

**BLM-WY State Director
Andrew Archuleta**

**Joint Agriculture, State and Public Lands & Water Resources Committee
Monday, June 10th, 2024**

**BLM Wyoming Updates
Rock Springs & Newcastle/Nebraska RMP, Sale of Land to PacifiCorp, and Wild Horse
Management**

Mrs. Chairperson, Mr. Chairperson, and members of the Committee, I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today to provide information about several different BLM Wyoming Management Plans and efforts on BLM-managed lands across the state.

Rock Springs RMP

- The Rock Springs RMP planning effort has garnered high interest from diverse stakeholders due to its diverse resource issues. The RMP revision was initiated in 2011 to develop new management actions for the field office and replace the 1997 Green River RMP.
- The Draft EIS was released in August 2023 and the public comment period ended on January 17, 2024.
- Since announcing the Draft RMP and EIS, the BLM held three public meetings and participated with the Wyoming Governor's Task Force through the Ruckelshaus Institute to address proposed management actions.
- More than 35,000 total comments were received, including several form letters and email campaigns, resulting in a net of about 4,000 individually distinct comments.
- The BLM is committed to addressing input received from the public, the Governor's Task Force, BLM staff, local cooperators, and Tribes such as right-of-way exclusion areas, designations of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), and Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA).
- The BLM is developing the final EIS/Proposed RMP and preparing for publication. We are taking the input we received very seriously and expect that those who providing that input will see their recommendations reflected in the Proposed RMP.

Newcastle/Nebraska RMP

- The BLM did extensive public outreach on the Newcastle/Nebraska RMP holding seven pre-scoping meetings with local counties during late 2022 through May 2023.
- BLM released the Notice of Intent to begin the Newcastle/Nebraska RMP in July 2023 and held an additional 4 meetings during the 45-day public scoping period. BLM received about 470 unique comments during public scoping that we're currently incorporating into the Draft EIS/RMP Amendment.
- BLM is currently reviewing a preliminary version of the Draft EIS/RMP Amendment which includes cooperators comments and plans on releasing the Draft for public comment this summer.

Sale of Land to PacifiCorp

- The BLM is working on a non-competitive (direct) sale of 307.5 acres of public lands in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, to PacifiCorp. The Notice of Realty Action was published in the Federal Register on April 18, 2024.
- The sale would allow PacifiCorp to gain ownership of the property, which is adjacent to the PacifiCorp Jim Bridger power plant and property owned by PacifiCorp.
- The sale would be subject to applicable provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), and BLM regulations. This includes FLPMA's requirement that the lands will be sold at not less than their fair market value.
- Written comments from interested parties were accepted until June 3, 2024 and BLM plans on finalizing the sale to PacifiCorp in the next few months.

Wild Horse & Burro Management

- Nationally, the BLM placed 8,046 animals into private care (adoptions, sales, transfers) in fiscal year 2023 and currently estimates the population of horses and burros on BLM managed public lands at more than 73,500.
- The BLM is caring for nearly 65,000 wild horses and burros in off-range corrals and pastures nationally, including 2,285 animals in Wyoming.
- BLM Wyoming manages 16 wild horse herd management areas on nearly 5 million acres. The combined appropriate management level for all HMAs in the state is 3,795 animals. BLM Wyoming's current wild horse population is estimated at 9,435.
- The BLM is planning for two gathers in 2024 – in the North Lander Complex and White Mountain herd management areas.
- The Rock Springs Record of Decision on the Wild Horse RMP Amendment is currently under litigation. Oral arguments are scheduled to begin on June 11, 2024, at the District Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming.