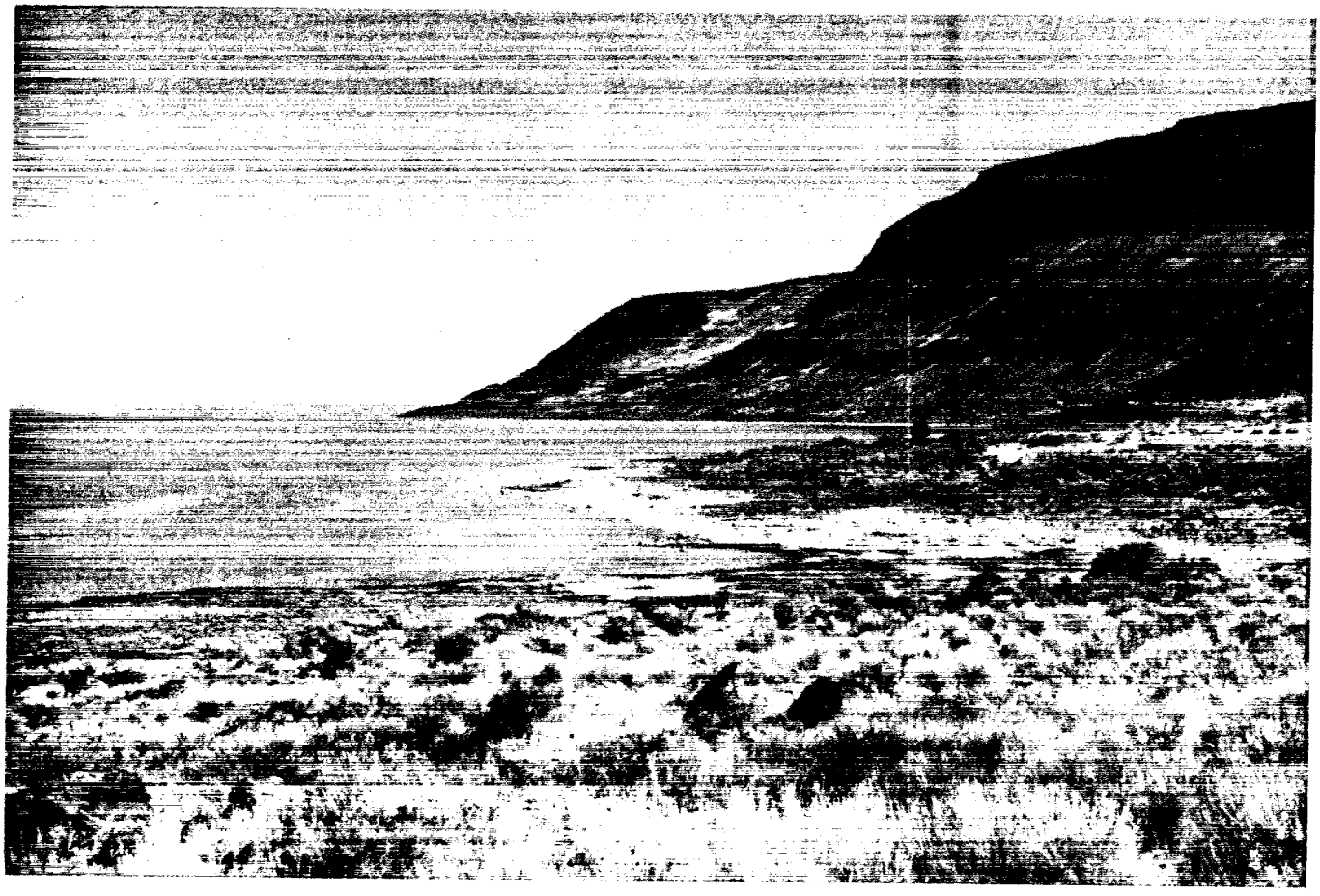
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Lakeview District Office
1000 south 9th street
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

March 1996

High Desert Management Framework Proposed Plan Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in Lake County, Oregon



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

BLM/OR/WA/PL-96/011+1792

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Lakeview District Office
P.O. Box 151 (1000 Ninth Street S.)
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

IN REPLY REFER TO:
161311617 (015)

February 15, 1996

Dear Public Land User:

Enclosed for your review and comment is the High Desert Management Framework Proposed Plan Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared, this document in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management A.ct of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Due to the lack of major, substantive comments received on the draft document, this final document has been prepared in an abbreviated final format. Therefore, your copy of the draft document should be retained for reference, as major sections of the draft are not repeated in this final.

A total of 37 comment letters were received during the draft review period. The interdisciplinary planning team assessed these comments and utilized them in making changes in the final. Those leading to changes in the document are discussed in Chapter 3 and Appendix A of the attached final.

This document contains a summary of the alternatives analyzed in the draft document, an introduction, a detailed description of the proposed plan amendment, a list of text revisions, and a description of the coordination/consultation process.

If you feel your concerns have not been adequately addressed in this final document and wish to provide additional comments, please submit them in writing to:

Mr. Scott Florence
BLM, Lakeview Resource Area
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

within 30 after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability of this FEIS in the *Federal Register*, which is expected on or about March 29, 1996.

Approval of this plan will be documented in a public Record of Decision (ROD) which will be made available to all parties who received a copy of this final document. The BLM planning process provides an opportunity for an administrative review via a plan amendment protest to the BLM Director, if you believe the approval of the proposed plan amendment would be in error under 43 CFR 1610.5-2.

Careful adherence to the following guidelines will assist in preparing a protest that will assure the greatest consideration to your point of view:

A protesting party may raise only those issues which he/she submitted for the record during the planning process.

The protest/comment period will end 30 days after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability of this proposed plan amendment/FEIS in the *Federal Register*. There is no provision within BLM's regulations allowing for an extension of time to comment/file a protest, nor will one be granted. To be considered timely, a protest must be postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment/protest period. It is recommended that your protest be sent certified mail, return receipt requested.

Protests must be submitted in writing to:

Director (480)
Bureau of Land Management
Resource Planning Team
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

To be considered complete, a protest must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

1. The name, address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest,

2. A statement of the issue(s) being protested.

3. A statement of the part(s) of the proposed plan amendment being protested, referencing specific pages, paragraphs, sections, tables, maps, etc.., within the document.

4. A copy of all documents addressing the issue(s) that you submitted during the planning process or a reference to the date the issue(s) were discussed by you for the record.

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management

HIGH DESERT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LAKE ABERT AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACEC) IN LAKE COUNTY, OREGON

Prepared by

Lakeview Resource Area Office
Lakeview District
February 1996

Elaine Zielinski
Elaine Zielinski
Oregon State Director

Edwin J. Singleton
Edwin J. Singleton
District Manager
Lakeview District Office

Scott R. Florence
Scott R. Florence
Area Manager
Lakeview Resource Area

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Subject	Page
ABSTRACT	7
SUMMARY	9
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION	21
Purpose and Need	21
Location	21
Planning Process	22
ACEC Evaluation Findings	22
Decision Making Process	22
Decisions to Be Made	22
Planning Issues	22
Management Goals and Objectives	24
Goal 1	24
Goal 2	25
Goal 3	25
Goal 4	25
Goal 5	25
Goal 6	25
Goal 7	25
Goal 8	25
Goal 9	26
Goal 10	26
Conformance with Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Land Use Plans and Policies	26
CHAPTER 2 - ALTERNATIVES	27
Introduction	27
Proposed Plan	27
CHAPTER 3 - TEXT REVISIONS	35
Introduction	35
CHAPTER 4 - CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC INPUT	
Introduction	39
List of Recipients	40

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page No.
S-l.	Comparison of Management Action by Alternative	10
s-2.	Comparison of Impacts by Alternative	15

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Title	Page No.
1.	Study Area	23
2.	Proposed ACEC Boundary	30

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix No.	Title	
A.	Comment Letters and Responses	4

HIGH DESERT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PROPOSED PLAN AMENDMENT AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LAKE ABERT AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACEC) IN LAKE COUNTY, OREGON

Draft ( ) Final (X) MFPA/EIS
Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District

TYPE OF ACTION: Administrative (X), Legislative ( )

ABSTRACT: This final Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement addresses the management of resources within approximately 123,000 acres of public land and 101,700 acres of reserved mineral estate administered by the Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview Resource Area of the Lakeview District. The planning area is located approximately 30 miles north of Lakeview, Oregon, in Lake County. This document was prepared in response to proposals by a public organization and a State agency to designate the Lake Abert area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). During the planning process, 16 issues were identified relating to the management of the area. A total of 10 management goals were developed to address those issues. A total of seven management alternatives were developed to meet the goals. These ranged from No Action (Alternative 1; no ACEC and continue existing management) to designation and protective management of the entire planning area as an ACEC (Alternative 2). Variations within this range included no ACEC designation, but some changes in management (Alternative 6) to ACEC designations with various degrees of protective management (Alternatives 3, 4, 5, and 7). The proposed plan (Alternative 7) involves designating approximately 49,900 acres of public land within the planning area as an ACEC. Special management direction identified under the proposed plan has been developed to protect those resource values identified as relevant and important (aquatic ecology, cultural resources, visual resources, and wildlife) and would involve the following resources: air quality, minerals, hydrology, water quality, vegetation, aquatic communities, fire, rights-of-way, rangeland, wildlife, special status species, cultural resources, visual resources, and recreation. The potential impacts of the alternatives, including the proposed plan, are described in detail in the previously released draft document.

COMMENT PERIOD: The review/protest period on this final Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement will last 30 days, ending on the date specified in the cover letter at the very front of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Paul Whitman
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview District
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630
Ph: 503-947-6 110

Summary

The Lakeview District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this, plan amendment to address the appropriateness of designating Lake Abert and the surrounding area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This designation (accompanied by special management actions) has been evaluated as a means of protecting significant resources in the area.

A total of seven alternative plans covering a wide range of management actions were developed for the planning area. These are discussed in great detail in Chapter 2 ***of the draft plan amendment/EIS.*** Alternatives 1 (No Action) and 6 call for no ACEC designation within the planning area. Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 (Preferred Plan) include an ACEC designation for all or part of the planning area.

Management action, by resource, for each alternative is summarized in Table S- 1. The impacts of each alternative are summarized, by resource, in Table S-2.

A draft plan amendment/EIS was prepared which evaluated the potential impacts of the alternative management plans. A 90-day review period was provided on the draft document. The comments received did not require major changes to the draft. As a result, an abbreviated final plan amendment/EIS was prepared in accordance with the requirements of 40 CFR Part 1503.4. The main changes to the draft are included in Chapter 3. The comment letters and agency responses are included in Appendix A. Important changes in the text of the Summary, Chapters 1, 2, and 5 are highlighted in bold, italic text. The reader should retain and refer to the draft document for more detail.

Table S-1. Comparison of Management Action by Alternative

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE2	ALTERNATIVE3	ALTERNATIVE4	ALTERNATIVE5	ALTERNATIVE6	ALTERNATIVE7 (PREFERREDPLAN)
Lands	No specific direction. Acquire lands through exchange, if in the public interest.	Actively acquire inholdings where there is a willing seller preferably through exchange.	Same as Alternative 1	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Rights-of-Ways	Open to the location of new rights-of-ways, except Abert Rim WSA.	Allow no new rights-of-ways.	Allow new rights-of-ways, but only in accordance with the restrictions of VRM class, lake levels, total dissolved solid levels, and wilderness IMP .	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 3.
Roads and Transportation	Restrict vehicle traffic on those roads lacking subgrade re-inforcement where critical erosion is likely. See also OHV restructions under Recreation. Mineral leasing and ROWs would require an increase in existing roads and maintenance. Railroad spur could also be required.	Same as Alternative 1, except no new roads or railroads would be constructed. OHV use would be eliminated or restricted. See discussion under "Recreation".	Same as Alternative 1, except OHV use would be limited to existing roads and trails and some seasonal closures imposed. See "Recreation" discussion.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.
Soils	Restrict vehicle traffic on those roads lacking subgrade re-inforcement where critical erosion is likely.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Air Quality	No specific direction.	Plan and implement prescribed burning plans such that they do not violate air quality standards.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 2.
Hydrology and Water Quality	No specific direction.	Establish goals and objectives for water quality and quantity.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 2, *plus review futurewaterrights applications and Forest Service planning within the basin.*
Aquatic Communities	No specific direction.	Aquatic communities would be protected due to the closure of the area to mining and new ROW location and by meeting water quality standards.	Aquatic communities would be protected by placing restictions on mining and new ROWs.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1, except for restrictions on lake levels and total dissolved solids.	Same as Alternative 3.

Table S-1 (Continued)

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 (PREFERRED PLAN)
Geology and Minerals	BLM-administered lands within the planning area would be open to: locatable mineral entry; all mineral leasing, except within the WSA; salable mineral disposal, except within the WSA.	BLM-administered lands within the planning area would be closed to locatable mineral entry via withdrawal. Leasing and salable mineral disposal would not be allowed. Two existing pits would be closed and reclaimed.	BLM-administered lands within the planning area would be open to: Locatable mineral entry. A separate Plan of Operations and NEPA document would be required for all activity, other than casual use, within the ACEC. Sodium mining would be subject to lake level and total dissolved solid stipulations. Salable mineral disposal would be restricted to 2 existing pits. Geothermal, oil, and gas leasing subject to no surface occupancy within the ACEC.	Same as Alternative 3.	Generally the same as Alternative 3, except: BLM-administered lands in the northern part of the ACEC (Map 7, Appendix B) would be closed to sodium leasing.	Generally the same as Alternative 1, except: sodium leasing on BLM-administered lands would be subject to lake level and total dissolved solid stipulations. Oil, gas, and geothermal leasing on BLM-administered lands would be subject to no surface occupancy near the lake below elevation of 4,260 feet.	Generally the same as Alternative 5, except: a relatively smaller area would be closed to leasing (Map 8, Appendix B), a relatively larger area would be subject to no surface occupancy restrictions, and mineral material disposal could occur anywhere on BLM-administered lands outside of the ACEC where a demand exists.
Ground-water	No specific direction.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Paleonto-logical	Protect and preserve whenever located. Allow scientific research.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Vegetation	No specific direction.	Use prescribed fire, grazing, exclosures, and reestablishment of vegetation to maintain or improve wetland, riparian, and upland habitats and botanical species diver- sity. Preference would be to reseed areas in need of rehab with native species.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 2.
Noxious Weeds	Continue on-going integrated weed control program.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Rangeland	Allocate forage and implement range improvement projects in accordance with the High Desert MFP, Lakeview Grazing EIS, and subsequent decisions and agreements. Continue exchange of use agreement with permittee on the north end of the lake for the benefit of snowy plovers. Exclude livestock grazing on Abert Rim. Maintain riparian exclosure fences on west side of the lake, ***including new Cave Springs fence.***	Open areas would remain open to livestock grazing in a manner similar to Alternative 1 unless documented evidence exists that significant, adverse impacts are occurring to the relevant and important resource values. Allocate all AUMs on Abert Rim (allotment #0400) to wildlife.	Same as Alternative 1, except would allocate all AUMs on Abert Rim to wildlife.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 3, ***except edtended Cave Springs fence 6-7 miles further south to completely exclude southwestern shore from grazing.***

Table S-1 (Continued)

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 (PREFERRED PLAN)
Special Forest Products	MFP allows for the disposal of timber products and other vegetation products on juniper woodlands to meet the public demand. Such products include firewood, posts, poles, berries, and boughs from juniper. District policy also addresses the cutting of Christmas trees and gathering mushrooms. Firewood cutting is allowed in designated firewood cutting areas only. No such areas exist in the planning area. Current policy also closes WSAs and ACECs to harvest of special forest products.	Entire ACEC would be closed to the harvest of all special forest products, consistent with District policy.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 2.
Wildlife	Continue 180 bighorn sheep months use on Abert Rim. Maintain 3 developed bighorn sheep water catchments on Abert Rim. Prohibit OHV use in raptor nesting areas between Feb. 1 and June 30.	Same as Alternative 1, except would allocate all AUM's (over and above the existing 180 bighorn sheep months) on Abert Rim to bighorn sheep and other wildlife.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 2.
Animal Damage Control	Continue existing or expanded predator and grasshopper control programs by APHIS/ ADC. Restricted by Wilderness IMP within Abert Rim WSA.	No control work allowed.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Special Status Species	Allow no land or surface disturbance on or near any known special status plant site. Eliminate, reduce, or maintain existing livestock/ wildlife use on rare plant sites. Manage all known potential habitats in manner that maintains or enhances the ecosystem required by special status species.	Reintroduce sensitive plant and animal species that were historically present in the area. Currently, only the desert allocarya is known from the area. Columbia cress and long-flowered snowberry are suspected. New information or future listings during the life of the plan could necessitate other reintroductions.	Reintroduce desert allocarya within the Cave Springs exclosure.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 3.

