



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Committee (MBRAC) Business Meeting Minutes

Web-based video teleconference

January 16, 2025

Individuals Present

MBRAC Members: *(a quorum was present)*

Online via Teams:

(Category 1) Kevin Wagner, Jeff Schafer, Perri Jacobs, Miles Hutton, Trisha Tonn
(Category 2) Greg Jergeson, Mark Good, Scott Heidebrink, Doug Krings, Bill Jensen
(Category 3) Jody Mason, James Moore, Stacey Barta, Cliff Merriman

Public:

Online via Teams: Patrick Kelly, Western Watersheds Project; Kristie McCusker and Chris Suelzle, North Dakota Land Trust

BLM Staff:

Online via Teams: Sonya Germann, State Director, BLM-Montana/Dakotas (MT/DKs); Wendy Warren, MBRAC Designated Federal Official and District Manager, Eastern Montana Dakotas District (EMDD); Zane Fulbright, District Manager, North Central Montana District (NCMD); Mark Jacobsen, EMDD Public Affairs & MBRAC Co-coordinator (lead); Gina Baltrusch, NCMD Public Affairs & MBRAC Co-coordinator; Ann Boucher, MT/DKs RAC Coordinator; Donna Bradley, Resource Assistant, Miles City Field Office (FO) meeting notetaker; Ben Hileman, Field Manager, Havre FO; Kathleen Tribby, Field Manager, Malta FO; Craig Miller, Wildlife Biologist, Havre FO; Whitney Patterson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Billings FO; Cynthia Barrett, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (UMRBNM); Eric Lepisto, Field Manager, Miles City FO; Jason Snellman, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Malta FO; Thomas Valencia, Park Manager, UMRBNM; Nate Arave, Field Manager, Billings FO; Edward Kraft, Field Manager, North Dakota FO; Greg Morel, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, North Dakota FO; Jesse Hankins, Acting Manager, UMRBNM; Jake Williams, Field Manager, South Dakota FO; Harrison (Alex) Nancarrow, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Billings FO; Ryan Larson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, South Dakota FO; Erika Miller, Acting Associate District Manager, EMDD.

8:00 a.m. – Meeting started; Mark Jacobsen & Gina Baltrusch facilitating

BLM Manager Briefings

Sonya Germann- State Director, BLM-Montana/Dakotas:

Welcomed MBRAC members and expressed appreciation for their accomplishments. Presented an overview of Montana projects and cooperative work accomplished across Montana and the Dakotas. Noted that Doug Burgum is the nominee to serve as the Secretary of Interior.

Wendy Warren-District Manager, Eastern Montana Dakotas District:

A written district update noting field offices' recent and upcoming significant planning activities and projects was provided to MBRAC members prior to the meeting (attached). Wendy Warren verbally highlighted several key items from that written update:

- Most offices are completing burning piles from fuels reduction projects.
- The proposed amendment regarding coal leasing through the Miles City FO Resource Management Plan has been approved.
- The Cherry Creek Gravel Pit project (Miles City FO) was completed last summer in cooperation with Prairie County. Discussion continues regarding additional gravel pits in the county.
- One employee from the EMDD Fire Division has gone to California to assist with fire efforts.
- The North Dakota FO Resource Management Plan (RMP) was signed last week.
- The North Dakota FO continues to partner with Tribes, assisting them in completing oil and gas applications.
- The Environmental Assessment for the Billings FO RMP amendment for the Horse Management Area has been sent to Montana and Wyoming governors and any input is due Jan. 17, 2025.
- The Fort Meade Recreation Area (South Dakota FO) contracted project for potable water (near Sturgis, S.D.) has been awarded and will be completed by April 2025. The pipeline will provide water to various locations throughout the recreation area.

Zane Fulbright - District Manager, North Central Montana District:

A written district update noting field offices' recent and upcoming significant planning activities and projects was provided to MBRAC members prior to the meeting (attached). Zane Fulbright verbally highlighted several key items from that written update:

- A four-year agreement has been signed with the Montana Conversation Corp. Staff will assist with habitat improvements through the Sagebrush Anchor Restoration Landscape project.
- Housing wildland fire personnel continues to be difficult in the Lewistown, Montana, area. BLM and Fergus County are working together to help provide for crew quarters.
- The UMRBNM RMP was signed in 2008. Maintenance of the document has been completed through the years, but the plan needs to be reviewed to determine if it continues to meet management goals.

• During the summer of 2024, a crew completed a four-day journey of the Lewis and Clark expedition, through the viewpoint of York’s perspective. It is scheduled to be released June 19, 2025, in Omaha, Nebraska.

8:15 a.m. – The meeting was turned over to Perri Jacobs, MBRAC Chairperson.

Agenda Item: Malta FO Recreation Business Plan proposal

Presenters: Jason Snellman, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Malta FO, & Kathy Tribby, Field Manager, Malta FO

Background: Sept. 11, 2024, during the MBRAC’s business meeting in Glasgow, Montana, the Malta FO presented a briefing about updating their Recreation Business Plan, which included proposed fee changes at some recreation sites in the Malta FO area. The plan may be viewed on the BLM’s ePlanning website -- MaFO Rec. Plan: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2034586/510>

Today, Jason Snellman and Kathy Tribby provided a follow-up briefing (attached) to MBRAC members on the final Malta FO Recreation Business Plan proposal. Members’ questions were answered, and the chairperson called for a member vote of endorsement for the plan.

Miles Hutton moved for the MBRAC to formally recommend approval of the Malta FO Recreation Business Plan and its proposed fees. Cliff Merriman seconded the motion.

MBRAC Vote Results: Yea – 11; Nay – 0. Motion carried.

Name	Title
Perri Jacobs	MBRAC Chairperson; Category 1
Trish Tonn	MBRAC Vice-Chairperson; Category 1
Jeff Schafer	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Miles Hutton	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Kevin Wagner	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Greg Jergeson	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Scott Heidebrink	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Mark Good	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Doug Krings	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Bill Jensen	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Jim Moore	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Stacey Barta	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Michael Fox	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Jody Mason	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Cliff Merriman	MBRAC Member; Category 3

Agenda Item: UMRBNM Recreation Business Plan proposal

Presenters: Thomas Valencia, Park Manager, UMRBNM, & Jesse Hankins, Acting Monument Manager, UMRBNM

Background: On Dec. 20, 2024, MBRAC members were emailed a briefing (attached) about the draft UMRBNM Recreation Business Plan to provide an overview of the draft plan and proposed fees to be discussed at the Jan. 16, 2025, meeting. The plan may be viewed on the BLM’s ePlanning website -- UMRBNM Rec. Plan: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2035431/510>

Today, Thomas Valencia provided a briefing (attached) about public outreach conducted, adjustments made to the draft UMRBNM Recreation Business Plan proposal and some improvements to visitor amenities being planned. MBRAC members' questions were answered, and the chairperson called for a called for a member vote of endorsement for the plan.

Cliff Merriman moved for the MBRAC to formally recommend approval of the UMRBNM Recreation Business Plan and its proposed fees. Stacey Barta seconded the motion.

MBRAC Vote Results: Yea – 12; Nay – 0. Motion carried.

Name	Title
Perri Jacobs	MBRAC Chairperson; Category 1
Trish Tonn	MBRAC Vice-Chairperson; Category 1
Jeff Schafer	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Miles Hutton	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Kevin Wagner	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Greg Jergeson	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Scott Heidebrink	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Mark Good	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Doug Krings	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Bill Jensen	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Jim Moore	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Stacey Barta	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Michael Fox	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Jody Mason	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Cliff Merriman	MBRAC Member; Category 3

9:30-9:45 a.m. – BREAK

Agenda Item: Acton Recreation Area Business Plan proposal

Presenters: Harrison (Alex) Nancarrow, Recreation Planner, Billings FO, & Nate Arave, Field Manager, Billings FO

Background: On Jan. 8, 2025, MBRAC members were emailed the draft Acton Recreation Area Business Plan to provide background for discussion at the Jan. 16, 2025, meeting. The plan may be viewed on the BLM's ePlanning website -- Acton Rec. Plan:

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2035543/510>

Today, Alex Nancarrow provided a briefing (attached) about the plan and proposed fees to MBRAC members. Members' questions were answered, and the chairperson called for a called for a member vote of endorsement for the plan.

Greg Jergeson moved for the MBRAC to formally recommend approval of the Acton Recreation Area Business Plan and its proposed fees. Jody Mason seconded the motion.

MBRAC Vote Results: Yea – 12; Nay – 1. Motion carried.

Name	Title
Perri Jacobs	MBRAC Chairperson; Category 1
Trish Tonn	MBRAC Vice-Chairperson; Category 1
Jeff Schafer	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Miles Hutton	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Kevin Wagner	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Greg Jergeson	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Scott Heidebrink	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Mark Good	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Doug Krings	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Bill Jensen	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Jim Moore	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Stacey Barta	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Michael Fox	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Jody Mason	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Cliff Merriman	MBRAC Member; Category 3

Agenda Item: South Dakota FO Campground Fees Business Plan proposal

Presenters: Ryan Larson, Recreation Planner, South Dakota FO; Jake Williams, Field Manager, South Dakota FO

Background: On Jan. 8, 2025, MBRAC members were emailed the draft South Dakota FO Campground Fees Business Plan to provide background for discussion at the Jan.16, 2025, meeting. The plan may be viewed on the BLM's ePlanning website -- SDFO Rec. Plan: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2035730/510>

Today, Ryan provided a briefing (attached) about the plan and proposed fees to MBRAC members. Members' questions were answered, and the chairperson called for a member vote of endorsement for the plan.

Cliff Merriman moved for the MBRAC to formally recommend approval of the South Dakota FO Campground Fees Business Plan and its proposed fees. Stacey Barta seconded.

MBRAC Vote Results: Yea – 12; Nay – 0. Motion carried.

Name	Title
Perri Jacobs	MBRAC Chairperson; Category 1
Trish Tonn	MBRAC Vice-Chairperson; Category 1
Jeff Schafer	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Miles Hutton	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Kevin Wagner	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Greg Jergeson	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Scott Heidebrink	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Mark Good	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Doug Krings	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Bill Jensen	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Jim Moore	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Stacey Barta	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Michael Fox	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Jody Mason	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Cliff Merriman	MBRAC Member; Category 3

Agenda Item: Schnell Recreation Area Business Plan proposal

Presenters: Greg Morel, Recreation Planner, North Dakota FO; Eddy Kraft, Field Manager, North Dakota FO

Background: On Jan. 8, 2025, MBRAC members were emailed the draft Schnell Recreation Area Business Plan to provide background for discussion at the Jan.16, 2025, meeting. The plan may be viewed on the BLM's ePlanning website -- Schnell Rec. Plan: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2035862/510>

Greg Morel provided a briefing (attached) about the plan and proposed fees for the Schnell Recreation Area. Members' questions were answered, and the chairperson called for a called for a member vote of endorsement for the plan.

