

# *CHAPTER 5*

## **CONSULTATION & COORDINATION**

**MONTANA**

## CHAPTER 5: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

### Introduction

The Montana Statewide Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plans (RMPs) was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of specialists from the Miles City Field Office, Billings Field Office, and Montana State office of the BLM, the State of Montana, and the consulting firms of ALL Consulting and CH2M HILL under contract to the BLM.

Consultation, coordination, and public involvement have occurred throughout the process through scoping meetings, informal meetings, individual contacts, newspaper releases, and *Federal Register* notices.

Preparation of the document began in January 2001. Data used was from inventories conducted before that time, from information received from the public and other agencies, and knowledge of the resource area specialists.

### Public Participation

A public participation plan was prepared to provide management and team guidance for developing the RMP amendment and EIS, and to insure public involvement during the entire document preparation process. During the scoping of the plan, formal and informal public input was encouraged and sought after.

*Federal Register* notice was published on December 19, 2000, informing the public of the notice of intent to plan, and announcing the notice of availability for the planning criteria.

Several news releases were published in local papers. The releases announced the beginning of the plan, encouraged public involvement, and announced the availability of the planning criteria.

Brochures were mailed to more than 1,000 individuals, groups, and agencies in December 2000 notifying the public of the expected issues and upcoming public scoping meetings. A *Public Comment Summary and Recommendations Report* was prepared and made available electronically and in hardcopy in March 2001. This report summarizes the comments received from the public scoping meetings.

Public scoping meetings were conducted at five towns in the planning area with a total attendance of 329 people. Individual meetings were held with Crow and Northern Cheyenne Native American Tribes.

A total of 311 written communications with more than 2,100 comments were received after the public scoping meetings. Most of these written comments were a reiteration of the oral comments received at the public meetings. Oral and written comments covered the entire spectrum of issues, but the majority were concerned with resource management of water, lands, air and wildlife programs. The issues identified are summarized in Chapter 1, under the heading *Issues*. Records of public comments and concerns are on file in the Miles City Field Office.

### Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Threatened and Endangered Species

As required by Section 7 of the endangered Species Act of 1973, the BLM prepared and submitted a biological assessment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This document defined potential impacts to threatened and endangered species as a result of management actions proposed in this RMP Amendment and EIS. The final EIS will include the biological assessment and USFWS biological opinion.

### Consistency

The BLM's planning regulations require that resource management plans "be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource related plans, and the policies and programs contained therein, of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian tribes, so long as the guidance and resource management plans are also consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal laws, and regulations applicable to public lands..." (43 CFR 1610.3-2)

All Federal, state, and local agencies and Tribal councils have been requested to review this document for consistency with their plans and to inform the BLM of any inconsistencies with their plans.

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The Montana Governors clearinghouse will be supplied with copies of this draft document for review to ensure consistency with the state's plans.

Official Cooperators:

- Crow Tribe
- U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Distribution List

The BLM requested comments from industries, businesses, individuals, and special interest groups, federal, state, and local agencies and from Native American tribes. Information has been distributed to the organizations, agencies, and individuals listed.

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CHAPTER 5  
Consultation and Coordination

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## BLM Coordination Support and Review

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Division of Mineral Resources

Division of Administration

### State of Montana Team

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Department of Energy