



NEW MEXICO

BLM
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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News Release

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE, P.O. BOX 1449, SANTA FE, NM 87501

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BLM TO LOOK AT 2.2 MILLION ACRES FOR WILDERNESS IN NEW MEXICO

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today, (July 9, 1979), announced that it will conduct an intensive inventory for wilderness values on 2,241,769 acres of public land in New Mexico. This is 17% of the nearly 13 million acres managed by the BLM in the state. Some 10.7 million acres are being dropped from further wilderness consideration. Mining, oil and gas exploration and off-road vehicle use may continue in this area within present laws.

In March the BLM began a wilderness inventory as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Since then the BLM has held 25 meetings around New Mexico to gain public input into the process. Some 1200 comments were received from citizens interested in the wilderness question, both pro and con. These comments have been used in arriving at the acreage proposed for intensive inventory announced today.

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The 2,241,769 acres which will be inventoried are broken into 104 separate units. Most of these are in the southern part of the state. Dona Ana County contains the most acreage, 505,987 acres. Other counties and acreages are: McKinley, 30,300; Torrance, 1,000; Taos, 21,760; Sandoval, 69,090; San Juan, 43,240; San Miguel, 15,360; Rio Arriba, 20,600; Santa Fe, 8,960; Socorro, 286,965; Catron, 148,240; Valencia, 79,760; Luna, 111,750; Sierra, 24,965; Lincoln, 51,880; Otero, 135,775; Hidalgo, 378,650; Grant, 272,776; Chaves, 10,800; Eddy, 33,566.

The 10,718,665 acres being dropped from further consideration do not have wilderness characteristics or were already altered from a natural state by roads, powerlines, private land inholdings or other development.

The BLM expects to finish the intensive inventory by September 1980. This inventory will then be presented to the public for comments. The public may also participate in the inventory process.

In 1981 the BLM may make the first recommendations to the President on those areas which meet all of the criteria for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Congress will make the final determination.

Maps and other information on the wilderness program are available from BLM offices throughout the state and may be obtained from the BLM, P. O. Box 1449, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

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