



RMP and EIS Process

Alabama and Mississippi Resource Management Plan

Jackson Field Office

The Jackson Field Office within BLM is responsible for preparing the RMP for Alabama and Mississippi. An RMP is a set of comprehensive long-range decisions concerning the use and management of resources administered by the BLM. The RMP—

- Provides an overview of goals, objectives, and needs associated with public lands management
- Resolves multiple-use conflicts or issues associated with those requirements that drive the preparation of the RMP.

The BLM land use (or RMP) planning process, explained in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1600, BLM 1601 Manual, and *BLM Land Use Planning Handbook* (H-1601-1), falls within the framework of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) environmental analysis and decision making process described in the Council on Environmental Quality regulations of 40 CFR 1500-1508, the Department of the Interior NEPA Manual (516 DM 1-7), and BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1.

MANDATES AND AUTHORITIES FOR PREPARATION OF THE ALABAMA AND MISSISSIPPI RMP EIS

BLM's land use planning process (as described in 43 CFR 1600) intertwines requirements from two important laws:

- **Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.** "The Secretary shall, with public involvement...develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land use plans." FLPMA sets the overall tone and policy concerning the management of BLM lands.
- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.** "Utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and environmental design arts in planning and in decision making which may have an effect on man's environment." Because the implementation of a new RMP could cause significant impacts, NEPA requires the analysis and disclosure of potential environmental impacts in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

CONSTRAINTS/CONSISTENCY REQUIREMENTS

BLM land use plans and amendments must be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans of Indian tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local governments to the extent practical. BLM land use plans must also be consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of FLPMA and other federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands (see 43 CFR 1610.3-2 (a)). If these other entities do not have officially approved or adopted resource-related plans, then BLM land use plans must, to the extent practical, be consistent with their officially approved and adopted resource-related policies and programs.



MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The process for developing an RMP/ EIS begins with identifying issues. Issues express concerns, conflicts, and problems with the existing management of public lands. Frequently, issues are based on how land uses affect resources. Some issues are concerned with how land uses can affect other land uses, or how the protection of resources affects land uses. The following preliminary planning issues for the Alabama and Mississippi RMP have been identified and are presented below:

- Land Ownership (Land Tracts) Issues
- Minerals Issues
- Special Management Areas Issues

The following resource elements will be addressed in the RMP EIS document as they pertain to the issue areas:

- Air, Soil, and Water
- Coastal Zone Management
- Cultural Resources
- Recreation and Visual Resources
- Socioeconomic
- Vegetation
- Wildlife Habitats and T&E Species

