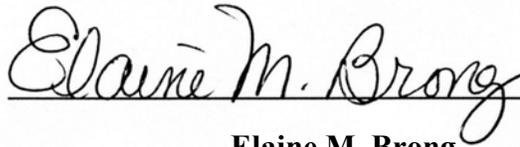


U. S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

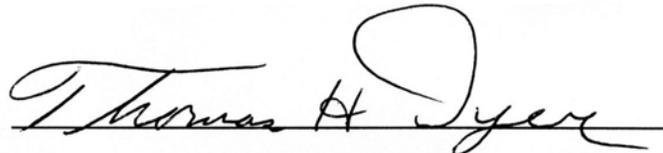
**Draft Andrews Management Unit/  
Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and  
Protection Area Resource Management Plan and  
Environmental Impact Statement**

Prepared by

**Burns District Office  
Burns District  
August 2003**



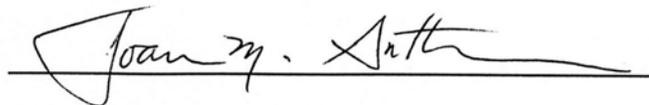
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Draft Andrews Management Unit/Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

1. Responsible Agency: United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

2. Draft (X)                      Final ( )

3. Administrative Action (X)                      Legislative Action ( )

4. Abstract: The Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000 created the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA). A management plan is in preparation for the CMPA and the surrounding Andrews Management Unit (AMU), collectively called the Planning Area. The Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the AMU/CMPA has identified five alternatives for managing approximately 1,649,470 acres of public lands, 1,221,314 acres of which are in the AMU and 428,156 acres in the CMPA, located primarily in Harney County, southeastern Oregon (Planning Area). Information provided by BLM personnel, other agencies and organizations, and the public have helped to develop the five alternatives described and analyzed in this Draft RMP/EIS. Alternative A is the continuation of present management. Alternative B minimizes human intervention in the ecosystem and minimizes commodity production. Alternative C emphasizes resource values and the functioning of natural systems. Alternative D, the agency preferred alternative, provides a balance with a high level of natural resource protection and improvement in ecological conditions while allowing commodity production. Alternative E emphasizes commodity production or extraction

Major RMP issues include the following: 1) management of the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area; 2) management of special designated areas; 3) management of riparian and wetland areas; 4) management of upland habitats; management of recreation in the Planning Area; 5) management of transportation in the CMPA; 6) and support for local tribes and communities.

The Draft RMP/EIS incorporates the scientific findings and assessments from the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project that are applicable to the Planning Area.

5. Date comments must be received: The close of the 90-day comment period will be announced in news releases, legal notices, individual mailings, and on the district planning web page ([www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning/Andrews\\_Steens\\_RMP/Andrews\\_Steens\\_RMP-EIS.html](http://www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning/Andrews_Steens_RMP/Andrews_Steens_RMP-EIS.html))

6. For further information contact:

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# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

1610 (020) N

September 30, 2003

Dear Interested Party:

You are invited to assist the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in a planning process that may be important to you and your interests. Enclosed for your review and comment is the Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for the Andrews Management Unit/Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (AMU/CMPA).

This planning effort has been undertaken to provide the Burns District with a comprehensive framework for managing the BLM-administered public land described in this document. The purpose is to plan for and manage public land use in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, consistent with the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield, and in accordance with the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000.

The Planning Area addressed in this document is located in southeastern Oregon and includes approximately 1,649,470 acres of public land, 1,221,314 acres of which are in the AMU and 428,156 acres in the CMPA. The Planning Area is located primarily in Harney County, but also includes 108,348 acres of public land in Malheur County.

Five management alternatives have been identified, described, and analyzed in this draft plan, each with a different emphasis and each addressing the planning issues. Public comment played an important role in shaping both the issues and the alternatives. Suggestions received (between February 2002 and June 2003) from private individuals, interest groups, other governmental entities, the Steens Mountain Advisory Council, cooperating agencies (including Harney County, cities of Burns and Hines, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Burns Paiute Tribe, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council) were thoroughly considered. These suggestions were utilized to seek a reasonable balance between the expressed desires of the public to emphasize the production of various commodity resources; to maintain the current flow of resources from public land; and to protect, maintain, and improve resource values. With these considerations in mind, the BLM has identified Alternative D as the agency's Preferred Alternative.

The end product of this planning process will be an RMP which will integrate resources and their uses into a multiple-use framework for management of the AMU/CMPA for approximately the next 20 years. The process will also result in an amendment to the Three Rivers Resource Area RMP for

that portion (53,436 acres) included in the CMPA. Your participation is essential to help guide the future management of public land.

Your review and comments are needed at this time to ensure that your concerns are adequately addressed in the planning process. A 90-day public comment period is being provided for review of this document. Public meetings will be held in Burns, Frenchglen, Bend, and Portland, Oregon, during the comment period. The comment period closing date and specific dates and locations of public meetings will be announced through the local media, newsletters, and the Burns District Planning Web site at [www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning/Andrews\\_Steens\\_RMP/Andrews\\_Steens\\_RMP-EIS.html](http://www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning/Andrews_Steens_RMP/Andrews_Steens_RMP-EIS.html).

Written comments should be sent to Gary Foulkes, RMP Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 28910 Hwy 20 West, Hines, Oregon 97738, or you may comment via the Burns District Planning Web site at the above address. All written comments will be fully considered and evaluated in the preparation of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. Additional copies of the document and other supporting records may be obtained by contacting Mr. Foulkes at the above address, or from the Web site.

Comments, including the names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Burns District Office during regular business hours 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the Final EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review, or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. Anonymous comments will not be considered. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

We would appreciate your review of this document and your help in this planning effort. We look forward to your continued interest and participation. For additional information or clarification regarding this document or the planning process, please contact Mr. Foulkes at (541) 573-4541.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karla Bird".

Karla Bird  
Andrews Resource Area Field Manager

Enclosure (as stated)

**DRAFT ANDREWS MANAGEMENT UNIT/  
 STEENS MOUNTAIN COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AND  
 PROTECTION AREA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND  
 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

*Reader note: Refer to the list below for abbreviations or acronyms that may be used in this document.*

<u>ACRONYM</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
ACECs	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
AML	Appropriate Management Level
AMP	Allotment Management Plan
AMS	Analysis of the Management Situation
AMU	Andrews Management Unit / The Planning Area outside of the Steens Mountain CMPA
Andrews RA	Andrews Resource Area
APHIS	Agricultural Plant and Animal Health Inspection Service
AUM	Animal Unit Month
BCB	Back Country Byway
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMPs	Best Management Practices
Burns DO	Burns District Office
CAA	Clean Air Act
CCD	Census County Divisions
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMPA	Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area
CWA	Clean Water Act
DEQ	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
DRC	Desired Range of Conditions
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERMA	Extensive Recreation Management Areas
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESI	Ecological Site Inventory
FAR	Functional At Risk
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FMP	Fire Management Plan
GIS	Geographic Information System
HMA	Herd Management Areas
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Codes
ICBEMP	Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project
ID Team	BLM interdisciplinary team
IMP	Steens Mountain CMPA Interim Management Policy
Andrews MFP	Andrews Management Framework Plan
MOAs	Memorandums of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEA	Northwest Economic Associates
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NSO	No surface occupancy
ODA	Oregon Department of Agriculture
ODF	Oregon Department of Forestry
ODFW	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
OHV	Off-highway vehicle
ONHP	Oregon Natural Heritage Database Program
ORV	Outstandingly Remarkable Values
OWRD	Oregon Water Resources Department
PFC	Proper functioning condition
PILT	Payment In Lieu of Taxes
Planning Area	The Entire Andrews Ra and the Portion of the Three Rivers Resource Area within the Steens Mountain CMPA
PNC	Potential Natural Community
PRIA	Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978

Protocol	USFS and BLM protocol for addressing CWA Section 303(d) listed waters (1998)
R&PP	Recreation & Public Purpose
RAC	Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council
RCA	Riparian Conservation Area
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RNA	Research Natural Area
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	right-of-way
RTR	Donner Und Blitzen Redband Trout Reserve
S&Gs	Standards and Guidelines
SBR	subbasin review
SEORMP	Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SMAC	Steens Mountain Advisory Council
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Areas
SRP	Special Recreation Permit
Steens Act	The Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000
Steens Loop	Steens Mountain Loop Road
T&E	Threatened and Endangered Species
Three Rivers RA	Three Rivers Resource Area
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Loads
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TNR	Temporary Nonrenewable
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDI	United States Department of Interior
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WIS	Wilderness Information Specialist
WJMA	Wildland Juniper Management Area
WQRP	Water Quality Restoration Plan
WSA IMP	Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review
WSAs	Wilderness Study Areas
WSR	Wild and Scenic River
WSR Act	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
WUI	Wildland urban interface
ybp	years before present

# Summary and Readers' Guide

## Introduction

The Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Andrews Management Unit/Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (AMU/CMPA) addresses options for future management of approximately 1,649,470 acres of public lands (Planning Area) (federal surface and federal mineral estate), 1,221,314 acres of which are in the AMU and 428,156 acres in the CMPA located primarily in Harney County, southeastern Oregon. This area of public land is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Burns District Office (DO). The RMP/EIS addresses a spectrum of major issues and analyzes five alternatives to resolve these issues. These alternatives represent different combinations of resource allocations proposed for future management of the Planning Area. The RMP/EIS amends the Three Rivers RMP.

After the 90-day public comment period on the Draft AMU/CMPA RMP/EIS closes, the BLM will analyze all comments and publish a Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The public will have an opportunity to review the proposed plan and to protest decisions believed adverse to their interests. After resolution of any protests, the Records of Decision (RODs) (one for the AMU and one for the CMPA) will be issued along with the approved plans.

The approved AMU/CMPA RMPs will replace the existing management framework plans that currently guide management in the Burns DO. Valid decisions and guidance contained in these plans are brought forward and will be incorporated into the approved plans. In addition, advances in resource management science, changes in laws, regulations, and public views will also be considered. Uses of public land, decisions, and directions will be identified for management of resources including vegetation; special status species; water resources and watershed; fish; wildlife and wildlife habitat; grazing management; wild horses; special designated areas; cultural and paleontological resources; social and economic values; fire management; wilderness; wilderness study areas (WSAs); recreation; off-highway vehicles (OHVs); energy and minerals; lands and realty; and transportation. Table S.1 has been prepared as a comparison summary of potential resource impacts by alternative. The reader needs to realize that this is only a summary and is not the complete analysis. The complete analysis can be found in Chapter 4.

In addition to the Maps published in this document, a CD is available to the public, by request, that includes various additional resource maps that were published in the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) or prepared as supplemental information for the RMP/EIS. These additional maps are also available on the BLM's website. A list of these maps can be found in the Table of Contents. The BLM contact information and website address are included in the Dear Reader letter that is included in this RMP/EIS.

The following is a brief overview of the document to assist in your review and help you better understand the planning process.

## Chapter 1

Chapter 1 identifies the purpose of and need for the plan, defines the Planning Area, and explains public participation in the planning process. This chapter identifies the planning criteria used as guidelines influencing all aspects of the process. These guidelines are based on law, regulation, and policy. Also included in this chapter is a description of the involvement of state, local, federal and tribal agencies, and governments. The issues developed through public participation and the planning process are listed along with the management considerations for resolving conflicts.

In addition, Chapter 1 also explains the relationship of this planning document to the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) supplemental EIS. The integrated scientific assessment, the supplemental Draft EIS, and the proposed ROD from ICBEMP and the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy were considered, and where applicable, incorporated throughout this document. The subbasin review process, which was identified by ICBEMP, is also explained in this chapter and in Appendix B.

## Chapter 2

Chapter 2 presents the various management strategies for achieving the desired range of conditions. This planning document identifies management for the 20-year life of the plan. However, the long-term vision for accomplishing objectives may be 50 years or longer and may not be completely achieved under any alternative during the life of the plan.

There is also an overview of the alternatives and a description of the theme of each alternative. Five alternatives are identified with different intensities of resource uses and management direction to resolve identified conflicts and achieve the desired range of conditions:

Alternative A – No action;

Alternative B – Minimal commodity production;  
Alternative C – Resource restoration and protection;  
Alternative D – (Agency Preferred Alternative) Balance between commodity production and resource protection; and  
Alternative E – Emphasize commodity production.

Table 2.1 presents a summary of the alternatives. The management goals, objectives and management actions to reach those goals and objectives are briefly described for each resource (issue) by alternative.

Each alternative is a complete land use plan that provides a framework for multiple use management of the full spectrum of resources present in the Planning Area. The resource management goals address the desired future conditions of the various resources; are based on law, regulation, and policy; and project the direction management would follow. Management goals and objectives are constant across all alternatives. Each alternative (except Alternative B) would meet the management goal(s) of the various resources; however, the means for meeting each goal, the rate at which they would be met, and the impacts to resources may differ among the alternatives.

The alternatives in this RMP/EIS are designed to provide general management guidance in most cases. Specific projects for a given area or resource will be detailed in future activity plans or site-specific proposals developed as part of interdisciplinary project planning or other means. These plans and processes address more precisely how a particular area or resource is to be managed and ensure compliance with the approved RMP's management direction. Additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and documentation would be conducted as needed.

## **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the Planning Area and describes the existing situation for each of the resource programs. It describes both the living and nonliving components that may be affected by the proposed actions. Other components of the environment that will not be affected by the proposed actions such as climate and physical characteristics are also described. Current management direction is briefly summarized for each program. Statistics such as acres, numbers, resource condition, and designations, etc., are presented in a number of tables. Applicable findings from the ICBEMP's integrated scientific assessment are also presented for the pertinent resources.

## **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 analyzes the effects of the management strategies (Chapter 2) on the existing condition (Chapter 3). A summary of this analysis is provided in Table S-1. There are several general assumptions listed at the beginning of the chapter that apply to all alternatives. Also, there are assumptions at the beginning of some specific resource programs to help guide the reader through the thought process.

Each resource program is analyzed by management goal and objective through each of the alternatives, followed by an overall comparison summary of resource effects across all the alternatives. At the end of the analysis of each resource program is a summary of the effects and a discussion of the cumulative effects of all actions across all alternatives. Effects analyzed include direct effects and indirect effects. Direct effects on a resource include those which would result from management actions proposed for that resource. Indirect effects on a resource include those which would result from actions proposed under a different resource.

## **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 summarizes key events in the consultation and coordination process prior to and during preparation of the Draft RMP/EIS. It also lists those agencies, organizations, and individuals who were contacted or provided input. Also listed are the specialists who prepared this plan, and the supporting technical specialists.

## **Chapter 6**

Chapter 6 contains the glossary and references cited in the document to assist the reader in the review process.