Miles Hutton moved for the MBRAC to formally recommend approval of the Schnell Recreation Area Business Plan and its proposed fees. Trish Tonn seconded the motion.

MBRAC vote results: 14 For 0 opposed

Name	Title
Perri Jacobs	MBRAC Chairperson; Category 1
Trish Tonn	MBRAC Vice-Chairperson; Category 1
Jeff Schafer	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Miles Hutton	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Kevin Wagner	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Greg Jergeson	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Scott Heidebrink	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Mark Good	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Doug Krings	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Bill Jensen	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Jim Moore	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Stacey Barta	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Michael Fox	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Jody Mason	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Cliff Merriman	MBRAC Member; Category 3

10:45 a.m. – Chairperson Perri Jacobs called for the agenda to advance, as business was proceeding more quickly than anticipated.

MBRAC Round Robin Discussion

Jeff Schafer presented to members a draft proposal for Missouri Basin RAC sub-committees. The document provided a starting framework for the RAC to consider and BLM Public Affairs to review for compliance with sub-committee requirements. The MBRAC desires to establish sub-committees to research, review and present the information to the MBRAC as a whole, on concerns, issues or responses to public land management topics in response to requests from the public, BLM or other agencies. Public concerns and requests often require research of the concern, review of regulations and law.

A regularly scheduled MBRAC meeting is not enough time for MBRAC members to develop a proposal or presentation to be considered by members, consensus possibly achieved, and a formal document prepared and approved to be sent to the BLM for consideration. It is often not realistic to accomplish this as an agenda item at a scheduled RAC meeting.

Due dates for BLM input often don't correspond with scheduled meeting times. After much discussion and review of the RAC charter and Federal Register notification requirements, it was

determined that the 60-day time to publish a subcommittee meeting date stymied the process to the point that it was impractical.

Discussion continued regarding the MBRAC's purpose in bringing concerns, proposals, solutions and input into proposed regulations to the BLM, yet parts of the CFR discourages the mandate. Additional effort will be made to determine how other Resource Advisory Councils are effective in meeting their goals.

11:53 a.m. – 1 p.m. – LUNCH BREAK

Post-lunch attendance – Perri Jacobs informed members that Stacy Barta could not rejoin the meeting (traveling); Jody Mason informed members she would need to depart at 2 p.m.:

Name	Title
Perri Jacobs	MBRAC Chairperson; Category 1
Trish Tonn	MBRAC Vice-Chairperson; Category 1
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Miles Hutton	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Kevin Wagner	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Greg Jergeson	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Scott Heidebrink	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Mark Good	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Doug Krings	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Bill Jensen	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Jim Moore	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Stacey Barta	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Michael Fox	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Jody Mason	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Cliff Merriman	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Wendy Warren	MBRAC Designated Federal Official;

Perri Jacobs called the meeting to order, proceeding with agenda items.

MBRAC Round Robin Discussion Continued

MBRAC members requested to have an active part in the Little Rockies Travel Management Plan. MBRAC members Greg Jergeson, Miles Hutton, Jim Moore and Perri Jacobs volunteered to be considered for a subcommittee.

BLM staff explained the TMP's NEPA work and related public involvement deliverables are already awarded under a service contract. Because subcommittee meetings must be open to the public and law/policy requires Federal Register Notices be submitted not less than 60 days prior to a meeting, forming a subcommittee to formally involve the RAC would likely result in planning schedule slippages and increase contract costs.

Kathy Tribby and Jason Snellman will ensure information is provided to members to follow the TMP's progress and encourage them to provide input through normal NEPA public-engagement process via ePlanning.

MBRAC members discussed developing standard operating procedures for subcommittees, prior to forming any subcommittees. Subcommittee membership was discussed and proposed by MBRAC members. Wendy Warren, Designated Federal Official, supported the proposal. Cliff Merriman amended his initial motion regarding alternates on subcommittees. The motion for consideration: "Any appointed subcommittee will have at least one representative per category. If a representative cannot attend a scheduled meeting, they will find their own replacement." Bill Jensen seconded the motion.

Subcommittee SOP vote results:
 Yea – 11; Nay – 1. Motion carried.

Name	Title
Perri Jacobs	MBRAC Chairperson; Category 1
Trish Tonn	MBRAC Vice-Chairperson; Category 1
Jeff Schafer	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Miles Hutton	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Kevin Wagner	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Greg Jergeson	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Scott Heidebrink	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Mark Good	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Doug Krings	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Bill Jensen	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Jim Moore	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Stacey Barta	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Michael Fox	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Jody Mason	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Cliff Merriman	MBRAC Member; Category 3

Greg Jergeson suggested the public comment period for MBRAC meetings be moved from the end of the meeting to earlier on the agenda. Topics brought by the public could be discussed and if action required, would be placed on the next meeting’s agenda. If agenda items are completed and the meeting is advanced, the meeting can’t be adjourned until it’s determined that no public is in attendance or wishes to comment.

Greg Jergeson made a motion to standardize the public comment period on future meeting agendas to occur 11 a.m. to noon for meetings lasting more than four (4) hours. Trish Tonn seconded the motion.

Standardize public comment period time, 11 a.m. to noon, vote results:
 Yea – 10; Nay – 1. Lack of a quorum present. Motion not carried. To be revisited during the next MBRAC meeting.

Name	Title
Perri Jacobs	MBRAC Chairperson; Category 1
Trish Tonn	MBRAC Vice-Chairperson; Category 1
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Miles Hutton	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Kevin Wagner	MBRAC Member; Category 1
Greg Jergeson	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Scott Heidebrink	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Mark Good	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Doug Krings	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Bill Jensen	MBRAC Member; Category 2
Jim Moore	MBRAC Mem
Stacey Barta	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Michael Fox	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Jody Mason	MBRAC Member; Category 3
Cliff Merriman	MBRAC Member; Category 3

Doug Krings expressed a concern with fuels reduction projects and wildlife winter ranges. He said the large amount of snow that has recently fallen presented an issue for deer that shelter in pine canopy that has been treated for fuels reduction. Where pine canopy was not treated, the snow cover was 6 inches, if there was no pine canopy cover, the snow was 30 inches deep. He requested this be brought to the attention of BLM fuels program managers.

Future Recruiting Discussion

Mark Jacobsen led a discussion regarding RAC membership recruiting; new members will be needed in 2026 when 10 of the 15 MBRAC members' terms expire. The nomination process can take up to year to be approved. Perri and Mark asked that anyone interested, please let Mark or Gina Baltrusch know.

Future Meetings Discussion

A 'doodle poll' will be sent to members to set a springtime meeting date. An option was proposed that the meeting be held in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, with a tour the second day.

Medora, North Dakota, was also discussed, to be considered as an alternate site.

MBRAC members should forward any requests for the next meeting's agenda topics to Perri Jacobs or Trisha Tonn. An agenda will follow from the BLM once all topics submitted have been considered and determined.

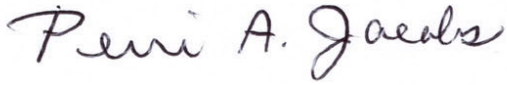
3 p.m. – All agenda items completed; MBRAC members temporarily dismissed until the public comment period begins at 4 p.m.; BLM MBRAC co-coordinators remain to monitor virtual meeting for new arrivals.

4 p.m. – Public Comment Period

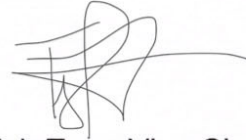
MBRAC members returned. No public in attendance at 4 p.m. or arrived by 4:15 p.m. Chairperson Perri Jacobs adjourned the meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Respectively approved and submitted for the record.



Perri Jacobs, MBRAC Chairperson



Trish Tonn Vice Chairperson MBRAC

Documents/Presentations provided to MBRAC members during meeting (attached):

- Handout: NCMD District Update, January 2025
- Handout: EMDD District Update, January 2025
- Presentation: Malta FO Recreation Business Plan proposal
- Presentation: UMRBNM Recreation Business Plan proposal
- Presentation: Billings FO Acton Recreation Area Business Plan proposal
- Presentation: South Dakota FO Campground Fees Business Plan proposal
- Presentation: North Dakota FO Schnell Recreation Area Business Plan proposal



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

North Central Montana District

Recent & Upcoming Significant Land Management Planning Activities & Projects

as of January 2025

Hi-Line Sagebrush Anchor Restoration Landscape (IRA). Nearly \$9 million in BLM funds will be invested through the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Partners typically provide a 5:1 partner match with projects. The project management team is engaging more than a dozen local-, regional- and national-level partners. Since our last update to the MBRAC, two Good Neighbor Authority projects have been awarded with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (one with Rangelands and one with the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program) for about \$2.75 million. Over the next five years these partnerships will improve upland and riparian habitats through grazing management, modify fencing to improve wildlife movements and bury up to 20 miles of powerline in priority sage grouse habitat. Three additional agreements are in the final stages of award and will total nearly \$2.5 million. Initial project targets proposed for the Restoration Landscape include removal and/or modification of about 100 miles of fencing to improve wildlife migration, restoration of about 2,500 acres of crested wheatgrass to native plant communities, burying about 10+ miles of powerline to reduce raptor predation of sage-grouse, about 50 miles of mesic (riparian) habitat projects to improve drought resiliency, treating about 250 acres of conifer invaded lands to improve wildland fire resilience, and assessing grazing management practices and potential adjustments to timing, intensity, duration and new technology to improve upland and riparian areas.

National Award. The Ranchers Stewardship Alliance won the BLM's 2024 Rangeland Stewardship Award – Collaborative Team Category. The RSA was nominated by the Malta and Glasgow field offices. The RSA has been working with the BLM since 2017 on conservation projects and recently hosted a Restoration Landscape coordinator to assist BLM in restoration and conservation activities in the Hi-Line Sagebrush Anchor Restoration Landscape in northeastern Montana. Through building connections, relationships, and trust between conservation organizations and the local ranching community, RSA has brought together over a hundred local ranchers to discuss conservation issues and implement projects throughout the region.