Table S-1 (Continued)

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 (PREFERRED PLAN)
Special Areas	No ACEC designation (Map 1, Appendix B). Manage Abert Rim WSA in accordance with the Wilderness IMP.	Designate and manage the entire planning area (immediate drainage totalling about 99,900 acres of Federal land) as an ACEC (Map 4, Appendix B). A portion of Abert Rim WSA would be in the ACEC, but would be managed similar to Alternative 1.	Designate and manage the lake and surrounding area (approximately 31,600 acres of Federal laud) up to the legally surveyed hi&water mark (elevation 4260 feet) as an ACEC (Map 5, Appendix B). Abert Rim WSA would 'be outside the ACEC, but would be managed the same as Alternative 1.	Designate and manage the area (approximately 39,300 acres of Federal land) up to the highest recently-recorded water (elevation 4262 feet) mark on the north west, and south and up to the top of Abert Rim on the east as an ACEC (Map 6, Appendix B). A portion of Abert Rim WSA would be within the ACEC, but would be managed similar to Alternative 1.	Designate and manage the lake, surrounding archaeological district, and northern playa as an ACEC (approximately 42,100 acres of Federal land) with the boundary established as Highway 395 on the east, an existing county road on the north, an existing jeep trail on the northwest and southwest. and an existing exclosure fence on the west (Map 7, Appendix B). Abert Rim WSA would be outside of the ACEC, but would be managed similar to Alternative 1.	No ACEC designation (Map 1, Appendix B). Manage Abert Rim WSA similar to Alternative 1.	Designate and manage tbe lake, archaeologic district, northern playa, part of Abert Rim WSA, and some adjacent lands (approximately 49,900 acres of Federal land) as an ACEC (Map 8, Appendix B). Abert Rim WSA would be managed ' similar to Alternative 1.
Fire	Allow wildfire to bum with limited suppression Over the entire area, if life or property are not in danger and it meets the fire Prescription forthearea. Severe wildfires are typically reseeded with non-native species to needed. prevent erosion and sedimentation.	All wildfires would be suppressed using a limited suppression strategy in situations where life and property are threatened. Prescribed burn plan(s) would be developed as Areas where an adequate seed source does not exist would be reseeded following the tire to prevent erosion and sedimentation. Seed mix would emphasize native species.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 2.
Cultural	Retain all listed and potential National Register sites in Federal ownership. Close all sites to OHV use except on existing roads. Prevent destructive, discretionary uses to report National Register sites.	Conduct a Class 111 archeological survey of the area, as time and funding permit. Place signs where they can he observed by the general public requesting that they any observed digging in the area. Perform regular patrols of sites to protect against excavation and monitor general site condition. Provide cultural site interpretation of some sites where the public is already stopping and other resources are being interpreted (i.e. the existing "Watchable Wildlife" site). Expand the existing archaeological district to include other eligible sites around the western lakeshore. Identify Native American traditional uses and concerns through consultation.	Same as Alternative 2, except sites would be added to the existing archaeological district, as time and funds allow.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1, except site interpretation would be expanded for public education purposes.	Generally the same as Alternative 3, except additional sites would be included within the ACEC boundary.

Table S-1 (Continued)

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 (PREFERRED PLAN)
Traditional Uses	Identify Native American traditional uses and concerns through consultation.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Recreation	Keep all public lands open to OHV use except special status plant and National Register Sites. Seasonally close areas near raptor nesting sites and in crucial deer winter range. Restrict OHV use to existing roads and trails in areas with erosion problems and in potential National Historic Register sites. Keep area open to hunting, wildlife viewing, and other recreation activities.	Close the area within the Abert Rim WSA and the northern playa to all OHV use. Restrict OHV use in the remainder of the area to existing roads and trails. Continue to allow hunting, wildlife viewing, and other low-impact recreation opportunities. Would convert an existing two-track ***road (east*** of ***Highway 395) near*** Juniper Creek lo a ***foot trail consistent with the*** wilderness ***IMP.***	Restrict OHV use throughout the ACEC to existing roads and trails, ***with certain administrative exceptions.*** Seasonal closures would be placed on the playa at the north end of the lake near ***reptor nest sites***,and in deer/bighorn sheep critical winter range, ***if needed.*** Thoogh outside of the ACEC, OHV use within Abert Rim WSA would remain restricted to existing roads and trails. The rest of the planning area would remain open to OHV use. Would maintain existing "Watchable Wildlife" site on the south end of the lake and would construct a new site on the north end of the lake. Would continue to allow hunting and other low-impact recreation opportunities. ***Would convert an existing two-track road (east of Highway 395) near Juniper Creek to a foot trail consistent with the wilderness IMP.***	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1, but allow and/or develop more low-impact recreational opportunities.	Same as Alternative 3.
Visual	Manage the area in accordance with the existing VRM class objectives (I, III, and IV).	Manage Abert Rim in its existing VRM Class (I). Designate and manage the remainder of the planning area as VRM Class II.	Manage the area from the eastern l&e-shore to the top of Abert Rim in its existing VRM Class (I). Designate and manage the western side of the planning area as VRM Class III.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Manage the area from the eastern lake-shore to the top of Abert Rim in its existing VRM Class (I). Designate and manage the rest of the ACEC and part of the western shore as Class II and the rest of the north and western sides of the planning area as VRM Class III (Map 9, Appendix B).
Hazardous Materials	***Identify, investigate, and remoce all sucj substances discovered on BLM lands in accordance with all applicable laws and regutations.***	***Same as Alternative 1.***	***Same as Alternative 1.***	***Same as Alternative 1.***	***Same as Alternative 1.***	***Same as Alternative 1.***	***Same as Alternative 1.***

Table S-2 Comparison of Impacts by Alternative

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 (PREFERRED PLAN)
Lands and Rights-of-Way Impacts	No chanee. All orooosals evaluated on cask-by-case basis. Least restrictive to location of new ROWs.	No land actions would be allowed except aquisitionof in-holdings via exchange. Most restrictive of locations of new ROWs.	Similar to Alternative 1. except new ROWs, leases; and permits would be allowed provided they are consistent withmanagement objectives.	Same as Alternatives 1 and 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternatives 1 and 3
Roads and Transportation Impacts	No change from existing conditions unless future development is permitted. This would require additional roads, possibly new railroad spur, and increased road maintenance.	woud be required. Emphasis No new roads or railroads would be on maintaining existing roads or closing a roads where necessary. OHV Impacts discussed under "Recreation".	Same as Alternative 1, except OHV use would be more restricted. OHV impacts are discussed further under "Recreation".	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 3.
Soil Impacts	Surface disturbance due road or railroad construction, new ROWs, or mineral activities would increase the potential for soil erosion. Wildfire suppression may lead to increased erosion depending upon fire intensity and amount of mechanical fire lines constructed.	to Minimal soil impacts. Wildfire fire suppression impacts similar to Alternative 1. Prescribed tire may cause temporary increase in soil erosion.	Impacts generally tbe same as Alternative 2. Increased potential for soil erosion during mineral production phase.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Impacts generally the same as Alternative 1. However, mineral development would have less potential to cause soil erosion while an increase in other uses (causing an increse in need for road maintenance) could cause greater soil erosion, if roads are not properly maintained.	Same as Alternative 3.
Air Quality Impacts	No change. Minimal impacts from natural wind erosion and vehicle traffic causing blowing dust. New construction would also increase the amount of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter released in the air. Wildlfires would continue to release uncontroled amounts of smoke, particulates, and carbon dioxide.	This Alternative would have minimal impacts to air quality. Wildfires would have similar impacts as Alternative 1. However, properly planned prescribed burns would reduce this potential as they would be designed to not violate air quality standards.	New construction associated with mineral development would increase the amount of pollutants released into the air similar to Alternative 1. Fire impacts would be similar to Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.
Hydrology and Water Quality Impacts	Issuance of new ROWs could impact total dissolved solids. Sodium mining would have the greatest potential to impact lake hydrology and water chemistry. Risk of damage from recreational and fire management activities exists due to removal of vegetation and increased soil compaction, overland flow, and sedimentation.	This represents the most protective alternative with respect to water quality and hydrologic function. Increased use of prescribed fire could temporarily increase overland flow and sedimentation from burn areas, but would generally be less severe than suppression activities under Alternative 1.	Impacts on hydrology and water quality from: ROWs would be similar to Alternative 1; mineral development and recreation would have low risk of causing significant impacts; fiie management would be similar to Alternative 2.	Fire management impacts would be similar to Alternative 2. ROW, recreation, and mineral development impacts would be similar to Alternative 3.	Fire management impacts would be similar to Alternative 2. ROW and recreation impacts would be similar to Alternative 3. Mineral development activity would have lower risk of causing significant impacts than Alternatives 3 and 4 due to less area available for mining.	Most impacts to water quality and hydrology would be similar to Alternative 1. Mineral development is expected to be the most impactive activity, but would be less so than under Alternative 1.	Fire management impacts would be similar to Alternative 2. ROW and recreation impacts would be similar to Alternative 3. Mineral development activity would have lower risk of causing significant impacts than Alternatives 3 and 4 due to less area available for mining.

Table S-2 (Continued)

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 (PREFERRED PLAN)
Geology and Mineral Impacts	This would be the least restrictive alternative as the planning area would be open to locatable mineral entry, all mineral leasing, except within the WSA, and salable mineral disposal, except within the WSA. This provide for the availability of the most mineral and resources wherever a resources would not be demand exists and there is made available, regardless economic viability.	This would be the most restrictive alternative as tbe planning area would be closed to locatable mineral entry via withdrawal. Leasing and salable mineral disposal would not be allowed. Two existing gravel pits would be closed reclaimed. Mineral time which could affect economic feasibility. of demand.	The planning area would be open to mining, but subject to the following: Sodium mining would be subject to lake level and total dissolved solid stipulations. This could cause intemptions or shutdown of the operation from time to Salable mineral disposal would be restricted to the 2 existing pits. This could adversely effect any activity that requires road, dike, or pond building and/or maintenance. Geothermal, oil, and gas leasing would be subject to no surface occupancy within the ACEC which would negatively impact these activities as more expensive directional drilling would be required. Geophysical exploration that requires surface occupancy from within the ACEC would be precluded.	Impacts would be similar to Alternative 3.	The impacts would generally be the same as Alternative 3, except less land would be available for sodium leasing and a greater area on the northern end of the ACEC would be subject to the no surface occupancy restrictions. Because the area would be managed as VRM class II, there would be additional restrictions placed on any type of activity within the ACEC which alters the appearance of the landscape. This could result in the need to use costly "masking" techniques as a part of any mineral development to conform to VRM Class objectives.	The impacts would generally be the same as Alternative 3, except locatable mineral activities and material disposal activities would be similar to Alternative 1.	Impacts would be similar to Alternative 5, except a larger area would be subject to no surface occupancy restrictions and more area would be open to leasing. Mineral material disposal would be allowed outside of the ACEC.
Groundwater Impacts	No change; no impacts expected.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Paleontological Impacts	No change; no impacts expected.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Vegetation Impacts	No significant changes expected to existing plant communities.	Natural processes would be reintroduced (fire) and native species reestablished resulting in improved habitat conditions and increased species diversity.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 2.
Rangeland Resource Impacts	No significant impacts beyond those described in "Lakeview Grazing Management EIS". May be an increased need for cattle guards in the area.	The area wouldremain open to livestock grazing, but portions could be closed where documented evidence exists that resource degradation is officially occurring. This could require construction and maintenance of more exclosures and water sources in the area and a potential loss of 50 to 100 AUMs. All AUMs on Abert Rim would be officially allocated to wildlife:	Generally the impacts would be the same as Alternative 1, except that all AUMs on Abert Rim would be allocated to wildlife and would no longer be available for livestock.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 3.

Table S-2 (Continued)

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 (PREFERRED PLAN)
Special Forest Products	No change; no impacts expected.	Entire ACEC would be closed to harvest of special forest products.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.
Aquatic Community Impacts	Highest potential for significant, adverse impacts.	Most protective alternative: no significant negative impacts expected.	No significant, adverse impacts expected.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 3.
Wildlife Impacts	Forage allocation on Abert Rim would continue to be insufficient for current use by bighorn sheep. Potential exists for conflict should livestock grazing be permitted in this area. Mineral development could reduce, displace, and/or eliminate local pronghorn antelope predator, rodent, waterfowl, and shorebird populations and/or their habitat.	Most protective alternative; potential for conflict between bighorn sheep and cattle forage allocation would not exist as all AUMs on Abert Rim would be allocated to wildlife. No other impacts to wildlife	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Impacts to bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, mules deer, predators, rodents, and lagamorphs would be similar to Alternative 1. Impacts to waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors would be similar to Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.
Special Status Species Impacts	No change; level of protection is as required by law, regulation, or policy. Some animal species could be negatively impacted.	This alternative would allow reintroduction of sensitive plant and animal species that were historically present such as desert allocarya, Columbia cress, long-flowered snowberry, and other species listed in the future. Would help insure long-term stability to all sensitive species and prevent Federal listing. Potential negative impacts to sensitive animals of Alternative 1 would not occur.	Would allow reintroduction of desert allocarya and aid in preventing its being federally listed. Impacts to sensitive animals expected to be similar to Alternative 2.	Plants: same as Alternative 3. Animals: same as Alternative 2.	'Plants: same as Alternative 3. Animals: same as Alternative 2.	Plants and animals: same as Alternative 1.	Plants: same as Alternative 3. Animals: same as Alternative 2.
Special Area Impacts	Would result in no ACEC designation or change in current management (Map 1, Appendix B). Existing management would be inconsistent with the intent/ direction of FLPMA with respect to ACEC designation. Abert Rim WSA would continue to be managed in accordance with the wilderness IMP	The entire planning area would be designated and managed as an ACEC (Map 4, Appendix B). A portion of Abert Rim WSA would be in the ACEC, but would continue to be managed similar to Alternative 1.	The lake and surrounding area up to the legally surveyed high-water mark (elevation 4,260 feet) would be designated and managed as an ACEC (Map 5, Appendix B). Abert Rim WSA would be outside the ACEC, but would be managed the same as Alternative 1.	The area up to the highest recently-recorded water (elevation 4,262 feet) mark on the north, west, and south and up to the top of Abert Rim on the east would be designated and managed as an ACEC (Map 6, Appendix B). A portion of Abert Rim WSA would be within the ACEC, but would be managed similar to Alternative 1.	The lake, surrounding archaeological district, and northern playa would be designated and managed as an ACEC (Map 7, Appendix B). Abert Rim WSA would be outside of the ACEC, but would be managed similar to Alternative 1.	There would be no ACEC designation, but some changes in current management in the planning area (Map 1, Appendix B). Management would be inconsistent with the intent/ direction of FLPMA with respect to ACEC designation. Abert Rim WSA would be managed similar to Alternative 1.	The lake, Abert Rim, and surrounding lands (Map 8, Appendix B) would be designated and managed as an ACEC. Abert Rim WSA would be managed similar to Alternative 1.