**Table S.1: Comparison Summary of Resource Impacts by Alternative**

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
<b>AIR QUALITY (Section 4.2)</b>				
Potential to emit between 350 and 700 tons of particulates per year from wildland fires. Additional amount of particulates emitted from prescribed fires. Emissions from mining would be proportional to the number of operations.	Emissions from mining operations would not occur. Emissions from prescribed fires would be less than Alternative A. Emissions from wildland fires would likely be somewhat greater than under Alternative A.	Emissions from prescribed and wildland fires would likely be greater than under Alternative A. Emissions from mining operations would not occur.	Emissions from prescribed and wildland fires would likely be somewhat greater than under Alternative A. Emissions from mining operations would be proportional to the number of operations.	Emissions from prescribed and wildland fires would likely be somewhat greater than under Alternative A. Emissions from mining operations would be proportional to the number of operations.
<b>WATER RESOURCES (Section 4.3)</b>				
Water resources would continue to be maintained or restored. Actions would be designed to increase bank stability and thermal buffering. Water quality improvements, restoration of riparian vegetation, and reduced erosion should result. Nonattainment of water temperature standards in current and potential future 303(d) listed water, as well as potential future listings associated to other water quality constituents, may continue.	Actions would maintain or improve attributes identified through assessments. RCAs would be designated for all streams on the 303(d) list. Water resources would improve over time. Short-term water quality effects, such as continued erosion or elevated stream temperatures, may occur.	Stream reaches or sites that provide cold water habitat in streams where temperature limits the distribution of aquatic species would be identified and protected. RCAs would be designated for all streams on the 303(d) list. Actions would initiate or increase the rate of progress toward an advanced ecological status. In disturbed or degraded areas, where natural rates of recovery may be slow, this action would increase vegetative cover and improve riparian community structure, reducing erosion and increasing shade.	Stream reaches or sites that provide cold water habitat in streams where temperature limits the abundance of aquatic species would be identified and protected. RCAs would be designated for all streams on the 303(d) list. Initiate or increase the rate of progress toward an advanced ecological status or other site/reach specific objectives.	Actions would maintain or improve attributes identified in PFC assessment, and management would consider ecologically significant cold water refuges. Riparian areas and adjacent uplands of 303(d) listed waterbodies would be managed according to site or reach management objectives.
<b>SOILS AND BIOLOGICAL SOIL CRUSTS (Section 4.4)</b>				
Actions would continue to reduce soil erosion. BMPs would be used to minimize effects caused by compaction from vehicle, recreation, livestock, or wild horse use; loss of soil offsite by water and wind erosion; and damage to biological soil crusts.	There are no direct effects.	There are no direct effects.	Effects on soils from increases in disturbances would be greater than Alternatives A, B, or C, and less than Alternative E. Management emphasis to rehabilitate soils and other resources would be greater than alternatives A, B, and E. An increase in new projects where activities disturb or compact soil crusts would cause an effect on soils.	More activities that affect soils would occur under this alternative. The greatest effect on biological soil crusts would be under this alternative to promote commodity uses, with its potential increase in grazing, mining, roads, OHVs, and recreation.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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**VEGETATION (Section 4.5)**

**Riparian and Wetlands (Section 4.5.1)**

<p>Actions would increase vegetation cover on uplands and reduce erosion into riparian/wetland areas. Areas would be maintained or progress toward attainment of PFC. Flooding events and other management activities would continue to degrade riparian resources and stream channels in those systems that are not in PFC. BMPs to protect and manage soil would be implemented. Sources of localized riparian shrub and tree (e.g., cottonwood and willow) material would continue to be established and maintained for restoration and to preserve genetics. Protection of rehabilitated riparian/wetland areas with fencing. Beaver expansion could result in reduced bank stability and shade, as well as subsequent increases in sediment input and water temperature, or it could result in riparian vegetation expansion.</p>	<p>Active restoration through planting riparian vegetation would be limited. Flooding events and other effects could continue to degrade riparian resources and stream channels in those systems that are not in PFC and that are not included in the priority areas identified for rehabilitation/restoration. BMPs to protect and manage soil would be implemented. Beaver populations would have same effects as Alternative A.</p>	<p>Improvements would occur throughout the Planning Area. Areas would be maintained or progress toward attainment of PFC and in some cases to an advanced ecological status. Flooding events and other effects would continue to degrade riparian resources and stream channels in the systems that are not in PFC. BMPs to protect and manage soil would be implemented. Actions would actively restore native vegetation communities. Possible short-term effects to riparian/wetland species diversity and plant community structure, also stream channel integrity and decreased erosion. Beaver populations would have the same effects as in Alternatives A and B plus promote expansion of riparian vegetation, improved streambank stability, and increased cover and habitat complexity.</p>	<p>Increasing vegetation cover on uplands and reducing erosion into riparian/wetland areas would be the same as Alternative A and C. Areas would be maintained or progress towards attainment of PFC, while meeting multiple resource objectives. Ground disturbances caused by increased commodity and recreation uses, flooding events, and other effects would continue to degrade riparian resources and stream channels in those systems that are not in PFC. BMPs to protect and manage soil would be implemented. Upland and riparian/wetland habitats would be restored. Competition with desirable nonnative species could affect riparian/wetland vegetation diversity and community structure. Beaver populations would be managed as in Alternative C but would be removed if there is economic harm or other effects.</p>	<p>Ground disturbances caused by increased commodity and recreational uses, flooding events, and other activities/alternatives would continue to degrade riparian resources and stream channels in those systems that are not currently in PFC, and those systems where recreational and grazing uses increase. BMPs to protect and manage soil would be implemented. Upland and riparian/wetland habitats would be restored. Competition with desirable nonnative species could affect riparian/wetland vegetation diversity and community structure. As in Alternative A, beaver populations would be allowed to expand naturally as habitat conditions indicate, unless suitable habitat is not available or economic harm is demonstrated, with the same effects. Effects of beaver removal same as Alternative D.</p>
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<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>Woodlands (Section 4.5.2)</b>				
<p>Tree density and cover would continue to increase, further reducing understory vegetation. A larger number of older trees would be lost due to the potential for larger fires. Removal of western juniper from lower elevation quaking aspen and mountain mahogany stands would release resources for quaking aspen and mountain mahogany growth. Limited suckering would occur following cutting. Seedling establishment of mountain mahogany would be encouraged. Falling of western juniper may damage quaking aspen and mountain mahogany plants. Herbaceous and other woody understory vegetation cover would increase following cutting. In the absence of fire, existing quaking aspen and mountain mahogany would continue to be out-competed by western juniper, and stand dominance would shift to juniper. Fencing of stands would protect new seedlings from grazing by large herbivores. Post-settlement western juniper would be decreased in riparian and sagebrush habitats. Following burning, tree cover would be reduced. Herbaceous plant productivity would increase in response to tree removal in the short term, but would decline as shrubs reestablished onsite. The presence of western juniper established prior to 1870 would be decreased in riparian and sagebrush habitats.</p>	<p>Post-settlement western juniper trees would continue to establish and grow in the old growth stands. Cover and density of western juniper would increase as the younger trees grow. Mortality rates of ancient trees would increase due to intraspecific competition. Acreage burned and number of ancient trees lost to fire would be greatest in this alternative. Increased tree cover and density of post-settlement trees would occur at the expense of the associated understory vegetation. Quaking aspen and mountain mahogany would decline at the lower elevation due to increases in western juniper. Associated understory plants would also decline in response to the increases in western juniper. Ongoing increases in the number of post-settlement western juniper in riparian and sagebrush habitats would continue.</p>	<p>Post-settlement western juniper trees would be cut in old growth stands, but up to ten percent of these trees would be left to replace dead and dying trees. Disturbance to soils and the associated understory plant community in this alternative would be lower than Alternatives A and E. Cover and density of understory plants would increase, reducing the size and extent of bare ground patches. Reduction in post-settlement western juniper would also help to reduce live fuel loading and the potential for stand-replacement fires in the old growth stands.</p> <p>Effects of Alternative C would be similar to Alternative A, with the following exceptions:  - All wildland fires would be evaluated for resource benefits.  - Wildfires that would not threaten firefighter or public safety and private property would be managed for resource benefits.</p> <p>Post-fire plant community would be similar to Alternative A. As shrubs increase, herbaceous plant cover and density would decrease. Effects of cutting of western juniper would be similar to Alternative A.</p>	<p>Effects of Alternative D would be similar to Alternative C with the following exceptions:  - Development of markets for byproducts of mechanical treatments would help boost the economy of Harney County.  - The amount of material generated from the old growth stands would be minimal, but could help to create jobs and increase economic activity.</p> <p>Effects of western juniper cutting and prescribed burning would be similar to Alternative A and the effects of utilizing wildfire for resource benefits would be similar to Alternative B. Utilization of cut western juniper would reduce the fuel loading in quaking aspen and mountain mahogany. The greatest number of acres of quaking aspen and mountain mahogany would be restored in this alternative. Effects of Alternative D would be similar to Alternative A and C; yet, a greater number of acres may be cut in Alternative D than C.</p>	<p>Effects of mechanical treatments in Alternative E would be the same as in Alternative A.</p> <p>Effects of fire management in Alternative E would be similar to Alternative C with the following exceptions:  - Areas burned in old growth stands would be seeded to plant species that maximize forage production.  - Effects of market development of byproducts from mechanical treatments would be the same as Alternative D.</p> <p>Effects of Alternative E would be similar to Alternative A with the following exceptions:  - Seeding of forage species following burning in quaking aspen stands would slow the recovery of native herbaceous and woody plants.  - No fencing following burning would also slow recovery.  - Wild and domestic larger herbivores would have ready access to the sites.  - Use of desirable forage species could help to defray some grazing on new quaking aspen and mountain mahogany shoots.</p> <p>Other effects would be the same as Alternatives A, C, and D.</p>

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>Wildland Juniper Management Area (Section 4.5.3)</b>				
Inventory of biological communities present in the WJMA would help provide information on past, current, and future management actions in the western juniper zone. Data would provide a baseline for future comparison. Signs would be placed adjacent to treatments to help display the type of treatment and the effects.	Effects would be similar to Alternative A.	Effects would be similar to Alternative A.	Effects would be similar to Alternative A.	Effects would be similar to Alternative A.
<b>Rangelands (Section 4.5.4)</b>				
Nonnative seedings would be managed or manipulated to meet S&Gs. Vegetation characteristics would probably be altered. Interseeding of only 200 acres would have no appreciable effect on vegetation in increasing the relative cover and biomass of herbaceous species.	Native species would colonize rangelands; weeds or desirable nonnative species could colonize and potentially dominate. Future sagebrush conditions would probably include a greater proportion of late-successional vegetation than exists at present.	20,000 acres of nonnative seedings would result in increases of native vegetation diversity and cover. Interseeding mix would result in competition with native species. Seeding 35,000 acres of deer winter range would increase the diversity of rangeland vegetation to a greater extent than any other alternative.	The results of seeding would be reduced in comparison with Alternative C, because only half the acreage would be treated (10,000 acres). Seeding 20,000 acres of deer winter range would similarly have smaller effects on vegetation as Alternative C.	Vegetation cover would be increased. Lower diversity of native species would occur due to competition with nonnative species and lower community and structural diversity.
<b>Noxious Weeds (Section 4.5.5)</b>				
Actions would eliminate the smaller, more easily eradicated infestations.	Actions would reduce the effects caused by noxious weed distribution. Priority to treat high quality resource lands for noxious weeds may allow for the establishment and spread of noxious weeds in other parts of the Planning Area. There will be no treatment to noxious weeds that do not respond positively to biological or mechanical methods.	Effects same as under Alternative B.	Actions would reduce effects on resource values from noxious weed infestations through cooperative management and information sharing. Control of the introduction and proliferation of noxious weeds would be emphasized on disturbed areas such as roads, ROWs, mineral materials sites, and recreation sites and in high quality natural resource areas. BMPs would be implemented to emphasize preventative measures to minimize weed spread.	Integrated management would be applied for the control of noxious weeds the same as Alternative D. The distribution of noxious weeds and the effects would be the same as under Alternative A.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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**FISH AND WILDLIFE (Section 4.6)**

Approximately 9,000 acres of deer winter range that are in unsatisfactory condition would be reseeded. This management action would contribute to increased habitat suitability for wildlife adapted to natural rangeland conditions. Opportunities would be identified for improvement and/or restoration of other fish and wildlife habitat. Forage for wildlife would be allocated at management objective levels.. Wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally or through limited transplants. Wildlife could establish populations outside their historic range. Transplants would be conducted by the ODFW in accordance with current species-specific management plans.	Aerial reseeded would be used for approximately 9,000 acres of deer winter range. Emphasis on sagebrush could improve winter forage conditions for deer and habitat dependent species. Opportunities would be identified and undertaken for improvement and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat. Forage would be allocated for wildlife above management levels. Wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally. Some wildlife species could establish populations outside their historic range.	Approximately 20,000 acres of nonnative seedings and all the native vegetation with low vegetative species diversity in deer winter range would be interseeded to establish native plant species. This action would improve forage productivity and availability. Wildlife habitat quality and quantity would be improved across a large expanse of the project area and could contribute to increases in populations of some wildlife species. Opportunities would be identified and undertaken to improve and/or restore fish and wildlife habitat. Additional types of projects compared to Alternatives A and B could include both active and passive methods and would provide more opportunities to improve habitat. Forage would be allocated for wildlife above management objective levels. Wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally or through limited transplants.	Approximately 10,000 acres or more of nonnative seedings and most of the native vegetation with low vegetative species diversity in deer winter range would be interseeded to establish native plant species. This would improve forage productivity and availability. Where sagebrush is successfully reestablished, suitable habitat for wildlife would improve. Opportunities for improvement and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat would be identified and implemented. Fences could potentially impede the movement of wildlife and cause mortality from entanglement. Continued compliance with BLM fencing requirements would reduce these effects. As with Alternative A, forage for wildlife would be allocated at management objective levels and wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally or through limited transplants.	5,000 acres of nonnative seedings and some native vegetation with low species diversity in deer winter range would be interseeded. This action would improve forage productivity and availability for wildlife. Minor effects to game species could occur. Effects of this management action are similar to those described for Alternative D. Opportunities to improve and restore fish and wildlife habitat would be identified and implemented. Improvements would also benefit livestock, and could thereby increase forage competition between wildlife and livestock. Forage for wildlife would be allocated at management objective levels and would be increased concurrent with improved range conditions and other improvements. Wildlife populations would be allowed to expand naturally or through limited transplants.
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**SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES (Section 4.7)**