MALTA FIELD OFFICE

Little Rockies Forest Health and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project. The Malta Field Office proposes to conduct fuels-reduction treatments both within and outside of the wildland urban interface, as well as within and outside of the Zortman-Landusky CERCLA/Superfund site boundary. The proposed project will break up continuous fuel materials, reduce the amount and height of hazardous fuels and maintain previous treatments to reduce the risk and impacts of large fire events. Addressing increased fuel loading in proximity to values at risk will reduce the potential for public and private property loss and to reduce suppression costs. Public scoping was conducted April 18-May 2, 2024, with a public scoping meeting held in Zortman on April 18. The final draft EA will be posted on ePlanning website for a 30-day public comment period starting in mid-January, 2025 and a final decision is anticipated by spring 2025. Learn more on ePlanning – <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2027358/510>.

Dry Fork Road culvert replacement (GAOA). The west end of Dry Fork Road begins at the intersection with State Highway 191. The Dry Fork Road is graveled for its entire length and is an all-weather surface. The Malta Field Office administers and maintains the first 23.8 miles of the road. Two existing corrugated metal pipe culverts are in poor overall condition and likely to soon fail. This project will remove and replace the metal culverts with a new single precast reinforced concrete culvert of approximately the same length. Principal items of work include structural excavation, corrugated metal pipe culvert removal, installation of bedding material, installation of a new precast reinforced concrete culvert, structural backfill and slope and site restoration. Replacing and maintaining this crossing will result in continued

access across the north side of the Charles M Russell National Wildlife Refuge and Missouri River, allowing the Dry Fork Road to continue to be a major access route for numerous traffic types, including ranchers, recreationists, tourists, and county, state, and federal employees. Construction is anticipated to take place during summer 2025.

Recreation Business Plan Update. As part of updating its recreation program business plan, the Malta Field Office is reassessing recreation fees at its campgrounds in the Little Rocky Mountains. These fees were last updated in January 2014 and need to be increased to meet fair market value to help with the increasing cost of maintenance and continue to provide for and receive fair value for use of recreation facilities as stated in the 2015 Hi-Line Resource Management Plan. These facilities include Camp Creek, Horse Corral and Montana Gulch campgrounds, the Buff's Day Use Picnic Area (for special events such as weddings and memorials), and the historic Zortman Ranger Station overnight rental fees. While the ranger station still needs quite a bit of interior work before it would be ready for public rental, it will be included with this proposal. The 30-day public comment period closed Oct. 18, 2024. Public comments will be summarized and presented to the Jan. 16, 2025, Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council meeting. Learn more on the BLM's ePlanning website - <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2034586/510>.

Little Rockies Travel Management Plan. The Malta Field Office will apply the Travel and Transportation Management Process to develop a sustainable network of roads and trails for motorized, mechanized and non-motorized methods of travel in the Little Rocky Mountains (Little Rockies). Development of the Little Rockies TMP requires a collaborative effort of interested public individuals, groups, communities and cooperating agencies. The travel management area encompasses a 27,700-acre area and currently contains 262 routes and 124 miles of roads, primitive roads and trails. Although the area surrounds scattered private parcels and adjoins private, state and Fort Belknap lands, the decisions within the TMP will apply only to the public lands managed by the BLM. TMP decisions, however, will take into consideration potential effects on non-BLM lands. In addition, any travel restrictions within the TMP will not apply to emergency operations such as fire response, search and rescue, law enforcement and military actions. This TMP has been on-hold awaiting the findings of a Class III Cultural Inventory which was recently completed. Public outreach and NEPA are anticipated to begin during early 2025.

Bar Island Dam Reconstruction (GAOA). The Malta Field Office administers Bar Island Detention Dam, a low-hazard class dam in South Phillips County, Montana. The compacted earth embankment dam was constructed in 1967 as a peak discharge control structure, and an erosion and sediment control structure. It also provides habitat for native fish, sage grouse, and many other wildlife species, and is a general recreation use area. Notably, the dam also consistently retains water that is available for wildland fire response operations. Reconstruction will address the deficiencies identified with the dam's principal spillway outlet works, the principal spillway inlet and outlet works, the auxiliary spillway, erosion on the dam embankment and more. This project is in the design phase, with construction anticipated to occur during 2026.

South Phillips Sage-Grouse Habitat Improvement and Fuels Reduction Project. The BLM Malta Field Office proposes to improve greater sage-grouse habitat conditions and reduce fuel loadings in southern Phillips County. Mechanical, manual and prescribed fire treatments will be considered. Over ten years, mechanical and manual conifer removal treatments may occur on up to 20,000 acres to improve sage grouse habitat. Treatments include masticating, chipping, hand slashing, removing or hand piling juniper and Ponderosa pine in sage grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas. Prescribed fire is being considered on up to 12,000 acres in limited areas with high conifer canopy closure to reduce conifer fuel loadings and improve forest health. A final decision is anticipated by spring 2025, followed by implementation of some projects during late-spring and summer 2025. Learn more on the BLM's ePlanning website - <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2033606/510>.

American Prairie July 2022 Grazing Decision. On July 28th, 2022, the BLM issued a final decision authorizing bison and/or cattle grazing on seven allotments administered by the Malta Field Office (Telegraph Creek, Box Elder, Garey Coulee, French Coulee, Dry Fork, Flat Creek, Whiterock Coulee). East Dry Fork – a common allotment grazed with one other operator – remains approved for cattle-only grazing. All seven grazing allotments are located in Phillips County, Montana. Telegraph Creek and Box Elder were previously authorized for bison grazing in 2014. The Final Grazing Decision was appealed by 1) the Montana Stockgrowers Association (a joint appeal including North Phillips County Cooperative State Grazing District, South Phillips County Cooperative State Grazing District, and the Montana Stock Growers Association), 2) the State of Montana by and through the Montana Attorney General, and 3) the State of

Montana, by and through its Governor (a joint appeal including , Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Department of Livestock, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks). The appeals are being adjudicated by the Department of the Interior, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Board of Land Appeals. The appeals were followed by petitions for stay from all three parties. On Oct. 13, 2022, Administrative Law Judge Veronica Larvie, with the DOI's Office of Hearings and Appeals, Departmental Case Hearings Division, issued an order DENYING the petitions for stay. Within 30-days, all three appellants appealed the petition order and filed timely their Statements of Reason on Dec. 22, 2022. On May 29, 2024, the IBLA ruling against the plaintiffs' appeal of the administrative law judge's Oct. 13, 2022, denial of petitions for stay. In April 2023, in keeping with standard administrative practices for BLM-authorized grazing leases, the Malta Field Office issued grazing permits to American Prairie for the allotments approved for both cattle and bison. The written arguments phase for adjudication of the appeals pertaining to the American Prairie July 2022 grazing decision was completed on Nov. 13, 2023. The parties involved are now awaiting a decision from the DOI's Office of Hearings and Appeals, Departmental Cases Hearings Division. It's important to note that there is no required deadline for the appeals adjudication to conclude. On Dec. 6, 2024, the State of Montana, by and through its governor, Montana DNRC, Montana FWP, Montana Livestock and Montana Agriculture filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana, Great Falls Division, challenging the IBLA's decision denying their petition for stay. DOI solicitors are working with Department of Justice counsel as this new legal action moves forward.

GLASGOW FIELD OFFICE

Finale Detention Dam Rehabilitation (GAOA). The Glasgow Field Office's Finale Detention Dam, a low-hazard dam built in 1965 in Valley County, Montana, requires rehabilitation. Undercutting of the dam's principal spillway outlet, severe scouring of the stilling basin, erosion of the embankment and damage to the concrete inlet pad require substantial restoration work to prevent complete dam failure. Finale Dam is critical to the safety of the town of Glasgow and for maintaining access to over 250,000 acres of BLM managed lands that are used by the public for hunting and wildlife watching. Rehabilitation of the dam will sustain wildlife habitat and support recreation opportunities for the public. The project will include dewatering the reservoir and construction area, excavating a portion of the existing dam embankment and foundation to removal of the current outlet works, construction of new outlet works, replacing and compacting the foundation and embankment materials, constructing a new principal spillway and restoring the road surface across the dam.

Cactus Flat Road Reconstruction (GAOA). · A large washout on the BLM's Cactus Flat Road, located in the Glasgow Field Office area within Valley County, Montana, is slated for repair in late-FY25. Cactus Flat Road provides an important access route to an estimated 250,000 acres of land managed by the BLM. Replacement of the culverts and restoration of the road's cross-sectional profile will restore a safe access route for local recreationists, grazing permit holders and BLM staff who rely year-round on using this road.

Gutshot Dam Disposal (GAOA). The Glasgow Field Office's Gutshot Dam, located in Valley County, is a hazard class dam that has breached and been funded (GAOA) for disposal in late-FY25 to mitigate serious safety deficiencies, provide public access and decrease the backlog of deferred maintenance. The primary spillway outlet works has failed, and the embankment is completely perforated. This embankment was part of an access trail that was built and maintained by the BLM and is also an important part of a primitive access road to an estimated 33,000 acres of BLM managed surface area. Disposal will include the removal of the outlet pipe structure, removal of a portion of the embankment, as well as providing a safe and stable access route across Lone Tree Creek. The project will also improve the stream and watershed functionality of Lone Tree Creek by returning the channel to its original shape to produce a more normal flow regime. Disposal of Gutshot Dam would produce a cost savings by eliminating the cost of total reconstruction of this dam.

Tomahawk Detention Dam Rehabilitation (GAOA). The Glasgow Field Office's Tomahawk Detention Dam is a hazard class dam in need of rehabilitation to mitigate safety deficiencies. The primary spillway outlet works is failing and in danger of washing out. The embankment is also an integral part of Beaver Branch Road, that was built and is maintained by the BLM for access to an estimated 250,000 acres of BLM lands. Rehabilitation, funded by GAOA, will include removal and replacement of the outlet pipe structure, embankment repairs, and riprap placement for erosion control. The project is still in the design and engineering phase, with construction anticipated in late-FY26.

Triple Crossing Access Road Culvert Replacement (GAOA). The T.C. Access Road in southern Valley County is classified as a collector road which the Glasgow Field Office maintains. Corrosive soils have damaged and weakened many of the corrugated metal pipe culverts to the point of failure which causes a serious hazard to the traveling public. T. C. Access Road provides an important access route to an estimated 250,000 acres of BLM managed surface area. During late FY25, several 48-inch and 60-inch culverts will be replaced to ensure continued access for the public and BLM staff.