Table S-2 (Continued)

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 (PREFERRED PLAN)
Fire Management Impacts	No change; fire would be allowed to burn withlimited suppression over the entire area, if life or property are not in danger and it meets the fire prescription (i.e. plan) for the area. Though fire management plans do not exist for the area, they could be written and implemented.	Wildfires would be handled similar to Alternative 1. Prescribed firemanagement plan(s) would be developed and implemented as needed to meet ecosystem management goals and objectives.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 2.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 2.
Cultural Resource Impacts	No significant change expected unless development is proposed. Sites could be disturbed or destroyed ifavoidance is not possible. Traditional use areas may be impacted. Existing archaeological district would continue and could be expanded in size.	Cultural resources and traditional uses would be given greater protection due to elimination of mining and ROW locations. A Class III inventory of the area would be a benefit. Signing some sites would allow for increased public education. Regular patrols would protect against illegal excavation and vandalism.	Impacts would generally be similar to Alternative 2 except: mineral leasing could have severe impacts upon some cultural and traditional use sites unless avoided. Not as much effort would be expended adding sites to the existing archeological district.	Impacts would generally be similar to Alternative 3 except: much of the cultural and traditional use areas would be bisscted by the ACEC boundary. This would make management more difficult as the level of protection for a given site would vary depending on the boundary location.	Impacts would generally be similar to Alternative 3 except: mining within part of a National Register District could make protection of cultural sites more difficult. Closure of the northern part of the ACEC to mineral leasing would protect cultural sites in that area.	Impacts would be similar to Alternative 1, except site interpreta-tion would be expanded for public education purposes.	Impacts would generally be similar to Alternative 5, except that more sites would fall within the ACEC boundary.
Traditional Use Impacts	Existing laws and policy dictate that the BLM identify Native American traditional uses and concerns through consultation. This on-going process should result in a better understanding of these uses and concerns and better government-to-government relationships.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1.
Social and Economic Impacts	Generally no change in existing socioeconomic conditions except for the potential for minor increases in area employment and associated spending effects which would result from mineral development. Such development would also result in royalties paid to the state and Federal governments.	Socioeconomic conditions would be expected to remain the same as existing conditions.	Impacts would be similar to Alternative 1, but would probably result in less employment and revenue generating potential.	Same as Alternative 3.	Socioeconomic benefits would be similar to, but possibly lesser than alternatives 1 and 3, as less area would be available for mineral development.	Same as Alternative 3.	Same as Alternative 5, except more area would be available for mineral leasing and less private land would fall within the ACEC boundary.

Table S-2(Continued)

RESOURCE	ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3	ALTERNATIVE 4	ALTERNATIVE 5	ALTERNATIVE 6	ALTERNATIVE 7 @'REFERRED PLAN)
Recreation Impacts	There would be no significant impact to non-motorized recreation opportunities within the planning area. OHV use could be further limited by additional seasonal or permanent closures. Potential mineral development activities could negatively impact recreation opportunities.	Minor, negative impacts to recreational opportunities as Abert Rim WSA and the northern playa would be closed to all OHV use.	Impacts would be similar to Alternative 2, except Abert Rim would remain open to vehicle access (restricted to existing roads and trails). Wildlife viewing and hiking opportunities would be improved.	Impacts generally similar to Alternative 3.	Impacts generally similar to Alternative 3.	Impacts would be generally similar to Alternative 1, but increased recreational opportunities could occur.	Impacts generally similar to Alternative 3.
Visual Resource Impacts	The area would be managed in accordance with the existing VRM classifications (I, III, and IV). No impacts would be expected to visual resources unless mineral development occurs or major ROW is issued (hydropower project). Sodium leasing could significantly impact visual quality along south half of lake. Structures located near Hwy. 395 would conflict with VRM I objectives.	Abert Rim would continue to be managed in accordance with its existing VRM Class (I). The remainder of the planning area would be designated as VRM Class Il. This would offer the most visual protection for the viewshed.	Abert Rim would continue to he managed in its existing VRM Class (I). The western portion of the planning area would be designated VRM Class III. Impacts would generally be similar to Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 3.	Impacts would generally be similar to Alternative 2, except that mineral development may not meet VRM Class II criterion and could require visual mitigation and/or cause potential resource conflicts.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 5.
Hazardous Material Impacts	*Proper removal, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials discovered on BLM lands would have* minimal *impacts provided such sites were located, contained,and treated soon after* illegal dumping *activities occurred.*	*Same as Alternative 1.*	*Same as Alternative 1.*	*Same as Alternative 1.*	*Same as Alternative 1.*	*Same as Alternative 1.*	*Same as Alternative 1.*

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Purpose and Need

The Lakeview District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this plan amendment to address the appropriateness of designating Lake Abert and the surrounding area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This designation (accompanied by special management actions) has been evaluated as a means of protecting significant resources in the area.

Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) states, "in the development of land use plans, the Secretary shall give priority to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" (ACEC). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regulations define an ACEC as an area "within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards".

Current land use management activities for the Lakeview Resource Area (which contains the planning area) are guided by the High Desert Management Framework Plan (MFP) completed in 1983 (BLM, 1983). However, this MFP did not evaluate the Lake Abert area as a potential Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The BLM has since recognized four important resource values or processes in the Lake Abert area potentially deserving special management attention: wildlife resources, cultural resources, scenic values, and ecological processes (BLM, 1993).

ACEC designation recognizes the area possesses significant values and establishes special management measures to protect those values. Designation helps assure that the significant values or resources are adequately addressed in future management actions and land use proposals within the area.

The FLPMA and BLM regulations allow potential ACECs to be nominated by staff, other agencies, or members of the public at any time. In 1992, Lake Abert and the adjacent uplands were nominated for consideration as an ACEC by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (letter dated August 7, 1992) and the Oregon Waterfowl and Wetlands Association (letter dated August 10, 1992).

There were two proposals within the planning area which initially brought a sense of urgency to the need to prepare a plan amendment at this time, rather than wait to evaluate ACEC designation during the preparation of an updated Resource Management Plan (land use plan) at some future time. These included a proposed pump-storage hydroelectric project and the issuance of a sodium

preference rights lease for sodium mining. These proposals drew attention to the need to update the overall management guidelines for the study area to protect existing relevant and important resource values. Just prior to releasing the draft documentforpublic review, the mining applicant withdrew its interest in mining leases in the area. During the public review of the draft document, the hydroelectric proponent requested that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) terminate its preliminary permit. FERC terminated this permit in early August I995 and subsequently vacated all public land withdrawals associated with this proposal. Nevertheless, it is anticipated other similar projects could be proposed in the future.

Location

The planning area is located approximately three miles northeast of Valley Falls in central Lake County, Oregon (Figure 1) within the Lakeview Resource Area (formerly called the High Desert Resource Area) and consists of approximately 188 square miles (120,570 acres) of Lake Abert and the surrounding area. Abert Rim Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is located along the eastern edge of the planning area.

Planning Process

The plan amendment/ACEC planning process is defined in Federal regulations (43 CFR Part 1610) and was discussed in detail in the draft document and will not be repeated here. To be designated as an ACEC, an area must meet both relevance and importance criteria for at least one resource value (43 CFR 1610.7-2).

ACEC Evaluation Findings

During the nomination process prehistoric cultural, wildlife, unique natural system (aquatic ecology) and scenic values in and around Lake Abert were identified as reasons for ACEC designation. After careful consideration of these and other potential values, the BLM interdisciplinary team evaluated these four values in detail. The staff prepared several resource inventory reports and combined the information into a summary report. The report documents that Lake Abert and its immediate surroundings meet the relevance and importance criteria for the presence of: prehistoric cultural values, scenic values, wildlife (both populations and habitat) resources, and natural processes (aquatic ecology). The natural hazards (landslides, rockslides, cliffs and potential for flash flooding) which are present were found to meet the relevance, but not the importance criteria (BLM, 1993).

Decision Making Process

Prior to making a decision to designate the area as an ACEC, a combined draft plan amendment/EIS was prepared which includes public involvement and inter-agency coordination. The document included the special management practices needed, uses to be allowed, and mitigation measures. With publication of this final plan amendment/EIS, the District Manager is prepared to make a recommendation to the State Director to approve the proposed plan amendment. The State Director will then review the final document and officially document the decision in a signed Record of Decision (ROD). Signing the ROD would constitute official ACEC designation for the area, if that is the State Director's decision.

Decisions to Be Made

Through the combined planning and NEPA process, the BLM proposes to make the following three key decisions:

1. Should the area be designated as an ACEC?

2. If designation is appropriate, how much area should be included in the designation?

3. If designated, what special management should be proposed and implemented to protect the relevant and important values?

Planning Issues

A number of issues were identified during the public scoping and working group processes which were addressed in the preparation of the plan amendment, These were organized into 16 major categories and are listed below. Those that were not considered outside the scope of analysis were used to develop management goals, objectives, or alternatives for future management. The following are not listed in any particular order of priority.

1. Economics

a) Protecting existing area economy
b) Future economic development opportunities
c) Mining/hydro electric project
d) Tax base effects

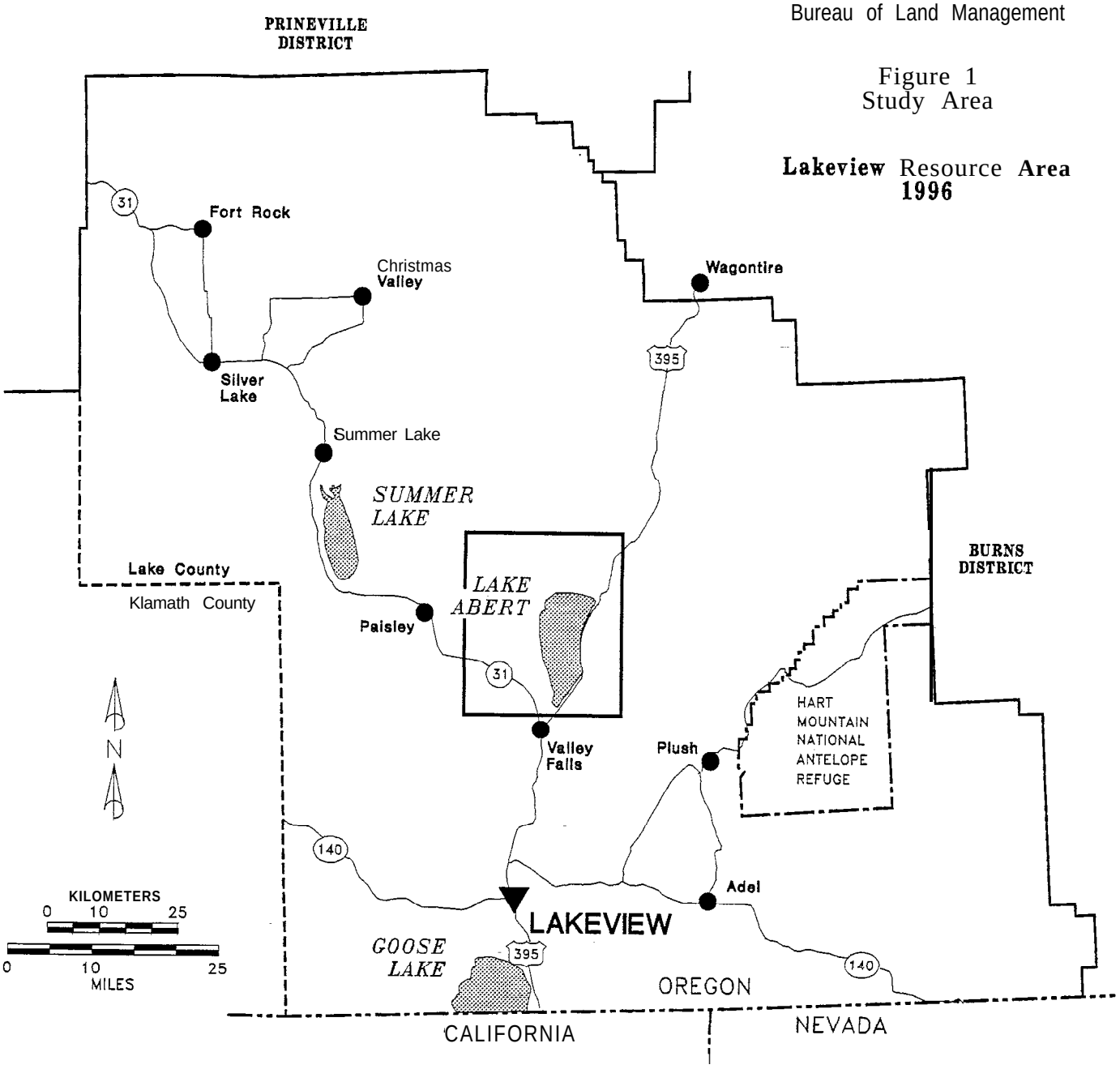
2. Aquatic ecology

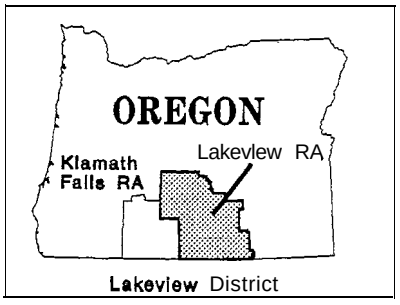
a) Water flow into the lake
b) Lake level fluctuation
c) Lake chemistry
d) Water quality

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

Figure 1
Study Area

Lakeview Resource Area
1996





Legend

- Study Area Location
- District Office
- 395 U.S. Highway
- 140 State Highway
- District Boundary
- State Boundary
- County Boundary
- Fish and Wildlife Service Boundary

- protect lake water/inflow from pollution
- work with Forest Service to protect water quality/ flows

e) Utilize a watershed-based approach to management

3. ACEC boundary/designation

a) Should an ACEC be designated?
b) How large an area should be designated?
c) The results of scientific processes, not economic factors, should determine if the area should be designated

4. Private property owners' rights

a) Maintaining access to private lands
b) Private lands in the area may be bought by the government or by a non-profit organization and transferred to the government
c) Future restrictions on lands outside of the ACEC area

5. Cultural resources

6. Recreation opportunities

a) Public hunting
b) Off-highway vehicle use
c) Wildlife viewing
d) General visitor use
e) Tourism/public education opportunities
f) Road closures

7. Visual resources

a) Allow no structures/developments within sight of the lake or ACEC boundary

8. Social/cultural (lifestyle) changes

9. Special status species

10. Management/implementation costs

11. Land tenure adjustments

12. Rights-of-way

a) Pump-storage hydroelectric project

13. Minerals

a) Leasing
b) Locatable/salable
c) Ownership of salts in the lake water (Federal, state, or both?)

14. Agricultural uses

a) Grazing on public lands
b) Water rights
c) Brine shrimp fishery

15. Wildlife resources/habitat

a) Disturbances to existing wildlife populations
b) Lake's relationship to other migratory stops on the flyway
c) Waterfowl nesting habitat
d) Population fluctuations
e) Wetland/riparian habitats

16, **Wilderness**

a) Allow no development or roads within Abert Rim WSA
b) Designate Lake Abert area and/or lands extending east to Hart Modhtain National Antelope Refuge as wilderness rather than ACEC

Management Goals and Objectives

Ten general management goals for the study area were developed along with a number of more specific objectives to aid in measuring, over time (through monitoring), how well an aiternative meets the goals. The following goals and objectives were developed to address the issues and concerns raised during the public involvement process. They are not listed in any order of priority and, at first glance, there may be some that appear to be in direct conflict with each other. This reflects the various legal mandates under which the BLM operates. While some goals may conflict, they are not totally exclusive of each other, The alternatives that were developed emphasize meeting some goals over others. The ultimate decision will be based on which alternative or combination of alternatives best meets the goals.

Goal 1

Maintain a viable, sustainable ecosystem within the lake and surrounding area (prevent changes that would cause significant, adverse effects on ecological values).

Objectives

a) Maintain current aquatic and wetland plant community diversity by not allowing any future, human-caused activity that would cause a significant change (defined as a 10% change over any three-year

period at an 85% confidence level) in relative species abundance. Should a significant change occur, existing management would be reevaluated.

b) Authorize no future discretionary human action which will increase the number of years by more than 5%, when compared to the 1926-1994 baseline, that the average total dissolved solid concentration in Lake Abert exceeds *100* g/l and/or reduces the level of the lake below *4,251* feet in elevation. (Note: water chemistry changes, primarily the ratio of dissolved carbonates to chlorides, are not addressed by this objective and would require detailed evaluation in a separate, project-specific NEPA document which would include a model of other criteria to be developed at a future date).

