

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Krijgsman, Recovery Permits Coordinator, Ecological Services, 303–236–4347 (phone), or permitsR6ES@fws.gov (email). Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, invite review and comment from the public and local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies on applications we have received for permits to conduct certain activities with endangered and threatened species under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and our regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations

(CFR) at 50 CFR part 17. Documents and other information submitted with the applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

Background

With some exceptions, the ESA prohibits take of listed species unless a Federal permit is issued that authorizes such take. The ESA’s definition of “take” includes hunting, shooting, harming, wounding, or killing, and also such activities as pursuing, harassing, trapping, capturing, or collecting.

A recovery permit issued by us under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA authorizes the permittee to take endangered or threatened species while engaging in activities that are conducted for scientific purposes that promote recovery of species or for enhancement of propagation or survival of species. These activities often include the capture and collection of species, which would result in prohibited take if a

permit were not issued. Our regulations implementing section 10(a)(1)(A) for these permits are found at 50 CFR 17.22 for endangered wildlife species, 50 CFR 17.32 for threatened wildlife species, 50 CFR 17.62 for endangered plant species, and 50 CFR 17.72 for threatened plant species.

Permit Applications Available for Review and Comment

The ESA requires that we invite public comment before issuing these permits. Accordingly, we invite local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies and the public to submit written data, views, or arguments with respect to these applications. The comments and recommendations that will be most useful and likely to influence agency decisions are those supported by quantitative information or studies. Proposed activities in the following permit requests are for the recovery and enhancement of propagation or survival of the species in the wild.

Permit No.	Applicant	Species	Location	Activity	Permit action
PER00191290	Eric Petterson, Glenwood Springs, Colorado.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southwestern willow flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>). 	Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah.	Play taped vocalizations for surveys.	New.
ES-704930	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lakewood, Colorado.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All federally listed plant and wildlife species occurring within the Mountain-Prairie Region. 	Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.	Purposeful take in the form of all activities that further the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s mission to conserve wildlife, plants, and the ecosystems upon which they depend.	Renew and amend.

Public Availability of Comments

Written comments we receive become part of the administrative record associated with this action. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public disclosure in their entirety.

Next Steps

If we decide to issue a permit to an applicant listed in this notice, we will publish a notice in the **Federal Register**.

Authority

We publish this notice under section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Thomas L. McDowell,

Division Manager, Ecological Services, Mountain-Prairie Region U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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BILLING CODE 4333–15–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

[GX23GB00UM20200; OMB Control Number 1028–New]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (Earth MRI) Competitive Cooperative Agreement Program With State Geological Surveys

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of information collection; request for comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), the Office of the Secretary will seek Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval of an emergency clearance for a new information collection.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before March 21, 2023.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and recommendations for the proposed emergency clearance for a new information collection should be sent to Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240; or by email to DOI-PRA@ios.doi.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number “1028–New EarthMRI” in the subject line of your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request additional information about this Information Collection Request (ICR), contact James Mosley by telephone at (703) 648–6312, or by email at jmosley@usgs.gov. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the PRA (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*) and 5 CFR 1320.8(d)(1), all information collections require approval. We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

As part of our continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burdens, we invite the public and other Federal agencies to comment on new, proposed, revised, and continuing collections of information. This helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public’s reporting burden. It also helps the public understand our information collection requirements and provide the requested data in the desired format.

We are especially interested in public comment addressing the following:

(1) Whether or not the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether or not the information will have practical utility;

(2) The accuracy of our estimate of the burden for this collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) How the agency might minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, *e.g.*, permitting electronic submission of response.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifiable information (PII) in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your PII—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your PII from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Abstract: Public Law 117–58, Section 40201, “*Earth Mapping Resources Initiative*” contained in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (November 15, 2021) authorizes and accelerates the mapping efforts of the Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (Earth MRI).

Earth MRI is a component of the Mineral Resources Program (MRP) and is a national effort to carry out the fundamental resources and mapping mission of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The goal of Earth MRI is to improve our knowledge of the geologic framework in the United States and to identify areas that may have the potential to contain critical-mineral resources. Enhancement of our domestic mineral supply will decrease the Nation’s reliance on foreign sources of minerals fundamental to national security and the economy.

Earth MRI was established in FY2019 in response to Executive Order 13817 (“A Federal Strategy to Ensure Secure and Reliable Supplies of Critical Minerals”) at a funding level of \$9,600,000 (subsequently increased to \$10,600,000 in FY2020). In FY2022, Earth MRI was authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act [otherwise known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)] which directs the USGS to accelerate efforts to carry out fundamental integrated topographic, geologic, geochemical, and geophysical mapping and provide interpretation of subsurface and above-ground (mine waste) critical-mineral resources data at a funding level of \$320,000,000 annually for five years (FY2022–FY2026). The BIL authorizes cooperative agreements with State geological surveys to support Earth MRI data-collection efforts and expands

Earth MRI’s scope by providing funding to initiate mine-waste research and assessment activities as a means to evaluate the potential for extraction of critical minerals from mine-waste materials. The data and expertise at State geological surveys is crucial to this new mine-waste critical-mineral resource mapping effort at a national scale.

The USGS developed a new competitive cooperative agreement program with the State geological surveys to support mine-waste activities authorized and funded by the BIL. State geological surveys apply for funds through an annual competitive process. The Earth MRI Mine Waste Cooperative Agreements support three goals of the USGS-Earth MRI effort: (1) building a national mine-waste inventory, (2) characterizing mine waste at sites across the nation, and (3) partnering with State geological surveys to plan Earth MRI data acquisition. Individual State projects can last for up to two years.