HAVRE FIELD OFFICE

Marias River Recreation Site Improvements (BIL). The Havre Field Office's Sullivan Bridge Recreation Area, located in the very southeast corner of Glacier County, Montana, will receive a new vault toilet, picnic tables and fire rings as part of a Resilient Recreation project for locations on the Marias River and in the Sweetgrass Hills. In addition, the flood-damaged earthen boat launch area will be rebuilt and gravel will be placed on roadways. This recreation area is located where the confluence of the Two Medicine River and Cut Bank Creek forms the Marias River and serves as a popular day-use area and boat launch for non-motorized watercraft.

Sweetgrass Hills Recreation Site Improvements (BIL). · The Havre Field Office's Sweet Grass Hills Recreation Site will receive a new vault toilet in the spring of 2025 as part of the initial development of this area. The location currently receives a good deal of dispersed primitive camping. Popular with hunters, hikers and other recreationists, this small camping area will provide approximately eight campsites when completed.

LEWISTOWN FIELD OFFICE

Elk Creek Outcome Based Grazing Authorization (OBGA) status/accomplishments. The Lewistown Field Office's Elk Creek Outcome Based Grazing Authorization gives greater flexibility to livestock operators and the BLM to adjust grazing use for changing conditions to achieve specific vegetative, habitat and livestock operation sustainability objectives. In March 2018, the BLM national office selected the Lewistown Field Office's Elk Creek project submission as one of the demonstration projects for this initiative. The Elk Creek OBGA project includes two individual grazing permittees and two grazing authorizations that authorize 2,279 Animal Unit Months of livestock grazing in four allotments in Petroleum County. BLM signed the final grazing decisions on June 3, 2022, and issued the flexible authorizations Sept. 15, 2022. The flexible authorizations allow permittees the opportunity to modify the season-of-use, pasture rotations and livestock numbers annually based on local environmental factors. The flexible use is contingent upon monitoring, which is completed by both BLM and permittees. Results from monitoring efforts are shared and discussed during the annual meeting, which also serves as a form of monitoring. In addition to flexible grazing use, range improvement projects including electrical fence construction, fence modification, livestock water pipeline installation, and mesic restoration projects are being implemented. Since the beginning of the OBGA project, approximately 12 miles of fence have been modified to wildlife-friendly standards on BLM managed lands. Many of these fences have been identified since the 1970s and 1980s as barriers to pronghorn movement. Additionally, nearly five miles of fence modifications installing bird collision markers have been completed on portions considered high or moderate risk for bird strikes. Two of the three mesic restoration projects have been installed. Electric fence construction, additional fence modifications and the third stream restoration project are planned for 2025.

UPPER MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Coal Banks Landing Recreation Area Boat Ramp Construction. A new boat ramp at Coal Banks Landing was recently constructed to improve motorized and non-motorized boat access to the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River. Over the last 30 years, an attached bar upriver from the original ramp has continued to grow, resulting in reduced flows and increased sediment deposition within the channel beyond the ramp. The new boat ramp was constructed at the upriver end of the campground and has room for both jet boat and canoe launching. Construction began during mid-September 2024 and was completed by November 2024.

Recreation Business Plan Update. The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument is updating its recreation business plan, which includes proposed fee increases and a proposed fee removal at the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center in Fort Benton. The plan, river-use fees and campground fees were last updated in 2016. The plan addresses a large and diverse recreation program that includes developed campgrounds, general recreation sites, boat launches

along with beneficial visitor amenities such as vault toilets or dump stations. Public comments will be summarized and presented to the Jan. 16, 2025, Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council meeting.

Monument Science Plan. Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Science Plan. BLM Manual 6100 National Landscape Conservation System Management (section 1.6.F) identifies that the BLM will develop science strategies (plans) for NLCS units encompassing values of substantial scientific interest and will ensure that these strategies are compatible with relevant BLM science strategies. Science strategies will be developed for all national monuments. This science plan, along with the UMRBNM Approved Resource Management Plan (ARMP), will be used as the basis for conducting science in the monument. Scientific efforts within the monument should support the conservation, protection and restoration of the objects identified in the designation language. The monument's plan will also incorporate the research of a rapid climate assessment summer graduate research assistant who conducted a high-level climate vulnerability assessment for biological, geological and historical objects of interest within the monument. The science plan was finalized and signed Dec. 18, 2024.

NCMD DIVISION OF OIL & GAS

Idled and Orphaned Wells. During FY24, NCMD's Division of Oil & Gas approved plugging plans for 13 idle wells, including some of the oldest idle wells in the state, and witnessed the plugging of seven idle wells. Twelve idle wells are slated for plugging during FY25. Twelve orphaned well processes advanced, with seven ready for enforcement against former lessees and five removed from the orphaned well list by former lessees.

Increased Engagement w/Tribes. Staff assisted representatives of three Tribes with applying for and using Bureau of Indian Affairs funding for the plugging of orphaned wells.

NCMD FIRE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Woodhawk Wildland Fire Module established. The Woodhawk Wildland Fire Module (WFM) is a new addition to the BLM Montana/Dakotas' fuels-management program and will not only help with the planning and implementation of fuels treatments but will also provide assistance across the BLM-Montana/Dakotas area, especially with prescribed fire implementation. The WFM is also expected to assist with wildland fire suppression efforts, both within the BLM-Montana/Dakotas three-state area and nationally, when requested. These priorities align with the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Establishing this module is a great example of advancing department priorities that will directly benefit public lands. There is only one other WFM in the BLM.

FY24 Fuels Treatments, the North Central Montana District's Fire Management Office treated a total of 5,859 acres with prescribed fire and 1,903 acres mechanically. Two large-landscape prescribed fires were conducted in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Antelope Creek was an interagency prescribed fire with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service totaling 8,592 acres between the two agencies (3,050 BLM acres involved). The Two Calf prescribed fire was 2,500 acres and partially BIL-funded.

FY25 Outlook. There are 6,641 acres of cultural inventories, and 11,395 acres of mechanical and prescribed fire treatments planned for **FY25**. There are also 35 acres of Community Assistance program support planned.

FY24 Rural Fire Readiness Program. NCMD's fire program donated a Type 6 fire engine to the Petroleum County Fire District on Aug. 12 through the Rural Fire Readiness Program. Learn more -- <https://www.facebook.com/BLMMontana/posts/pfbid0w18Ta3ACqLttqkKiVvHyGTixgQR2tRCAA26q8JhPyhyLZLWQAG2ipHLPNeDCfFPbl>. NCMD also donated an engine to Blaine County on April 18. Learn more -- <https://www.krtv.com/news/montana-and-regional-news/a-new-truck-for-the-blaine-county-rural-fire-department>.

-BLM-

Updated January 2024



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Eastern Montana-Dakotas District

Recent & Upcoming Significant Land Management Planning Activities & Projects

as of January 2025

MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE

Western Organization of Resource Councils - 2. The 2015 MCFO ROD/Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) (BLM 2015a) was challenged by the Western Organization of Resource Councils in the US District Court of Montana in March 2016. The court issued an order on March 26, 2018, finding that the BLM violated NEPA in the Final EIS and required the BLM to complete a new coal screening and remedial NEPA analysis by November 29, 2019. Thereafter, the BLM signed the ROD on November 25, 2019.

As a result of the challenge by Western Organization of Resource Councils and others to the 2019 ROD/Approved RMPA, the District Court for the District of Montana issued an order on August 3, 2022 (the Order). Pursuant to the Order, the court found that the BLM violated NEPA; the court ordered the BLM to complete a new coal screening and remedial NEPA analysis that considers no-leasing and limited coal leasing alternatives and discloses the public health impacts from the planning area. The BLM published a notice of availability for the Draft SEIS/Potential RMPA in the Federal Register on May 5, 2023, which initiated a 90-day comment period.

Update: On May 17, 2024, the BLM Montana/Dakotas State Office published a Notice of Availability (NOA) on the Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 2015 Miles City Field Office Approved RMP. The publication of the NOA initiated the 30-day protest period and 60-day governor's consistency review. Protest of the Proposed RMP constitutes the final opportunity for administrative review of the proposed land use planning decisions prior to the BLM adopting an approved RMP. A protest resolution report will be completed and published on the BLM website at <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/public-participation/protest-resolution-reports>. The BLM Montana/Dakotas State Director received and responded to the governor's consistency letter.

MCFO completed WORC 2 Final SEIS to meet the court ordered deadline of December 3rd. Currently routing NOA to HQ for signature/ROD

2024 Range and Renewables. 65 Transfers; 162 Permit Renewals. Approximately 35 allotments – Field ID Team Health Assessments this field season. 2024 Broadscale land health assessment effort – 86 allotments (ground truthed approximately 12). Livestock grazing trespass settlement for \$13,794.40. Fence modifications to reduce barriers to wildlife movements – approximately 12 miles in Carter County/5-7 miles operator modifications and worked with back country hunters/anglers. Pumpkin Creek riparian restoration project to increase connectivity/habitat complexity/active valley bottom – contracted beaver dam analog and post-assisting log structures – 230 total.

2024 Realty. Completed 110 lands and realty inspections. Processed 33 rights-of-ways (new, renewals, assignments). Completed/Approved the Land Use Authorization (Land Use Lease) for Spring Creek Mine – NTEC.

2024 Cultural/Paleo. Completed 147 undertakings in FY24. Issued 11 paleo survey permits and 16 excavation permits.

2024 Minerals. Significant accomplishments and activities related to resource management, permitting, and regulatory compliance. Here's a refined summary:

1. **Azure Migration and IT Support:** Led the district through a successful Azure migration, addressing and resolving data and user support issues in a timely manner.
2. **Mineral Material Trespasses:** Resolved three cases of Mineral Material Trespasses, ensuring regulatory compliance and proper management of resources.
3. **Petroleum Production Record Review:** Conducted a review of petroleum production records, resulting in the recovery of:
 - \$17,699,931.40 in oil,
 - \$21,634.92 in gas.
4. **Federal Categorization Agreements and Notices:**
 - Processed 18 Federal Categorization Agreements.
 - Managed 863 Federal Sundry Notices and 75 Indian Sundry Notices.
 - Completed 158 Federal Idle Well Reviews and 37 Indian Idle Well Reviews.
5. **Well Inspections:**
 - Conducted 210 Federal PET/PAT Inspections and 12 Federal Drilling Inspections.
 - Carried out 72 Indian PET/PAT Inspections and 2 Indian Drilling Inspections.
 - Inspected 183 Federal Surface sites and 58 Federal Monitoring sites.
 - Reviewed 56 Indian Surface sites and 29 Indian Monitoring sites.
6. **Well Plugging and Environmental Management:**
 - Oversaw the plugging of 28 wells to mitigate environmental risks.
7. **Permit Management:**
 - Permitted the Cherry Creek Pit to supply gravel to Prairie County, facilitating infrastructure development.
 - Processed 6 applications for Federal drilling permits and 4 Indian drilling permits.

