

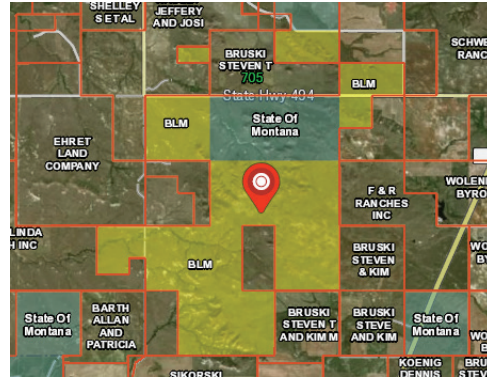
Protecting Recreational Access to BLM Public Lands



Important BLM Access Identified For Disposal

As required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, for the past forty years the BLM has included in its Resource Management Plans (RMPs) lists of lands identified for potential disposal. According to the criteria used by the agency, the BLM is not required to weigh public access considerations for outdoor recreation against considerations about a tract's location or other characteristics that make it "difficult and uneconomic to manage" (§ 2710.0-3(a)(3)). While most such parcels are small and inaccessible, making them good candidates for targeted disposal, numerous tracts important for recreational access have also been identified for potential sale. We request that DOI take several specific actions to ensure that BLM lands important for recreational access remain in public ownership. The following examples highlight specific considerations with this issue that should be addressed.

Miles City Field Office RMP (2015). More than 5,000 acres of BLM land adjacent to a state highway identified for Category 3 (disposal), potentially available for “all disposal methods, including sale.” This area of Montana is very popular for deer, antelope, and upland bird hunting, yet the BLM did not have to consider recreational access via public roads when making their disposal decisions.



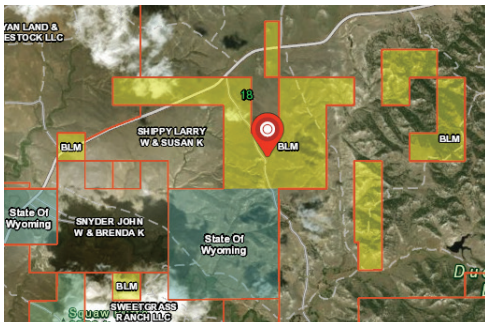
Pocatello Field Office RMP (2012). A Category 3 (disposal) tract along the Snake River in Idaho. The Snake River is extremely popular for anglers, and waterfowl and upland bird hunters. The BLM does not have to consider public access along waterways when identifying tracts for disposal.

Conveyance to the USFS Likely Not Considered

Missoula Field Office draft RMP preliminary alternatives (2018). These BLM tracts contiguous with the Helena National Forest are proposed for Category 3 (disposal). It would be most appropriate to consider conveying these lands to the USFS for management efficiency purposes. Category 2 (retention, limited disposal) would be the proper category for such transfers.



Effects on Access to Adjacent Lands Not a Consideration



Buffalo Field Office RMP (2015). This example shows publicly accessible BLM land identified for Category 3 disposal. Note that this parcel provides public access to a neighboring state section that would be lost if the BLM land was sold. Impacts from the disposal of one tract of land on access to adjacent areas of public lands (including state trust lands) are not a required consideration when lands are identified for Category 3 (disposal).