

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Eastern States, Jackson Field Office  
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Jackson, MS 39206

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## Alabama and Mississippi Resource Management Plan

### Mark Your Calendar

Please join us at an open house public meeting to provide comments on the Draft RMP-EIS. Each meeting will be conducted in an open house format. People may enter and leave at any time during scheduled hours.

Date	Location	Address	Time
Oct. 22	Birmingham Public Library	2100 Park Pl., Birmingham, AL	6:00 – 7:30 PM
Oct. 23	Adult Activity Center	260 Clubhouse Dr., Gulf Shores, AL	6:00 – 7:30 PM
Oct. 25	BLM Jackson Field Office	411 Briarwood Dr., Suite 404, Jackson, MS	6:00 – 7:30 PM

BLM staff will be available at each meeting to explain decisions under each Resource Management Plan alternative, impacts identified in the Environmental Impact Statement, next steps in the process, and answer any questions you may have on the Draft RMP/EIS.

You will be able to submit written comments at the meetings or via email at [jcomment@blm.gov](mailto:jcomment@blm.gov).

Visit our Website at [http://www.es.blm.gov/AL\\_MS\\_RMP](http://www.es.blm.gov/AL_MS_RMP)

Bureau of Land Management – Jackson Field Office

## Alabama and Mississippi Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement



### Draft RMP-EIS Now Available

The Alabama and Mississippi Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP-EIS) is now available for public review. The document was published on August 17, 2007, and initiated the 90-day public review period. Written comments on the Draft RMP/EIS will be accepted until November 15, 2007.

There are several ways to review the document:

- Download it from the project Website:  
[http://www.es.blm.gov/AL\\_MS\\_RMP](http://www.es.blm.gov/AL_MS_RMP)
- Call (601) 977-5400 or e-mail [gary\\_taylor@es.blm.gov](mailto:gary_taylor@es.blm.gov) to request a CD by mail
- Review the document at the following locations:
  - Bureau of Land Management  
Eastern States – Jackson Field Office  
411 Briarwood Drive, Suite 404  
Jackson, MS 39206
  - Bureau of Land Management  
Eastern States Office  
7450 Boston Boulevard  
Springfield, VA 22153

### You're Invited...

Open house public meetings on the Draft RMP-EIS are scheduled in October. The purpose of the open house meetings is to give the public an opportunity to discuss and comment on the Draft RMP-EIS. Written comments will also be accepted at the open house meetings. **See the back of this newsletter for details.**

Comments submitted to BLM on the Draft RMP-EIS will be fully evaluated and considered in the development of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. Through your participation in this effort, we can move forward together toward a common goal of improved management of public lands in Alabama and Mississippi.

### Contact Information

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### How to Submit Your Comments

BLM encourages the public to review and provide feedback on the Alabama and Mississippi Draft RMP EIS. Please submit comments on the Draft RMP-EIS before November 15, 2007, which ends the 90-day public review period.

Your comments are most useful when submitted in writing by any of the following methods:

- 1) Website: [http://www.es.blm.gov/AL\\_MS\\_RMP](http://www.es.blm.gov/AL_MS_RMP)
- 2) E-mail: [jcomment@blm.gov](mailto:jcomment@blm.gov)
- 3) Mail: Bureau of Land Management  
Jackson Field Office  
Attn: Alabama and Mississippi RMP-EIS  
411 Briarwood Drive, Suite 404  
Jackson, MS 39206

### Comments That Are Most Helpful

All comments received within the review period will be accepted. We particularly welcome comments that provide specific criteria and values that clearly relay concerns, issues, and suggestions for improving the RMP.

To learn more about the Resource Management Planning Process, visit our Website at [www.es.blm.gov/AL\\_MS\\_RMP](http://www.es.blm.gov/AL_MS_RMP)

# Summary of the Resource Management Plan Alternatives

Four alternatives are analyzed in detail, including the Preferred Alternative. The management prescriptions of the four alternatives described in Chapter 2 of the Draft RMP-EIS would guide management of BLM-administered lands (referred to as surface tracts) and non-U.S. Forest Service Federal mineral ownership (non-USFS FMO) in Alabama and Mississippi.

## Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative)

This alternative involves continuing the management activities that already occur in the planning area. BLM would retain all BLM-administered surface tracts. Potential impacts and mitigation would be identified and assessed when an application is made for an activity on a tract. All non-USFS FMO would be open to oil and gas leasing subject to the standard lease terms and conditions that are included on the lease form.

