



Carlsbad Draft Resource Management Plan

Shaping future management of southeastern New Mexico's public lands

The Bureau of Land Management, Carlsbad Field Office has released a Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) for a 90-day public comment period. Once finalized, the RMP will make decisions that guide future management of public lands in the Carlsbad Field Office for the next 20 years.

The BLM Carlsbad Field Office completed public scoping for the Carlsbad RMP in 2011. At that time, the public was asked for information about resources and issues that should be addressed in the RMP. Now, the BLM has incorporated that information into the Draft RMP and is asking for public input again.

The BLM will consider all substantive comments received from the public in developing the Final RMP. The BLM can mix and match any decisions considered in the Draft RMP to create the Proposed RMP – so it's important to comment to the BLM on specific decisions and actions rather than advocating for only one alternative.

Resources in the Draft RMP

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

The BLM is required by law and policy to inventory our public lands for wilderness characteristics and consider protectively managing those lands in Resource Management Plans. The BLM has identified 66,666 acres of lands with wilderness characteristics (LWC) in the Carlsbad Field Office.

The BLM considers protecting all of the inventoried LWC in Alternative A of the Draft RMP, but would only give the highest protections to 5,119 acres of LWC in the "Preferred Alternative." BLM should protect all LWC in the final RMP to ensure these places continue to provide quality backcountry recreation and wilderness experiences for future generations.

Resource Management Plans are guiding documents that make land use allocations, outline goals and objectives for various resources, identify management actions and allowable uses, and set parameters for future activity-level planning.

The Draft RMP evaluates 5 management alternatives:

1. No action alternative would be a continuation of existing management from the 1988 RMP.
2. Alternative A focuses on watershed management and restoration, and using restoration to avoid a net loss of habitat.
3. Alternative B focuses on geographic separation of conflicting uses as much as possible.
4. Alternative C, the "Preferred Alternative", focuses on multiple use, and using management prescriptions to protect resources.
5. Alternative D focuses on maximized development by allowing development within existing laws with no additional restrictions.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designations highlight areas where special management attention is needed to protect important historical, cultural, and scenic values, or fish and wildlife or other natural resources. New Mexico Wild proposed 4 ACECs for designation in the RMP: Birds of Prey, Chihuahuan Desert Rivers, Desert Heronries and Salt Playas. The BLM should designate all of these ACECs in the final RMP.

In the Draft RMP, Alternative B proposes designating 561,433 acres of ACECs, including the Birds of Prey, Heronries and Salt Playas, but the "Preferred Alternative" only designates 98,562 acres of ACECs. These are some of the last untouched places in the heavily developed Permian Basin. Ensuring some lands remain free of further development preserves these places for wildlife such as migratory birds and rare plants, and also ensures that BLM is providing an appropriate balance of conservation and responsible development.

Oil and Gas

The Carlsbad area is one of the most developed oil and gas regions in the western U.S. and continues to rapidly expand. The "Preferred Alternative" in the Draft RMP would make nearly 97% of the planning area available to oil and gas leasing, only closing 88,502 acres and placing an additional 158,401 acres under No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations. Given the important resource values in the area, more lands should be closed to oil and gas development.

The BLM must adopt management decisions that better protect public lands resources, such as cave and karst resources and special designation lands. The BLM should close all areas with important resources and values to oil and gas leasing, including lands with wilderness characteristics, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, recreation management areas, and cultural and historic sites.

Climate Change

This arid region is already heavily hit by the impacts of a changing climate. The BLM is required to closely scrutinize the impacts increased oil and gas development will have on climate change and have a plan for adaptation where the impacts of climate change are already present.

The BLM's "Preferred Alternative" does not have necessary requirements to reduce greenhouse gases. This puts communities and our environment at risk. The BLM must conduct a more robust analysis of climate change impacts, including specifically related to oil and gas development, implement a management plan that reduces emissions and ensure the plan includes adaptation.



Submit your comment to the BLM

The BLM needs to hear from the public as they make important decisions about how to manage public lands in the Carlsbad area.

- Use the points on this factsheet to point out key opportunities for conservation and emission reductions.
- Share why you personally care about the area.
- Submit your comments to the BLM through the ePlanning site or email comments to blm_nm_cfo_rmp@blm.gov

**Comments are due
November 5!**

For more information, contact:

Judy Calman, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
judy@nmwild.org

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