North Plains Connector. North Plains Connector, LLC (North Plains, a subsidiary of Grid United LLC) has submitted a right-of-way application to Miles City Field Office for a 525-KV DC transmission line to connect the eastern and western power grids. The Notice of Intent was released by Federal Register Notice on October 25, 2024, to begin the 45-day public scoping period. The Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office will be Lead Agency for the NEPA process, and the BLM will be a Cooperating Agency. A cooperating agency agreement has been signed between the BLM and DOE.

The transmission line will begin in Colstrip, Montana and travel east into North Dakota where it will diverge into two separate lines with one 345-KV AC transmission line connecting to Center, North Dakota and another 345-KV AC transmission line to Solen, North Dakota. No additional connections or spurs are planned, as this line is solely intended to connect two separate power grids for improved reliability, redundancy, and emergency support. The total route is projected to be around 420 miles in length with around 10-miles being on BLM-managed lands in the Miles City Field Office. The line will cross multiple jurisdictions: BLM, U.S. Forest Service, USDA Agricultural Research Station, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional waters, Montana State Trust Lands, North Dakota State Trust Lands, and private lands. The project will be analyzed under an Environmental Impact Statement.

BILLINGS FIELD OFFICE

Restoration Projects. The BiFO has made significant progress on restoration efforts, including sagebrush seeding in the Robertson Draw Burn Area and the completion of 35 riparian restoration structures. They are also experimenting with new restoration techniques on BLM lands.

Fire Management. BiFO has begun treatments for this winter season burning piles in several fuel project areas including Horse Thief (west of Roundup), Pompys Pillar, and Britton Springs (near the Wyoming border on the Horse Range). They also initiated a Fuels Environmental Assessment (EA) for Stillwater County.

Recreation and Accessibility. BiFO is working to improve recreational opportunities by making trails and campgrounds ADA-compatible, developing mountain bike trails, and enhancing shooting site designations. This includes significant progress toward completion of the Cottonwood Travel management area.

17-Mile Rec Area (Partial) Temporary Shooting Closure. The BiFO will temporarily close the western most portion of the popular the 17-Mile RA to shooting in order to keep shooters focused in the safest direction; away from private buildings that are hidden from view to shooters while recreating on the site. The temporary measure will be followed by an in-depth plan to improve the area for shooting, while directing fire in a safe direction(s) with adequate backstops. The greater Billings area is experiencing a lack of shooting ranges able to take new members and as the population builds, so does the pressure on this popular public land shooting location.

Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Amendment to the Billings RMP and Horse Management Area Plan (HMAP). The BiFO hasn't gathered Wild Horses from the Pryor Mountain HMA since 2015 resulting in degradation of the range conditions from prolonged overpopulation. This EA proposes to Amend the RMP and the HMAP establishing the framework for management of wild horses on the range for the next 10 years to promote the recovery of range conditions.

The purpose of an HMAP is to establish an appropriate management level (AML - which is the number of adult horses within an HMA) with the overall goal being to manage for healthy wild horses within healthy productive habitats or rangelands. The Pryor Mountain HMA includes lands managed by BLM, USFS, and NPS with BLM being the agency primarily responsible for horse management. While the HMA includes multiple jurisdictions, the management of the Wild Horses is primarily the responsibility of the BLM. The USFS will issue a separate decision from the BLM prepared EA with their own objection process.

The current EA is being prepared to establish a new HMAP as well as amend the BiFO RMP to manage for desirable levels of genetic diversity. This EA will need to meet the requirements for both BLM and USFS administrative remedy processes as well as the timeline requirements for RMP amendments to include a governor's consistency review in both Montana and Wyoming. The proposed amendment was released for

public protest which ran from November 15 through December 16, 2024. The BLM is currently evaluating the protests. A 60-day Governors' Consistency Review was initiated with the governors of both Montana and Wyoming beginning November 18, 2024, concluding on January 17, 2025. Decisions on the HMAP and AML as well as the gather plan will occur at a later time after conclusion of the Governors' Consistency Review and subsequent final decision on the proposed land use plan amendment.

NORTH DAKOTA FIELD OFFICE

Here's a summary highlighting the accomplishments of the NDFO Adjudication team related to Categorization Agreements (CAs):

1. ****Assistance to IESC and BIA****: The NDFO Adjudication team provided valuable support to the Indian Energy Service Center (IESC) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the processing of Categorization Agreements (CAs).
2. ****Indian Categorization Agreements (CAs)****:
 - In the second half of FY, the team fully adjudicated 35 Indian CAs.
 - Out of these, 10 CAs were approved, and 6 additional CAs are awaiting approval by the BIA.
 - Additionally, the team collaborated with the MT/DAKs cadastral department to fully adjudicate and package 11 Little Missouri River CAs for BIA completion.
3. ****Yearly Improvements****:
 - In FY23, 9 Indian CAs were approved.
 - In FY24, the team significantly increased this number, successfully approving 42 Indian CAs.
4. ****Federal Categorization Agreements (CAs)****:
 - The team processed and approved a total of 64 federal CAs in FY24, further demonstrating their efficiency and contributions to the district's operations.

This highlights the NDFO Adjudication team's success in processing and improving the approval of Categorization Agreements, showcasing the increase in productivity and collaboration with other departments to meet regulatory and operational goals.

After several years, the EA for the **Denbury trespass and pipeline** have finally been signed. Denbury was originally given authorization for pipeline installation several years ago when they deviated from the authorized route. Additionally, Denbury disturbed a known cultural site which complicated the trespass/authorization. The NDFO resources staff worked with Denbury, ND State Historic Preservation Officer, and with the Northern Cheyenne and Fort Peck Tribes to reach an agreement. A memo of agreement was signed by all parties this summer along with the NEPA. The pipeline was installed, and reclamation is ongoing.

The **NDFO surface Inspection and Enforcement group** completed a total of 616 surface inspections. This included 17 USFS inspections for priority wells within the Medora and McKenzie Ranger Districts. These inspections have led to several work orders and resulted in paint, clean up or additional reclamation work. The NDFO has received compliments from the USFS District Managers on this continued effort. The Minerals I&E team completed all their High Priority inspections this FY. This includes 303 production, 95 drilling, 32 plugging, 17 Idle Well, and 30 RAs and 88 RVs inspections.

The NDFO approved a total of **208 Applications for Permit to drill (APDs) and 2,578 Sundry Notices during FY24**: Federal Categorization Agreements (CA) approved – 54, Federal CAs received – 64 and Indian CAs approved – 43.

North Dakota Field Office Resource Management Plan. The BLM released its proposed resource management plan and final environmental impact statement for the North Dakota Field Office.

Under the final EIS, the BLM identifies Alternative D as the proposed plan. BLM will close areas to oil and gas leasing if they have low development potential or are state-designated drinking water source protection areas. The proposed plan also allows federal coal to be leased within four miles of existing coal mine permit boundaries. In addition, Alternative D updates management strategies for potential National Scenic River sections, visual resource management, and land tenure issues and identifies one special recreation management area, two backcountry conservation areas, and one area of critical environmental concern.

During the plan's development, the BLM worked closely with local communities, energy producers, and other stakeholders to determine areas appropriate for future development, including protections for private property owners near BLM lands. During the 90-day comment period on the draft plan, which included a 30-day extension granted at the request of the Governor's office, the BLM received 535 public comments, which informed the selection of the proposed plan.

A [Notice of Availability](#) was published in the *Federal Register* on August 9, initiating a 30-day protest period, which closed September 9.

SOUTH DAKOTA FIELD OFFICE

GAOA Projects Completed: Spruce Gulch Road Reconstruction Project was completed in October FY24. The project rebuilt approximately 1.3 miles of road with new culverts, gravel, road profile adjustment, and ditches. Alkali Creek Vented Ford Project was completed at the Alkali Creek Campground. New box culverts were installed on Alkali Creek which replaced the old undersized culvert which provides better access to camp sites. GAOA Project Awarded: Contract for the replacement of two bridges was awarded and work will start Spring of FY25.

Pipeline Contract Awarded. Contract for replacement and expansion of Fort Meade Pipelines for Range and Recreation. Contract will be completed by April 2025.

Deadman timber sale was completed in FY24. This is the first timber sale completed in the SDFO since 2015.

The **Ft. Meade and Bear Butte grazing leases** were bid at \$76.90/AUM (1693 AUMS for both), totaling \$130,191.70 that we received for this grazing season. The bid was for two years.

USGS IAA- Sagebrush mapping: Includes most BLM land within the sage grouse BSU in SD and ND (166,115 acres)

AML Surveys: WL crew, MCCs and SDSMT intern completed surface inventories of 2,455 AML sites.

FIRE MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Fire Suppression Program. Billings Dispatch reported 449 fires for 4,616 acres (424 BLM-Billings Field Office acres burned). Miles City Dispatch reported 1,117 fires for 502,349 acres (617 BLM-North Dakota Field Office acres and 26,855 BLM-Miles City Field Office acres burned).

The fire season lasted 309 days during calendar year 2024.

Fuels Program. The EMDD fuels program completed treatment on 6,319 acres utilizing a combination of hand thinning, piling and mechanical mastication. Work was performed by fuels staff, District fire staff as well as contractors. Treatment areas include Horsethief, Knowlton, Cedar Creek, Ft Meade, Deadwood and Lead. Prescribed fire treatments were completed on 2,115 acres in the district. Treatments included the Silver Spur RX in BiFO, Schenk Canyon (South Dakota) as well as the Knowlton area in Custer Co., (Montana). Resources were utilized from MT BLM, USFS and local cooperators.