<b>Special Status Plants (Section 4.7.1)</b>				
There are no effects associated with Alternative A.	This alternative could benefit special status plant species in the short term. In the long term, this alternative could potentially increase effects such as habitat degradation for special interest plant species.	Management emphasis to protect natural resources and cultural values would offer greater protection of special interest plant species and their habitats than would Alternatives A or B.	Management emphasis for the development of new projects that would cause more ground disturbance than Alternatives A, B, or C.	Management emphasis for commodity uses and the development of new projects that would cause more ground disturbance than Alternatives A, B, C or D.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>Special Status Animals (Section 4.7.2)</b>				
<p>Bat gates would be installed at the entrances to abandoned mines. This would protect bat colonies from disturbances. Sites most in need of structural improvement or most likely to increase habitat suitability for sagebrush dependent special status species would be targeted. This would result in better survival of fledglings. The need for habitat improvements, to create suitable habitat for reintroduced Columbia sharp-tailed grouse, mountain quail, and other species would be determined. Habitat improvements prior to reintroduction would increase the likelihood of establishing successful self-sustaining populations of these special status species. Transplants, reintroductions, and natural expansion of bighorn sheep populations would be allowed. These actions would maintain healthy viable herds of bighorn sheep populations. Poor quality habitat in historic bighorn sheep range would be improved. The ODFW would be authorized to trap bighorn sheep when they determine excess animals are available. This would protect the range from resource overuse. Development of water sources would increase the likelihood of viable bighorn becoming established in historic habitat.</p>	<p>Effects would be similar to Alternative A. However, sites where bat gates were installed would be withdrawn from mineral entry, minimizing additional disturbances. Natural processes would be allowed to determine future conditions of big sagebrush habitat except in areas of significant resource values. To the extent practicable, management would be in accordance with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines. This would result in better survival of fledglings. Reliance on passive methods could limit the ability to achieve the management goals. No habitat improvements would be conducted prior to reintroductions of Columbia sharp-tailed grouse, mountain quail, and other species. This would reduce the chances of establishing successful self-sustaining populations. Natural processes would be allowed to determine the natural range expansion of bighorn sheep populations. Bighorn numbers would be allowed to exceed management objectives. No additional introductions and/or transplants would be conducted into identified historic range. These actions could result in declines in herd health and viability. Up to five sites would be identified for construction of water sources in historic bighorn sheep habitat. Development of water sources would increase the likelihood of viable herds in historic habitat.</p>	<p>Effects of bat gate installation would be the same as those described for Alternative B. Big sagebrush habitat would be managed for the benefit of special status species to meet the DRC. Management would be in accordance with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines. The effects of this management action are similar to those described for Alternative A. The effects of the management actions on Columbia sharp-tailed grouse, mountain quail, and other species, are similar to those described for Alternative A. Transplants, reintroductions, and natural expansion of bighorn sheep would be allowed. The effects would be similar to those described for Alternative A. No habitat improvements in historic bighorn range would be conducted. This could reduce the likelihood of establishing viable herds in these transplant and reintroduction locations. Bighorn population numbers would be allowed to exceed management objectives. ODFW would be authorized to trap bighorn sheep if they determine that excess animals are available for removal. Effects of water development would be the same as those described in Alternative A.</p>	<p>Bat gates would be installed at the entrances of abandoned mines to protect known roost sites from disturbance by recreationists. Specific crucial sites would be considered for withdrawal from mineral entry. Management would be in accordance with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines. The effects of this management action are similar to Alternatives A. Big sagebrush habitat would be managed for the benefit of special status species to meet the DRC. Habitat management would be coordinated across agency boundaries, which would increase the likelihood of successfully accomplishing goals and objectives relating to sage-grouse and other special status species. The effects of the management actions on Columbia sharp-tailed grouse, mountain quail, and other species, are similar to those described for Alternative A. Management actions associated with bighorn sheep populations are the same as for Alternative A. Effects of these management actions are similar to those described for Alternative A. The management action to identify up to ten sites for construction of water sources or wildlife guzzlers in historic bighorn sheep habitat is the same as for Alternative A. Effects of this are similar to those described for Alternative A.</p>	<p>Effects of bat gate installation would be the same as those described for Alternative A. Big sagebrush would be reestablished where economically important special status species are present. Management would occur to the extent practicable with the Migratory Bird Executive Order and the Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines. The need for habitat improvements create suitable habitat for reintroduced Columbia sharp-tailed grouse, mountain quail, and other species would be determined. Implementation of any necessary habitat improvements prior to reintroductions would increase the likelihood of establishing successful, self-sustaining populations. Introductions would not occur in areas where economic effects are demonstrated. This could potentially limit the number of suitable locations for reintroductions. Management actions associated with bighorn sheep are the same as for Alternative A. Effects of these management actions are similar to those described for Alternative A. The management action to identify up to ten sites for construction of water sources or wildlife guzzlers in historic bighorn sheep habitat is the same as for Alternative A. Effects of this are similar to those described for Alternative A.</p>

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>Special Status Fish (Section 4.7.3)</b>				
Promote viable populations of special status fish, which may preclude future listings.	Except for critical habitat, natural processes would be allowed to define special status species habitat. Erosion may continue, and noxious weeds may spread, both of which lead to increased sedimentation and reduced available habitat. In other areas, natural processes should provide for maintenance or continued improvement of habitat conditions. The Borax Lake chub would likely be eligible for down-listing to "threatened" or delisted from the ESA as a result of permanent protection from threats identified in the Recovery Plan for the Borax Lake Chub.	As in Alternative A, special status species habitat would be managed for conservation and/or recovery, with the same effects. As in Alternative B, permanent protection of designated critical habitat for the Borax Lake chub would be pursued.	As in Alternative A, special status species habitat would be managed for conservation and/or recovery, with the same effects. Permanent protection of designated critical habitat for the Borax Lake chub would be pursued. This action would likely promote the protection of the Borax Lake chub and designated habitat in the event that TNC wished to dispose of the property.	Special status species habitat would be managed with an emphasis on game species. For most special status species, this would have the same effects as under Alternative A. Management for redband trout would also benefit the Malheur sculpin. This alternative may not provide the same level of conservation for Alvord chub. As in Alternative A, current management of designated critical habitat for the Borax Lake chub would continue, with the same effects.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>Redband Trout Reserve (Section 4.7.4)</b>				
The boundaries of the RTR would be delineated independent of this RMP through coordination between the BLM, ODFW and SMAC. Management for PFC would allow for ecological progression of riparian vegetation that would promote increased fish habitat values. The RTR would be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act, as appropriate. This may preclude some restoration activities for fish. The Page Springs gauging station weir may be removed, which may increase the ability of redband trout to migrate upstream and downstream. Complete removal may increase the opportunity for nonnative fish to migrate into the RTR, and increase the effects of competition and predation on redband trout and other native species.	The RTR would consist of public lands on the Donner und Blitzen River and its tributaries upstream of the confluence with Fish Creek to the longitudinal extent of current and future redband trout distribution. This alternative would include all potential habitat and potential populations, and would maximize conservation and protection for Donner und Blitzen redband trout. Riparian and aquatic habitats would be managed for an advanced ecological status, which may promote increased fish habitat values. The RTR would be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act, as appropriate. This may preclude some restoration activities. Removal or modification of the Page Springs gauging weir may occur. This action retains the option of no modification if analysis indicates greater benefit to the redband trout population.	As in Alternative B, the RTR would consist of public lands on the Donner und Blitzen River and its tributaries upstream of the confluence with Fish Creek to the longitudinal extent of current and future redband trout distribution. As in Alternative B, riparian and aquatic habitats would be managed for an advanced ecological status, with the same effects. The RTR would be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act, with the same effects. As in Alternative B, coordination would occur with appropriate entities on removal or modification of the Page Springs gauging weir, with the same effects.	As in Alternative B and C, the RTR would consist of public lands on the Donner und Blitzen River and its tributaries upstream of the confluence with Fish Creek to the longitudinal extent of current and future redband trout distribution, with the same effects. Riparian and aquatic habitats would be managed for a diversity of fish habitat values, and effects would be similar to Alternative C. The RTR would be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act, with the same effects. As in Alternative B and C, coordination would occur with appropriate entities on removal or modification of the Page Springs gauging weir, with the same effects.	The RTR would consist of public lands on the mainstem Donner und Blitzen upstream of the confluence with Fish Creek. Tributaries with known populations of redband trout would not be included. This alternative would potentially eliminate some redband trout populations or spawning areas from the RTR, potentially reducing the emphasis on assessment, protections, and conservation. As in Alternative D, riparian and aquatic habitats would be managed for a diversity of fish habitat values, with the same effects. The RTR would be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act, with the same effects. Activities and effects associated with Page Springs weir would be the same as Alternatives B, C, and D.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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**PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES (Section 4.8)**

Research would be focused on areas where conflicts with other resource uses occur. Protection of paleontological localities through law enforcement surveillance and other protective measures would occur. Onsite and off-site interpretive facilities could be constructed. Interpretation program could result in construction of road pull-outs, kiosks or sign bases, and placement of interpretive signs at various locations in the Planning Area.	Research would be limited in scope. Onsite interpretation and interpretive facilities construction would not be implemented, and only off-site, interpretative displays and other products would be created.	Research would be focused on areas where conflicts with other resource uses occur. Protection of paleontological localities through law enforcement surveillance and other protective measures would occur. Off-site interpretive facilities would be constructed and self-guided walking tour brochures would be created. Interpretation program could result in construction of road pull-outs, kiosks or sign bases and placement of interpretive signs at various locations in the Planning Area.	Research would be focused on areas where conflicts with other resource uses occur. Protection of paleontological localities through law enforcement surveillance and other protective measures would occur. Off-site interpretive facilities would be constructed and self-guided walking tour brochures would be created. Interpretation program could result in construction of road pull-outs, kiosks or sign bases and placement of interpretive signs at various locations in the Planning Area.	Research would be conducted in all known localities in the Planning Area. Protection of paleontological localities through law enforcement surveillance and other protective measures would occur. Onsite and off-site interpretive facilities would be constructed and self-guided walking tour brochures would be created. Interpretation program could result in construction of road pull-outs, kiosks or sign bases and placement of interpretive signs at various locations in the Planning Area.
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**CULTURAL RESOURCES (Section 4.9)**

Proactive inventories would occur at a rate of approximately 500 acres per year. Research would be focused on significant cultural sites where other resource conflicts occur. No physical protection measures would be implemented. Law enforcement surveillance and monitoring of certain significant sites and groups of sites within wildland fire areas would occur. Land acquisitions to bring significant sites into public ownership would be pursued. No land acquisitions would occur to bring significant sites into public ownership. Inventory, assessment, and preservation activities at historic sites would occur. Onsite and off-site interpretation could be implemented under this alternative, and could result in construction of road pull-outs, kiosks or sign bases, and placement of interpretive signs at various locations in the Planning Area.	Proactive inventories would occur at a rate of approximately 500 acres per year. This type of research would be implemented on a limited basis. No physical protection measures would be implemented. Law enforcement surveillance and monitoring of certain significant sites and groups of sites within wildland fire areas would occur. Land acquisitions to bring significant sites into public ownership would be pursued. Preservation activities at historic sites would not occur. Onsite interpretation and interpretive facilities construction would not be implemented under this alternative. Only off-site interpretive displays would be created.	Proactive inventories would occur at a rate of approximately 500 acres per year. Research would be focused on significant cultural sites where other resource conflicts occur. Physical protection measures would be implemented. Law enforcement surveillance and monitoring of certain significant sites and groups of sites within wildland fire areas would occur. Land acquisitions to bring significant sites into public ownership would be pursued. Inventory, assessment, and preservation activities at historic sites would occur. Onsite and off-site interpretation could be implemented. This type of interpretation could result in construction of road pull-outs, kiosks or sign bases and placement of interpretive signs at various locations in the Planning Area.	Proactive inventory would occur at a rate of approximately 500 acres per year. Research would be focused on significant cultural sites where other resource conflicts occur. Physical protection measures would be implemented. Law enforcement surveillance and monitoring of certain significant sites and groups of sites within wildland fire areas would occur. Land acquisitions to bring significant sites into public ownership would be pursued. Inventory, assessment, and preservation activities at historic sites would occur. On-site and off-site interpretation could be implemented under this alternative, and could result in construction of road pull-outs, kiosks or sign bases, and placement of interpretive signs at various locations in the Planning Area.	Proactive inventory would be increased under this alternative to support increased heritage tourism. Research would be increased at significant cultural sites in order to support increased heritage tourism; physical protection measures would be implemented. Law enforcement surveillance and monitoring of certain significant sites and groups of sites within wildland fire areas would occur. Land acquisitions to bring significant sites into public ownership would not be pursued in this alternative. Onsite and off-site interpretation would be increased under this alternative. This type of interpretation could result in construction of road pull-outs, kiosks or sign bases, and placement of interpretive signs at various locations in the Planning Area.
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<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONAL PRACTICES (Section 4.10)</b>				
The BLM would continue active consultation/coordination with the Burns Paiute Tribe and other tribes to identify traditional practice areas. Traditional Cultural Properties would be nominated or found eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and known burial sites would be monitored and protected. Plants of cultural, traditional and economic importance would be inventoried in cultural and botanical inventories. The Burns Paiute Tribe and other tribes would be consulted on vegetative management projects.	This alternative would be the same as Alternative A except the amount of active consultation/coordination and inventory could decrease because of decreased commodity use.	Effects same as Alternative A.	Effects same as Alternative A.	This is the same as Alternative A except the amount of active consultation/coordination and inventory would increase because of increased commodity use.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>VISUAL RESOURCES (Section 4.11)</b>				
<p>In the Planning Unit present management would continue to maintain existing MFP VRM classes in the Planning Area. This would include the following: 852,209 acres as VRM Class I; 239,362 acres as VRM Class II; 121,048 acres VRM Class III; and 436,851 acres VRM Class IV. All WSAs would be managed as VRM Class I. In the CMPA, the Steens Mountain Wilderness, all designated wild WSRs, and the Steens Mountain ACEC would also be managed as VRM Class I. The remainder of the CMPA, the AMU and the WJMA would be managed under existing MFP VRM Classes. In the AMU, the remainder of the CMPA, the AMU, and the WJMA would be managed under existing MFP VRM Classes.</p>	<p>In the Planning Unit, visual resources would be managed to allow natural processes to determine visual quality. All lands would be designated as VRM Class II (799,132 acres), except where VRM Class I (850,338 acres) is required by law, policy or regulation. The Steens Mountain Wilderness and all existing wild WSRs would be designated as VRM Class I. The WJMA and the remainder of the CMPA would be designated VRM Class II. In the AMU, all MFP VRM Class II areas would remain as VRM Class II but all remaining MFP VRM Class III and IV areas would be amended to VRM Class II. In the Planning Unit, CMPA, and AMU commodity uses such as mining, grazing, and other resource consumptive uses would not be allowed and the potential for effects to visual resources in comparison to all of the other alternatives would be reduced.</p>	<p>In the Planning Unit, existing MFP VRM classes would be amended as follows: 854,266 acres Class I; 248,944 acres Class II; 546,260 acres Class III; and zero acres for Class IV. The Steens Mountain Wilderness, all designated wild WSRs, and the Steens Mountain ACEC would be designated as VRM Class I. The WJMA and the remainder of the CMPA would be designated VRM Class III. In the AMU, all remaining MFP VRM Class IV areas would be designated as VRM Class III. MFP VRM Class II and III areas would keep those classifications.</p>	<p>Visual resources would be managed to improve natural values. Existing MFP VRM classes would be amended as follows: 851,214 acres Class I; 207,012 acres Class II; 214,488 acres Class III; and 375,756 acres Class IV. The Steens Mountain Wilderness and all designated wild WSRs would be designated as VRM Class I. All lands within 0.5 mile of the Steens Loop Road within the WJMA would be designated as VRM Class III. The remainder of the WJMA would be designated as VRM Class IV. All MFP VRM Class IV land in the CMPA would be designated as VRM Class III. MFP VRM Class II and III areas would remain the same. In the AMU, existing MFP VRM classes would be maintained.</p>	<p>Visual resources would be managed as determined in the MFP, as reinventoried, or as detailed in the following: 852,214 acres Class I; 28,880 Class II; 66,978 acres Class III; and 701,398 acres Class IV. The Steens Mountain Wilderness and all designated wild WSRs would be designated as VRM Class I. The WJMA would be designated as VRM Class IV. All other areas in the CMPA would retain existing MFP VRM classes. In the AMU, all remaining MFP VRM Class II and III areas would be designated as VRM Class IV, except the VRM Class II areas in the Trout Creek Mountains and around Denio Creek; these would remain as VRM Class II. MFP VRM Class IV areas would remain the same This alternative would be similar to Alternative A.</p>

<b>Alternative A -</b>	<b>Alternative B -</b>	<b>Alternative C -</b>	<b>Alternative D -</b>	<b>Alternative E -</b>
No action. Continues present management.	Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	Emphasizes protection of natural values.	Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	Emphasizes commodity production and public uses

<b>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES (Section 4.12)</b>				
Contracts for services and sale of products would continue to be available to local residents. Public and private partnerships to achieve shared economic objectives would also continue. Current management practices would continue for all resources and uses under Alternative A; therefore, no new or additional effects should result.	The effects to social and economic values associated with this alternative include the loss of revenues from mining, energy, agricultural production, and disposal of lands as well as a decline in revenues from recreation and tourism. Local contracts and employment could decline, resulting in indirect effects to the retail and service industries. Intrinsic and natural values would also be affected by this alternative. The increase in natural process values may offset any revenues lost from recreation and commodity production.	This alternative allows more uses than Alternative B and provides for stability in the local economy; nevertheless, it would still have some effects on commodity production, realty use authorizations, land tenure, renewable energy, and recreation, thereby resulting in a decline of revenues from these uses. As with Alternative B, intrinsic and natural values would be affected. The increase in these values may offset any revenues lost from recreation and commodity production.	This alternative is less restrictive on commodity uses than Alternatives B and C and would have more effects on the natural environment such as soils, vegetation, water resources, and wildlife than either Alternative B or C. The effects to commodity production, realty use authorizations, land tenure, renewable energy, and recreation would not be as great as Alternatives B and C and may favor the local economy. Intrinsic values would also be effected by this alternative.	This alternative is the least restrictive on commodity uses and would have more effects than any other alternative on the natural environment such as soils, vegetation, water resources, and wildlife. Effects on commodity production, land authorizations, land tenure, renewable energy, and recreation would not be as great as any of the other alternatives. Intrinsic values would be affected the most by this alternative.