## Alternative 2

BLM would retain the BLM-administered surface tracts and investigate opportunities to manage the tracts in partnership with other agencies or organizations. Tract-specific constraints for resource uses, such as right-of-way (ROW) access, would be based on the presence of sensitive resources. In addition to standard terms and conditions, conservation measures would be applied as stipulations to oil and gas leases and best management practices (BMPs) would be used to reduce adverse effects caused surface-disturbing or disruptive activities associated with oil and gas operations on BLM-administered non-USFS FMO. Under this alternative, lease stipulations would include a 1,000-foot no surface occupancy (NSO) buffer from aquatic habitats and Alabama beach mouse habitat would not be available for lease.

## Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative)

All of the BLM-administered surface tracts would be available for disposal except the Hancock County tract in Mississippi. For some of the surface tracts, there would be conditions placed on the disposal that development and use of the tract would be consistent with the resource management objectives and allowable uses established for the tract. Until the surface tracts are disposed, management would apply tract-specific constraints for resource uses, such as ROW access, based on the presence of sensitive resources. Similar to Alternative 2, this alternative uses conservation measures that would be applied as lease stipulations and BMPs to reduce adverse effects caused by surface-disturbing or disruptive activities associated with oil and gas operations on BLM-administered non-USFS FMO.

The stipulations in Alternative 3 are different from Alternative 2 in two ways. First, Alabama beach mouse habitat would be available for lease, but subject to a NSO stipulation. Second, the buffer from aquatic habitats would be reduced to 250-feet.

## Alternative 4

All BLM-administered surface tracts would be made available for disposal from Federal ownership with no specific condition on use after disposal. Under this alternative, management of BLM-administered non-USFS FMO would be the same as Alternative 3.

## About the RMP

Until now, BLM resource management and public lands in the States of Alabama and Mississippi has been governed by project specific planning analyses and environmental assessments (EAs). However, preparing separate project-specific documents in response to external proposals has been inefficient and costly. Preparing project-specific planning analysis and EAs has delayed decision making to lease Federal minerals and approve land tenure adjustments. The Alabama and Mississippi RMP will provide the BLM Jackson Field Office with a comprehensive framework for managing BLM-administered land and minerals within these States. Completion of the RMP will meet the mandate of the Federal Land and Policy Management Act (FLPMA) that public lands be managed for multiple use and sustained yield under an approved RMP.

Within the two States combined, BLM administers approximately 333 acres of public land surface and mineral estate and 704,850 acres of Federal minerals where the surface estate is in non-Federal ownership. BLM also has responsibility for 126,570 acres of mineral estate where the surface is managed by other Federal agencies (excluding BLM and U.S. Forest Service [USFS]).

# Major Components of the Draft RMP-EIS



Chapter 2, *Alternatives*, and Chapter 4, *Environmental Consequences*, are the two major components of the Draft RMP-EIS. Chapter 2 describes the alternatives for the RMP, including the preferred alternative, that guide management of BLM-administered lands and non-USFS FMO in Alabama and Mississippi. The management alternatives evaluated in this Draft RMP-EIS were developed to meet resource condition objectives and minimize adverse impacts to cultural and natural resources while providing for compatible resource use and development opportunities consistent with current laws, regulations, and policies.

Chapter 4 of the Draft RMP-EIS analyzes potential environmental impacts that could occur from implementing each of the four RMP alternatives. Potential impacts considered include ecological, visual, historic, cultural, economic, and social impacts. The analysis focuses on impacts that could eventually result in on-the-ground changes by planning for uses on surface tracts and non-USFS FMO over the next 20-years.

## Public Involvement Next Steps

A critical component of the Alabama and Mississippi RMP planning effort is public involvement. A series of public meetings and a 90-day public comment period will allow the public to interact with the BLM staff and submit comments. The public meetings will be held in October 2007. More information is on the back of this newsletter. BLM encourages you to review the document, attend the public meetings, and provide meaningful comments.

Comments submitted to BLM on the Draft RMP-EIS will be fully evaluated. Responses will be prepared for substantive public comments that raise significant issues regarding the Draft RMP-EIS. The RMP-EIS will be based on issues and concerns raised from public comments. The resulting document will be the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. The Proposed RMP will guide BLM management for the next 20 years.



## Alabama and Mississippi RMP-EIS Process and Public Participation Components