Pile burning was completed on 618 total acres. The Fuels program completed monitoring on several thousand acres of completed treatments and funded AIM monitoring on multiple projects as well. The fuels program completed four project level EA's, including the BiFO Ponderosa Juniper Fuels reduction project, Hellgate sage grouse (SG) habitat enhancement and Carter County SG Habitat enhancement. DNA's were completed on 10 different projects throughout the District. This fuels work was accomplished while the program assisted fire suppression efforts throughout the district and across the country. Every single member of the fuels program assisted with suppression from driving supplies to filling management positions on incident management teams.

Community Assistance. 10 Programs: Rapid City, Meade County, Lawrence County, Custer County in South Dakota and Carter County, Custer County (MT), Garfield County, Musselshell County, Stillwater County and Carbon County in Montana. During 2024, 697 acres were treated, improving fire protection for 163 homes. Additionally, 33 Fire Education Events were conducted at 13 middle schools in Billings with 1,677 kids in attendance, Smokey Bear appearances with over 2,000 people contacted and fire prevention radio ads and gas station fire safety messages with over 500,000 people reached.

-BLM-

Updated January 2025



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Malta Field Office

Recreation Business Plan and Fee Proposal

Information Briefing for the **Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council**

January 16, 2025





Public Outreach

- Sept. 11, 2024 – Malta Field Office briefed the MBRAC on its proposal; fielded questions
- Sept. 18, 2024 – News release distributed to MT media outlets announcing the start of a 30-day public comment period
- News release distributed to MBRAC members, MT state offices (Gov. & DNRC), MT CODELs, MT state legislators, county commissioners, MBRAC members and Tribes with jurisdictions overlapping the NCMD operational area
- Announcement posted on BLM-Montana/Dakotas social media pages (Facebook & X)
- Articles published by multiple news outlets: Hi-Line Today, Billings Gazette (and other Lee Enterprises-owned news outlets), Phillips County News, Roundup Record & Winnett Times



Public Comments / Results

The public comment period on ePlanning resulted in one public comment that was off-topic and absent substantive content. There are no changes to the plan as originally proposed.

Questions?



How is the MBRAC Involved?

- The 2004 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act directs Department of the Interior to “provide the public with opportunities to participate in the development of or changing of a recreation fee” and requires the consideration of input from an appropriate resource advisory committee (*References: 16 U.S.C. § 6802 & 6803*)
- The Missouri Basin RAC’s charter also addresses the RAC’s role to make recommendations to the BLM when we propose to establish, eliminate or expand recreation fees; see the charter’s “Description of Duties” section
- **Ultimately, we need your input and collective recommendation (vote)**



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

THANK YOU!

Jason Snellman

Malta Field Office

Outdoor Recreation Planner

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Malta Field Office

Recreation Business Plan Update

**[https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-
ui/project/2034586/510](https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2034586/510)**





U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

Recreation Business Plan and Fee Proposal

Information Briefing for the **Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council**

January 16, 2025





Public Outreach

- Dec. 20, 2024 -- News release distributed to MT media outlets announcing the start of a 15-day public comment period
- News release distributed to MBRAC members, MT state offices (Gov. & DNRC), MT CODELs, MT state legislators, county commissioners, MBRAC members and Tribes with jurisdictions overlapping the NCMD operational area
- Announcement posted on BLM-Montana/Dakotas social media pages (Facebook & X)
- Articles published by multiple news outlets: Hi-Line Today, Havre Weekly Chronicle, Fort Benton River Press, Lewistown News-Argus, Billings Gazette (and other Lee Enterprises-owned news outlets)
- Individual emails sent to Monument SRP-holders for awareness of proposed fee adjustments and invitation to submit comments



ePlanning Public Comment Results

The 15-day public comment period on ePlanning resulted in four public comments.

- Three comments supported fee adjustments:

1) "I've been wanting to camp at this site for a while now. It sounds like a steal for a tent site at \$5-12, you can't beat that. However, maintenance for sites like this isn't free and paying a higher fee, **I think the article in the paper said \$15-35, is not unreasonable. An up in prices to help with cost of maintenance should be explored.**"

2) "I am a Montanan and have canoe-camped the Missouri Breaks four times...**I strongly support the BLM's proposed fee increases.** I've seen big increases in visitors in the Breaks, and am concerned about resource damage and negative impacts to the wild river experience. BLM needs adequate funding to fully staff up, and to buy necessary supplies. The new increased fees are reasonable...I hope that, once this fee increase is in place, that BLM will have more of a presence on the river during the peak floating season."



ePlanning Public Comment Results Continued

3)"I am writing to express my support for the proposed fee adjustments outlined in the draft recreation business plan...

Campground Fee Increases: Increasing the campsite fees at Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, James Kipp Campground, and the introduction of a fee at Wood Bottom Campground **align with the costs required to maintain and improve these facilities.**

Dump Fee Adjustment: The increase in the septic dump fee at James Kipp Campground from \$10 to \$15 is a **reasonable reflection of the rising costs** of waste management and supports the sustainable operation of this essential service.

Fee Removal at the Interpretive Center: **Making the Upper Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center free for all ages is a commendable step toward improving accessibility and fostering greater public engagement.**

Special Recreation Permit Fee Increase: Increasing the day and overnight use fee to \$5 per person per day for the Upper Missouri National Wild & Scenic River **is a modest adjustment** that reflects the value of this unique resource. "



ePlanning Public Comment Results Cont.

- One comment questioned the validity of raising rate at the James Kipp Recreation Area campground; suggested incremental increases in relation to increased amenities available:

4) **"I question the validity of the raising the camping fee at James Kipp campground.** Although the campground is very busy on the weekends, in May and June, the weekdays, and remainder of the year it is very slow. Additionally, the services are limited at the campground. There has been no water and is not electrical available. An additional comment is the increase from \$12 to \$20 is an increase of 67% in a single year. **Having a plan for incremental increases, or a significant increase in amenities, would be a more reasonable approach."**



Updates to the Proposal

NCMD-Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument seeks the MBRAC's formal recommendation (vote) on a proposal to increase, establish and/or remove fees at the following recreation sites and areas:

Fee Increases

- Coal Banks Landing Campground
- Judith Landing Campground
- James Kipp Campground
- Upper Missouri Wild & Scenic River (River Mile 41.5-149) [Individual Special Recreation Permit \(ISRP\)](#)

New Fee & Fee Removal

- A new campground fee is proposed for Wood Bottom Campground
- UMRBNM proposes removing the entrance fee at the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center



Fee Proposals - Increases



Coal Banks Landing Campground:
Increase campsite fee from \$10/night to \$20/night



Judith Landing Campground:
Increase campsite fee from \$5/night to \$20/night



James Kipp Campground: Increase campsite fee from \$12/night to \$20/night; increase RV dump fee from \$10 to \$15 per dump



UMNWSR ISRP: Increase river use fees to \$5/person/day)
(current fees: \$4/Age 17+, \$2/Age 6-16, \$0/Age 0-6)



Fee Proposals - Fee Removal & New Fee



Upper Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center (MBIC):
remove entrance fee for visitors of all ages; decrease from
\$5/person (age 16+) to free for all ages



Wood Bottom Campground: new campsite fee of \$10/night



Fee Comparisons

Ownership	Recreation Site	Current Fees	Amenities
BLM	Chain of Lakes – Holter Lake	\$25/night	Fire rings, picnic tables, vault toilets
BLM	Camp Creek	FY25 Proposed: \$20/night	RV and tent spaces, picnic tables, fire rings, vault toilets, bear resistant garbage cans, horseshoe and cornhole pits, potable drinking water, horse corrals, picnic shelters
BLM	Montana Gulch	FY25 Proposed: \$16/night	RV and tent spaces, picnic tables, fire rings, vault toilet, bear resistant garbage cans
Army Corps of Engineers	West End Tent and Trailer Campground (Fort Peck)	Tent \$15/night RV \$25/night	Fire rings, picnic tables, vault toilets
Army Corps of Engineers	Downstream (Fort Peck)	Tent \$15/night RV \$30/night	Picnic tables and shelters, fire rings, Electric hookups



Fee Comparisons (Continued)

Ownership	Recreation Site	Current Fees	Amenities
American Prairie	Antelope Creek	Cabin \$71/night Tent \$19/night RV \$38/night	Electricity, water, showers, Wi-Fi, dumping station
US Forest Service (USFS)	Crystal Lake	RV/tent \$20/night	Fire rings, picnic tables, potable water
Hill County	Beaver Creek Park	RV/Tent \$15/day	Picnic table, fire ring, vault toilet
Private	Hell Creek Recreation Area	RV/tent \$40/night	Electric hookups, picnic table, fire ring, showers and flush toilets nearby.
National Park Service (NPS)	Glacier National Park - St. Mary Campground	RV/tent \$20/night - primitive \$30/night summer	Fire ring, picnic table, potable water (seasonal), bear resistant storage lockers, flush toilets



Recreation & Monitoring Labor Costs

Appropriated funding provides for overall recreation program labor costs at UMRBNM.

Day-to-day maintenance & monitoring is completed by monument staff, including seasonal staff and BLM law enforcement.

Annual Labor Costs (Estimated)			
Staff	Average Work Month Cost	Approximate Work Months	BLM Salary Cost
Outdoor Recreation Planner (GS-11)	\$9,600	3.0	\$28,800
Law Enforcement (GS-11)	\$9,600	5.0	\$48,000
Park Ranger (GS-9)	\$7,900	3	\$23,700
Admin Support Assistant (GS-6)	\$5,900	2	\$11,800
Seasonal Park Ranger (GS-5)	\$5,200	12	\$62,400
TOTAL Cost			\$174,700



Justification – Routine Operating Costs

Recreation fee program routine costs not listed below include deferred maintenance projects, resource protection and reclamation projects, noxious weed management, new construction and planning/coordination with other agencies.