Goal 2

Maintain or enhance economic conditions consistent with other listed goals and existing laws, regulations, and policies.

Goal 3

Maintain or enhance existing resource values for future generations (i.e. do not exclude future options by current management actions).

Goal 4

Continue current, traditional, and historic land and resource uses in the area.

Goal 5

Maintain or enhance recreational opportunities and wilderness values.

Objectives

a) Manage the area in accordance with the following Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) management objectives with the intent of allowing continuation of hunting, limited trail development, and other recreation opportunities within the area:

- Preserve primitive, non-motorized recreation opportunities east of Highway 395 (within Abert Rim WSA).
- Manage the Highway 395 corridor as a Roaded Natural Environment.
- Manage the playa at the north end of the lake and the westside of the lake as a Semi-Primitive, Motorized area.

b) Mange Abert Rim WSA in accordance with the Wilderness Interim Management Policy (BLM, 1987b) until a final decision on wilderness designation is made by Congress. The Wilderness IMP generally precludes activities which permanently impair existing wilderness values.

Goal 6

Maintain the present visual/aesthetic quality.

Objectives

a) Allow no developments which would cause a significant, adverse visual impact to the casual observer as viewed from the primary travel corridor of Highway 395.

Goal 7

Protect and/or interpret, where appropriate, existing cultural resource values, including protecting and respecting Native American traditional uses.

Objectives

a) Ensure that, in any given year, no cultural sites are damaged due to unauthorized excavation.

Goal 8

Maintain or enhance habitat quality and quantity for native plant and animal species, including special status species (such that the latter do not become Federally-listed).

Objectives

a) Provide or maintain an upland vegetation community (composition by weight of total annual production) of 70-80% grasses, 5-15% forbs, and 5-15% shrubs, on existing seeded areas.

b) Provide or maintain an upland native vegetation community (composition by weight of total annual production) of 30-40% grasses, 5-15% forbs, and 25-40% shrubs on existing unseeded areas. These composition ranges can occur in mosaics within the unseeded areas.

c) Provide and maintain habitats within the area capable of supporting the greatest diversity (those minimum species diversity levels presented below) of non-sensitive, native wildlife species at the highest population levels consistent with sustaining that diversity:

- 70 nesting avian species
- 90 migratory and/or seasonal avian species
- 45 resident and/or migratory mammalian species
- 15 resident amphibian and reptile species

d) Provide and maintain habitats capable of supporting the following population levels of sensitive fish and wildlife species known or strongly suspected of breeding in the area:

- Peregrine Falcon - 5 nesting pairs
- Western Snowy Plover - 100 nesting pairs
- Long-billed Curlew - 20 nesting pairs
- California Bighorn Sheep - 125 individuals
- Loggerhead Shrike - to be set after future inventories
- Pygmy Rabbit - to be set after future inventories
- Ferruginous Hawk - to be set after future inventories
- White-tailed Antelope Groundsquirrel - to be set after future inventories
- White-tailed Jackrabbit - to be set after future inventories
- Oregon Lakes Tui Chub - to be set after future inventories

e) Provide and maintain suitable habitats capable of supporting the following sensitive wildlife species known to make seasonal use of the area:

- Bald Eagle - 10 individuals (December - March)
- White-faced Ibis - 50 individuals (February - March)
- Black Tern - 150 individuals (migratory; February - June)

f) Provide, maintain, or restore habitats capable of supporting the following minimum population levels for all sensitive plant species which currently exist or historically existed within the area. Reevaluate management if an existing population declines by 10% or more over 3 years.

- Desert allocarya (*Plagiobothrys salsus*) - 50 plants (to be restored)
- Columbia cress (*Rorippa columbiae*) - to be set after future inventories, if located
- Long-flowered snowberry (*Symphoricarpos longiflorus*) - to be set after future inventories, if located

Goal 9

Maintain or enhance public education and scientific research opportunities.

Goal 10

Maintain exploration and development opportunities for leasable, salable, and locatable minerals to provide needed mineral resources, consistent with other listed goals and existing laws, regulations, and policies.

Conformance with Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Land Use Plans and Policies

In the draft plan amendment/EIS, the BLM documented the consistency of the proposed ACEC designation and management activities with the existing, known Federal, State, Local, and Tribal land use plans/policies. An additional regional scale plan was released during the public review period by the Ore-Cal Resource Conservation and Development Council (1995) which was considered. Appropriate agencies, state and local governments, and tribes were given an opportunity to comment on consistency with their plans/policies during the 90-day review period. The National Park Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife were the only agencies thatprovided written comments on the proposal. No comments related to plan consistency were received. Therefore, the BLM assumes there are no major concerns with plan consistency other than those disclosed in the draft document. The reader should refer to the draft plan amendment/EIS for this discussion.

Chapter 2 - Alternatives

Introduction

NEPA requires that whenever a Federal agency proposes a major Federal action, the agency must evaluate a wide range of (but not necessarily all) possible alternative actions. During the planning process, the public, the working group, and BLM ID Team members provided input into the development of management goals and objectives for the area. A total of eleven alternatives were considered with seven being studied in detail, based on the management goals and objectives for the area. ***A summary of the seven alternatives studied in detail is located in the summary section at the front of this document. The proposed plan (Alternative 7 in the draft document) is described in detail in the following section. The other 6 alternatives are discussed in detail in the draft plan amendment/EIS and will not be repeated here. The reader should refer to the draft plan amendment/EIS for a complete discussion of the alternatives considered in detail.***

Proposed Plan

Under the proposed plan, a portion of the planning area would be designated as an ACEC (Figure 2). For the purposes of impact assessment, a number of assumptions were made concerning what may or may not happen in the future under the proposed plan. It is assumed that certain types of mineral developments and rights-of-way applications could be proposed and approved, but would be subject to protective stipulations. Mineral leasing would be very restricted compared to the other alternatives (with the exception of Alternative 2). It is also possible that future development(s) may never be proposed. Wildlife and special status species resources may require mitigation in response to such developments. Fire prescriptions would probably be developed and implemented. Current range, recreational, cultural, and other resource management practices would be somewhat protective or restrictive. In general, the proposed plan is similar to Alternative 5 in most respects with some exceptions.

Lands Management

No specific land tenure adjustments were identified in either the High Desert MFP or the draft plan amendment related to the planning area. However, under the proposed alternative, the BLM would continue current policy, which is to block-up or acquire, with exchange with a willing party being the preferred method, parcels within the existing checkerboard land ownership pattern, in order to improve land management efficiency when it is in the general public interest.

Rights-of-Way Management

New rights-of-way could be allowed within the ACEC, but only in accordance with the goals and objectives for VRM class (Goal 6), lake levels, total dissolved solid levels, and water chemistry (Goal 1, objective b), and wilderness interim management policy (none can be located in WSAs). The burden of proof that a new right-of-way proposed within the ACEC met the goals and objectives and, thereby, did not cause an adverse impact on the lake ecosystem, would be on the applicant and would require the preparation of a separate NEPA document.

Roads and Transportation Management

During the wet season, vehicle traffic may be restricted on those roads lacking subgrade reinforcement where critical erosion is known to occur. Those roads which are not needed for management, as identified in the transportation plan, could be closed and rehabilitated. Currently, no roads in the planning area within the transportation plan have been identified as unnecessary, but unneccessary roads could be identified and closed in the future.

Road maintenance would continue as needed (funding permitting). New roads or other transportation features could be constructed in response to discretionary approvals of new rights-of-ways or other permitted developments. However, the burden of proof that such new construction would not cause an adverse impact on the lake ecosystem, would be on the applicant and would require the preparation of a separate NEPA document.

OHV use would be limited to existing roads and trails. Seasonal closures would be placed on the northern playa, in deer/bighorn sheep critical winter range, and near raptor nesting sites, as needed. See also the discussion under Wildlife Management and Recreation Management. Authorized administrative use, on a limited basis, such as law enforcement, emergency search and rescue operations, wildlife surveys, project maintenance, and permittee access may be exempted from these restrictions.

Soils Management

During the wet season, vehicle traffic may be restricted on those roads lacking subgrade reinforcement where critical erosion is known to occur. See also Vegetation Management section.

Air Quality Management

Prescribed bum plans would be planned and implemented such that burning does not violate state air quality standards.

Hydrology and Water Quality Management

No discretionary actions under the control of the BLM would be allowed which would violate State of Oregon water quality standards or conflict with Goal 1, objective b. ***The BLM recognizes water inflow and quality as one of the most important factors affecting lake ecology. However, the authority to control the allocation of water within the basin rests with the Oregon Department of Water Resources and the majority of the headwaters occur on Forest Service lands. The BLM would work cooperatively with both agencies to ensure thatfuture water allocation proposals or projects occurring on Forest Service lands in the basin adequately consider water inflow and quality issues as they relate to potential impacts on the Lake Abert ecosystem. The BLM currenty receives notices from both agencies concerning planned activities going on in the basin. The BLM intends to review all such proposals on a case-by-case basis to determine if they would be detrimental to the lake ecosystem. If the BLM determines that such proposals would have an adverse impact on the relevant and important ACEC values it would officially object or protest the proposed action.***

Aquatic Community Management

No active management or manipulation would occur. However those management measures described under rights-of-ways, water quality, mineral, and visual resource management have been designed and included in the preferred plan specifically to protect the aquatic community and ecology of the lake system.

Mineral Management

The northern portion of the ACEC area (Figure 2) would be closed to sodium leasing.

Within Abert Rim WSA (Map 2 of the draft plan amendment&IS), mineral leasing or mineral disposal is currently not allowed under the wilderness interim management policy (IMP). This restriction would continue under the proposed plan (Figure 2). Locatable mineral activity (under the 1872 Mining Law), other than non-surface disturbing casual use, would require a Plan of

Operation. In addition, any activity requiring reclamation can no longer be allowed. If Congress decides to include Abert Rim WSA in the wilderness system, the area would be officially withdrawn from all mineral activities (locatable, leasable, and salable). However, if Congress decides to release Abert Rim WSA from WSA status, that portion of the WSA within the ACEC (Figure 2) would become open to locatable mineral activity, but subject to a separate Plan of Operation. Abert Rim WSA would remain closed to salable and leasable mineral activities.

The rest of the planning area would be open to mining, but subject to to special stipulations related to lake levels, total dissolved solids, and visual quality (goal 1, objective b; goal 6). Geothermal, oil, and gas leasing could occur throughout the ACEC, but no surface occupancy would be allowed within the ACEC boundary. Locatable mineral activity would be allowed throughout the ACEC, but would require preparation of a separate Plan of Operations/NEPA document. The burden of proof that a given proposal could meet the management goals and objectives would be on the mining applicant. Mineral material disposal would continue from the two existing pits and any other potential sources outside of the ACEC should a future need develop for this material. Any lease issued would be in conformance with the decisions, terms, and conditions of the existing land use plan (i.e. this plan amendment) and all NEPA requirements,

Paleontological Resource Management

No special management was identified. Current guidance would be implemented which requires that such resources be protected and preserved whenever located. Scientific research could follow any new discoveries.

Vegetation Management

Vegetation in the area would be managed using such available techniques as prescribed fire, livestock'grazing management, livestock exclosures, and vegetation reestablishment where necessary to maintain or improve the existing wetland, riparian, and upland habitats and overall botanical species diversity. (See also special status species management section). Preference would be given to the use of native species when reseeding sites which are damaged by disturbance (i.e. gravel pit reclamation), severe fire, or have been treated for noxious weeds and lack an existing native seed source. Existing, non-native seeded areas would be maintained as they currently exist.

An extension of the soon-to-be constructed Cave Springs exclosure fence was proposed during the public review period which (in combination with the Cave Springsfence) would exclude livestock grazing from most of the western riparian zone. This would benefit riparian/wetland vegetation and is discussed further under the Rangeland Management section.

