



United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

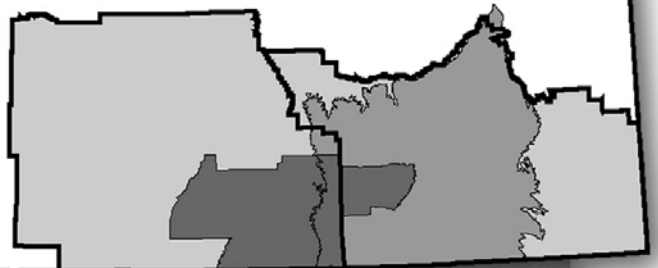
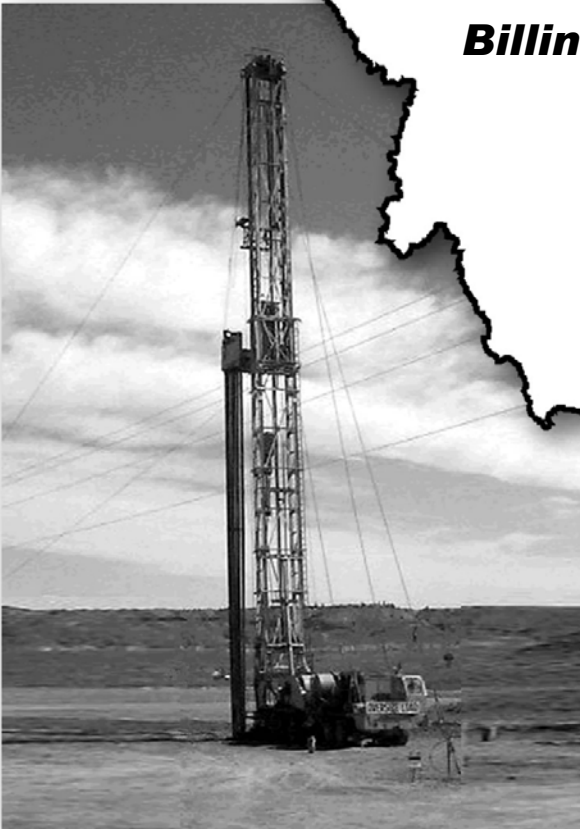
Miles City Field Office

Billings Field Office

April 2003

MONTANA

***Record of Decision for the Final
Statewide Oil and Gas Environmental
Impact Statement and Proposed
Amendment of the Powder River and
Billings Resource Management Plans***



Record of Decision

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM/MT/PL-03/011



In Reply To:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Miles City Field Office
111 Garryowen Road
Miles City, Montana 59301-0940
<http://www.mt.blm.gov/mcfo/>



Dear Reader:

This is a copy of the Record of Decision and approved resource management plan amendments for the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plans. The RMP amendments provide guidance for managing oil and gas activities on over three million BLM-administered oil and gas acres in the Powder River RMP area of the Miles City Field Office and the Billings RMP area of the Billings Field Office.

The Proposed RMP Amendments were analyzed in the *Montana Statewide Final Oil and Gas EIS and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings RMPs* published in January 2003. The EIS was prepared with the State of Montana (Department of Environmental Quality and the Board of Oil and Gas Conservation) as co-leads and with the following Cooperating Agencies: Environmental Protection Agency, Crow Tribe of Indians, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of Energy. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe also helped prepare the EIS. Copies of the Final EIS are available at local libraries at the BLM offices in Miles City and Billings and on the Miles City Field Office website: <http://www.mt.blm.gov/mcfo>.

Each of the co-leads will issue its own Record of Decision. The Montana Board of Oil and Gas Conservation issued its Record of Decision on March 26, 2003.

The BLM Record of Decision approves the amendments for the Powder River and Billings RMPs and updates the goals, objectives, management actions and conditions of use in the applicable land use plans.

The proposed RMP Amendments were subject to a 30-day protest period that ended on February 18, 2003. The protests were reviewed by the BLM Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning, in Washington DC. This Record of Decision includes information about the protests and BLM's findings. No significant changes to the proposed plan were made as a result of the protests.