Annual Maintenance & Operating Costs (Estimated)	
Misc. Expenses	Cost
Toilet Pumping (23 Vault Toilets)	\$45,000
Trash Collection (4 Sites – MBIC, CB, JL & Kipp)	\$20,000
Seasonal Partner Recreation Intern Staff – 2 Positions	\$34,800
Volunteer Campground Hosts (Per Diem) – 4 Positions	\$19,200
Cleaning Supplies/Toilet Paper	\$5,000
Public Water Supply Test/Fees/Licensing/Training	\$1,500
Misc. Maintenance Costs (Paint, Parts, Tools, Hardware, Signs)	\$5,000
TOTAL Cost	\$130,500



Justification – UMRBNM Recreation Fee Revenue

Recreation Use Permits (RUPs), River Individual Special Recreation Permit (ISRP), Special Recreation Permit (SRP) & MBIC Entry Fee for the previous 5-year period (2020-2024)

Fiscal Year	Campground RUP Revenue	River ISRP Fee Revenue	Special Rec Permit Revenue	MBIC Entry Fees Revenue	Total Fee Revenue
2020	\$30,060	\$29,694	\$22,808	\$950	\$83,512
2021	\$41,749	\$31,917	\$28,280	\$910	\$102,856
2022	\$37,018	\$23,789	\$65,881	\$635	\$127,323
2023	\$38,990	\$20,861	\$49,625	\$1,405	\$110,881
2024	\$30,839	\$28,090	\$35,926	\$1,157	\$96,012
FY20-24 Avg	\$35,731	\$26,870	\$40,504	\$1,011	\$104,116



Justification - Costs vs. Recreation Fee Revenue

The table below displays the difference in estimated routine operating costs and estimated recreation fee revenue.

Routine costs to the recreation fee program not listed below include deferred maintenance projects, resource protection and reclamation projects, noxious weed management, new construction and planning/coordination with other agencies. These costs do not include any recreation fees used to supplement labor costs during reduced budget years.

Rates	Estimated Routine Operating Costs	Estimated Future Recreation Fee Revenue based on Current Average (FY20-24)	Difference
Current Fee Rates	\$130,500	\$104,116	-\$26,384



Recreation Site Improvements

- New developed boat launch ramp at Coal Banks Landing
– completed November 2024
- Improved site layout and safety features at Coal Banks Landing campground (new directional signage, fencing, safety bollards)
– Spring 2025
- New picnic tables at Wood Bottom Campground
– Spring 2025
- Installation of digital fee kiosks at Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing and James Kipp Recreation Area
– Spring 2025





Sanistar Remote Off-Grid Kiosks (ROKs)

- An initial investment and installation of on-site digital fee pay stations will coincide with the proposed fee increase at developed campgrounds
- These pay stations will increase compliance and minimize additional workload from fee sites; on-site users often do not have cash and frequently request a digital pay option
- Allow payment of campground, river use and dumpsite fees on same kiosk
- Cost: \$35,000 for three ROKs





How is the MBRAC Involved?

- The 2004 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act directs Department of the Interior to “provide the public with opportunities to participate in the development of or changing of a recreation fee” and requires the consideration of input from an appropriate resource advisory committee (*References: 16 U.S.C. § 6802 & 6803*)
- The Missouri Basin RAC’s charter also addresses the RAC’s role to make recommendations to the BLM when we propose to establish, eliminate or expand recreation fees; see the charter’s “Description of Duties” section
- Ultimately, we need your input and collective recommendation (vote)



U.S. Department of the Interior
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Questions?



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

THANK YOU!

Thomas Valencia
UMRBNM-MBIC Manager
tvalencia@blm.gov, 406-622-4010

UMRBNM Recreation Business Plan Update

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-
ui/project/2035431/510](https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2035431/510)





U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Billings Field Office

Acton Recreation Business Plan and Fee Proposal

Information Briefing for the Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council

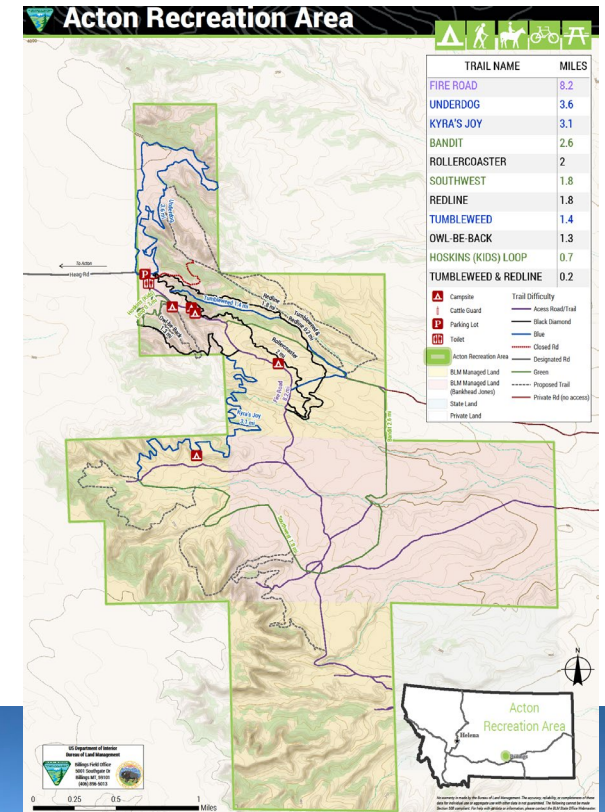
January 16, 2025





Acton Recreation Area Description

- No fees
- 3,697 acres
- Day-use and campground amenities
- BLM Law Enforcement and non-law-enforcement personnel patrols
- Agreement with local IMBA chapter

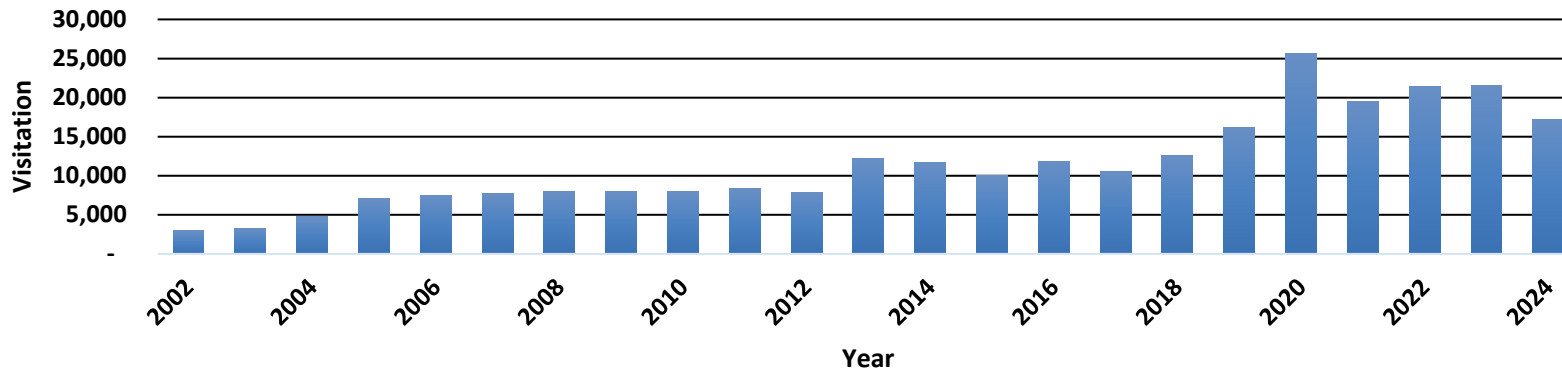




Visitation

- 27 miles from Billings, MT
- Mountain bikers, campers
- 17,208 visitors in FY2024
- Events

Acton Recreation Area Annual Visitation



Year	Visits	Percent Increase
2002	3,000	
2003	3,300	10.0%
2004	4,750	43.9%
2005	7,126	50.0%
2006	7,482	5.0%
2007	7,706	3.0%
2008	7,937	3.0%
2009	7,937	0.0%
2010	7,927	-0.1%
2011	8,323	5.0%
2012	7,860	-5.6%
2013	12,216	55.4%
2014	11,740	-3.9%
2015	9,981	-15.0%
2016	11,817	18.4%
2017	10,482	-11.3%
2018	12,539	19.6%
2019	16,176	29.0%
2020	25,678	58.7%
2021	19,534	-23.9%
2022	21,426	9.7%
2023	21,498	0.3%
2024	17,208	-20.0%
Total	263,643	473.6%



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Issues





Fee Proposal

- Day Use: No fees
- Camping:
 - \$20 per night, year-round
 - America the Beautiful Passes honored
 - Camping restricted to designated sites





U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

QUESTIONS?

Alex Nancarrow

Outdoor Recreation Planner

Billings Field Office

hnancarrow@blm.gov, 406-896-5223



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

South Dakota Field Office

Recreation Business Plan Update

Information Briefing for the Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council

January 16, 2025



Fort Meade Recreation Area

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
South Dakota Field Office

Fort Meade Recreation Area

RECREATION

- 1. Select camps and use fire wisely.
- 2. Observe all posted regulations from the recreation area and follow all posted signs.
- 3. Follow all posted signs and regulations.
- 4. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 5. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 6. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 7. Follow the posted signs and regulations.

Centennial Trail

Centennial Trail

- 1. Select camps and use fire wisely.
- 2. Observe all posted regulations from the recreation area and follow all posted signs.
- 3. Follow all posted signs and regulations.
- 4. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 5. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 6. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 7. Follow the posted signs and regulations.

SELF SERVICE PAY STATION

ALKALI CREEK TRAILHEAD

- 1. Select camps and use fire wisely.
- 2. Observe all posted regulations from the recreation area and follow all posted signs.
- 3. Follow all posted signs and regulations.
- 4. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 5. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 6. Follow the posted signs and regulations.
- 7. Follow the posted signs and regulations.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT ALKALI CREEK CAMPGROUND CAMPSITE RESERVATIONS

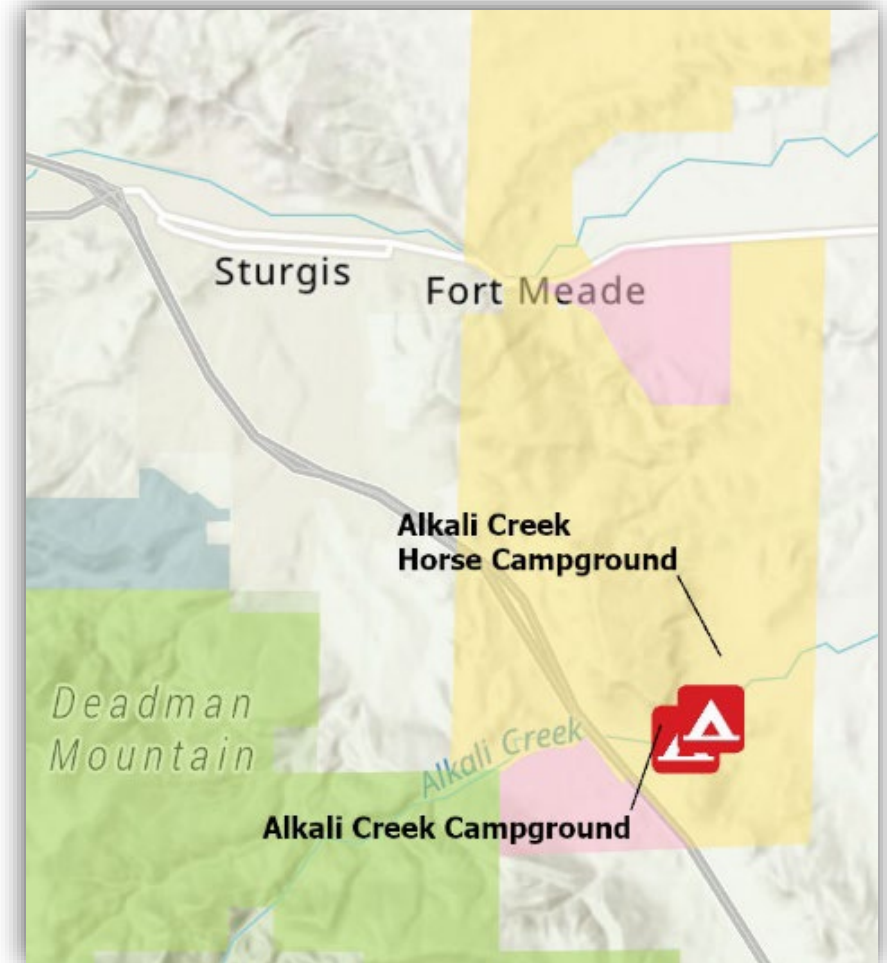
RESERVED BY

To reserve the use of a campsite, contact the South Dakota Field Office at 605/338-2300. All reservations must be made in person and are subject to the Bureau of Land Management's reservation system.



SDFO Recreation Program Overview

- The Fort Meade Recreation Area is approximately 6,500 acres of public lands directly adjacent to Sturgis, SD.
- Two developed campgrounds on Fort Meade:
 - Alkali Creek Horse Camp (6 sites)
 - Alkali Creek Campground (18 tent sites, 5 RV sites)
- Current amenities: Potable water, vault toilets, picnic tables, fire rings, garbage collection, gravel trailer/RV pads, group picnic shelters, maintained access roads, campground hosts, and corrals at the Horse Camp.
- Area is designated as non-motorized, no dispersed camping, and archery hunting only.





Annual Operating Costs FY 2024

Labor – Law Enforcement/Non-LE Patrols	\$1,000
Labor – Seasonal Staff	\$7,500
Additional funding for the summer seasonal is supplemented with appropriated funds when available	
Road Maintenance	\$1,000
Supplies (signs, maintenance projects, cleaning supplies, etc.)	\$5,000
Utilities/Services (garbage service, water samples, weed spraying, etc.)	\$2,500
Vehicle Expenses	\$5,000
Vault Toilet Pumping	\$2,500
Camp Host Reimbursement	<u>\$3,120</u>
Total Operating Costs	\$27,620

FY 2024 Campground fees collected: \$4,491 (17% of operating costs)



Similar Fee Sites Nearby

U.S. Forest Service – Black Hills National Forest Campgrounds - \$26 to \$30 per night

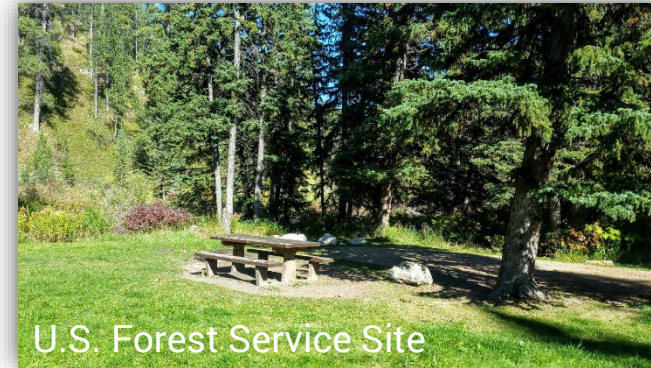
U.S. Forest Service – BHNF Willow Creek Horse Camp - \$30 per night

Rocky Point State Park – \$26 per night + (entrance fee of \$10 daily or \$40 annually)

Bear Butte State Park – tent sites \$11, horse camp \$18 per night + (entrance fee of \$10 daily/\$40 annually)

Vanocker Canyon Campground & RV Park (private)

- tent sites \$29 per night, RV sites (electric) \$39 to \$49 per night





Proposed Modifications to Business Plan

Alkali Creek Horse Camp:

Current Fees: \$8 per night, May 15 – Sept. 30

Proposed Increase: \$30 per night

Alkali Creek Campground:

Current Fees: \$6 per night for tent and RV sites, May 15 – Sept. 30

Proposed Increase: Tent Sites - \$24 per night

RV Sites - \$30 per night

Fees will be charged year-round

America the Beautiful passes (Senior and Access) will allow for 50% reduction in fees

Camping is restricted to designated sites in the Fort Meade SRMA

With increased fees and using the 5-year reservation average, revenue would increase to \$23,304 (74% of operating costs)



Public Outreach

- December 23, 2024 – Announcements were posted on the South Dakota Field Office info board and on-site at Alkali Creek Campground.
- December 26, 2024 – News release distributed to media outlets announcing the start of 2-week comment period.
- December 26, 2024 - Announcement posted on BLM – Montana/Dakotas social media pages (Facebook & X).
- January 16, 2025 – Discussion with the MBRAC on the business plan proposal.

Public Comments Received

- The public comment period on ePlanning resulted in one public comment:
“The increases are very reasonable.”



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Questions?



Ryan Larson
Outdoor Recreation Planner
South Dakota Field Office
rlarson@blm.gov, 605-892-7033

**[https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-
ui/project/2035730/510](https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2035730/510)**



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

North Dakota Field Office

Schnell Recreation Area Business Plan and Fee Proposal

Information Briefing for the **Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council**

January 16, 2025



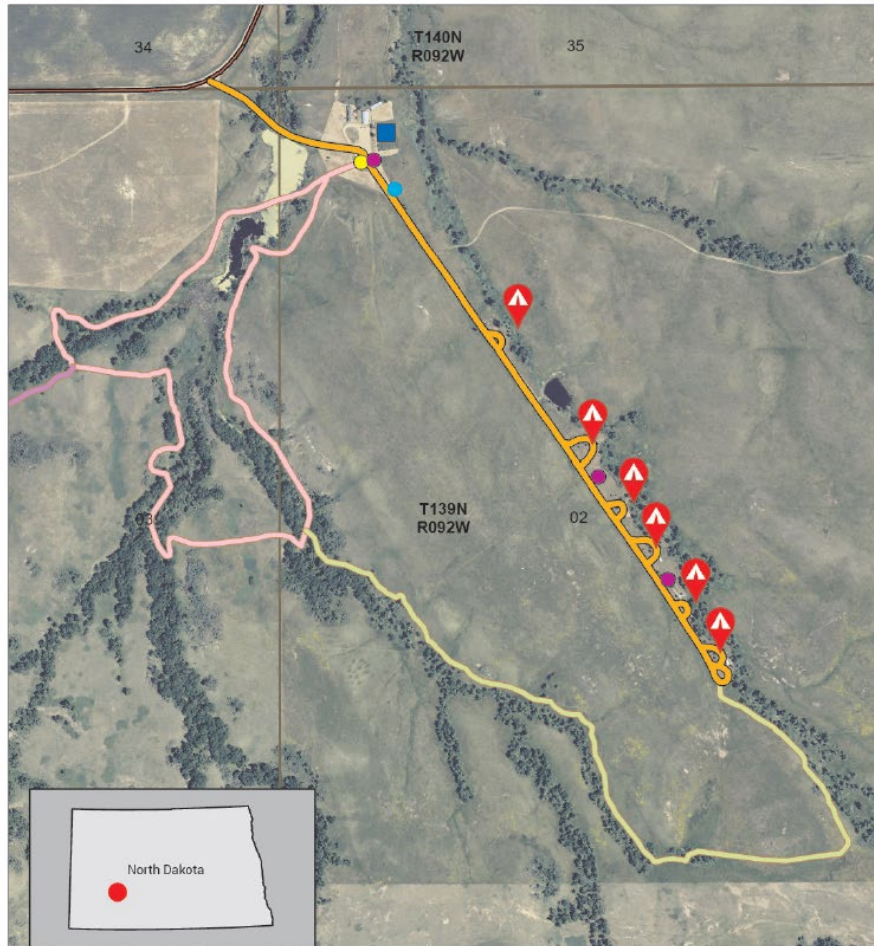


 Schnell Recreation Area
Campground

Bureau of Land Management
North Dakota Field Office
99 23rd Avenue West, Suite A
Dickinson, ND 58601
701-227-7700

North
Dakota

12/6/2024



Background

- The Schnell Recreation Area is approximately 2,000 acres of public lands.
- Once a working cattle ranch and was privately owned and operated for 120 years before the BLM's acquisition in 1993.
- The recreation area provides a variety of non-motorized recreation opportunities including hiking, hunting, horseback riding, bird watching, picnicking, biking, fishing, and camping.
- Six developed campsites with following amenities provided; tent and trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, fee collection, toilet facilities, fire rings and reasonable visitor protection. Potable water is available from May through September.





Revenues

On a 5-year average, the annual revenue covers approximately 29% of the operating costs. Increasing the cost of the camping fees would significantly support the NDFO with managing this resource.

Revenue by Year	Total
FY 2020	\$1,632
FY 2021	\$3,282
FY 2022	\$2,288
FY 2023	\$4,071
FY 2024	\$3,595



Operation Costs

Operation and Maintenance Expenses	Annual Costs (approximate)
General supplies and tools	\$ 5,500
Vehicle Expenses (fuel, maintenance, etc.)	\$4,000
Vault Toilet Pumping	\$400
Restroom Cleaning Contract	\$200
Total	\$10,100



Proposal

Fee Areas	Current Fees	Proposed Fees (Expanded Amenity)
Schnell Campground	\$5 camping (expanded amenity)	Individual Site (non-electric) per night: \$10 Senior and Access Pass holders: 50% off individual campsites



Contact

For any additional questions about the proposal
or the Schnell Recreation Area:

Greg Morel
North Dakota Field Office
Assistant Field Manager - Resources
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gmorel@blm.gov

