



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Release No.: OR110-02-41

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BLM News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Comment Period Extended for Draft Monument Management Plan

BLM Now Accepting Public Comment Through December 19, 2002

July 30, 2002, Medford, OR - In response to numerous requests, the Medford District Bureau of Land Management announced today that **the public comment period for the Draft Resource Management Plan (Draft Plan) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) will be extended an additional 90 days through December 19, 2002.** Because of its national importance and the intense public interest in reviewing the plan and providing input on its content, BLM Director Kathleen Clarke recently approved the extension. The plan will now be open for public comment for a full six months, or 180 days.

“We recognize the importance of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument to the public,” said Rich Drehobl, Monument Manager. “We want to ensure that all segments of the public have ample time to review and comment on the Draft Plan. Public input is essential to building a strong foundation for long-term cooperative management of this special area.”

The Draft Plan outlines the proposed direction for the long-term management of the CSNM, including goals and objectives, proposed management, and monitoring requirements. The Draft Plan also evaluates the potential consequences of implementing each of the four alternatives. The final version of the plan will supersede current planning guidance related to this area found in the 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan. The original comment period was due to end on September 20, 2002.

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The Draft Plan analyzes four different alternatives. Alternative A, the “No Action” Alternative, describes current Monument management and serves as a baseline for comparing the action alternatives. Alternatives B, C, and D describe different methods for achieving the plan’s overall goal, which is protection, restoration and enhancement of Monument resources. Although the methods for reaching this goal change by alternative, each alternative meets the intent of the Proclamation to protect the biological values for which the Monument was established.

Alternative B promotes primarily natural ecosystem processes in the management of plant communities. Alternative C (the agency “Preferred Alternative”) incorporates active but moderate management for protection and maintenance of the Monument’s different plant communities. Alternative D promotes a more proactive management approach for protection, maintenance and restoration of Monument plant communities. Alternative D would utilize the widest array of management options and actively manage the most acres of land.

While BLM believes Alternative C is currently best suited to address the diversity of issues across the landscape, identification of the Preferred Alternative does not guarantee that this alternative will be selected. Based on the analysis of consequences and public input, various pieces of the differing alternatives may be selected to develop the final management plan.

The next steps in completing a resource management plan for the CSNM include publication of a Proposed Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) followed by a Record of Decision. The BLM expects the PRMP/FEIS to be released in the fall of 2003. A Record of Decision is expected to be released in the winter of 2003.

Written comments regarding the Draft Plan should be sent to:

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Single hard copies or CD-ROM versions of the Draft Plan will be available at the Medford District BLM Office. It can also be viewed on the internet at <http://www.or.blm.gov/CSNM>. In addition, a Reader’s Guide to the Draft Plan will be available at the Medford District BLM Office and on the web site listed above.

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