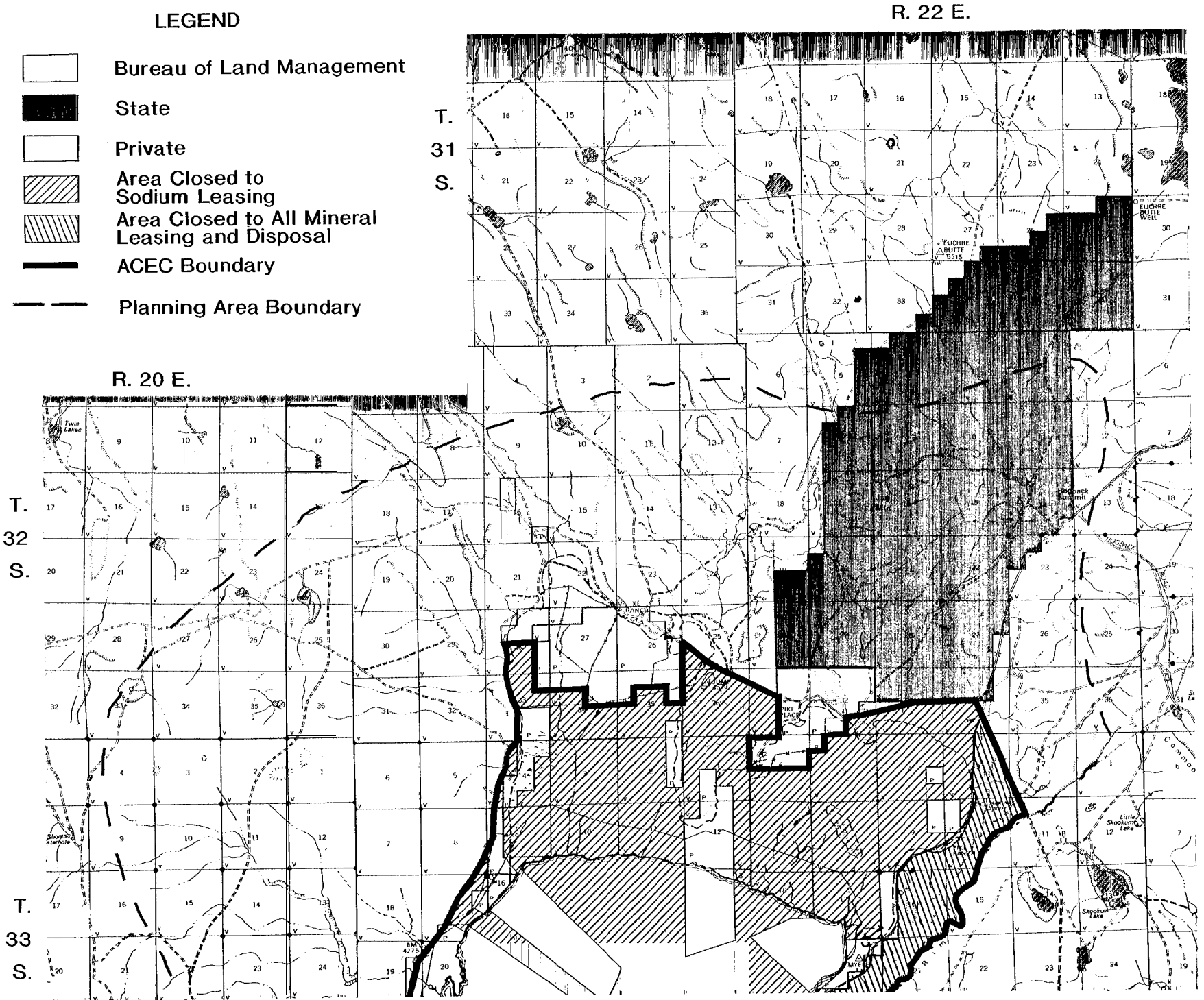
Noxious Weed Management

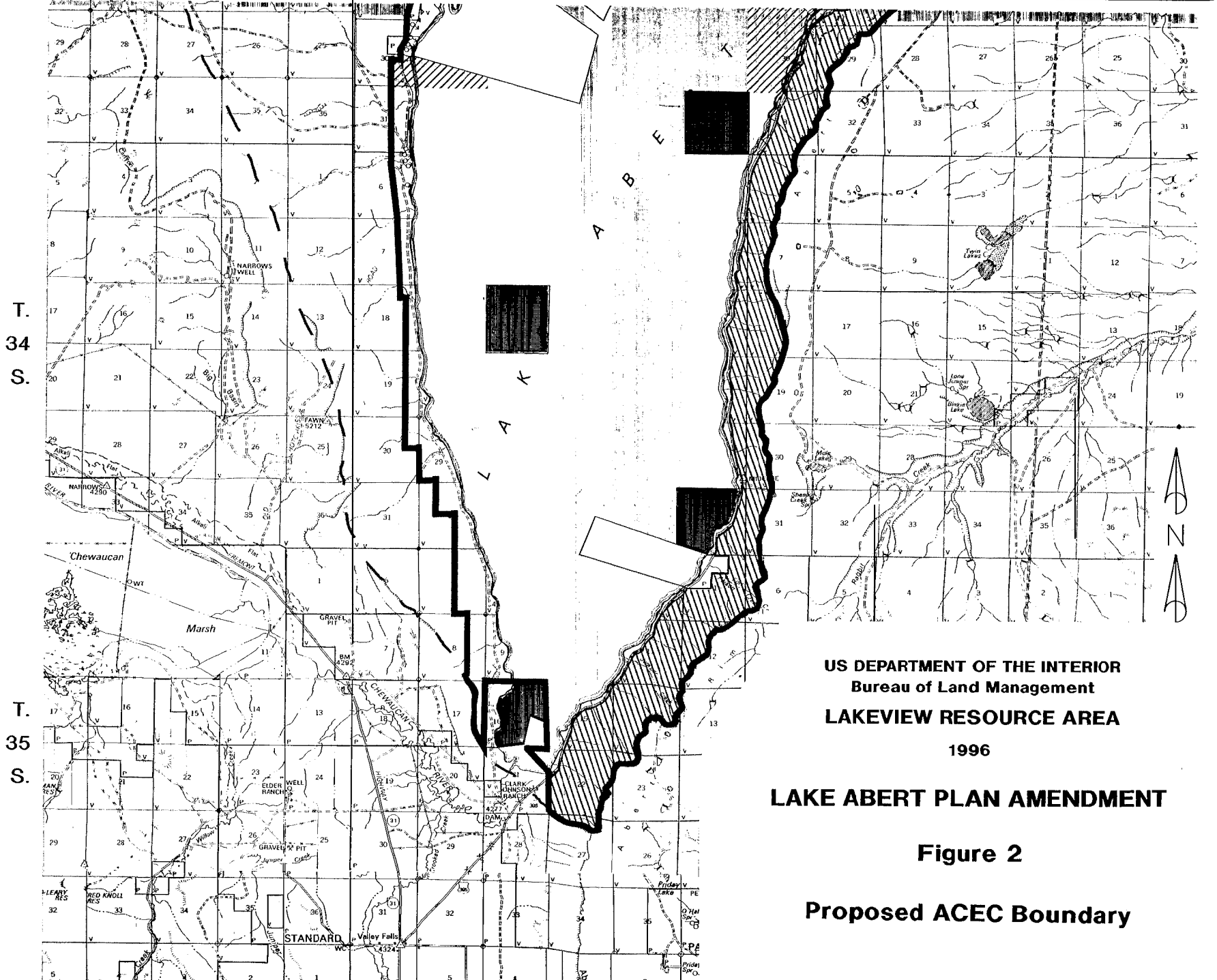
The on-going integrated noxious weed control program would continue. This includes plans to continue treatment of a large, existing mediterranean sage infestation on the eastern edge of Lake Abert, extending up to the top of the rim and small satellite populations scattered throughout the area. There have been several attempts at establishing biological control organisms in recent years. Additional infestations of mediterranean sage and other noxious weeds would be treated as the need arises in accordance with the existing weed plan.

Rangeland Management

Forage would continue to be allocated and range improvement projects implemented in accordance with the High Desert MFP, Lakeview Grazing EIS, and subsequent decisions and agreements as reported in later Rangeland Program Summaries (Table 5). The current exchange of use agreement with the permittee on the north end of the lake (allotment 0425) would continue for the benefit of maintaining snowy plover nesting habitat (on Federal and private land) in an early successional stage. Livestock grazing would continue to be excluded on Abert Rim (part of Paisley Commons allotment 0400) and all AUM's on Abert Rim would be officially allocated to wildlife.

The small Cave Springs exclosure fence on the west side of the lake (allotment 0427) would be maintained in the future. Grazing would continue to be excluded from other small exclosures located throughout the planning area. This would also include maintaining a new exclosure fence (approximately 3.5 miles long) on the west side of the lake which was recently evaluated in a separate NEPA document (BLM, ***1995). This fence is expected to be constructed before this plan amendment is completed. In addition, during the public review period, it was pointed out that approximately 6-7 miles of the western shoreline would continue to be open to grazing (though this area has not been grazed in recent years), even after construction of the Cave Springs fence. This led the ID Team to propose continuing the Cave Springs fence along the southwestern shore to completely exclude grazing from the riparian zone. The impacts of this fence extension are expected to be similar to those of the Cave Springs fence, but will require later evaluation in a separate NEPA document. The exact alignment for this fence will depend on the results of future botanical and cultural surveys and may or may not correspond to the actual southwestern boundary of the ACEC.***


LEGEND
Bureau of Land Management
State
Private
Area Closed to Sodium Leasing
Area Closed to All Mineral Leasing and Disposal
ACEC Boundary
Planning Area Boundary
R. 22 E.
R. 20 E.
T. 31 S.
T. 32 S.
T. 33 S.
EUCHRE BUTTE
EUCHRE BUTTE WELL
Twin Lakes
Little Skookum Lake
Skookum Lake



US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

LAKEVIEW RESOURCE AREA

1996

LAKE ABERT PLAN AMENDMENT

Figure 2

Proposed ACEC Boundary

Scale: 1/2" = 1 Mile

C01-2-96

Special Forest Products Management

The ACEC, including Abert Rim WSA, would be closed to the collection of all special forest products, consistent with current district policy.

Wildlife Management

One hundred and eighty bighorn sheep months use on Abert Rim (allotment 0400) would continue to be allocated to bighorn sheep. All remaining AUM's on the west fact of Abert Rim would be permanently allocated to wildlife. The 3 existing water catchments for bighorn sheep on Abert Rim would be maintained. Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use may be seasonally restricted in raptor nesting areas on Abert Rim in the future, if needed to protect nesting raptors. This would be accomplished through publication of a notice in the *Federal Register*.

An extension of the soon-to-be constructed Cave Springs exclosure fence was proposed during the public review period which (in combination with the Cave Springs fence) would exclude livestock grazing from most of the western riparian zone. This would benefit riparian/wetland vegetation and associated wildlife habitat. This proposal is discussed further under the Rangeland Management section.

Animal Damage Control Management

The existing animal damage control program within the planning area would continue. This consists primarily of predator (coyote) and rangeland grasshopper/Mormon cricket control efforts. These programs are under the authority of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), not the BLM (APHIS, 1993; 1994; 1995).

Predator control activities are carried out by APHIS at the request of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife or livestock permittees in response to wildlife depredation (mule deer and pronghorn antelope), livestock depredation, or human health/safety concerns. Abert Rim WSA is currently identified as a no-control area, except in emergency situations, and is restricted by the Wilderness IMP. The rest of the planning area is within the general control zone, with the exception of public safety zones (one-quarter mile buffer on each side) along Highway 395. Future predator control activities could include cougar, black bear, and other predatory animals based on the final decision resulting from a regional animal damage control program NEPA document prepared by APHIS (APHIS, 1994a).

Rangeland grasshopper and Mormon cricket control could also be conducted should the need arise, though there has been no need in the recent past. The recent APHIS (1993 and 1995) Environmental Assessments have identified the possibility of outbreaks capable of causing economic damage in the general vicinity of the planning area. However, neither APHIS or permitees have contacted the BLM concerning a need to conduct treatreatment. It is not likely that such treatment would be requested or conducted in the near future.

Special Status Species Management

Desert allocarya would be reintroduced (within an improved exclosure where it was historically present).

Special Management Areas

The lake, the surrounding archaeological sites/district, and playa on the north end would be designated and managed as an ACEC with the boundary being established as the top of Abert Rim on the east, an existing powerline on the northeast, an existing county road and private property lines on the north, and an existing jeep trail on the northwest, a 3.5mile (soon-to-be constructed) exclosure fence on the west, and legal/property lines on the southwest as shown in Figure 2. This boundary was derived based on its ability to include all of the lake proper, important scenic wildlife values, and more of the cultural values than most of the other alternatives.

Fire Management

All wildfires would be suppressed using a limited suppression strategy in situations where life and property are threatened. Wildfire areas would be reseeded (with an emphasis on the use of native seed) if natural revegetation did not occur or severe soil erosion was considered to be an immediate threat. A prescribed burn plan(s) would be developed where appropriate or as needed to meet ACEC management objectives. Prescribed fires would be designed and implemented to encourage natural revegetation by fire-tolerant native species and break up large tracts of monotonous vegetation types into a mosaic of different vegetation types.

Cultural Resource Management

A Class III archeological survey of the entire area would be conducted, as time and funding permit. Signs would be placed where they could be observed by the general public

requesting reporting of any digging observed in the area. Regular patrols of sites within the area would be performed to protect against unauthorized excavation and monitor general site condition. Patrols would be conducted by both law enforcement and cultural resource personnel.

Cultural site interpretation of some sites would be provided within the area where the public is already stopping and other resources are being interpreted (i.e. the existing Watchable Wildlife site).

The existing archaeological district would be expanded to include other eligible sites within approximately one-half mile of the western shore, as time and funding allow.

Traditional Uses

Native American traditional uses and concerns would be identified through continued consultation.

Recreation Management

With the exception of administrative use, OHV use would be restricted throughout the ACEC to existing roads and trails. Seasonal closures would be placed on the playa at the north end of the lake, in deer/bighorn sheep critical winter range, and near raptor nest sites, if needed. In the remainder of Abert Rim WSA east of the ACEC boundary, the OHV designation would remain restricted to existing roads and trails. The remainder of the planning area would be open to OHV use.

The existing Watchable Wildlife site on the south end of the lake would be maintained and a new site constructed on the north end of the lake. Hunting and other low-impact recreation opportunities would continue. An existing two-track road at the mouth of Juniper Creek, east of Highway 395, would be converted to a foot trail, in a manner consistent with the wilderness interim management policy.

Visual Resource Management

The exiting visual resource classifications (Class I, III, and IV) would be modified to more accurately depict the current visual quality of the area. The Abet-t Rim corridor would remain in its existing class I category. The remainder of the lake and ACEC and part of the rest of the planning area would become Class II. The remainder of the planning area would become Class III. These proposed visual class designations are shown on Map 9 of the draft plan amendment/HIS.

Hazardous Materials Management

Identify, investigate, and arrange for the removal of any hazardous substances discovered on BLM lands within the planning area in accordance with CERCLA, RCRA, Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act, and other applicable laws and regulations. Emergency response would include site cleanup, proper notifications, criminal investigations, risk assessment, and other actions consistent with these requirements. Methods would be employed to protect the public and BLM employees from exposure to such materials untilproperly removed and disposed of. All hazardous materials used in management activities would be stored, treated, and disposed of in accordance with all applicable legal requirements.

Chapter 3 - Text Revisions

Introduction

This section contains a list of those minor text changes needed to the draft plan amendment/EIS as a result of response to public comments and/or a need to clarify specific portions of the draft document. Changes needed in the Summary, Chapter 1, and Chapter 5 sections of the draft document have been made in the appropriate part of this final document. Changes needed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the draft document are listed in the following section in the order in which they occur in draft text. The reader should refer to the draft document and insert these changes where appropriate.

The following are text revisions to the draft document are being incorporated into this final document.

Chapter 2 - Alternatives

Corrections

Page 31, Alternative 2, Rangeland Resource Management section, first paragraph;

Delete second sentence, "Areas currently open to livestock grazing would remain open...".

Additions

Page 26, Management Assumptions Common to All Alternatives section;

Add the following after paragraph 10): "11) Should new information from monitoring or other sources reveal that existing or proposed activities (such as livestock grazing, mineral development, etc...) are or would cause significant, adverse impacts to the relevant and important resource values, appropriate mitigating measures would be taken".

Page 32, Alternative 2, Recreation Management Section;

Add the following to the end of the paragraph, "An existing two-track road east of Highway 395 along Juniper Creek would be converted to a foot trail, in a manner consistent with the wilderness interim management policy."

Chapter 3 - Affected Environment

Corrections

Page 38, Withdrawals section, first paragraph;

During the public review period, the Abert Rim Hydroelectic Associates requested that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) terminate its preliminary permit studying the feasibility of locating a pumped storage hydroelectric facility on Abert Lake and Rim. FERC terminated this permit, effective early August 1995. FERC then officially vacated the two existing withdrawals (#11074 and #11419) in the study area. Therefore, those two withdrawals are no longer in effect. The text occurring in this paragraph referencing these two withdrawals should be deleted.

Pages 42-43, Water Rights section;

change all references to Water Resources Department and State Water Resources Department to Oregon Department of Water Resources.

Page 48, Aquatic Community section;

change heading "Aquatic Commnities" to "Aquatic Communities".

Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences

Corrections

Page 64, Actions Which Have Not Been Analyzed in This Document section, last paragraph;

During the public review period, the Abert Rim Hydroelectic Associates requested that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) terminate its preliminary permit studying the feasibility of locating a pumped storage hydroelectric facility on Abert Lake and Rim. FERC terminated this permit, effective early August 1995. FERC then officially vacated the two existing withdrawals (#1 1074 and #11419) in the study area. Therefore, those two withdrawals are no longer in effect. The entire paragraph referencing these two withdrawals should be deleted.

Page 66, Hydrology and Water Quality Impacts section, fisrt sentence;

change "...Chapter 2 . .." to . ..Chapter *1* . ..".

Page 68, Table 10;

change ranking value for fire under Alternative 7 from a "2" to a "I". Also change the total ranking value under Alternative 7 to a "12" rather than a "13".

Page 72, Aquatic Community Impacts section, first sentence;

replace the second to the last paragraph with: "It is between these two extremes that impact analysis becomes less definitive. For example, for brine shrimp, Conte and Conte (1988) estimated an annual production of 14.5 million pounds during their study period (1980-82), a time of moderate salinities (50-75 g/L). Herbst (1994) alkali fly population data collected over a number of years of varied salinities show substantial reductions (an order of magnitude) when salinities exceed 150 g/L compared to when salinities range from 25-90 g/L. Between 100 and 150 g/L the relative abundance of alkali flies has not been censused in the field, but is likely to be reduced based on lab studies. No comparable estimates are available from field studies for algae or brine shrimp populations during varying salinity levels."

Chapter 5 - Consultation and Public Involvement

Corrections

Page 90, photograph caption;

change "Apeil" to ***"April"***

Page 9 1, working group participant list;

change "Seagar" to ***"Seager"***

Literature Cited

Additions

Page 97;

APHIS. 1995. *Site-Specijic Environmental Assessment Tiered to the 1987 Final Environmental Impact Statement for Rangeland Grasshopper Cooperative Management Program. Klamath and Luke Counties, Oregon.* Assessment Number OR-04-95. APHIS, USDA. Portland, OR.

ORE-CAL Resource Conservation and Development Council. 1995. *Area Plan. 27* pp.

Glossary

Additions

Pages 101-103;

APHIS - the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture

which is responsible, among other things, for carrying out a national Animal Damage Control program.

IMP - the BLM's wilderness Interim Management Policy which guides the interim management of wilderness study areas until such time as Congress officially designates them as wilderness or releases them from wilderness study status.

Appendix A

Corrections

Page A-3, Table 1;

"Sharp-shined Hawl" is corrected as, "Sharp-shined ***Hawk".***

Page A-6, Table 4;

Heading should be, "Monthly Peak Waterbird Numbers for Selected Species, 1992-1994."

Page A-8, Table 6;

"**=suspected to breedin area" is corrected as, "suspected to ***breed in*** area".

"Sagebrush Lizars" is corrected as, "Sagebrush ***Lizard***".