<b>Alternative A -</b>	<b>Alternative B -</b>	<b>Alternative C -</b>	<b>Alternative D -</b>	<b>Alternative E -</b>
No action. Continues present management.	Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	Emphasizes protection of natural values.	Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	Emphasizes commodity production and public uses

<b>ENERGY AND MINERALS (Section 4.13)</b>				
Twenty-eight percent of the Planning Area would be open to mineral exploration and development. Two percent of the Planning Area would be open to mineral exploration and development that has high potential for hot springs gold and mercury. Less than 0.1 percent of the Planning Area that has high potential for locatable minerals would be open. Only 332 acres in the open area have high potential for leasable minerals, and they would be open to leasing with standard lease stipulations. Twenty-eight percent of the Planning Area would be open to consideration for saleable mineral materials development. Development may not be permitted where it conflicts with resource values, as determined by the BLM Authorized Officer.	Under this alternative, the entire Planning Area would be closed to mineral exploration and development except where required by law or where essential to protect human safety, such as road construction under critical or emergency conditions. Protection of natural values under this alternative places the maximum constraint or outright prohibition on renewable energy development.	Thirteen percent of the Planning Area would be open to locatable and leasable mineral exploration and development. Less than 0.5 percent of the Planning Area that has high potential for locatable minerals would be open. Only 43 acres in the Planning Area with high potential for leasable minerals would be open to leasing. They would be open with standard lease stipulations. Thirteen percent of the Planning Area would be open to consideration for saleable mineral materials removal. The result of this alternative would be to discourage exploration and development of energy and mineral resources.	Twenty-seven percent of the Planning Area would be open to locatable mineral exploration and development. 1.5 percent that has high potential for hot springs gold and mercury would be open; and less than 0.1 percent that has high potential for other locatable minerals would be open. Twenty-eight percent of the Planning Area would be open to leasable mineral exploration and development. Only 332 acres in the Planning Area with high potential for leasable minerals would be open, of which 281 acres would be open for leasing with seasonal or other special stipulations and 43 acres would be open to leasing with standard lease stipulations. Twenty-seven percent of the Planning Area would be open to consideration for saleable mineral materials removal. Development may not be permitted in the open area where it conflicts with resource values, as determined by the BLM Authorized Officer.	Minerals management would be conducted the same as under Alternative A and therefore, the effects would be the same.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>WILD HORSES AND BURROS (Section 4.14)</b>				
<p>The acreage of the existing HMAs would remain the same. Retaining the current HMA boundaries would result in two HMAs: the Kiger and South Steens. The Alvord-Tule Springs HMA would not be combined with the Coyote Lake HMA. The two HMAs would continue to be managed separately by the Burns and Vale Districts, respectively. The current AMLs would be retained for all HMAs. The number of acres of BLM land in the Kiger and South Steens HMAs was reduced due to land exchanges. Failure to consider adjustments of the AMLs in these two HMAs could result in resource damage such as excess forage utilization, which might then result in undesirable rangeland trends. Alternative A does not provide any management actions to adjust current AMLs other than those stated in the herd management plans. However, as conditions vary in the future, events such as drought might require temporary adjustments in horse numbers in order to meet other resource objectives. If vegetation management objectives are not met, permanent adjustments in AMLs might also be necessary. Wild horses would continue to be gathered every three to four years. Current public lands water sources would be maintained.</p>	<p>Combining the current 343,201 acre Alvord-Tule Springs HMA with the Coyote Lake HMA would result in the 588,420 acre newly-named Alvord-Tule Springs-Coyote Lake HMA. The HMA would then be managed as one unit by the BLM's Vale District. The Kiger HMA would be reduced from its current 38,359 acres to 26,873 acres. The South Steens HMA would be reduced from its current 127,838 acres to 102,342 acres. To maintain an administrative record of the historic location of horses in the Kiger HMA, a Kiger Herd Area would be created, depicting the loss of public lands resulting from the Steens land exchanges. The current AMLs and wild horse forage allocations would be retained in all HMAs. However, management actions would allow for consideration of permanent increases or decreases, thereby providing greater management flexibility in response to changing environmental conditions and modified HMA size. The effects of any adjustments in AMLs on gathering frequency would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. The decreased size of the Kiger and South Steens HMAs would warrant consideration of downward adjustments in the AMLs and forage allocations. Failure to do so could result in overgazing, a decline in range condition, poor horse health, and consequently, more frequent gathering.</p>	<p>The direct effects of Alternative C are the same as those described for Alternative B.</p>	<p>The effect of boundary and acreage adjustments are the same as for Alternative B, with the following exception: The South Steens HMA would be reduced in acreage from its current 127,838 acres to 126,732 acres. To maintain an administrative record of the historic location of horses in the Kiger HMA, a Kiger Herd Area would be created. The effects of all other management actions are the same as those described for Alternative B. However, the management emphasis on balanced uses and cooperative management practices means that wild horses would not be given preference over other uses for increasing forage allocations, and thus AMLs. Horses might need to be gathered more often in order to meet the objectives for other resources.</p>	<p>The effect of boundary and acreage adjustments are the same as those described for Alternative B, with the following exception: The South Steens HMA would be increased in acreage from its current 127,838 acres to 182,485 acres. The effects of all other management actions are the same as those described for Alternative B. Since management emphasizes commodity production, differences in preference mean that any excess forage could be allocated to livestock and/or economically important wildlife rather than to wild horses. Competition for available forage would be increased. Permanent adjustments in AMLs may be necessary; as more emphasis is placed on forage use by livestock. Management actions to acquire legal access to critical private water sources would not be conducted. Lack of guaranteed legal access to private water sources could make wild horses more susceptible to the effects of drought. If insufficient water is available during droughts, horses might need to be gathered more often. If horses are excluded from private water sources at some time in the future, herd health and long-term viability could decline.</p>

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
<p>Legal access to critical private water sources other than those identified in existing herd management plans would not be pursued. Horses currently use private water sources. If horses are excluded from these water sources in the future, herd health could decline and horses would probably need to be gathered more frequently.</p>	<p>Herd health as one of the measures to consider before initiating herd gathering would provide greater management flexibility than Alternative A. Besides gathering, other approved methods of population control would be allowed. If these additional methods are effective, the 20 percent average annual increase in herd numbers may decline, thereby increasing the interval of three to four years between gathers, and reducing stress to horses caused by gathering. The management action to develop additional water sources could allow for better health of horses during periods of drought, and distribute horse use, thereby reducing the likelihood of overgrazing. Legal access to critical private water sources would help to provide more stable water sources for wild horses. Gathering excess horses would continue, but the time period between gathering could be potentially increased. The option to modify the male/female sex ratio from 50:50 to 60:40 could increase the time between gathering due to a slower annual population growth rate. Allowing for the introduction of horses from outside the HMA could help to improve herd health by increasing genome diversity.</p>			

<b>Alternative A -</b>	<b>Alternative B -</b>	<b>Alternative C -</b>	<b>Alternative D -</b>	<b>Alternative E -</b>
No action. Continues present management.	Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	Emphasizes protection of natural values.	Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	Emphasizes commodity production and public uses

<b>GRAZING MANAGEMENT (Section 4.15)</b>				
The authorization of TNR grazing use during years of favorable growing conditions would provide additional forage for use by livestock.	Alternative B would discontinue grazing use in the AMU. Viable livestock grazing operations would be relatively unlikely in the areas of the CMPA where grazing would continue if grazing levels were reduced to "minimal". TNR grazing use would not be authorized. Livestock forage in nonnative seedings could become decadent and forage quality would deteriorate. Grazing use would not exceed the amount of permitted use in the CMPA.	Alternative C would reduce grazing use in the CMPA and AMU to "minimal sustainable," which is interpreted to mean at a level that allows livestock grazing operations to continue to be economically viable. TNR grazing use would not be authorized. Forage quality would decline in nonnative seedings. Grazing use would not exceed the amount of permitted use in the Planning Area.	The management actions under Alternative D relating to the application of livestock management practices, administrative solutions, rangeland projects, and relinquished permits would provide more flexibility in the use of available grazing resources than under Alternatives A, B, and C, and would therefore be expected to increase the utilization of available grazing resources.	This alternative would maximize the amount of livestock grazing on public land, creating more revenue from grazing fees and more income for grazing permittees. More range improvements would be constructed, creating more jobs for contractors.
<b>WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT (Section 4.16)</b>				
Suppression of all wildfires would maximize short-term public safety, protection of private lands, and areas with important resource values. Short-term firefighter safety would also be increased because initial attack would be given a priority in this alternative. Areas burned by wildfire would be minimized due to the aggressive suppression of wildfires. Long-term firefighter and public safety could be compromised because of the accumulation of fuels due to suppression. Wildfires that escape initial attack would have a greater potential to burn larger areas at high intensities.	This alternative places the lowest priority on fire suppression throughout the Planning Area. Firefighter and public safety would still be the number one priority for suppression. Only fires that directly threaten firefighter or public safety, private property or areas of significant resource values would be suppressed. Other fires would be evaluated for resource benefits and managed accordingly. Fire rehabilitation actions could be greater because of the reduced suppression activity and potentially larger fire size. However, these actions would rely primarily on passive methods where possible.	The direct effects of Alternative C would be the same as Alternative A in the wildland urban interface. Without mechanical fuels treatments or prescribed fire, fuels will continue to accumulate in the wildland urban interface. Fuels accumulation within this area would increase the risk to human life and private property. All fires within this zone would be suppressed with the appropriate management response. Direct effects of fire management activity outside of the wildland urban interface would be the same as alternative B. Only native plant species would be utilized in the rehabilitation efforts. The effects of using natives would be the same as Alternative B	Alternative D would exhibit a combination of effects from Alternatives A, B, C, and E. Firefighter and public safety would be the highest priority in fire management decision making. However, fire would be reintroduced into the ecosystem through prescribed fire and wildland fire use for resource benefit (prescribed natural fire). Fires that would not pose a significant risk to firefighter safety, public safety, or private land would be evaluated for wildland fire use. Rehabilitation projects would occur on sites with low potential for natural recovery. Cooperative projects would be developed with adjacent public and private landowners.	The effects of Alternative E are similar to those under Alternative A, except that a greater emphasis would be directed toward contract firefighting resources to support suppression actions and local economics.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
<p>Fuels treatments conducted under this alternative would treat only the highest priority areas where high threats exist to firefighter and/or public safety and private property. However, prescribed fire activity would reintroduce fire into the system, and overall acreage burned would increase over current levels. All areas burned by wildfire would be evaluated for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation. Native and desirable introduced plant species would be utilized in fire rehabilitation.</p>	<p>Fire rehabilitation actions could be greater because of the reduced suppression activity and potentially larger fire size. Fire rehabilitation efforts would be less cost effective than Alternative A, D, or E. Reliance on native plant species would increase the cost of rehabilitation treatments. The rate of recovery in areas where native seedings are used may be longer compared to desirable introduced perennial plants.</p>		<p>These projects would increase the efficiency of fuels treatments and work to treat fuels on a landscape scale instead of by geopolitical boundaries. Cost of fire suppression should be lowest in this alternative. The number of acres burned or converted to a herbaceous plant dominated community would be less than in Alternatives B and C, but more than in Alternative A.</p>	

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>LANDS AND REALTY (Section 4.17)</b>				
<p>Lands in Zone 1 containing important public values would be protected from disposal, but there would be no flexibility in this zone to exchange or sell public lands; therefore, opportunity and ability would be limited to acquire lands with high public values and to resolve long-term inadvertent and unauthorized uses, survey errors or hiatuses. Land sales and other disposals in Zone 3 would be considered only after the possibilities for exchange have been exhausted, further limiting disposal opportunity and expediency. Lands may be acquired in any zone on a case-by-case basis. This has the potential of wasting valuable acquisition funding and effort in areas containing little public land and resources because there is no focus or priority for acquisition. There would be a slight net loss of public lands in the Planning Area with a corresponding increase in county tax revenues. Overall, there would be opportunity for consolidation of both public and private lands through exchanges, sales, and acquisitions, although somewhat limited by the availability of disposal lands and inflexibility of this alternative.</p>	<p>Under this alternative, all public lands would be retained in federal ownership with emphasis on acquiring lands with natural values. All lands would be protected from commodity-producing activities likely to occur if conveyed out of public ownership. There would be no exchanges, thereby limiting the opportunity and ability to acquire lands with natural values. There would be a slight net gain of public lands in the Planning Area. Since all acquisition would be by purchase or donation with no disposal of public lands, there would be a net loss of county tax revenues from private land acquisition. Overall, there would be some consolidation of public lands by fee purchases but no such opportunity for private lands due to the prohibition on disposals and the inflexibility of this alternative. The entire Planning Area would be considered a ROW realty and renewable energy authorization exclusion area and no corridors would be designated. The most likely effect of this alternative would be an increase in unauthorized use and illegal activities because the public would be unable to utilize public lands through legal means. Without some level of control, these uses could potentially damage sensitive resource values.</p>	<p>All lands in Zone 1, 1A, and 1B would be retained in public ownership and would be protected from disposal, and thus, commodity-producing activities. There would be no flexibility in these zones to exchange or sell public lands, limiting the opportunity and ability to acquire lands with important natural values and to resolve long-term, inadvertent unauthorized uses, survey errors, or hiatuses, or to provide lands for community expansion and public purposes. Exchange of lands to resolve a trespass situation is allowable in Zones 2 and 3, but the exchange must serve to acquire lands with important natural values. These disposal opportunities may result in loss of some lands with natural or public values. Disposal of lands for community expansion or public purposes would be limited to Zones 2 and 3 because a disposal must be consistent with the appropriate land tenure zone. All disposal actions would be subject to site-specific inventory and screening for the existence of any special resource values which may have been unknown or overlooked at the time of the RMP development. These values would be considered in the final decision to dispose of the land.</p>	<p>Lands in Zone 1A would be protected from any form of disposal. There would be flexibility in Zone 1 to exchange public lands for a specific set of public resource values. In addition, exchanges that further the purposes and objectives of the Steens Act are allowable in Zone 1B. More lands are available for exchanges in Zone 2 and 3, providing additional opportunity for exchanges outside the CMPA. Sales and other disposals would be generally limited to Zone 3, but could be used in any zone except 1A to resolve long-term, inadvertent unauthorized use of public lands. This additional disposal capability may result in losses of some lands with natural or public values. The constraints of special resource values in Zone 1 and 1B are relaxed by the flexibility included in this alternative. Only in Zone 1A is a prohibition placed on any form of land disposal. Regardless of the zone, all disposal actions would be subject to site-specific inventory and screening for the existence of any special resource values which may have been unknown or overlooked at the time of the RMP development. These values would be considered in the final decision to dispose of the land. Generally, over the long term there would be no expected change in the ratio of public lands in the Planning Area. The effect on the county tax revenues is expected to increase because a balanced variety of disposals and acquisitions would occur.</p>	<p>Retention of lands is mandated only in Zone 1A, with maximum flexibility to exchange lands for commodity production being available in Zones 1, 1B, 2, and 3. Opportunity is maximized for disposal by sale or other means in Zone 3. Lands for public purposes would be available in Zones 1, 2, and 3. Lands for community expansion would be available by exchange, sale, or other means consistent with the land tenure zones. These disposal opportunities may result in the potential for loss of some lands with natural or public values, or conflicts with existing uses and values. Regardless of the zone, all disposal actions would be subject to site-specific inventory and screening for the existence of any special resource values, which may have been unknown or overlooked at the time of the RMP development. These values would be considered in the final decision to dispose of the land. Although relative acreages in Zones 1, 1A, and 1B would generally remain constant, there would be the potential for an overall net loss of public lands in the Planning Area due to liberalized disposal possibilities. A corresponding increase in county tax revenues could occur.</p>

