



BLM NEWS

New Mexico Oklahoma Texas Kansas

Bureau of Land Management
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BLM Announces New Date for Publication of Draft National Off-Highway Vehicle Strategy

The Bureau of Land Management announced today that it plans to publish its Draft National Off-Highway Vehicle Strategy on November 30 rather than this week, as originally scheduled. The Draft Strategy, which the Bureau is still developing, is aimed at ensuring environmentally sound Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on BLM-managed public lands.

The BLM is postponing publication of the Draft Strategy because it has not yet completed its work on the document, which will be available for a 30-day public comment period that will run from November 30 to January 2, 2001. The Draft Strategy, which will reflect extensive public input, is intended to recognize the interests of OHV users while protecting environmentally sensitive areas on the public lands. The strategy is also aimed at enabling the BLM to spend scarce funding resources on managing OHV use rather than on OHV-related litigation, protests, appeals, and Freedom of Information Act requests.

Henri Bisson, the BLM's Assistant Director for Planning and Renewable Resources, said, "The strategy under development will reflect substantial input from OHV user groups, environmental organizations, State and local agencies, and the general public." Bisson noted that the BLM received comments at 49 "listening" meetings that the Bureau held last summer on the OHV management issue; the agency also received an additional 4,904 written (both paper and electronic) comments.

The BLM will initially publish the Draft Strategy on the Internet (at www.blm.gov) and will then make printed copies available through its State and Field Offices in the West, as well as in Washington, D.C. After the conclusion of the 30-day public comment period, the Bureau plans to issue its final National OHV Strategy on the Internet on January 19, 2001, then mail out printed copies on January 24.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land – 264 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion and a workforce of some 9,000 full-time, permanent employees, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM preserves open space by managing the public lands for multiple uses, including outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, and mining, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources found on the public lands.