Additions

Page A-10, Table 8;

add the following plants to the Abert Rim WSA plant list:

FORBS

Scientific Name	Common Name
Aster campestris var. nudicauli	meadow aster
Brodiaea doualasii	Douglas' brodiaea
Camassia auamash	blue camas
Collomia arandiflora	large flowered collomia
Collomia linearis	narrow leafed collomia
Eriogonum caespitosum	matt buckwheat
Eriophyllum lanatum	Oregon sunshine
Gayophytum humile	dwarf desert smoke
Lewisia rediviva	bitterroot
Navarettia breweri	yellowflowered navarettia
Perideridia aairdneri	yampah
Phoenicaulis cheiranthoides	daggerpod
Trifolium gymnocarpon var plummerae	hollyleaf clover
Zvaadenus venenosa	death camas

SHRUBS

Cercocarvus montanum	mount mahogany
Symphorocarpus oreophilus	snowberry

Pages A-12 - A-15, Tables 10 -17;

Add the following definitions as a footnote:

Closed Discretionary - those areas where BLM proposes to recommend change in the closure status by one or more planning alternatives, or where status can be changed by action of the BLM without legislation, regulatory change, Secretarial decision, or Executive Order.

Closed Nondiscretionary - those currently closed areas where the closure status cannot be changed or would not be recommended for change by planning alternative. Included would be existing areas specifically closed to mineral entry and location by law, regulation, Secretarial decision including PLO's or Executive Order.

Open With Standard Requirements - areas open to entry and location under the 1872 Mining Law where notice or plan level activities are subject only to requirements over which BLM has no discretionary control such as Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, RCRA, NEPA, Coastal Zone Management Act, Endangered Species Act, cultural resource protection laws, etc...

Open With Additional Requirements- areas open to entry and location under the 1872 Mining Law where plan level activities (inlcuding areas that will have less than 5 acres of cumulative disturbance and a plan is required by 43 CFR Parts 3802 or 3809) may be subject to additional restrictions that can be legally required by the BLM pursuant to law, regulation, or other legal authority such as ACEC designation, OHV closure, community pit designation, etc...

Also add the following as a footnote to all of these tables:

During the public review period, the two existing withdrawals (#11074 and #1 1419) in the study area were officially vacated (are no longer in effect). The acreage values listed in these tables have not been revised to reflect this. It is important to note there is a considerable amount of overlap between mineral restrictions due to the vacated withdrawals, those in effect within Abert Rim WSA, and those proposed within the various ACEC alternatives. Therefore, the BLM did not feel it was necessary to update these acreage values. The reader should note that these values are not entirely accurate as listed and are subject to change in the future due a variety of reasons (such as Congressional action on wilderness designation of Abert Rim).

Appendix D

Corrections

Page D- 1, paragraph b);

Change first two sentences of the paragraph to read, "Conduct a Class III archeological survey of the entire area, as time and funding permit ***(Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7). For Alternatives 1 and*** 6, conduct archeological surveys, as needed, in response to proposed ground-disturbing activities...".

Additions

Page D-2;

i) Inventory and monitor relative abundance of alkali fly populations as an indicator of aquatic ecological health.

Chapter 4 - Consultation and Public Involvement

Introduction

A discussion of the public involvement opportunities and public views/concerns expressed up to the preparation of the draft plan amendment/EIS is contained in Chapter 5 of the draft document and will not be repeated here. The issues and concerns raised by the public during scoping,. working group meedint attenders, and the BLM ID team were used to guide the development of management goals, objectives. and alternatives considered. The major planning issues used to guide the plan amendment process are summarized in Chapter 1 of this document. The draft document was made available for 90-day public review period which ended on August 16, 1995. Public review/comment opportunities were announced in *Federal Register* notices published on May 10 and 19, 1995, as well as legal notices/news releases that appeared in the *Luke County Examiner,* the Klamath Falls *Herald and* News, and the *BLM* News between May and July 1995.

A total of 37 written comment letters were received on the draft document. Five of these letters were from individuals conducting research in the area who wished to provide additional data/information, correct misinterpretation of existing data presented in the analysis, and/or support for ACEC designation. Twenty-six letters were from environmental groups or individuals supporting adoption of Alternative 2 along with 2-5 of the same general recommended changes in that alternative. One letter was from the brine shrimp industry generally in support of ACEC designation, but also expressed concern over the perceived failure of the BLM to address future water allocation in the basin. Three letters were from Federal or state agencies. Two letters were from individuals expressing support for adoption of Alternative 7. The complete collection of comment letters received and the BLM's response are contained in Appendix A of this document. Those comments which were considered substantive have been incorporated/ addressed in this final document. The reader should refer in particular to Chapter 3.

Two public meetings were held during this review period which were also announced in the legal notices/newspaper releases described above and in the draft document cover letter. The first, held in Lakeview, Oregon, had a total of 14 members of the public in attendance and served mainly as an opportunity to answer questions on the draft document analysis. The second meeting held in Bend, Oregon, failed to draw any public interest. Copies of meeting notes are available as part of the planning record.

A 30-day public review/protest period is being provided on this final document. This review/protest period has been announced via the same manner as the draft document. The reader should refer to the cover letter at the front of this document for specific information on the review/protest period timeframe and procedures.

List of Recipients

In addition to those who received a copy of the draft plan amendment/US, as iisted in Chapter 5 of the draft document, the following individuals requested a copy of the draft during the public review period and have been added to the mailing list for this final document.

Jason Holstine	FTRA
Joseph Eilers	Oregon Lakes Association
Charles Inman	
Cindy Buchner	
Doug Oien	
John Hunt	
Simona Altman	
Justin Ramsey	
Melanie Allvidale	
Ed Sargent	
Dennis Phillips	Oregon Optimal Population Society
Denzel and Nancy Fergusson	Society Advocating Natural Ecosystems
Kim and Donald Fontenot	
Tonya Graham	
George Wuerthner	
Paul Ketchum	Audubon Society of Portland
Rhonda and George Ostertag	
Sue Knight	Oregon Natural Desert Association
Randy Webb	
Bob Wilson	
Bill and Victoria Barbour	
Arthur Boeschen	

Appendix A - Comment Letters and Responses

Index of Comment Letters

Name	Page No.
David Herbst, University of California	A-l
Wendell Wood, Oregon Natural Resources Council	A-3
Trevor Dick, Oregon Natural Desert Association	A-5
Dick Vander Schaaf, The Nature Conservancy	A-8
Trent Seager	A-10
Keith Kreuz, Oregon Desert Brine Shrimp Company	A-13
Larry Conn, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife	A-15
Joseph Eilers, Oregon Lakes Association	A-16
Cindy Buchner	A-17
Doug Oien	A-19
Dan Sherman, Audubon Society of Portland	A-21
Joan Cabreza, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	A-26
Justin Ramsey	A-29
John Hunt and Simona Altman	A-30
Elaine Rees, Oregon Natural Desert Association	A-33
Susanna DeFazio	A-34
Melanie Allvidale	A-35
Unknown	A-37
Ed Sargent	A-38
Dennis Phillips	A-38

Index of Comment Letters Continued

Name

Kim and Donald Fontenont

Arthur Boeschen

Denzel and Nancy Ferguson, Society Advocating Natural Ecosystems

Sue Knight, Oregon Natural Desert Association

Bob Wilson

Bill and Victoria Barbour

Dr. Randy Webb

Tonya Graham

Linda Dehile, Grant County Conservationists

Paul Ketchum, Audubon Society of Portland

George Wuerthner

Rhonda and George Ostertag

Joseph Higgins, Wilderness Watch

Charles Inman

Ron Hydro, National Park Service

David B. Herbsf Ph.D.
Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory
University of California
Route 1, Box 198
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
(619) 935-4536

August 13, 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
P.O. Box 15 1
Lakeview, OR 97630

Dear Mr Florence:

I have reviewed the Draft Plan and EIS for the Proposed Lake Abert ACEC and would I ike to commend you and your staff for putting together a thorough document. I provide the following comments as a statement of my professional opinion especially with respect to research I have contributed to defining optimum conditions for the ecological vitality of this saline lake ecosystem.

From my perspective as an aquatic biologist, I believe that the primary management objective should be protection of the aquatic ecosystem from any increase in the frequency of years when lake levels are below 425 1' or salinities are above 100 g/L. The life found in this lake is the most unique and valuable resource considered under this plan and its protection is appropriately listed as the first goal of management (p. 20). There is no justification however for the stated objective of allowing "critical" conditions to increase even by 5% What is the basis for this 5% figure? It is also essential that the target range for management of the lake be defined by conditions when the lake is in a healthy state rather than at the edge of critical thresholds. As determined by the results of my research with the alkali fly and benthic algae (refer to publications and 1994 ODF&W technical report), the critical limits are variously in the range of 100 to 150 g/L. Selection of 130 g/L as a criterion under objective b), goal 1 (p. 20) thus represents management "at the edge" of sustainable survival. I urge you to lower this limit to 100 g/L and use the lake level corresponding to this salinity as the minimum elevation for sustained production of the ecosystem. Although "critical limits" may be conceptually appealing, limitations by salinity on lake productivity are actually more gradual or cumulative by nature. That is, productivity does not remain constant to some threshold level and then suddenly collapse, but rather declines gradually with increased salinity stress and loss of habitat. Another problem with objective b) (p.20) is that 130 g/L and 4252' elevation do not correspond with one another (130 corresponds to ca. 4249.5'; and ca. 80 g/L to 4252'). While 4252' and above provides the optimum benthic habitat conditions, 130 g/L is probably too high a salinity for sustained productivity. Elevation 4251' corresponds with a salinity of 100 g/l and would be more appropriate target levels for management

1. Several valid points have been raised, particularly related to managing too close to critical threshold salinity levels. It is the BLM's intent to use the best available scientific information in the development of this management plan. Therefore, Goal 1, objective b, has been revised to reflect a minimum lake level of 4251 feet and maximum total dissolved solid concentration of 100 g/l (refer to page 25).

I also take issue with the statements on page 73-74 which imply a lack of data on the relative production of the alkali fly under conditions of varied salinity. On the contrary, (as I have already pointed out in a letter commenting on an earlier draft of the ACEC), such data does exist and can be found in my final report to BLM/ODF&W (Herbst 1994) Absolute production estimates arc not necessary to evaluate salinity effects. My population ccnsus data of relative 'abundance over years of varied salinity show substantial reductions (an order of magnitude) when salinities exceed 150 g/L relative to salinitics in the range 25-90 g/L. Jt is in the range 100 to 150 g/L that relative abundance has not been ccnsuscd but is likely to be reduced based on laboratory studies of both the alkali fly and bcnthic algae.

(2)

In view of the absence of validating data for this intermediate salinity range it is surprising that no monitoring of alkali fly abundance is recommended under the section on future inventory and monitoring needs (Appendix D). As I have suggested in previous letters, this is the only comparative database already available for multiple years at Abert Lake and thus is the most logical information that may be used for continued assessment of aquatic community health. This is a grave oversight - such data should be pan of a regular ongoing program of monitoring. Adaptive management depends on monitoring data for feedback so that appropriate and informed decisions can bc made. When unccnainty exists about the outcome of management plans, it is especially important to monitor criteria used to define planning objectives. While studies of undescribed features of the aquatic and terrestrial environment are desirable, monitoring should focus on subjects with previous data records so that trends over time in relation to salinity and lake level may be evaluated.

(3)

I am uncertain that any of the alternatives present the optimum ACEC boundary - some combination of alternatives 2 & 7 would provide more inclusive lake area protection but less exclusion from mineral/sodium development (provided compliance with aquatic community protection) Why is the southern end of the lake excluded in alternative 7?

(4)

In summary:
(I) target levels for lake salinity should not exceed 100 g/L, or drop below 4251' elevation in order to sustain ecosystem health and productivity within the range of natural variation
(2) monitoring of the alkali fly population should be incorporated as an ongoing data component of adaptive management
(3) ACEC boundaries should be expanded beyond those recommended in the preferred alternative to Include the entire lake

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ACEC Draft Plan.

Sincerely,

David B. Herbst

David B. Herbst, Ph D.

2. Comment noted; text has been revised (refer to page 36)

3. 'The BLM concurs that alkali fly population monitoring should be included in the monitoring plan. The text has been modified accordingly (refer to page 38 of the final document).

4. The southwestern tip of the lake is excluded from the ACEC boundary show.. on map 8 because it is comprised of state and private land and is not subject to Federal ACEC designation, just as other private and state lands are not subject to this designation. However, it was easier to show this area excluded from the boundary compared to other such lands falling in the middle of the lake.

OREGON
NATURAL
RESOURCES
COUNCIL
SOUTH CENTRAL OFFICE
P O BOX 667
CHILOQUIN, OR 97624
(503) 885-4886 OR (503) 783-2206
FAX: (503) 885-4887

Protecting Oregon's lands waters and natural resources

RECEIVED
AUG 14 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

August 11, 1995

Scott R. Florence, Manager
Bureau of Land Management
PO Box 151 (1000 Ninth Street S.)
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

Dear Mr. Florence,

After reviewing the Draft Plan Amendment and EIS for the proposed Lake Abert ACEC the ONRC feels that certain changes must be made if this unique ecosystem is to remain viable.

Alternative 2 certainly provides optimal protection of the Lake for the public that owns it. However, with private and corporate ranches involved, the BLM apparently regards them as the public more so than the rest of the taxpayers in the state and country. This alternative was obviously set up to create an extreme that would never be chosen. We do feel Alternative 2 is the best choice in protecting this salt lake ecosystem that provides critical migratory and nesting habitat for tens of thousands of birds.

However, since Alternative 7 is the "preferred plan" for BLM, and the one that will most likely be chosen, the following areas in that plan need changed to insure a healthy lake ecosystem:

(5) The boundary of Alternative 7 follows the road on the north end of the lake. Ecosystems and habitat types do end with roads. Rimrock or some other natural feature is much more of an appropriate boundary. If the BLM truly wants to recognize the lake as an area or ecosystem that deserves protection, then the map should depict that. A map that allows natural boundaries to designate an area is only reasonable as the BLM moves towards ecosystem and integrated management.

(6) The project to install a three and half mile fence on the west side to protect endangered plant habitat is a good start. However, the other 10 or 12 miles of marshes on public land are still being grazed. These lush spring areas provide important habitat for nesting and foraging birds. In the past, poorly maintained fenceshave been known to let cows in, and not out, of sensitive areas. Therefore, we don't feel fencing the marshes guarantees their protection from trampling and gazing. We would like to see the BLM implement one of the following: 1) begin rotation **gazing** where cattle are not allowed on the west side during spring, when the plants are beginning their-growth and are most vulnerable, and during summer when birds are using the areas to nest and forage; or (better yet) 2) eliminate gazing-on the west side within the ACEC boundary.

Printed on 100% recycled paper (50% post-consumer waste) using soy inks

5. Part of the challenge of this planning process has been determining the boundary of the area needed to preserve those resource values for which ACEC designation was originally proposed. Under Alternative 7, the boundary does follow some topographic bresak, such as along the top of Abert Rim. In other areas, such as the north side of the lake where there is a large block of state land and several blocks of private land, it makes more sense from a management perspective to exclude those lands (as ACEC designation would not apply to them even if shown within the boundary). The existing road provides a more definable boundary there.

6. Following construction of the 3.5 mile Cave Spring fence, there would be about 6 to 7 miles of unprotected riparian area along the southwest shore. This area does provide nesting habitat for a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds. This area is included in the West Lake (0424) allotment. Season of use has been from March 1 to May 15 though the area has not been utilized much in the last several years. However, there is nothing to prevent it from being used in the near future and when it has bee" used in the past, utilization along the shoreline has been heavy. Therefore, a provision to extend the Cave Springs fence to the south to tie off with existing fence at the River's End Ranch has been included in this final plan (refer to page 29). Appropriate NEPA documentation and botanical/cultural clearances would be required before implementation. The final alignment would depend upon the results of these clearances and may or may not correspond to the actual ACEC boundary.

As to the two grazing options for this area in absence of a riparian exclosure fence: 1) early season grazing (spring) allows for the best chance for distribution of livestock away from riparian areas as the upland forage is green and palatable during this time. The purpose of spring grazing is to get more evenly distributed livestock use and to allow sufficient time for regrowth of perenial forage species later in the year after livestock are removed. While we agree that to defer use until late summer or fall is beneficial for waterfowl and shorebird nesting, it would also increase the amount of use/concentration in the riparian area as the forage found there later in the year would still be green. palatable, and more attractive to livestock; 2) elimination of livestock grazing from this riparian area (in absence of a" exclosure fence) could only be accomodated by elimination of livestock from the entire allotment. Though this is technically feasible, it is not consistent with the multiple use mandate of the Federal Land Policv and Management Act, Taylor Grazing Act, and other laws and regulations under which the BLM must operate. Refer also to comment response #43.

Water inflow is not ad&essed. Under Hydrology (pp.. 39-42), the Plan reads that although me Chewaucan River drainage is excluded, this does not mean that "the primary water source for Lake Abert, the Chewaucan River, has been ignored as part of the lake's hydrology." The river may not be ignored as part of the hydrology, but it is completely ignored as part of the management of every Alternative. The ODFW report for the River's End Dam project found the maximum amount of water that could be taken from the Chewaucan without adversely affecting the lake. Therefore, any more water taken from the river will have an adverse affect on the lake. Addressing each future water allotment as they come is ridiculous. The BLM needs a standing policy, stated in the Draft Plan, and on file with Oregon Water Resources Department, that no more water rights should be issued from the Chewaucan River. (7)

Please continue to keep us advise on the BLM's continued consideration of this proposed ACEC.

Sincerely,

Wendell Wood

Wendell Wood
South Central Field Representative
943 Lakeshore Drive
Klamath Falls. Oregon 97601-9107

7. The issue of water inflow is addressed to the extent that it is feasible to do so, considering the BLM's lack of authority in the area of water rights (refer to pages 42-43 of the draft document). Further. the BLM recognizes the relationship between water inflow and lake health. However, the authority to manage water inflow rests with the Oregon Department of water Resources. The BLM currently is on the mailing list of the Oregon Department of Water Resources for any water-related actions within the Chewaucan River basin. The BLM intends to work cooperatively, to the extent possible, with the Oregon Department of water Resources to ensure sufficient inflow into the system. However, the BLM is not willing to make a blanket protest against 011 future water allocations within the basin, but instead will review any and a11 proposals on a case bv case basis. officially opposing/protesting any significant new appropriations that appear to be detrimental to the lake system.

RECEIVED
AUG 1 61995
LAKEVIEW, 13. L.M.

Oregon Natural Desert Association

August 9, 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

Dear Mr. Florence:

Thank you for allowing the Oregon Natural Desert Association to comment on the proposed Lake Abert ACEC Draft Plan Amendment (Plan Amendment) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The values and ecological processes of this unique high desert region certainly qualify for ACEC designation, and. the BLM is to be commended for their foresight in seeking such a designation.

In analyzing the draft Plan Amendment, consideration was given to the 'ten general management goals and specific objectives, and the extent to which each alternative met these goals and objectives. With this consideration in mind, we must support Alternative #2 as the alternative that would to the greatest extent protect those values and processes for which the Lake Abert area is being recognized. Both the broader boundary and greater degree of protection in Alternative #2 clearly afford the potential to protect the wildlife, cultural resources, scenic values, and ecological processes within this planning area. The following are specific comments with respect to our support of Alternative #2.

Wildlife

Alternative #2 allows for a greater degree of protection for wildlife and, in comparison to the other alternatives, best meets Goal #8. Of particular relevance is that the broader boundary protects a larger area of upland habitat, particularly on the western shore of the lake. This is important for the protection of the following special status species, which to varying degrees are dependent on upland habitat: Pygmy Rabbit, White-tailed Antelope Squirrel, White-tailed Jackrabbit and Loggerhead Shrike. The other alternatives appear to not fully meet the habitat needs of these species and may put them at further risk of decline and eventual listing under the Endangered Species Act.

While Alternative #2 would protect more acreage of upland habitat, an issue we

16 NW Kansas • Bend • Oregon • 97701 503•385-6908
recycled paper • please recycle

8. While the BLM concurs that upland habitat is important for the sensitive species mentioned, it is not true that a larger boundary. in and of itself, would provide more protection for such species. The BLM is required to manage habitat for sensitive species to prevent them from being officially listed. This would occur regardless if the habitat occurs inside or outside of the ACEC boundary.

would like to see addressed is the extent to which cattle grazing may be causing significant and adverse impacts to the upland and riparian habitat in which the above mentioned and other special status and listed species live. We question whether livestock grazing is compatible with promoting viable populations of these special status species. For example, with reference to the Pygmy Rabbit, the. draft Plan Amendment states, "...little is known about its numbers, densities or trends"(page 57). This lack of baseline data makes it difficult to make sound wildlife management decisions. Furthermore, livestock grazing seems to be in conflict with Goals 2, 3, 5 and 8, and is only partially consistent with Goal 4. For these reasons, it appears that continued livestock grazing within the ACEC (regardless of the eventual boundary) would be inconsistent with the management goals and objectives raised during the public involvement process. As there is a paucity of knowledge regarding the ecology of such special status species as the Pygmy Rabbit, we recommend the suspension of livestock grazing within the ACEC for the protection of essential upland habitat, at least until studies show the degree of compatibility between livestock grazing and habitat needs of the pygmy rabbit.

With respect to livestock grazing, we request that one specific issue be clarified in the Final Plan. Under the preferred alternative (#7), it is unclear if open areas would remain open to livestock grazing if there exists documented evidence that significant and adverse impacts are occurring to the relevant and important resource values. Alternative #2 indicates that grazing practices would be altered in response to such evidence. In Chapter Two, page 31, and Chapter Four, page 75, it is indicated that impacts to livestock management under Alternative #1 (No Action) would be the same as those listed in Alternative #2. Please clarify that this is in fact the case, or stipulate where differences arise.

Cultural Resources

As identified in the draft Plan Amendment, the cultural resources of the Lake Abert watershed clearly meet the relevance and importance criteria for ACEC designation. It is encouraging that the BLM recognizes the fundamental and essential importance of protecting cultural resources. Clearly, Alternative #2 is the only alternative that will provide the needed protection for these cultural resources. However, we are concerned about funding for the Class III archaeological survey and recommend that a higher priority be placed on obtaining funding for the survey completion. Failure to allocate such funding may put the BLM at legal risk. The 'Rivers End" project serves as a prime example of the devastating cultural impacts and likely financial losses associated with poor attention to the importance of cultural resources.

Ecological Processes

We have three issues of concern and areas of recommendation with respect to ecological processes. First, we recommend that BLM specify limits on total dissolved solids and minimum lake levels that guarantee the biological health of the unique

9. Specific to the Lake Abert area, the BLM does not have any existing inventory or monitoring data supporting the contention that cattle grazing is detrimental to the continued viability of the sensitive species mentioned. What information that is available is contradictory. Elimination of grazing would change vegetation composition and characteristics, which may benefit some species, have no effect on some, and be detrimental to others.

The heaviest concentration of white-tailed antelope ground squirrels is found in the uplands adjacent to the northwest corner of the lake. The land ownership patter" in this area is a mix of private and public land. This area also has the most severely impacted vegetal communities of anywhere around the lake due to grazing and past wildfires.

Pygmy rabbits have not been found in sufficient numbers in the area to allow for any conclusions regarding a preference for grazed or ungrazed habitats.

White-tailed jackrabbits though assumed to be present, have not been observed in recent surveys.

As to grazing appearing incompatible with Goals 2. 3, 5, and 8, this is unsupported opinion. Grazing may or may not be compatible with Goal 5 and is certainly consistent with Goals 2 and 4. It should be noted that the goal statements themselves are not entirely compatible with one another. That is the reality of managing for multiple us% under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and other conflicting laws and regulations.

10. To clarify the statement under Alternative 2 that "areas currently open to livestock grazing would remain open unless documented scientific evidence exists..." has been removed from the description of Rangeland Resource Management for that alternative. In its place a statement has been added to paragraph 4 of the section titled Management Assumptions Common to All Alternatives (pages 25-26 of the draft document) which reads, "Should new information from monitoring or other sources reveal that existing or proposed activities (such as livestock grazing, mineral development, etc.) are/would cause significant, adverse impacts to the relevant and important resource values, appropriate mitigating action will be taken" (page 35 of this final document).

11. The statement that Alternative 2 is the only alternative that will provide the necessary protection for cultural resources is unsupported opinion. As to the recommendation that a higher priority be placed on obtaining funding for survey completion, recognizing the area as a" ACEC, in part for its cultural values, will place a higher priority on cultural resource management compared to other portions of the Lakeview Resource Area. However, it needs to be understood that in the BLM budgeting process the local BLM office has little control over how much funding it receives annually. Thus funding and the archaeologist's time are limiting constraints on how much survey work can be accomplished in a given year. The best that the BLM can commit to is to conduct the needed survey work as time and funding allow.

12. The BLM did specify limits on total dissolved solids and minimum lake levels (refer to discussion of Goal 1, objective, b, on page 20 of the draft document; these limits have bee" revised in this final document. Refer to page 25). The description of every alternative (except 1 and 2; refer to Chapter 2 of the draft document) refers to allowing mineral development or location of new rights-of-ways only if it can meet the requirements of Goal 1, objective b. Should a mineral development proposal ever move forward, the project proponent will be responsible for conducting pre (baseline), during, and post-mining monitoring of lake levels and total dissolved solid concentrations. It will be the BLM's responsibility to ensure that these standards are met.

aquatic communities in Lake Abert. Further, we recommend that BLM work with other appropriate agencies to ensure that these water quality standards are met. Second, we recommend that disturbed areas be reseeded with native species only to promote the restoration of the grassland ecosystem. Our third recommendation is to restrict OHV use to existing roads in order to decrease disturbances to plant and animal communities. Also, this would decrease the risk of looting and accidental damage to archaeological sites.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this draft Plan Amendment. . We hope our comments are of help in this process. We appreciate any feedback or response to these comments, and look forward to reviewing your final plan.

Sincerely,

Trevor Dick,
on behalf of the Oregon Natural Desert Association

13. As to the recommendation to reseed disturbed areas with only native species, the BLM recognizes the value of using native species for site restoration work within the context of ecosystem management. However, the BLM also recognizes that in the instance of a large scale disturbance, such as the large wildfires experienced in the vicinity over the last 20 years, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find the quantity of native seed necessary from commercial sources to reseed thousands of acres. Further, if such seed could be located in the quantity needed, it would be prohibitively expansive to plant it exclusively over large areas. It is not a given that reseeding is even necessary after every disturbance. In some areas (such as where prescribed fire may be used) a good understory of native grasses and forbs may already exist and will provide an adequate rhizome or seed source to regenerate on its own. In areas where desireable native species do not exist, the BLM would prefer to use native species where feasible. The "8% of natives is most feasible in smaller scale restoration efforts. In view of these limitations and the potential for increased erosion and noxious weed invasion, it may be more deaireable to get vegetation established, even if it is not native, than to allow the ground surface to remain bare and risk losing the soil or allowing noxious weeds to invade.

14. Regarding the recommendation to restrict OHV "a% to existing roads to decrease disturbance to important resources, it is unclear what the commenter intended as OHV restrictions are already built into the description of alternatives. Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 (Preferred Alternative) all, with the exception of administrative "se. restrict OHV use to existing roads and trails. In addition, seasonal or permanent closures are specified for the northern playa, Abert Rim WSA, or in critical deer/bighorn sheep winter range, depending on the alternative. When it comes to plan implementation. regardless of the alternative, existing made or trails could also be closed on an as needed basis under the emergency closure provisions of 43 CFR 8341.2, if a resource degradation problem arises in a specific portion of the planning area.

The Nature Conservancy.
OF OREGON
1205 N.W. 25th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97210-2497
503 228-9561

RECEIVED
AUG 14 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

August 10, 1995

Scott Florence
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview. Oregon 97630

Dear Scott.

The Nature Conservancy would like to take this opportunity to comment on the proposed Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). We support the designation of Lake Abert as an ACEC as the area contains a number of significant natural values as well as cultural values. Lake Abert is one of Oregon's unique lacustrine resources whose chemical properties vary over a wide range of pH and concentrations of dissolved solids. Given the variability of the lake in terms of its alkalinity from drought years to flood years it is remarkable how productive the site can be and how important it is for migratory waterfowl as well as nesting species. The site also contains good quality representations of natural playa communities including extensive greasewood/saltgrass stands on the northern playa, although some of these stands are located on private lands. There are also a number of alkaline wetlands and springs located again on the northern playa and along the western side of the lake which add to the diversity of the area. We are encouraged to see that the preferred alternative includes the steep sloped Abert Rim which is ecologically tied to the lake and considerably enriches the proposal.

The preferred alternative (Alternative 7) contains sufficient direction to protect many of the natural values present at the site except for issues related to mineral management which, in general, we feel could be more protective. Appendix C paints a less than secure scenario of the lake if sodium mining were to proceed in any developed fashion. While it seems that there may not be much of a long term resource present at the site for such an enterprise, the short term impacts would be extreme with site disruption by equipment, changing water levels, changing alkalinities, and possible loss of the playa habitat. It is hard to fathom how such alterations could not be considered to threaten the ACEC and the values for which it was designated in the first place. Given the threats that such leasable mining may bring to the lake system we recommend that the BLM proceed with formal mineral withdrawal for the proposed ACEC. With regards to locatable minerals in the ACEC, unless there are no other

15

15. BLM does not allow formal withdrawals for leasable minerals. Mineral learning is a discretionary action, meaning the deciding official has discretion in whether to allow leasing or not. If there are other resource values in the area which are in conflict with a proposed leasing operation, the deciding official can opt not to allow the leasing activity or can require use of measures to mitigate its effects. Further, the BLM feels that Alternative 7 offers a balance in allowing some level of sodium leasing (provided it meets the operational restrictions of Goal 1, objective b, page 20 of the draft document, as revised on page 25 of the final document) while still protecting the important and relevant resource values.

National Office 1815 North Lynn Street Arlington, Virginia 22209 703 841-5300

Recyclable and made from recycled materials. Printed with soy ink.

(16) potential sites in the area outside the proposed ACEC, it makes sense to also close down the existing pits in the protected area.

The narrative description of the preferred alternative does not directly address livestock grazing except to say that there is an exchange of use with the private lands on the northern playa and that there are wetlands exclosures in place along the western shore of the lake. (17) Does the exchange of use act to protect some of the greasewood/saltgrass natural community at the site and likewise does it protect some of the natural springs present as well? Clarification as to what results from exchange of use agreements at Lake Abert is needed so the public can evaluate the effects of grazing management at the site. With regards to the wetlands exclosures are all of the wetlands exclosed or only some of them and how are these wetlands characterized? Finally, it was stated in the summary table that vegetative (18) rehabilitation of sites would emphasize native species. This language is not sufficient and should read "Re-seeding will be conducted only with natives".

Thank you for giving the Conservancy the opportunity to respond to the proposed Lake Abert ACEC designation. The site is truly one of the most important sites on the Lakeview District lands and is most deserving of special management attention.

Sincerely,

Dick Vander Schaaf

Dick Vander Schaaf
Public Lands Coordinator

16. The two existing gravel pits on the north side of the lake represent salable, not locatable mineral resources. As such, they represent discretionary activities which the BLM can and does require mitigation measures to avoid or lessen impacts. The two pits fall outside of the Preferred (Alternative 7) ACEC boundary and pose no immediate threat to any of the resource values for which ACEC designation is being considered. In addition, opening up new pits to meet the need for material currently being met by the existing pits would cause far more disturbance/impact then allowing the existing pits to continue in operation until either a demand no longer exists or the material is exhausted. Reclamation would occur at that time.

17. The existing exchange of use agreement acts to protect some of the greasewood/saltgrass and natural spring communities present. This voluntary agreement includes a decrease in livestock use of 40-60% (compared to before the agreement was in place) on approximately 5,000 acres of public land and about 1,000 acres of private meadows, wetlands, and saltgrass flats. The agreement also defers livestock "se until after the waterfowl and shorebird nesting season is over. As stated on page 28 of the draft document, grazing in thia area is used as a management tool to maintain snowy plover nesting habitat in an early successional stage and is also less impacting on those vegetative communities than management practices prior to the agreement.