BIL Section 40201 stipulates that the USGS may enter into cooperative agreements with State geological surveys to accelerate the efforts of Earth MRI. Earth MRI has set the deadline to post a Notice of Funding Opportunity on [grants.gov](https://www.usgs.gov) as January 9, 2023 and a deadline for applications to submit proposals as 3 p.m. EDT March 6, 2023. The BIL requires the USGS to collect information necessary to ensure that cooperative-agreement funds authorized by this legislation are used in accordance with the BIL and Federal assistance requirements under 2 CFR 200. Information collected by Earth MRI as part of the consolidated workplan is described below. The USGS seeks OMB approval of an emergency clearance to collect this information to manage and monitor cooperative agreement awards and comply with the BIL.

Title of Collection: Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (Earth MRI) Competitive Cooperative Agreement Program with State Geological Surveys
OMB Control Number: 1028-New.
Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Request for emergency approval of a new information collection.

Respondents/Affected Public: 25.
Responses: 73 (25 applications, 32 total six-month progress reports, and 16 final technical reports.)

Total Burden Hours: 2,076 hours.
Respondent’s Obligation: Required to obtain or retain a benefit.

Frequency of Collection: On occasion.
Total Estimated Annual Nonhour Burden Cost: None.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, nor is a person required to

respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

The authority for this action is the PRA (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

Sarah J. Ryker,

Associate Director for Energy and Mineral Resources, U.S. Geological Survey.

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BILLING CODE 4338-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[L16100000.DP0000 LX.SS.E0900000]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the North Dakota Field Office

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a draft resource management plan (RMP) and draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the North Dakota Field Office and by this notice announces the opening of the comment period on the Draft RMP/EIS. This notice also announces the comment period on the BLM's proposed area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) within the RMP area.

DATES: This notice announces the opening of a 90-day comment period for the Draft RMP/EIS beginning with the date of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) publication of its Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft RMP/EIS in the **Federal Register**. The EPA usually publishes its NOAs on Fridays.

To afford the BLM the opportunity to consider comments in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, please ensure that the BLM receives your comments prior to the close of the 90-day public comment period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later.

In addition, this notice also announces the opening of a concurrent 60-day comment period for the ACEC proposed in the Draft RMP.

The BLM will hold a total of three public meetings. One meeting will be held virtually and two meetings will be held in-person. In-person meeting locations will be announced along with details of all meetings once they are known. In compliance with Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention public health guidelines, the BLM may need to hold public meetings in virtual format if county-level transmission of COVID-19 is "high" at the time of the public meetings. In that case, the BLM will hold three virtual public meetings.

In all cases, the dates and locations of meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, social media, newspapers, and the ePlanning website (see **ADDRESSES** section).

ADDRESSES: The Draft RMP/EIS is available for review on the BLM ePlanning project website at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/1505069/510>. The ePlanning website also includes background information on the North Dakota RMP revision.

Written comments related to the North Dakota Draft RMP/EIS may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- **Website:** <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/1505069/510>.
- **Mail:** North Dakota Field Office, Attention: North Dakota RMP/EIS, 99 23rd Ave. West, Suite A, Dickinson, ND 58601.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined online at the ePlanning project website and at the North Dakota Field Office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristine Braun, Planning and Environmental Coordinator for the Eastern Montana/Dakotas District, telephone (701) 227-7725; address North Dakota Field Office, 99 23rd Ave. West, Suite A, Dickinson, ND 58601; email kebraun@blm.gov. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services for contacting Mrs. Braun. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document provides notice that the BLM Montana/Dakotas State Director has prepared a Draft RMP/EIS, provides information announcing the opening of the comment period on the Draft RMP/EIS, and announces the comment period on the BLM's proposed ACEC. The planning area includes the entire state of North Dakota and encompasses approximately 58,500 acres of BLM-managed public land and 4.1 million acres of BLM-managed mineral estate.

Purpose and Need for the Planning Effort

The need for the North Dakota RMP revision is to address changes in resource conditions, shifting demands for resource uses, new technologies, new program and resource guidance and policies, and new scientific information since the development of the 1988 RMP. The purpose of this RMP revision is to develop management direction to guide future land management for BLM-managed lands and minerals in North Dakota. The BLM has identified four specific purposes to describe BLM's distinctive role in the North Dakota landscape: (1) Provide recreational opportunities and improve access to BLM-managed lands; (2) Contribute to the conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered and special status species; (3) Manage mineral and energy development on BLM-managed lands; and (4) Manage for other social and scientific values.

Alternatives Including the Preferred Alternative

The BLM has analyzed four alternatives in detail, including the no action alternative. Alternative A is the No Action Alternative, which is a continuation of current management direction in the existing 1988 North Dakota RMP and associated amendments.

Alternative B emphasizes sustaining the ecological integrity of habitats for all priority plant, wildlife, and fish species, while allowing appropriate development scenarios for allowable uses, including opportunities for mineral and energy development. Where Federal oil and gas is available for leasing, major stipulations would apply to most areas. Alternative B would designate one special recreation management area (SRMA), two backcountry conservation areas (BCAs), and one ACEC, and would find three eligible Wild and Scenic River segments suitable for designation.

Alternative B.1 is a sub-alternative to Alternative B that provides the same management opportunities and protections as found under Alternative B for all resources except for coal. Alternative B.1 further restricts Federal coal leasing to only those areas within existing Federal mine permit boundaries.

Alternative C is similar to Alternative B but provides for more flexibility in management of natural and cultural resources while providing modest development of resource uses. Alternative C provides opportunities for Federal mineral and energy