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
<p>Special resource values included in an exchange or disposal zone (Zones 2 and 3) would be identified and considered during site-specific review of land tenure proposals. This alternative continues the designation of corridors on approximately 340 miles of public land. There would be no immediate effects to the continued designation of public land for ROW corridors. Specific effects would be analyzed when new projects are proposed. The long-term effects of corridor designation would be the centralizing of facilities, which would confine surface and visual disturbance, as well as other effects, to existing corridors and ROWs. Consideration of withdrawal actions, an airport lease at Fields, and other land use and ROW authorizations, including those necessary for renewable energy development would be handled on a case-by-case basis and deferred to a site-specific review and analysis upon receipt of definitive proposals. Implementation of this alternative would promote access for BLM lands, but efforts to secure public access would be limited. Under this alternative, little focus or direction is provided to proactively acquire access.</p>	<p>Disallowing leasing and reopening of the Fields airstrip may force aviators to land in unsafe, undeveloped areas, thereby causing new resource damage and creating safety hazards such as landings on public roads and highways. Since the entire Planning Area would be withdrawn, there would be no effects from mining, energy and minerals, military activities, and other commodity production. The primary thrust of this alternative on access would be to control and limit public access for the protection of natural values. Road construction to provide legal access around private lands would not be authorized; existing roads that provide public access would be closed. All unauthorized uses would be terminated and none would be authorized. No disposals would be made to accommodate any uses. Therefore, no flexibility would be provided for options to resolve situations. Facilities and structures would be removed, but otherwise restoration of lands would be by natural processes.</p>	<p>There would be a slight net gain of public lands in the Planning Area with a corresponding loss in county tax revenues, since private lands and values acquired would exceed the values of public lands being disposed. Overall, there would be some opportunity for consolidation of both public and private lands, which would be somewhat limited by the availability of disposal lands and inflexibility of this alternative. Corridor designations would be limited to those which have existing major power transmission lines and primary county roads and state and federal highways. Corridor designations on public land total 246 miles. Major facilities and projects would be required to be sited within corridors. In some situations this may require costly route changes in adjacent planning areas to bring the alignment of a facility in line with the designated corridor in the Planning Area. A large portion of the Planning Area, 995,037 acres, would be considered a ROW realty, and renewable energy exclusion area where a large variety of land uses, no matter what the effects, would be prohibited. If a valid application is received, the existing Fields airstrip would be leased and reopened for public use. The primary effect of this alternative would be that basic infrastructure and necessities such as residential roads and driveways, a rural airstrip, utility distribution service, filming and short-term storage sites would be allowable, while large scale projects outside of corridors would be limited.</p>	<p>Property tax revenues would be enhanced by disposal of public lands, some of which would be converted to commodity production such as seedings or alfalfa fields under private ownership, resulting in higher assessed values on those lands. Overall, there would be balanced opportunity for consolidation of both public and private lands while protecting, acquiring, and enhancing important public values. Proponents for all large scale ROW facilities would be encouraged to site their facilities in the corridor. A total of 870,912 acres would be designated a ROW, realty use authorization exclusion and avoidance area where realty or realty-related land uses would be prohibited or restricted. If a valid application is received, the existing Fields airstrip would be leased and reopened for public use. Approximately 20,367 acres are proposed for new withdrawals protecting only key special management areas which are not already withdrawn. Generally, the primary effect of this alternative would be that many ROWs, realty land uses, and renewable energy projects would be allowable and accepted in open areas while protecting sensitive resources and areas where they exist. Large scale projects and activities such as major transmission lines, energy development, and military maneuvers would be possible outside of corridors and avoidance and exclusion areas, but may be limited or restricted to some extent dependent upon location and nature of the proposal.</p>	<p>Further, tax revenues would be enhanced by disposal of public lands, some of which would be converted to commodity production such as seedings or alfalfa fields under private ownership, which should result in higher assessed values on those lands. Overall, there would be a high opportunity for land disposal, consolidation of private lands, and facilitating of commodity production. Lands containing public values could be lost and some areas of public lands could potentially be fragmented. Alternative E designates 354 miles of public lands as ROW corridors. Corridor designations are maximized in this alternative to provide a variety different route alternatives. Designated ROW, realty use and renewable energy exclusion/avoidance areas total 849,690 acres. If a valid application is received, the existing Fields airstrip would be leased and reopened for public use. There would be no new protective withdrawals. Other withdrawal actions would be geared toward opening lands for commodity-producing activities. Generally, the primary effect of this alternative would be that most ROWs, realty land uses, and renewable energy development would be allowable and accepted, while only the most critical sensitive resources and areas would be protected and in some cases affected by this type of development. Large scale projects and activities would not only be possible, but also encouraged outside of corridors, and avoidance and exclusion areas.</p>

<b>Alternative A -</b>	<b>Alternative B -</b>	<b>Alternative C -</b>	<b>Alternative D -</b>	<b>Alternative E -</b>
No action. Continues present management.	Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	Emphasizes protection of natural values.	Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	Emphasizes commodity production and public uses

**TRANSPORTATION AND ROADS (Section 4.18)**

Continuation of the current road use and maintenance levels and seasonal restrictions for the existing road system would have no new effects on maintenance or degree of access.	Road closures and decreased maintenance would reduce motorized access to public lands. Approximately 156 miles of closed routes are proposed under this alternative. Decreased road maintenance would result in lower maintenance costs.	Thirty miles of motorized routes would be closed, reducing motorized access to public lands. Road closures and decreased maintenance would result in decreased costs.	Seven miles of routes would be closed, reducing access to public lands. Expanded winter access for motorized uses and motorized access to dispersed campsites would also increase public access.	No route closures are proposed for this alternative. Increased access and road maintenance combined with less restrictive management could increase use of the road system as well as maintenance costs. Expanded winter access and motorized access to dispersed campsites would also increase use of the road system. Increased access, road maintenance, and commercial and recreation activities may cause effects to other resource programs.
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**OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES (OHVs) (Section 4.19)**

Maintaining the existing OHV designations and seasonal closure on the Steens would not affect current OHV and mechanized vehicle use in the Planning Area. In the CMPS, the current OHV designations, the result of the Steens Act, closed the Steens Mountain Wilderness to motorized and mechanized vehicle use. The Steens Act also prohibits the cross-country travel by motorized and mechanized vehicles. The Pueblo and Trout Creek Mountains would not formally be closed seasonally in the AMU.	The Planning Area would be designated as limited to designated roads and trails or closed. No areas would be designated as open or limited to existing roads and trails. No opportunities for OHV and mechanized vehicle play (open areas) would be available, organized events would not be allowed, and roads and trails available for use would be reduced. Closing WSAs and WSA cherrystem roads would further reduce the opportunities for OHV and mechanized vehicle use. Closing the Steens Mountain Loop Road would eliminate access to many roads used by OHVs and mechanized vehicles in the CMPA. In the AMU, closing the Alvord Desert playa would displace OHV and mechanized vehicle to suitable areas in adjacent states.	The Planning Area would be designated as limited to designated roads and trails or closed. No areas would be designated as open or limited to existing roads and trails. No opportunities for OHV and mechanized vehicle play (open areas) would be available, but most roads, ways, and trails would be available for use. Closing the Rooster Comb to motorized vehicles only would close the Steens Loop Road to through traffic. Closing other roads in the CMPA would reduce the routes available for OHV and mechanized vehicle use. In the AMU, closing the Alvord Desert playa would displace OHV and mechanized vehicle to suitable areas in adjacent states	Most of the Planning Area would be designated as limited to existing or designated roads, ways, and trails. One area would be designated as open, thus providing an opportunity for OHV and mechanized vehicle play. Most roads and trails would be available for use. Opportunities for OHV and mechanized vehicle use would generally be available. Closing seven miles of roads in the CMPA would not affect OHV and mechanized vehicle use, because these are mostly duplicate roads. Designating all areas in the AMU, except the WSAs, the Alvord Desert playa, and some ACECs, as limited to existing roads, ways, and trails, would increase the number of routes available for OHV and mechanized vehicle use.	Most of the Planning Area would be designated as open or limited to existing or designated roads, ways, and trails. Much of the AMU would be designated as open to OHV and mechanized vehicle use, thus providing extensive opportunities for OHV and mechanized vehicle play. Most roads and trails would also be available for use. OHV and mechanized vehicle use opportunities would be maximized. No additional roads in the CMPA would be closed, therefore OHV and mechanized vehicle use would not be affected. Seasonally closing the upper Steens Mountain area would also not affect motorized or mechanized use during the winter and spring, because the Steens Loop Road would be open to the snow line when road conditions are suitable. Designating the AMU WSAs as limited to existing ways and trails would increase routes available for OHV and mechanized vehicle use.
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<b>Alternative A -</b>	<b>Alternative B -</b>	<b>Alternative C -</b>	<b>Alternative D -</b>	<b>Alternative E -</b>
No action. Continues present management.	Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	Emphasizes protection of natural values.	Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	Emphasizes commodity production and public uses

**RECREATION (Section 4.20)**

<p>This alternative is based on current management and does not implement any measures to increase recreation opportunities, tourism, or visitation. Although this alternative would continue, most of the current management would not have any new or additional effects to recreation, since additional recreation opportunities or usage are limited.</p>	<p>The emphasis on natural processes and de-emphasis of management and facilities development would affect developed recreation opportunities and use. Dispersed recreation would also be affected; however, it may be either increased or decreased. Winter recreation would be affected, as no facilities would be developed and all snowmobile use would be eliminated within the CMPA. Recreational river use would be eliminated in the CMPA, which would have additional effects to recreation. SRPs would continue in the CMPA and would not lead to any new effects within the CMPA. No SRPs would be issued for the AMU, which would eliminate all opportunities for commercial, competitive, and organized group recreation outside of the CMPA. Eliminating the BCBs would limit potential tourism and visitation based on these designations. In addition, removing the High Desert Trail from maps and discontinuing management under the MOU would reduce use of this trail corridor.</p>	<p>The CMPA, Pueblo Mountains, and Trout Creek Mountains would be managed as SRMAs. Sites where recreation use is affecting resource values would be rehabilitated or closed. Both developed and dispersed recreation use would be affected by increasing some opportunities and limiting others. Existing developed sites, campgrounds, and facilities would be maintained. Group size limits would be implemented to protect natural values. All of these activities would continue or limit existing opportunities under Alternative A. Winter recreation would be affected by eliminating snowmobile use associated with the North Steens Loop Road. SRP management under this alternative would promote protection of natural and cultural values while minimally affecting the SRP operators. Management of and effects from BCBs would be the same as Alternative A. The High Desert Trail would be managed the same as under Alternative A; therefore, the effects would be the same.</p>	<p>The CMPA, the Pueblo Mountains, and Trout Creek Mountains would be managed as SRMAs. The emphasis on recreation opportunities and expansion of facilities would affect developed recreation. Dispersed recreation would also be affected; however, it may either increase or decrease. Winter recreation would be affected by developing a winter use staging area along the North Steens Loop Road, allowing snowmobile use on marked routes, and developing cooperative agreements with private landowners for winter play areas. Recreational river use would be the same as Alternative A and would have the same effects. SRP management under this alternative would promote protection of natural and cultural values while minimally affecting the SRP operators. Management of existing and creation of new BCBs would promote tourism and recreation. The High Desert Trail would be managed the same as under Alternative A; therefore, the effects would be the same.</p>	<p>The CMPA, Pueblo Mountains, and Trout Creek Mountains would be managed as SRMAs. The emphasis on developing tourism, recreation opportunities, and new facilities would affect both developed and dispersed recreation. Developed recreation would be promoted and increased while dispersed recreation may either increase or decrease. Winter recreation would be affected by developing cross-country ski trails, a nonmotorized winter play area, and by allowing snowmobile use on all designated roads within the CMPA. SRPs would be issued in the CMPA and the AMU; commercial, competitive, and organized group use opportunities would be emphasized, leading to increased use and effects. Management of existing and development of new BCBs would promote tourism and recreation. The High Desert Trail would be managed the same as under Alternative A; therefore, the effects would be the same.</p>
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**AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (Section 4.21)**

<p>No new ACECs would be designated and existing ones, totaling 132,112 acres, would be retained.</p>	<p>All existing ACEC designations would be revoked and one new ACEC, Mickey Hot Springs, would be designated for a total of 42 acres. Areas where ACEC designations were revoked would be the same as that applied across the Planning Area.</p>	<p>All existing ACECs would be retained and seven proposed ACECs would be designated for a total of 143,426 acres.</p>	<p>Twelve of the existing ACECs would be retained while the designation on three of the existing ACECs (Alvord Peak, Pickett Rim and Steens Mountain) would be revoked and five new ACECs would be designated for a total of 66,870 acres.</p>	<p>All existing ACEC designations would be revoked and one new ACEC, Mickey Hot Springs, would be designated for a total of 42 acres.</p>
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<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>WILDERNESS (Section 4.22)</b>				
<p>The entire Steens Mountain Wilderness would be managed as a single unit without monitoring areas. Management under this alternative would not restrict party size, dogs, human waste disposal, camping, or stock use. These activities and/or uses would affect the condition of the trails, campsites and surrounding areas, and affect wilderness characteristics such as naturalness and solitude. Present policy calls for no length-of-stay limitation which would result in increased visitation and use at any one time thus effecting solitude and causing additional primitive campsites to be created and used. Unrestricted visitation and use by dogs and stock could create conflicts with wildlife, cattle, other visitors, or other uses. Minimal maintenance of trails and closures of others may provide protection and restoration of natural resources within the wilderness; nevertheless this may also lead to trail damage and increased use and degradation of a few more popular or more visible trails. Campfires are not restricted under this alternative, which may increase wildland fire potential. There may be some unavoidable effects to naturalness or primitive recreational opportunities from weed eradication and fire suppression, but these activities would be temporary.</p>	<p>The Steens Mountain Wilderness would be classified into two monitoring areas; the Gorges and the Uplands. Management under this alternative would restrict party size (six people and nine head of stock); dogs would not be allowed; human waste would have to be packed out. These restrictions would lead to increased naturalness. No trail maintenance or reclamation would be implemented unless a threat is posed to life, property, or wilderness values. This may promote protection and rehabilitation of natural resources within the wilderness; nevertheless, little or no maintenance could lead to increased degradation of the trails and adjacent resources. Campfires would not be allowed, leading to an increase in naturalness and possibly decreasing wildland fire potential. There may be some unavoidable effects to naturalness or primitive recreational opportunities from weed eradication and fire suppression, but these activities would be temporary and would provide long-term protection of wilderness characteristics. Livestock grazing access in the wilderness would be limited because no mechanized or motorized equipment would be allowed for grazing operations. Also, no mechanized or motorized use would be allowed for inholder access. Although this may be a hardship on livestock operators, effects to the wilderness would trend toward an increase in naturalness.</p>	<p>The Steens Mountain Wilderness would be classified into two monitoring areas; the Gorges and the Uplands. Management under this alternative would restrict party size (nine people and 12 head of stock); dogs would be allowed but must be under control; catholes would be required for human waste; and toilet paper would have to be packed out. Minimal trail maintenance would be conducted on Little Blitzen, Big Indian, and Wildhorse Lake trails but no new trails would be constructed. Inappropriate user trails would be reclaimed as well as selected roads. Other closed roads would be left for use as informal stock and hiking routes. These activities would promote protection and rehabilitation of natural resources and wilderness values within the wilderness while providing greater access than Alternative B. Fire blankets, fire pans, or stoves would be required. These measures could decrease the potential for wildland fire and reduce effects to the wilderness associated with campfires. Effects to the wilderness from activities would be greater than those under Alternative B and may include additional disturbance to the wilderness, affecting wilderness characteristics such as solitude, naturalness and primitive recreational opportunities. Nevertheless, these activities would be temporary and would provide long-term protection of these wilderness characteristics while promoting natural processes.</p>	<p>The Steens Mountain Wilderness would be classified into two monitoring areas; the Gorges and the Uplands. Management under this alternative would restrict party size (12 people and 15 head of stock); dogs would be allowed but must be under control; catholes would be required for human waste; and toilet paper would have to be packed out. Minimal trail maintenance would be conducted on Little Blitzen, Big Indian, and Wildhorse Lake trails and new trails could possibly be constructed where appropriate as use increases. Selected closed roads would be reclaimed and others would be left for use as informal stock and hiking routes. These activities provide increased access over Alternatives A, B, and C; nevertheless, as maintenance increases, effects on the wilderness and to wilderness values would increase. The use of fire rings may decrease the potential for wildland fire. Effects to the wilderness from activities would be similar to Alternative C and greater than those under Alternative B. Disturbance to the wilderness and effects on wilderness characteristics such as solitude, naturalness and primitive recreational opportunities could be expected. Nevertheless, these activities would be temporary and would provide long-term protection of these wilderness characteristics while promoting a balance between resource protection and use. Livestock grazing access would have the same effects as Alternative A.</p>	<p>The entire Steens Mountain Wilderness would be managed as a single unit without monitoring areas. Management under this alternative would not restrict or limit party size and would not restrict dogs, human waste disposal, camping, or stock use. These activities and/or uses would affect the condition of the trails, campsites, and surrounding areas. Wilderness characteristics such as naturalness and solitude would also be affected. Minimal trail maintenance would be conducted on Little Blitzen, Big Indian, and Wildhorse Lake trails and new trails would be constructed where appropriate as use increases. Selected closed roads would be reclaimed and others would be left for use as informal stock and hiking routes. These activities provide increased access over Alternatives A, B, and C; nevertheless, as maintenance and construction increase, effects on the wilderness and to wilderness values increase. Campfires would be allowed and the use of existing campfires would be encouraged. The use of fire rings may increase the potential for wildland fire. This alternative would have the greatest effects on the Steens Mountain Wilderness and wilderness values of all the alternatives. Wilderness degradation, decreased solitude, naturalness and primitive experiences would result. Effects to the wilderness from activities would be greater than under all of the other alternatives.</p>

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
<p>Livestock permittee grazing access would be managed in keeping with the Motorized Access for Grazing Operations in Wilderness EA and Decision Record. New proposals would be considered for commercial services (e.g., outfitters), which could lead to increased use of the wilderness and affect trail and campsite conditions as well as solitude and naturalness. Inholder access would be managed in accordance with the decision record of the Access for Inholdings in the Steens Mountain Wilderness EA/Decision Record.</p>	<p>No commercial services (e.g., outfitters), would be allowed under this alternative, which would limit certain types of access and use. It would also decrease wilderness visitation and affect trail and campsite conditions as well as solitude and naturalness.</p>	<p>In the long term, wilderness values and the wilderness experience may be enhanced by management under this alternative. Livestock permittee grazing access would have the same effects as Alternative A. Opportunities for access and use would be greater than under Alternative B but less than the other alternatives, which would consider new proposals. This alternative would protect resources and wilderness values and promote natural processes while allowing continued use and access. Inholder access would have the same effects as Alternative A.</p>	<p>Opportunities for access and use would be greater than under Alternatives B and C, but less than Alternative A. Inholder access would have the same effects as Alternative A.</p>	<p>Permanent effects from increased facilities and access would affect the use levels and thus the characteristics of solitude, primitive recreational opportunities and naturalness. There may also be some unavoidable effects to naturalness or primitive recreational opportunities from weed eradication and fire suppression, but these activities would be temporary and would provide long-term protection of these wilderness characteristics. Motorized or mechanized use would be allowed at historic levels for livestock permittee grazing access. The level of use allowed to occur under this alternative would be the greatest of the alternatives, and may include resource degradation, and decreases in solitude, naturalness, primitive recreational opportunities, and conflicts with other uses. Motorized or mechanized use would be allowed at historic or higher levels for inholder access. The level of use allowed to occur under this alternative would be the greatest of the alternatives and may include resource degradation, and decreases in solitude, naturalness, primitive recreational opportunities, and conflicts with other uses.</p>

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS (Section 4.23)</b>				
The current WSA designations and management under the WSA IMP and the Steens Act would continue, and this alternative would not result in any new or additional effects to the existing WSAs. The acquired parcels in the Mahogany Ridge and Bridge Creek WSAs would not be incorporated into those WSAs; therefore, wilderness values in these parcels could potentially be impaired because they would not be afforded the same level of protection as the existing WSAs.	Three parcels within the Mahogany Ridge WSA (totaling approximately 318 acres) acquired through a land exchange would become part of that WSA. In addition, a 40-acre parcel adjacent to the Bridge Creek WSA would become part of that WSA. Adding these parcels to the existing WSAs would protect the wilderness characteristics and values in these areas.	Effects from this alternative would be the same as Alternative B.	Effects from this alternative would be the same as Alternative B.	Effects from this alternative would be the same as Alternative B.

<b>Alternative A -</b> No action. Continues present management.	<b>Alternative B -</b> Excludes commodity production and limits other uses; maximizes natural processes.	<b>Alternative C -</b> Emphasizes protection of natural values.	<b>Alternative D -</b> Balances cultural, economic, ecological and social health in a manner that encourages cooperative management practices.	<b>Alternative E -</b> Emphasizes commodity production and public uses
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<b>WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS (Section 4.24)</b>				
All rivers currently eligible for inclusion in the WSR system would continue to be managed conformance with BLM Manual 8351 for protective management of eligible WSRs. The identified ORVs for each eligible river shall be afforded adequate protection, subject to valid existing rights, and until the eligibility determination is superseded, management activities and authorized uses shall not be allowed to adversely affect either eligibility or the tentative classification. This may include restrictions on grazing management, recreational use, and mineral or energy development.	No eligible rivers would be recommended as administratively suitable for potential designation as WSRs by Congress. These rivers would be managed in accordance with RMP management objectives instead of in conformance with BLM Manual 8351 for protective management of eligible WSRs. Most eligible rivers are at least partially within the CMPA and the No Livestock Grazing Area, the mineral withdrawal area, the Steens Mountain Wilderness or WSAs. Also, several of the rivers have been listed on the 303(d) list for summer water temperature, and will be subject to water quality restoration plans. These management requirements will provide additional protection for ORVs, especially those associated with riparian and upland vegetation or fish and wildlife habitat.	All eligible rivers would be recommended as administratively suitable for potential designation as WSRs by Congress. All rivers found suitable for inclusion in the WSR system would be managed in conformance with BLM Manual 8351 as if it was a designated wild and scenic river until Congress acts on whether or not to add these rivers into the National WSR system. All suitable rivers shall be administered in such a manner as to protect and enhance their ORVs. This may include restrictions on grazing management, recreational use, and mineral or energy development within the river corridor boundary.	A recommendation to Congress would be made to reclassify the Riddle Brothers Ranch Historic District and the Page Springs and Jackman Park campgrounds from wild to recreational, and change the classification of the Blitzen Crossing to scenic. Changing the classification would be unlikely to affect ORVs identified for the Donner und Blitzen River. These are also either within Steens Mountain Wilderness or WSAs and are in the No Livestock Grazing Area, which would restrict or curtail activities that could affect ORVs in these areas. All of the streams listed in these areas are on the 303(d) list for summer water temperature. WQRPs will be developed, promoting protection of ORVs associated with riparian and upland vegetation, and fish and wildlife habitat. As in Alternative B, no eligible rivers would be recommended as administratively suitable for potential designation as WSRs by Congress, with the same effects.	As in Alternative D, the wild classification of the Riddle Brothers Ranch Historic District, and the Page Springs and Jackman Park campgrounds would be recommended to Congress to be changed to recreational, and the Blitzen Crossing changed to scenic, with the same effects. As in Alternatives B and D, no eligible rivers would be recommended as administratively suitable for potential designation as WSRs by Congress, with the same effects.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Oregon Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Burns District office, manages 3,275,694 acres of public lands located primarily in Harney County, Southeastern Oregon (Map 1.1). The Burns District BLM is divided into two resource areas: the Andrews Resource Area (Andrews RA) and the Three Rivers Resource Area (Three Rivers RA).

## 1.1 Purpose of and Need for Action

Resource management of the public lands within the Andrews RA is currently directed by the Andrews Management Framework Plan (Andrews MFP), which was completed in 1982 (United States Department of the Interior [USDI] 1982a). As used in this document, public lands are defined as “those lands administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the BLM.” As a result of recent legislation, changes in BLM management policies and regulations, and demands on resources, the Andrews MFP no longer provides the adequate and comprehensive planning direction needed for resource management within the Andrews RA. The Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-399) (Steens Act) (Appendix A) established the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA). The CMPA encompasses 496,136 acres primarily within the Andrews RA and a small portion (53,436 acres) within the Three Rivers RA. The remaining portion of the Andrews RA outside of the CMPA is identified as the Andrews Management Unit (AMU). Special areas created within the CMPA include the Wildland Juniper Management Area (WJMA), the Steens Mountain Wilderness (which contains a No Livestock Grazing Area), new Wild and Scenic River (WSR) designations, and the Redband Trout Reserve (RTR). In addition, the Steens Act authorized five specific land exchanges, created a citizen’s advisory council (Steens Mountain Advisory Council [SMAC]), authorized establishment of a science advisory committee, and established a Mineral Withdrawal Area. Congress recognized that the CMPA provides for exceptional cooperative management opportunities and offers outstanding natural, cultural, scenic, wilderness, and recreational resources. To ensure that these resources are appropriately managed, the Steens Act mandated the Burns District BLM prepare a management plan for the CMPA by October 30, 2004.

In 1995, preparation of the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan (SEORMP) was initiated by the Vale and Burns Districts of the BLM. The SEORMP initially included the Andrews RA. However, as a result of the Steens Act, the Burns District of the BLM determined it appropriate to separate the Andrews RA from the SEORMP and develop a separate plan in order to address changes in land management resulting from mandates of the Steens Act. The AMU/CMPA Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) will provide the BLM with a comprehensive framework for managing public lands within the Andrews RA and the CMPA (Map 1.2). Completion of the RMP/EIS will meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), which mandates public land be managed for multiple use and sustained yield under an approved RMP. In addition, the Steens Act requires that “within 4 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop a comprehensive plan for the long-range protection and management of the Federal lands included in the Cooperative Management and Protection Area, including the Wilderness Area” (111(b)). A primary goal of this plan is to develop management practices that promote long-term sustainability of a healthy and productive landscape. An RMP contains a set of comprehensive long-range decisions concerning the use and management of resources administered by the BLM. In general, the RMP does two things: (1) provides an overview of goals, objectives, and needs associated with public lands management and (2) resolves multiple use conflicts or issues that drive the preparation of the RMP. In addition, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared to analyze the alternatives proposed in the RMP as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

This RMP/EIS also considers and, where appropriate, incorporates the science and findings derived from the assessments of the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) and the Interior Columbia Basin Final EIS and Proposed Decision (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA]/USDI 2000a). No Record of Decision (ROD) was finalized for the Interior Columbia Basin Final EIS and Proposed Decision; however, a Memorandum of Understanding was entered into by several agencies, including the BLM, to implement The Interior Columbia Basin Strategy (Strategy) (USDA/USDI 2003). The Strategy provides guidance for incorporating the science data and resource information developed by the ICBEMP into land use planning efforts. These findings are important in defining the complexity and scope of the issues being addressed in this RMP/EIS.

## 1.2 Planning Area

The Planning Area encompasses the entire Andrews RA and the portion of the Three Rivers RA within the CMPA. The Planning Area outside of the CMPA is identified as the AMU. (See Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the Planning Area.)

### **1.3 Existing Management Plans**

This section outlines the current management direction, which includes the Andrews MFP and the Steens Act. Current management direction also includes the following associated NEPA documents applicable to the Planning Area: Animal Damage Control Final EIS, three volumes (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] 1994); Steens Mountain CMPA Interim Management Policy Draft (USDI 2001a) (IMP); Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Projects for Implementation of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000, EA-OR-027-01-27 (USDI 2001b); Three Rivers RMP, ROD, and Rangeland Program Summary (USDI 1992a); Donner und Blitzen National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) (USDI 1993a); National Wild and Scenic River Donner und Blitzen Management Plan EA (USDI 1992b); Noxious Weed Management Project EA, EA OR-020-98-05 (USDI 1998a); Andrews Grazing Management Program EIS (USDI 1982b); and the Land Tenure Adjustment Plan Amendment for the Andrews and Drewsey MFPs (USDI 1988a).

This RMP is necessary not only to revise the Andrews MFP and to address management of the CMPA, but the decision record for this document will also amend the Three Rivers RMP to address management of the CMPA, the mineral withdrawal area, livestock grazing, and wild horse and burro Herd Management Areas (HMAs). The SEORMP incorporates management of the mineral withdrawal area for the Vale District BLM.

Several activity level plans have also been completed in recent years and include the following: Steens Mountain Final Recreation Area Management Plan (USDI 1985); Andrews Rangeland Program Summary Update (USDI 1986a); Andrews Plan Amendment for Recreation Access Surrounding the Steens Mountain Loop Road (Steens Loop) (USDI 1993b); The Riddle Brothers Ranch Historic District Cultural Resources Management Plan (Crespin 1990); Kiger Mustang Area of Critical Environmental Concern Management Plan (USDI 1996a); Riddle Mountain and Kiger Wild Horse HMA Plan (USDI 1996b); Recovery Plan for the Pacific Bald Eagle (USDI 1986b); The Pacific Coast American Peregrine Falcon Recovery Plan (USDI 1982); Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for Steens Mountain Trail Maintenance (USDI 2001c); Pueblo-Lone Mountain Management Plan EA (USDI 1995a); Burns District EA for Commercial Day-Use Activities OR-020-EA-99-24 (USDI 1999); The Riddle Brothers Ranch Historic District Cultural RMP, EA (USDI 1994a); The Trout Creek Mountains Allotment Management Plan; and Recovery Plan for the Borax Lake Chub, *Gila boraxobius* (USDI 1997a).

### **1.4 Planning Process**

The RMP is a land use plan as prescribed by FLPMA (Sections 201 and 202). The RMP establishes, in a written document, the following:

- Land areas for limited, restricted, or exclusive resource uses or for transfer from BLM administration;
- Allowable resource uses and related levels of production or use to be maintained;
- Resource condition, goals and objectives to be reached;
- Program constraints and general management practices;
- Identification of specific required activity plans;
- Support actions required to achieve the above;
- General implementation schedule or sequences; and
- Intervals and standards for monitoring effectiveness of the plan.

The underlying goal of the RMP/EIS is to provide efficient on-the-ground management of public lands and associated resources over a period of time, usually up to 20 years. The procedure for preparing a RMP/EIS involves eleven interrelated steps as shown in Table 1.1.

#### **1.4.1 Public Involvement in the Planning Process**

Public involvement is an integral part of the BLM's resource management planning process. Public involvement activities for this RMP/EIS have included a mass mailing of a scoping brochure, holding public meetings, meeting with local government and tribal government officials, conducting a subbasin review (SBR) (Appendix B), mailing the Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS Summary) (USDI 2002), mailing a newsletter as followup to the publication of the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) (USDI 2002), and other correspondence.

From October 2001 through January 2002, the BLM conducted a SBR. This review resulted in the identification of a number of issues and management concerns to be addressed in the RMP/EIS.

**Table 1.1: Steps in the BLM Planning Process**

<b>Planning Step</b>	<b>Definition/Purpose</b>
1) Identification of issues	Orients the planning process to the significant resource management problems and land use conflicts in the area covered by the plan.
2) Development of planning criteria	The manager and interdisciplinary team develop standards or rules to focus the planning process on the issues and management concerns.
3) Inventory and data collection	Baseline information is collected on an ongoing basis in support of resource management. Information about all ecosystem components, including human uses, is necessary to prepare a plan that meets requirements and is legally defensible.
4) Analysis of the management situation	The study and assessment of public land resources data for the area covered by the plan; completes the information base for formulating reasonable alternatives.
5) Formulation of alternatives	The development, analysis, and documentation of a reasonable range of multiple use management options that resolves conflicts and issues and provides a basis for future management.
6) Estimation of the effects of the alternatives	The consequences of the resource management alternatives are analyzed and documented.
7) Selection of preferred alternative	Based on a comparison of the estimated effects and tradeoffs associated with the alternatives, a preferred alternative is identified in the draft RMP/EIS.
8) Public review and comment on Draft RMP/EIS	After selection of preferred alternative, the draft RMP/EIS is distributed for 90-day public review and comment.
9) Selection of the resource management plan	Selecting the proposed plan and preparing the final EIS based on evaluation of public comments of the draft RMP/EIS.
10) Public protest period on published Proposed RMP and Final EIS	Publication of the proposed RMP/Final EIS initiates a 30-day public protest period. Following resolution of any protests, the plan is approved and a ROD issued.
11) Monitoring and evaluation	Indicates the effectiveness of plan decisions and related management prescriptions. May continue through the life of the plan. Results are used to determine whether the plan needs amendments or revisions.

The BLM began its public involvement in February 2002 with the mailing of a scoping brochure that briefly described the RMP/EIS process, outlined the planning schedule, and requested comments on the first major planning step; which constitutes identification of issues. The brochure was sent to approximately 1,220 individuals, organizations, and agencies. Additional copies of the scoping brochure were made available at the four scoping meetings. The BLM invited the public to identify issues or concerns they believed should be addressed in the RMP/EIS process. A Notice of Intent to prepare the RMP/EIS was published in the Federal Register at the same time. The Federal Register notice also announced the dates and locations of the four public meetings that would be held. A news release with the same information and a request for publication or announcement was mailed to 19 media groups including the Burns Times Herald, The Bulletin, The Oregonian, and KZZR Radio. BLM representatives attended meetings with the Harney County Court to inform them of the RMP/EIS and to encourage them to make comments, request information, and generally be involved in the process. The same information was distributed to the Burns Paiute Tribal Government. Other meetings with the tribe were also conducted at key steps in the planning process. The Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council (RAC), the SMAC, cooperating agencies, and other participating partners were involved throughout the process.

Members of the public, local and tribal governments, other federal agencies, and state agencies were mailed copies of the AMS Summary and were asked to comment, particularly on the planning criteria and proposed RMP/EIS alternatives. Approximately 2,313 comment letters were received. A followup newsletter outlining the primary comments was then mailed to 257 individuals in July 2002. An additional 143 copies of the AMS Summary were sent to interested

individuals and organizations by request. The full version of the AMS was published and made available to the public in November 2002.

#### 1.4.2 Planning Issues

As a result of internal scoping for the development of the preliminary plan and the AMS (Appendix B), the following 17 issues were identified by BLM staff to be addressed in the RMP/EIS:

- 1) BLM management of resource uses to improve and maintain the integrity of upland ecological communities;
  - How will livestock grazing be managed to sustain resource values while maintaining stable watersheds and the continued production of forage?
  - What areas previously ungrazed could be grazed and under what circumstances? Are there areas where, or situations when, grazing should be excluded?
  - What practices will be authorized and implemented to provide wildlife habitat and forage for livestock while maintaining other uses and values of public land resources?
  - Under what conditions is grazing compatible with management of areas such as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), WSRs, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)?
  - What are the visual considerations related to upland conditions, and how will the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) play a role?
  - What indicators will be used to identify levels of wild horse use compatible with sustaining a thriving, natural, ecological balance?
  - What practices will the BLM implement to manage wild horses consistent with the legislative mandate that all management activities be at minimum feasible level?
  - What practices will be authorized and implemented to provide adequate habitat and forage for wildlife while maintaining other resource uses and values?
  - What grazing practices are necessary to protect sensitive resource values such as riparian areas and special status species?
  - What new and existing rangeland projects, including seedings, are needed to improve rangeland resource values?
  - What rehabilitation practices will be implemented following rangeland project construction and maintenance that disturb established vegetation cover?
  - What criteria should be considered for fire rehabilitation, for restoration of wildlife habitat, and to determine whether or not native or introduced species should be seeded to stabilize watersheds?
  - How should the BLM prioritize implementation of management practices to maintain desired conditions and improve undesirable conditions where feasible?
  - What criteria should be established to determine conditions and timetables for improvements?
  - What resource uses and management practices will be employed in geographic areas with lower management priority?
  - Is the current strategy of full wildland fire suppression compatible with upland management objectives?
  - How, and to what extent, should fire be used to manage western juniper and aspen woodlands?
  - Can cottonwood stands be restored along Donner und Blitzen WSR and the east side of Steens Mountain?
  - Can juniper treatments in corridors be accomplished?
- 2) BLM management of resource uses to improve or maintain the integrity of riparian ecological communities;
  - How will riparian vegetation communities be managed to improve or maintain ecological status, species diversity, bank stability, water quality, and the timing of watershed discharge while providing for resource uses such as grazing, recreation, water development, mineral exploration and development, and woodland products harvest?
  - What areas previously excluded from grazing could be grazed and under what circumstances? Are there areas or situations when grazing should be excluded?
  - What are the visual considerations relating to riparian conditions, and how will the BLM's VRM play a role?
  - How will riparian systems be managed to improve or maintain habitat quality for fish, wildlife, plants, and invertebrates?
  - How will riparian and wetland areas be managed to incorporate State of Oregon water quality standards and approved management plans addressing water quality concerns?
  - Is the current strategy of full wildland fire suppression compatible with riparian management objectives?
  - How will management actions in upland communities be handled to be compatible with the needs of riparian communities?
  - How should management actions with potential to affect riparian communities be identified and prioritized?

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- What timeframes are acceptable to achieve riparian management objectives?
  - When does the establishment of juniper threaten other resource values, and what management actions can be used to control the invasion?
  - Is collection of baseline riparian information and proper functioning condition (PFC) on acquired and isolated stream segments necessary?
  - Should the riparian habitat inventory be redone?
- 3) BLM maintenance or improvement of woodland communities and how woodlands will be managed to maintain or improve rangeland and wildlife habitat;
- What should be done to preserve and manage the 20.1 acres of grand fir forested areas on public land on Steens Mountain?
  - Are there juniper woodland areas that should be preserved?
  - What types of woodland products should be harvested?
  - What are the potential effects of woodland management on wildlife, watersheds, soils, vegetation, recreation, aesthetics, and other resources?
  - What kind of woodland management is compatible with management of Wilderness, ACECs, WSRs, and other designated areas?
- 4) BLM provisions for wildlife habitat while considering other resource uses;
- To what extent will livestock management and brush control be conducted to meet the habitat requirements of wildlife?
  - Which areas, if any, are appropriate for reintroduction of wildlife, and what species could be reintroduced?
  - What management practices avoid conflicts between wildlife and livestock for vegetation, especially between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep?
  - What are the long-term strategies for managing wildlife?
  - To what extent will the BLM adopt Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) management objectives for game and nongame species of wildlife?
  - What management practices best address areas of biodiversity, the needs of species at the limits of their range, and species assemblages?
- 5) Public land management contributions to the preservation of and increase in healthy, sustainable populations of species now considered in special status. Land management for successful prevention of habitat destruction, which would lead to listing of additional species;
- To what extent will livestock management and brush control be conducted to meet the habitat requirements of special status species?
  - Which areas, if any, are appropriate for reintroduction of special status species?
  - What are the long-term strategies for managing habitat for special status species?
  - To what extent will the BLM adopt ODFW management objectives for special status species?
  - What management practices best address areas of biodiversity, the needs of special status species at the limits of their range, and species assemblages?
- 6) BLM management of energy and mineral resources on public land;
- Are there areas where some types of energy and mineral development should be restricted or prohibited?
  - Are there areas where mineral development should be recognized as being the highest and best use?
  - How will energy and mineral development be managed to minimize resource conflicts?
  - What are the visual considerations relating to management of energy and mineral resources, and how will the BLM's VRM play a role?
  - How should recreational rock collecting be managed?
  - What reclamation practices will be implemented following mineral development activities?
  - Which remediation methods should be used for each identified abandoned mine site?
  - What leasing stipulations will be applied to the area outside of the mineral withdrawal?

- 7) Special area management within the CMPA and in the AMU;
- Should existing ACECs be retained under their current designations and management prescriptions?
  - Are there other areas that warrant special designations to protect unique or special values?
  - Would designating new special areas or eliminating existing special areas affect other resource values or management?
  - How will impacts from nonconforming but acceptable uses and administrative needs in the Wilderness Area be managed in order to meet objectives but also preserve wilderness characteristics?
  - How will wilderness values be protected against the impacts of unauthorized uses such as off-highway vehicle (OHV) use and other mechanized or motorized transport?
  - What management actions are needed to protect and preserve wilderness values while offering opportunities for quality recreational experiences?
  - Where and under what conditions will access be permitted to provide reasonable use and enjoyment of private land within wilderness?
  - How will WSRs be managed as they relate to wilderness or other special areas?
  - How will the Historic District be managed with the continuing interest and visitation from the public?
  - What preventive measures will need to be in place to successfully manage the No Livestock Grazing Area?
  - How will the removal of livestock from the No Livestock Grazing Area affect natural ecological processes?
  - What management actions will be introduced to control the spread of western juniper and rejuvenate depleted aspen stands in the WJMA?
  - How will the RTR be managed to protect the habitat for the fish and provide for research and education opportunities?
  - How will land acquired subsequent to the Oregon Wilderness Inventory/EIS, and determined to contain wilderness characteristics, be managed?
- 8) BLM management of wildland fire, fuels, and prescribed fire to meet and be consistent with resource objectives, while protecting life and property. BLM and private landowners working together to manage wildland fires;
- While the BLM continues to protect life, property, and important resources from fire, are there areas where Appropriate Management Response strategies should be implemented? If so, where and under what conditions would these strategies be applied?
  - Which areas are appropriate for using prescribed/wildland fire as a management tool? How would this tool be used?
  - Which areas may be subject to constraints (e.g., Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) air quality standards) that could limit the use of prescribed fire?
  - Which areas should continue to have full suppression to protect important values?
  - What rehabilitation practices would be implemented following fire?
- 9) BLM management of recreation opportunities for both developed and dispersed recreation uses while meeting other resource objectives;
- What types and levels of recreation should the Planning Area provide?
  - How, when, and to what extent should the BLM enhance recreation opportunities?
  - What conflicts with resource values or other uses would restrict recreation opportunities?
  - How should the BLM address SRPs and any needed allocations?
  - Would changes in existing OHV designations affect recreation opportunities?
  - To what extent should the BLM develop facilities (campgrounds, trails, etc.) and generally improve recreation access opportunities to meet public demand, to provide for public health and safety, and to direct use away from areas of conflict?
  - What role, if any, should the BLM serve in encouraging tourism?
  - How should the BLM provide for public awareness of recreation resources and opportunities?
- 10) BLM administration of land status and values to improve management efficiency and cooperation with private landowners;
- Should some BLM administered land in the Planning Area be exchanged for other land with high public value if the exchange is consistent with the land tenure objectives of the BLM? If so, which land should be exchanged?
  - What effect does the Oregon Division of State Land's "Asset Management Strategy" have on management of public land?
  - Should some federal agency withdrawals be considered for revocation?

