

INTERNAL DRAFT

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## Executive Summary

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# Executive Summary

## ES.1 INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rio Puerco Field Office (RPFO) is revising its existing 1986 Resource Management Plan (RMP). The revised RMP will be referred to as the *Rio Puerco Resource Management Plan*. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the BLM has prepared an associated environmental impact statement (EIS) to support the RMP. The RMP will provide future management direction for the public lands within the boundaries of the RPFO Planning Area.

The BLM developed this Proposed RMP/Final EIS as a result of public, stakeholder, and cooperating agency input and agency internal review of the 2012 Draft RMP/EIS (BLM 2012). The Proposed RMP is Alternative [EC](#), which ~~includes management actions and allowable uses from Alternatives A, B, C, and D, the range of alternatives outlined~~ is the preferred alternative in the 2012 Draft RMP/EIS (BLM 2012). Other factors contributing to the development of the Proposed RMP ~~and alternatives~~ include changes in policy and guidance, new legislation, and input and special expertise provided by cooperating agencies.

## ES.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AND DECISION AREAS

### ES.2.1 Planning Area

The Planning Area extends from the eastern boundary of Torrance County west through Torrance, Bernalillo, Valencia, Cibola, and McKinley Counties to the New Mexico-Arizona boundary, and from the Valencia County southern boundary north through Valencia, Bernalillo, and Sandoval Counties to the Sandoval-Rio Arriba County boundary. Interstate 40 (I-40) crosses the Planning Area east-west, while Interstate 25 (I-25) runs north-south. These interstate highways intersect each other in Albuquerque. Other cities and towns from east to west on I-40 include Moriarty, Grants, Milan, and Gallup. The I-25 cities and towns from south to north are Belen, Los Lunas, and Bernalillo; the highway leaves the Planning Area as it exits Sandoval County. These highways also cross American Indian Pueblo and tribal lands as they pass through the Planning Area. (**Appendix S, Map I-1**)

### ES.2.2 Decision Area

The Decision Area is composed of the lands within the Planning Area boundary over which the BLM has jurisdiction (**Appendix S, Map I-1**). These include BLM-administered surface and subsurface estates. Portions of the RPFO administrative area are excluded because they are addressed in the El Malpais Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (BLM 2001a) and the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (BLM 2007a). Also excluded are lands assigned to the Bureau of Indian Affairs under Public Land Order 2198.

## ES.3 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE RMP

The BLM has identified the need to revise the existing plan through a formal internal evaluation, the results of an internal analysis of the management situation (BLM 2009a), and examination of issues identified during the public scoping process and through collaboration with cooperating agencies. Since the Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in January 1986 for the existing plan, new data have become available, new policies have been established, and old policies have been revised.

The purpose, or goal, of the land-use plan is to ensure that BLM-administered lands are managed in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. This RMP is designed to provide a comprehensive framework for the BLM's management of public lands within the Decision Area, along with the allocation of resources under the multiple-use and sustained-yield mandates of FLPMA. Specific purposes of the plan are listed in **Section 1.2.1**.

#### 43 **ES.4 PLANNING ISSUES**

44 For a discussion of the planning issues identified during scoping, please refer to the RPFO Final Scoping  
45 Report (BLM 2008). This report is available on the Rio Puerco RMP website at [https://eplanning](https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/64954/570)  
46 [.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/64954/570](https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/64954/570). Other resource and use issues are identified in the BLM Land  
47 Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) and BLM Manual 1610.

48 The key planning issues identified for use in developing the alternatives addressed in this RMP/EIS are land  
49 tenure adjustment, mineral and energy development, recreation and visitor services, visual resources  
50 management, special designations, public land-urban interface, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use.  
51 Additionally, in response to public input, decisions in the Placitas area have been highlighted in **Chapter 2**.

#### 52 **ES.5 OVERALL VISION**

53 The BLM RPFO's overall vision is to create an RMP that will meet the goals of the agency, by providing  
54 multiple resource use opportunities while protecting and preserving precious resources.

#### 55 **ES.6 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS**

56 The BLM has identified ~~five~~<sup>four</sup> alternatives and included detailed analysis for these alternatives. The ~~four~~<sup>five</sup>  
57 ~~alternatives~~ are described in **Sections 2.1** and **2.2**. **Table ES-1** provides a general overview of the  
58 themes of the alternatives.

59 **Table ES-1: Alternatives Summary**

Alternative	
Alternative A (No Action)	Continue 1986 RMP, as amended, management direction.
Alternative B	Protect, maintain, restore, or improve components of the ecosystem using natural processes.
Alternative C (Draft RMP/EIS Preferred; <a href="#">Proposed RMP</a> )	Balance the protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural and cultural values with resource use and development. <a href="#">Meets all statutory requirements and responds to the purpose of and need for the RMP by best resolving the issues pertinent to the planning effort and is the best combination of decisions to achieve the goals and policies of the BLM as reflected through the U.S. Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan and New Mexico State Director and Administration guidance.</a>
Alternative D	Emphasize resource uses and commodity production with the least constraints, while still complying with applicable laws, regulations, and BLM policies.
<del>Alternative E (Proposed RMP)</del>	<del>Meets all statutory requirements and responds to the purpose of and need for the RMP by best resolving the issues pertinent to the planning effort and is the best combination of decisions to achieve the goals and policies of the BLM as reflected through the U.S. Department of the Interior's (USDI's) Strategic Plan and New Mexico State Director and Administration guidance</del>

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#### 61 **ES.7 COMPARISON AND SUMMARY OF CONSEQUENCES BY ALTERNATIVE**

62 The environmental consequences portion of the RMP/EIS (**Chapter 4**) presents the potential direct,  
63 indirect, and cumulative impacts on the human and natural environment that could occur from implementing  
64 each of the alternatives. Key findings of the impact analysis for all alternatives are summarized in  
65 **Appendix T**.

#### 66 **ES.8 CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING THE PROPOSED RMP**

67 The BLM ~~developed-identified~~ Alternative ~~CE~~ as the Proposed RMP ~~by selecting components of the Draft~~  
68 ~~EIS alternatives because it best resolves the issues pertinent to the planning effort. The resource prescriptions~~  
69 ~~within Alternative E were pulled directly from the range of Draft EIS alternatives (Alternatives A, C, or D),~~  
70 ~~in accordance with the BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1). Alternative E is primarily comprised of~~  
71 ~~Alternatives A and D. Approximately 75 percent of Alternative E's framework is the same as Alternative D,~~

72 ~~with exceptions for Lands and Realty, Mineral Resources, Recreation and Visitor Services, and Special~~  
73 ~~Designations (except for Wild and Scenic Rivers), which are the same as Alternative A. The only resource~~  
74 ~~decision from Alternative C that was brought into Alternative E is Wild and Scenic Rivers. The combination~~  
75 ~~of the three alternatives is now presented as Alternative E. Also, the Proposed RMP is the best combination~~  
76 ~~of decisions to achieve the goals and polices of the BLM as reflected through the US Department of the~~  
77 ~~Interior's (USDI's) Strategic Plan, New Mexico State Director, and Administration guidance.~~

78 The BLM chose not to supplement the EIS because Alternative ~~E-C~~ is ~~an~~within the spectrum of alternatives  
79 already analyzed in the Draft EIS (Section 5.3.2, on page 30 of the BLM NEPA Handbook [H-1790-1]).  
80 ~~Alternative E selects components of the Draft EIS alternatives.~~

81 The Proposed RMP, ~~which contains management actions from the Draft RMP/EIS alternatives analyzed in~~  
82 ~~detail,~~ balances resource use and extraction. In ~~identifying~~ developing the Proposed RMP (Alternative ~~EC~~),  
83 the BLM made ~~minor clarifications~~ ~~modifications~~ based on its internal review, new information and best  
84 available science, the need for clarification in the 1986 RMP, and ongoing coordination and collaboration  
85 with stakeholders. The BLM received substantive public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS (**Appendix R**),  
86 which also informed the BLM's ~~identification~~ ~~development~~ of the Proposed RMP. Changes in BLM  
87 regulations, policy, and guidance were also considered.

88 The alternatives evaluated in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS offer a range of discrete strategies for resolving  
89 limitations in existing management, exploring opportunities for enhanced management, and addressing issues  
90 identified through internal assessment and public scoping. The BLM fully considered the comments submitted  
91 by other government agencies, public organizations, state and Tribal entities, and interested individuals.

#### 92 **ES.8.1 Recommendations and Resulting Actions**

93 The BLM Field Manager recommends Alternative ~~E-C~~ as the Proposed RMP.

#### 94 **ES.9 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE RMP/EIS**

95 Implementation of the RMP will begin when the BLM State Office Director signs the ROD.

96 Decisions in the RMP will be tied to the BLM budgeting process. The BLM will develop an implementation  
97 schedule to provide for systematic accomplishment of decisions in the approved RMP.

98 During RMP implementation, the BLM will prepare additional documentation for site-specific actions to  
99 comply with NEPA. This can vary, from a simple statement of conformance with the ROD and adequacy of  
100 existing NEPA analysis to more complex documents that analyze several alternatives.

101 The BLM will monitor and periodically evaluate RMP implementation, based on guidance in its Land Use  
102 Planning Handbook, H-1601-1 (BLM 2005), as amended. Monitoring is the process of tracking and  
103 documenting the implementation (or the progress of implementation) of land use plan decisions; evaluation  
104 is the process of reviewing the land use plan and the periodic plan monitoring reports. This is done to  
105 determine whether the land use plan decisions and NEPA analysis are still valid. The BLM would also review  
106 the way in which the plan is being implemented.

107 As outlined in the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1, the RMP will be periodically evaluated, as  
108 documented in an evaluation schedule (at a minimum, every 5 years). This is to determine whether revisions  
109 or further amendments to the RMP may be necessary to accommodate changes in resource needs, policies,  
110 or regulations. Implementation-level decisions would be issued in order to fully implement the RMP.

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