The regulations in 43 CFR 1610.5-2 do not provide for any additional administrative review of this decision. However, implementation of this decision through future authorization of APDs, permits, and other actions, may be administratively reviewed at the time such authorizations are made. Such review will be conducted in accordance with regulations in 43 CFR 3165.3, 43 CFR 3165.4, and 43 CFR 4.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the development of the plan. If you have any questions about the Record of Decision, please contact BLM at (406)233-3649.

Sincerely,

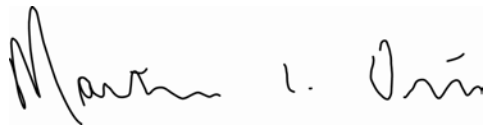
David McInay

Sandra S. Brooks

**RECORD OF DECISION
MONTANA STATEWIDE OIL AND GAS EIS
AND
AMENDMENT OF THE POWDER RIVER AND BILLINGS
RMPS**

Prepared by:
United States Department of the Interior
Miles City Field Office
Billings Field Office
April 2003

Deciding Official:



Martin C. Ott, State Director, Montana BLM

Date: April 30, 2003

Record of Decision

Montana Statewide Oil and Gas EIS

and

Amendment of the Powder River and Billings RMPs

Lead Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Miles City and Billings field offices

Type of Action: Administrative

Jurisdiction (Planning Area): Powder River RMP Area—Powder River, Carter, and Treasure counties and portions of Big Horn, Custer and Rosebud counties. Billings RMP Area—Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland, and Yellowstone counties and the remaining portion of Big Horn County. The BLM planning area comprises approximately 425,336 acres of BLM-administered surface and 662,066 acres of BLM-administered oil and gas estate in the Billings RMP area and approximately 1,080,675 acres of BLM-administered surface and 2,522,950 acres of BLM-administered oil and gas estate in the Powder River RMP area.

Abstract: The BLM with co-lead State of Montana analyzed alternative approaches for managing oil and gas, particularly coal bed methane (CBM) in the 2003 *Montana Statewide Final Oil and Gas EIS and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings RMPs*.

A 30-day protest period that ended February 18, 2003 resulted in 25 letters of protest from people with standing on the Plan. None of the protests resulted in a change to the preferred (now approved) alternative.

Alternative E is the Approved Alternative. The Approved Alternative provides a comprehensive framework for managing oil and gas resources on public lands in the planning area. This alternative amends the Resource Management Plans and allows coal bed methane exploration and development while minimizing impacts on environmental resources.

Further information regarding this Record of Decision is available from the contact below or at the BLM website (<http://www.mt.blm.gov/mcfo>).

Bureau of Land Management
Miles City Field Office
111 Garryowen Road
Miles City, MT 59301
Telephone: (406) 233-3649

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
AIRFA	American Indian Religious Freedom Act
AO	Authorized Officer
APD	Applications for Permit to Drill
APLIC	Avian Power Line Interaction Committee
BACT	Best Available Control Technologies
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practices
BO	Biological Opinion
CBM	coal bed methane
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DNRC	Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (Montana)
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy
EC	electrical conductivity
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FWS	Fish and Wildlife Service (USDI)
GIS	Geographic Information System
INC	Incidence of Compliance
LOP	Life-of-the-Project
MBOGC	Montana Board of Oil & Gas Conservation
MDEQ	Montana Department of Environmental Quality
MFWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPDES	Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
MRWA	Montana Riparian Wetland Association
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOC	Notice of Completion
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOS	Notice of Staking
NSO	No Surface Occupancy
POD	Plan of Development
PSD	Prevention of Significant Deterioration
RFD	Reasonably Foreseeable Development
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	right-of-way
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RMU	Regional Monitoring Units
SAR	Sodium Adsorption Ratio
SC	Species of Concern
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SMA	Special Management Area
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office
TEC	Threatened, endangered, candidate
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load

UIC	Underground Injection Control
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey (USDI)
WMP	Water Management Plans
WMPP	Wildlife Monitoring and Protection Plan
WSA	Wilderness Study Area