- What land should be returned to BLM administration?
  - Should state or other non-federal mineral estates under public surface ownership be acquired through mineral estate exchanges?
  - Where should the BLM consider exchanging BLM administered land for other land with higher public values or consider selling isolated or difficult-to-manage land? Should the BLM consider selling land for public purposes and community expansion?
  - What areas within the Planning Area should be identified as unsuitable for rights-of-way (ROWs) routes for major utilities and roads?
  - What areas within the Planning Area should be identified as open for ROWs or other land use authorizations?
  - What mitigation measures would be appropriate for land that is suitable for ROWs routes?
  - Which land in the Planning Area should have current withdrawals or classifications revoked, continued or modified? Which land in the Planning Area not currently withdrawn should be withdrawn in order to protect Planning Area resources?
  - Where should utility corridors, avoidance, and exclusion areas be designated?
  - Is there land within the Planning Area that should be identified for retention, acquisition or sale exchange, or other disposal in order to address management objectives and issues?
  - What criteria should be applied when considering acquisition from willing sellers of non-federal land to be added to the Planning Area?
  - Are there public lands more suitable for administration by other federal, state, or local agencies?
- 11) Management of wild horses in the HMAs for maintenance of a sustainable, viable, healthy population for existence in thriving, natural, ecological balance with their habitat and other multiple uses of the area;
- How do goals and objectives of the CMPA affect the management of HMAs and wild horse populations?
  - Should the existing appropriate management levels (AMLs) for HMAs inside the CMPA boundary be changed considering the following:
    - reduced acreage within the HMAs,
    - impacts of existing and potential fencing (inside the HMA) to implement the Act's No Livestock Grazing Area,
    - potential impacts of fence removal within the HMAs,
    - potential impacts of fence additions in the HMA and outside of the No Livestock Grazing Area, or
    - potential impacts of less water being available to horses in the area west of the No Livestock Grazing Area?
  - Should the Alford-Tule Springs and Coyote Lakes HMAs be combined and the herds managed as one population?
  - Are past decisions and current management practices still valid regarding HMAs and Herd Areas within the Planning Area?
- 12) Management of significant cultural sites and localities for protection and preservation. Use of interpretation as an education tool to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of the Planning Area's cultural resources. Gaining the scientific information to form the basis of this interpretation. Consideration and protection of American Indian interests, traditional practice sites, land forms and resources;
- How can cultural and paleontology inventories (beyond project specific clearances) be focused primarily on areas most likely to contain significant intact properties most susceptible to impacts such as erosion, livestock trampling, OHV use, artifact looting, and concentrated recreation use?
  - How can sites and localities be evaluated for significance and managed as such, given time frames and constraints imposed by the needs of other resource management?
  - Can all data pertaining to sites and localities continue to be successfully tracked in an automated data base?
  - Can cost-share agreements with universities, research teams, undergraduate and graduate students, and the tribes continue to be implemented to gain scientific and cultural information that will form the basis for interpretation?
  - Will resources, both internal and external, be available for BLM cultural personnel to gain the training and experience required to make oral and written interpretive presentations as well as to prepare design and construction of interpretative panels and facilities?
  - Will active consultation with Indian tribes be ongoing and continue to establish baseline data for traditional religious sites and use areas?
  - Will a Planning Area tribal use plan be developed by the BLM with cooperation of the various tribes, and would it increase coordination with tribes?

- 13) Controlling and eradicating noxious weeds;
- Should the Burns District's Noxious Weed Management Program EA (EA OR-020-98-05) continue to be implemented in its present form or should it be evaluated and modified if necessary?
  - How will management of noxious weeds in special areas (including Wilderness) be successfully conducted within the restraints required by the guidelines and requirements of those areas?
  - Can data in the District weed data base be successfully broken out, summarized, and utilized specific to the Planning Area?
  - Can the BLM effectively increase cooperative work with other agencies to monitor locations and spread of weeds? If so, how can this be accomplished?
- 14) Management of OHV use in the Planning Area;
- What criteria will be used to determine whether current and future OHV use is compatible with OHV designations in the existing BLM OHV strategy?
  - What criteria will be used to determine whether OHV use is causing "considerable adverse effects" to Planning Area resources?
  - What changes should occur to current OHV designations if determined to be incompatible with the current BLM OHV Strategy or Planning Area objectives?
- 15) BLM management of resource uses to improve unacceptable aquatic habitat and water quality conditions (such as stream reaches listed as Water Quality Limited (303(d) by the DEQ or maintain aquatic habitat and water quality that are currently in acceptable conditions;
- Do water developments/alternative water developments (reservoirs, springs) need to have application made to the state for water rights? (For smaller water developments, the lag time will be approximately seven months to gain certificate.)
  - Will workload and water quality monitoring objectives need to be determined under new management priorities? As the upper Donner und Blitzen drainage area is under new management strategies, should the BLM take steps to get the tributaries and mainstream de-listed from 303(d), or should the state focus on these areas?
  - To what extent will livestock management and brush control be conducted to meet fisheries habitat requirements?
  - What management practices for range and woodlands accommodate fisheries habitat requirements?
  - Which areas, if any, are appropriate for reintroduction of native fish species?
  - What are the long-term strategies for managing fisheries?
  - To what extent will the BLM adopt ODFW management objectives for fisheries?
  - What management practices best address areas of biodiversity, the needs of species at the limits of their range, and species assemblages?
  - How can grazing management techniques improve water quality?
- 16) BLM management of transportation issues in the Planning Area;
- What roads and trails are needed for administrative use and/or public access?
  - Where are easements or other use agreements needed to ensure future access?
  - Which roads and trails should be open or closed to motorized vehicles or limited to non-motorized, non-mechanical traffic, and where?
  - Which roads or trails should be seasonally closed for protection and/or improvement of resources or for public safety, and where?
  - To what standards should roads and trails be maintained?
  - Can roads or trails that no longer serve management purposes be abandoned and/or reclaimed?
  - Should new roads or trails be considered to provide access to important public resources, prevent environmental degradation, or to improve transportation?
  - What existing roads are needed to provide reasonable access to private land or areas involving other private rights or interests?
  - What areas may need new roads to provide future private access?

- 17) Changes in current resource uses and management practices affecting the economic and social status of rural communities in the Planning Area;
- How can public land management contribute to the economic stability of small rural communities in the Planning Area?
  - How would changing land use and tourism affect traditional rural life styles?
  - How would land tenure adjustments affect the economic stability of small rural communities in the Planning Area?
  - How, and to what extent, will the creation of the Steens Mountain specially designated areas impact communities and residents?

As stated in the previous section, public scoping was conducted and resulted in identification of additional issues. The BLM received 469 different scoping letters and 1,844 copies of various form letters. A total of 3,601 comments were identified. The comments were categorized into the following 23 categories: Alternative Choices; Cultural; Development Issues; Fire; Fish/Wildlife/Wild Horses; Geology/Mining/Energy; Lakes/Springs; Lands; Livestock Grazing; Noxious Weeds; OHVs/Snowmobiles; Planning and Process Issues; Recreation; Roads/Access; ACECs; Socioeconomics; SPRs; Vegetative Ecosystems; Water Quality/Water Quantity; Wilderness/WSAs; WSRs; Soils; and Other. Less than two percent of the comments (Other) listed in the table were considered beyond the scope of this planning process. A bulleted summary of the comments listed by category is included as Appendix C. The comments categorized as Other are not listed in Appendix C and are not further addressed in this RMP/EIS.

### 1.4.3 Issues Eliminated from Detailed Study

A number of issues were determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP/EIS. For example, issues related to private and state lands will not be analyzed in the RMP/EIS because the RMP prescribes management only for BLM administered land. Issues related to block grants for communities/counties/states, potential changes in federal law (e.g., laws relating to energy and mineral development and grazing), and release of WSAs are outside of the scope of the RMP because they are based on Congressional actions.

The BLM identified and reviewed the findings from the ICBEMP Scientific Assessment (USDI/USDA 1999) relevant to issue identification across the Interior Columbia Basin. The findings that applied to the SBR area are discussed in Appendix B of this document. Those findings determined not to be applicable to BLM administered land in the Planning Area have been eliminated from further analysis.

#### 1.4.3.1 Planning Criteria

BLM planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610) require preparation of planning criteria for all RMPs. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules guiding and directing the development of the RMP. The criteria determine the planning team and the public approach for the development of alternatives and ultimately the selection of a Preferred Alternative. Criteria assist with tailoring the RMP to the identified issues and in avoiding unnecessary data collection and analyses. Planning criteria are based on analyses of information pertinent to the Planning Area, professional judgment, standards prescribed by applicable laws, regulations, and agency guidance, and are the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other federal, state, and local agencies, the Burns Paiute Tribe and other Indian tribes.

Planning criteria help to accomplish the following:

- Streamline the RMP's preparation and focus;
- Establish standards, analytical techniques, and measures to be used in the process;
- Guide development of the RMP;
- Guide and direct issue resolution; and
- Identify factors and data to consider in making decisions.

Principles of ecosystem management, as well as a continuing commitment to multiple use and sustained yield, will also guide land use decisions in the Planning Area. The commitment to multiple use would not mean that all land will be open for all uses. Some uses may be excluded on some lands to protect specific resource values or uses. Any such exclusion, however, would be based on laws or regulations or be determined through the planning process and subject to public involvement. Appendix D contains a detailed description of the planning criteria and legal authorities used in the development of this RMP/EIS.

This RMP/EIS is being prepared using the best available information. Limited inventories were conducted to gather additional data for some resources.

### **1.5 Relationship to Federal Agency Plans**

A number of land use plans or RMPs have been developed by the BLM and other federal agencies that relate to or otherwise govern how management is currently implemented within the AMU or CMPA. The BLM is responsible for determining whether or not the proposed RMP is in conformance with these plans. The following federal plans have been identified as applicable to the Planning Area and, unless otherwise noted, are believed to be in conformance with the proposed RMP/EIS. Where appropriate, the management direction and previous management decisions set forth by these documents are used to tier analyses performed in this plan, or are incorporated by reference and therefore are not repeated in detail within this document. Consequently, pertinent decisions already established by these documents are not being revisited here, but are mentioned to give the reader a broad perspective of all management direction pertaining to the Planning Area.

BLM program documents or Inter-agency plan/NEPA documents and decisions applicable to the Planning Area include the following:

- Visual Resource Management Program (USDI 1980);
- 1613 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Resource Management Planning Guidance (USDI 1988b);
- Oregon Wilderness Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDI 1989a);
- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDI 1991a);
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended;
- Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1 Handbook (USDI Updated 2001d);
- National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands (USDI 2001e);
- Environmental Impact Statement, Volume III Appendices for all WSAs beginning with OR-2 plus OR-3-114 (USDI 1989b);
- National Environmental Policy Act Handbook H-1790-1 (USDI 1988c);
- Wilderness Management (USDI 2001f);
- Wilderness Management: Final Rule (USDI 2001g);
- Oregon Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement, Volume I-Statewide (USDI 1989c);
- Upper Columbia River Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1 (USDI 1997b);
- Proposed Southeast Oregon Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1 of 3 - Text (USDI 2000a);
- Rangeland Reform '94, Draft Environmental Impact Statement Executive Summary (USDI 1994b);
- Interior Columbia Basin Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDA/USDI 2000b);
- House Report 101-405 (Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990);
- House Report 101-405 Appendix A, Grazing Guidelines (1990);
- Oregon Natural Heritage Plan (Oregon Natural Heritage Advisory Council 1998);
- Reformatted Comprehensive Plan for the City of Burns, Oregon (1997);
- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended;
- Oregon Wilderness Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDI 1989a);
- H-8550-1: Interim Management Policy for lands under Wilderness Review (WSA IMP) (USDI 1995b);
- Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy (National Park Service et al. 1998);
- Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Animal Candidate Review for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species, Proposed Rules (USDI 1991b); and
- Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystems Management Guidelines (USDI et al. 2000b).

### **1.6 Relationship to State and Local Government Plans**

The Department of Land Conservation and Development's "Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals" guides land use planning within the state and requires local governments to develop their own comprehensive plans, which implement the state's goals on the local level (Department of Land Conservation Development 1995) (Appendix E). Also shown in Appendix E are the Division of State Lands asset management prescriptions for state lands.

The Governor and various state agencies will be given an opportunity to review the Proposed Final RMP/EIS and comment on its consistency with their goals, policies, and plans.

The RMP is consistent with the Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which was last updated in part by the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Plan: 1994-1999 (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department 1994). The RMP is also consistent with the Southeast Oregon Recreation Plan for Harney, Lake and Malheur Counties (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department 2000); the Oregon Wildlife Diversity Plan, Second Edition (Puchy and Marshall 1993); Noxious Weed Policy and Classification System (Oregon Department of Agriculture 1997); Oregon's Bighorn Sheep Management

Plan (ODFW 1992-1997); Oregon's Elk Management Plan (ODFW 1992); Mule Deer Plan (ODFW 1990); Oregon Cougar Management Plan Public Review Draft (ODFW 1993); Catlow Redband Trout and Catlow Tui Chub Conservation Agreement and Strategy (ODFW 1997); and the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Plan 2003-2007 (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Draft 2002).

### **1.6.1 Harney County Plan**

Harney County has an existing land use plan developed in response to the State of Oregon's requirements. The Harney County Commissioners are being provided with an opportunity to review the RMP/EIS and comment on its consistency with their approved plans and policies.

### **1.6.2 Malheur County Plan**

Malheur County has an existing land use plan developed in response to the State of Oregon's requirements. This RMP/EIS will be consistent with the Malheur plan for those sections of the Planning Area in Malheur County.

## **1.7 Relationship to Tribal Government Plans**

The Burns Paiute Tribe is known to have an active interest in the Planning Area. Burns BLM management representatives and the RMP team leader have met with tribal leaders of the Burns Paiute Tribe to discuss the RMP/EIS and to identify tribal goals, needs, or plans which may conflict with or support any of the alternatives. Additional meetings will occur at key points during the process. Also, a Tribal representative has participated in RMP interdisciplinary team meetings. The RMP will be in conformance with Burns Paiute Tribal land use plans.

## **1.8 Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project Implementation Strategy**

“The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) was established in 1994...to develop and then adopt a scientifically sound, ecosystem based strategy for managing all United States Forest Service (USFS)- or BLM-administered lands within the (Interior Columbia) Basin” (USDA 2000). The ICBEMP covers an area of 145 million acres including all of eastern Oregon. Fifty-three percent of the ICBEMP area is public land managed by the BLM or the USFS. As part of the project, a science integration team was set up and directed to “...study ecological, economic and social systems; examine current and historical conditions; and evaluate whether outcomes from current practices and trends would be consistent with long-term maintenance of ecological integrity and ecosystem health.” (USDA 2000). This was all completed at the basin scale. Therefore, a “step-down” process was required to bring findings and information down to a local level where they could be applied in a USFS or BLM management unit such as a ranger district or resource area. This is called the SBR process. The ICBEMP area was divided for analysis and review into four geographic scales: broad-scale (Interior Columbia Basin), mid-scale (subbasins or groups of subbasins), fine-scale (watershed), and site scale (project). The mid-scale or subbasin level is the level at which field offices would do long-range planning for all resources within their respective administrative boundaries. In March 2000, an ICBEMP supplemental draft EIS was published, followed in December 2000 with a final EIS and proposed ROD (USDA/USDI 2000a, 2000b, 2000c). The ROD was not finalized; the state directors and regional foresters have instead chosen to complete the project through an Implementation Strategy. Scientific data and resource information from the ICBEMP have been incorporated into this RMP where applicable per the Implementation Strategy.

As part of the preparation for the RMP/EIS, the BLM conducted a SBR. The subbasins are based on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) fourth field hydrologic unit codes (HUCs). On average, these fourth field HUCs comprise an area of 500,000 to 1,000,000 acres. The Andrews SBR area included six subbasins wholly or partially within the Planning Area identified in the ICBEMP scientific assessment: Guano, Harney/Malheur Lakes, Alvord Lake, Donner und Blitzen, Thousand-Virgin, and Crooked Rattlesnake, comprising an area of approximately 6,200,110 acres. Land ownership and administrative responsibilities include private, State of Oregon, BLM, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The majority of the land in the SBR area is administered by the BLM, Andrews Field Office.

The BLM team examined the ICBEMP findings as well as the science behind the findings and identified a number of relevant issues applicable across the Interior Columbia Basin. The BLM determined that some of the findings and science assessments applied to the SBR area. Appendix B of this document contains a complete report of the SBR and the ICBEMP findings applicable to the SBR area. The RMP/EIS incorporates multi-scale issues and priorities identified in the SBR.

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