Not all wetland/riparian areas are currently excluded from grazing. There are about 35 miles of shoreline around Lake Abert. Nine miles (26%) are in state/private ownership. About 31% of the shoreline is on Public land currently excluded from grazing (eastern shore; part of allotment 0400 which extends to the top of Abert Rim). Another 10% of shoreline (including several small springs) will soon be excluded on the west side of the lake following construction of the 3.5-mile Cave Springs fence later this fall. About 15% of the shoreline and adjacent wetlands on the north aide of the lake are intermingled with large tracts of private land and it is not practical to Construct exclosure fences. This is what prompted the development of the exchange of use agreement discussed in comment response #17. The remaining 18% of the shoreline is located along the west side in the West Lake 0424 allotment (refer to comment response #6. An additional exclosure fence has been proposed during the review of the draft document which has been adopted as part of the Preferred Alternative 7 (refer to pages 11 and 29). Wetlands around the lake are classified in accordance with Cowardin et al. (1979) as palustrine, emergent, seasonally flooded; palustrine, unconsolidated shore; palustrine unconsolidated bottom; and several lacrustrine types.

18. Refer to comment response #13.

Valley Falls
15 August 1995

RECEIVED
AUG 16 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

Dear Scott:

The recognition and awareness that the ACEC is bringing to Lake Abert is a good thing. This salt-lake island of life in the desert is unique and deserves protection. However, as happens so often in this day of federal land being our only natural trusts--we must manage it. I truly believe that Abert does not need protection or management; it just needs to be left alone from major human disturbance. Knowing this will not happen soon, I am thankful for the ACEC.

I have spent a long time reading the Draft Plan Amendment and EIS, and have discussed it with you and with Walt. I also have a good understanding of the habitats and systems around the lake. With respect to the studies that I have done on the birds and their habitats, I am giving Walt my reports and data to include in the ACEC as he deems pertinent. There are, however, other management subjects that are not inherent in my wildlife and habitat reports. It is these issues that I wish to address here, as a field biologist who has studied the area, and as a Sacred Ecologist who has lived among the creatures of the lake and talus slopes.

This land is public land. It belongs to the people in New Jersey as much as the people in Lake County. This stir of sagebrush rebellion, demanding all rather than the most, of the public land is now bringing this issue to light. I do not see anything (19) in the ACEC that speaks for the people in this country who want Lake Abert (and the tens of thousands of migratory and nesting birds) and Abert Rim left as wild scenic places. The voices of the other 49 states may be going unheard, but they deserve to be considered in the management of federal land.

Although the BLM has no legal right to water-flow from the Chewaucan River, inflow still needs to be addressed. We all know that freshwater inflow is critical to lake health. The ACEC document discusses issue after issue of water chemistry, wildlife, vegetation and habitat. Yet, in this entire document about and Area of Critical Environmental Concern, inflow is mentioned only as part of the river-(20) drainage hydrology and then is left to be. This is pathetic. The BLM should have a letter on file with OWRD stating that no more water rights should be granted from the Chewaucan River. ODFW at least did that, and they are not even the managers of the property. Why is it that Keister's report tells us that the River's End Dam projects is taking all of the water available without harming the lake, yet there is still the possibility that water rights will be issued? This is a year of plenty of rainfall, and still the lake only returned to 4252'. It is in years like this that OWRD and ranchers alike feel that there are more water rights to be given out. Keister's report is all we have to inform us of inflow, and yet you ignore its final analysis and put the responsibility into others hands.

19. All interested publics have been considered while developing this management plan. The initiation of this planning effort (public scoping process) and the Notice of Availability of the Draft Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement were announced nationally in the Federal Register, as was the release of this final document. Copies Of the draft and final documents were sent to Federal agencies, groups, and individuals throughout the United States and Canada (refer to "List of Recipients", pages 91-93 of the draft document).

20. Refer to comment response #7.

At one of the Working Group meetings, I remember a discussion on grazing and the benefits to young Snowy Plovers. However, I do not believe that the trampled marshes that I have witnessed on the west side are a benefit to any of the bird species. There is a difference between keeping springs open for foraging habitat, and mucking up all of the vegetation that the insects (plover food) need to thrive and many birds need as habitat. More marshes need protection. There were so many birds on the west side this year. Nearly all of them used areas that were not heavily grazed. In my counts of thousands of birds along the west shore, there were only scattered few on the heavily grazed sections (both private and public). Grazing must change on the west side to give more protection to the marshes and the highway-free nesting zone that many birds need. (21)

As I began my monitoring of Loggerhead Shrikes this spring, I first looked at what habitat was available. The most striking part of all was that there were no areas that had been excluded from grazing. I was surveying complex and fragile dunes, and none could be separated as what would be present without cows. It seems a minor thing to set aside portions of each habitat to be non-grazed. How do we know what animals and plants prefer if everything is grazed? The fact that the east side was gazed up until 10 or 12 years ago is shocking. Every acre does not need to be grazed. Rest and rotation still grazes. Not many people in this country own cattle, yet everyone owns this land. Some areas deserve to be free of grazing. (22)

This land of a fluctuating salt-lake and migratory bid patters old as the rimrock is far beyond our understanding. We may never know why the birds head to the north end of the lake each night to roost, and then fly to the south end each morning to forage. Or why the birds from other states come here during a year of high failure. I first came upon this place as I was heading to the John Day country. When I saw Abert Rim, a haven for breeding raptors, and the Lake--teeming with brine arthropods that fed the birds packing the shorelines-1 knew this was sacred ground. I also knew that I would return to study and live here, so as to truly know this area. At that time I had no knowledge of what an ACEC was, or even that the lake wasn't protected. I didn't even care if the BLM was interested in a joint project or not. I just knew that this lake had much to offer. That offering belongs to anyone who happens by the lake, and so it must be protected.

This lake belongs to our children's children more than it does to us. More importantly, it belongs to the Grebe and Phalarope children. They are the ones who do not have a voice in this management and control of the lake. Although my studies may end this fall, my dedication to the lake, and my voice for the surrounding life will continue.

Sincerely,

Trent Seager

Trent Seager

21. It is not clear from this comment specifically which marshes are being referred to as "trampled". The exchage of use agreement has in recent years substantially reduced the impacts of grazing on private marshes on the north end of the lake compared to prior management. Those marshes/riparian areas falling within allotment 0427 will soon be excluded from grazing (refer to response to comment #17). Those wetlands in allotment 0424 have not been grazed in the past couple of years, but a riparian fence exlosure extending 6 to 7 miles to the south has been added to the Preferred Alternative 7 (refer to response to comment #6).

22. Not every acre within the proposed ACEC currently is or would continua to be grazed. As noted in this comment, the entire eastern shore extending up to the top of Abert Rim has not been grazed since 1981 and would not be grazed under any of the alternatives considered. Areas along the western shoreline either currently are or will be excluded from grazing in the future.

23 Typographical and Inconsistencies in the Lake Abert EIS and Draft Plan Amendment

RECEIVED
AUG 23 1995
LAKEVIEW, P.M.

Appendices A-2, A-7 and A-8:
under Habitats, the "Sh = sagebrush, rabbitbrush & greasewood brushfields" is tabbed over to the right too far.

Xpendix A-2:
there is an extra space between Pied-billed Grebe and Homed Grebe; the same is for the Yellow Rail and American Coot.

Apendix A-3:
Sharpshinned Hawl should be Hawk.

Appenix A-6:
in the title, 1992-199 should be 1992-199X4

Appendix A-8:
under Breeding Activity, **= suspected to breed in area.
Sagebrush Lizars should be Lizard.

Appendix A-10:
the Closed Discretionary and Nondiscretionary and the Opens are not really self-explanitory and are confusing. This may be a mute-point since review period is over.

Page 90: in the caption below the picture Apeil should be April.

Page 91: My last name (the last one on the list) should be Seager (not ar).

Page 92: under State, you list Oregon Department of Water Resources which differs from pages 42-43 which calls the department State Water Resources Department and Water Resources Department.

'Page 66: at the end of the first sentence it reads Chapter 2 (which contains Alternatives) and it should be Chapter 1 (which contains the Goals and Objectives).

Page 68: Table 10. Under FIRE, the numbers read 1, 1 and 2 under alternatives 2, 5 and 7 resepectively. According to the paragraph on the previous page ("Alternative 5 and 7"-upper right comer), the numbers should be the same (1,1 and 1). The paragraph lumps Alternative 5 and 7 together because they are. the same and compares them to Alternative 2 with regaurds to Fire.

Page 6: Table S-l Continued) -- should it be (Continued) on page 5-8?
Under Alt #7 and Special Status Species, the number is missing after "Same as Xltemative"

23. The list of typographical and consistency errors have been incorporated/corrected in this final document (refer to pages 36-37).

OREGON DESERT BRINE SHRIMP COMPANY
Natural fish food from the high Oregon desert
(503) 285-3729 1-800-689-0799 FAX 285-2527
9360 N.W. Harbor Blvd. Portland, OR 97231

13 August 1995
Valley Falls, Oregon

Dear Scott,

Having reviewed the draft amendment for the proposed Abert Lake ACEC, I wish to reiterate and clarify some issues which concern me. It is apparent that the issue of water flow into the lake has not been (24) properly addressed. Most of the resource values identified as relevant and important (aquatic ecology, visual resources, and wildlife) are directly or indirectly related to lake level and thus water flow. It is of primary importance that this issue be addressed. If it is not, all the issues and management decisions for this ACEC would be meaningless if the lake be comes too saline or goes dry.

I talked with Michael Mattick of the Oregon Water Resource Department explaining this situation and asked his advice on what action could be done to protect water'flow into the lake. He indicated that ODFW could apply for a water right on the Chewaucan for Abert Lake. The purpose of this water rightwould be to protect the eology of Aberr. He believed that Kiester's study (Kiester, G. P. 1992. The (25) Ecology of Lake Abert: Analysis of further development. Technical Report #92-5-02, ODFW, Portland. 34 pp.) would validate this application. In this report ODFW determined the maximum amount of new water which could be allocated for the Rivers End Project and not have a negative impact on Abert Lake. It follows that any new appropriations from the Chewaucan drainage would have adverse effects. As a result of a water right obtained by ODFW no new water rights could be granted or utilized if the lake is below a prescribed healthy level (4252 feet). This certainly would give a needed level of protection for the lake and this ACEC.

24. See response to comment #7.

25. Having the Oregon Department of Fish and wildlife (ODFW) apply for all remaining water rights on the Chewaucan River for the purpose of protecting the lake ecology sounds like a good idea. The BLM would be supportive of such an effort. However, ODFW may have trouble demonstrating "beneficial use" and obtaining such rights as no fish or other aquatic species in the river or lake system is a listed species.

RECEIVED
AUG 16 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

A water right obtained by ODFW would have no effect on existing water rights but only on future demands on the Chewaucan drainage which most certainly will occur in the future. I strongly encourage the BLM to pursue this option with ODFW. ODFW has already recommended to the Warer Resource Department that it is opposed to new allocations: however this alone probably will have little. impact when new water rights are considered.

You have stated that BLM will investigate each new water right application individually. This is not enough. BLM should follow the (26) lead of ODFW and make it clear to Oregon Water Resource Department that it is opposed to any new water appropriations on the Chewaucan drainage.

One other issue which I believe needs to be corrected regards the management action on the existing road at Juniper Creek The Draft Plan Amendment states it "would convert an existing two track road (27) at the mouth of Juniper Creek to a foot trail consistent with the Wilderness IMP". I believe it should be stated that the foot trail begin where Juniper Creek meets Hwy 395. The existing two track road from Hwy. 395 to the lake's edge is the only road access I have to the lake. It is also the only area from which a boat could be launched for emergency or scientific purposes.

Sincerely,

Keith Kreuz

26. See response to comment #7.

27. You are correct in the intention to convert the existing two track to a trail would start east of Highway 395, not at the mouth of Juniper Creek. The two track running west from Highway 395 to the lake shore would remain to provide boat access to the lake. This has been corrected in the final document (refer to pages 14 and 33).

Oregon

RECEIVED
AUG 16 1995
LAKEVIEW, O.L.M.

DEPARTMENT OF
FISH AND
WILDLIFE

Lake District Office

August 14, 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

Dear Scott:

(28) I have reviewed the High Desert Management Framework Draft Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern in Lake County. In our view, ACEC designation is necessary to highlight the need for special management attention to protect unique and outstanding wildlife values of the lake ecosystem. I commend Lakeview BLM for moving forward with the ACEC designation process.

Alternative 7 seems to be a reasonable compromise to protect this unique ecosystem. It allows for historic uses and allows for future uses that may be compatible with hydrology and chemistry of the Lake.

I look forward to working with BLM to develop the details of a management plan that gives the necessary protection to this unique resource.

Sincerely,

Larry Conn
District Wildlife Biologist

PO Box 1214
Lakeview, OR 97630
(503) 947-2950

28. Comments noted.

Oregon Lakes Association

RECEIVED
AUG 14 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

A Voice for Our Quiet Waters

P.O. Box 586 . Portland, Oregon 97207

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Lakeview Resource Area
PO Box 151
Lakeview. OR 97630

August 10, 1995

Dear Mr. Florence:

I wish to comment on behalf of the Oregon Lakes Association regarding the EIS for the proposed Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in Lake County, Oregon. The Oregon Lakes Association (OLA) is a non-profit group of scientists, resource managers, and interested citizens that attempt to provide a voice for the protection and restoration of lakes in the state. Our organization favors those alternatives that will best retain the unique qualities of Lake Abert. This appears to be best satisfied by Alternative 2. although Alternatives 5 and 7 may be acceptable with certain safeguards.

However the future of Lake Abert appears to hinge, not on execution Of one of these alternatives, but rather on the interpretation of its navigability and ownership of the minerals in the water. Our organization is concerned that a ruling that Lake Abert is non-navigable and that the minerals in the water are not state-owned could leave the lake highly vulnerable to mining interests. We-urge the ELM to use its influence as the federal land manager to argue for policies that protect these resources for the public rather than facilitating mineral extraction. (29)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this document and to your information Contact. Mr. Paul Whitman, for kindly answering my questions over the phone. The Oregon Lakes Association would be available to assist the BLM in efforts to maintain the quality of Lake Abert and other lakes in your jurisdiction

Sincerely.

Joseph M. Eilers
Oregon Lakes Association

/jc

cc: Dr Mark Systma, President, OLA
Ms. Avis Newell, Secretary. OLA

29. It is true that the issue of the ownership of the minerals dissolved in the waters of Lake Abert is still unclear and does have bearing on this management plan. However, it is the BLM solicitor's opinion that the owner of the lake bottom is also the owner of the minerals dissolved in waters lying immediately above it. The State of Oregon has not challenged thia position, but final resolution of this matter will likely need to be decided in a court of law. Regardless of who owns the minerals in the water, mineral leasing could take place. If leasing were denied on Federal land, it could still be performed on state or private land surrounding the lake. The BLM has no authority to regulate mining activity on these lands. Further, the BLM feels it would be more beneficial to all land owners/managers to work cooperatively to develop a cooperative agreement on how sodium mineral development would procede, who would have compliance oversight, how royalties would be divided, etc... should a mineral development proposal ever move forward. The protective restrictions (goal 1. objective b) and monitoring requirements outlined in this plan amendment offer a better opportunity for mineral development without significant environmental impacts on the lake ecosystem, than if mining were to occur on state or private lands without BLM involvement.

Regarding the statement related to protecting the resources rather than allowing mineral extraction, refer also to comment response #15.

Cindy Buchner
I'. 0. Box 10580
Stanford, California 94309

Scott Florence. Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
I'. 0. Box 151
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

-Mr. Florence,

I am writing concerning the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern. I support your choice that alternative seven should be the preferred plan. Alternative seven provides a good mix of only slightly altering current public use while greatly increasing the environmental protection of the special area. The economy of the area continues to have the benefits, or have the potential to benefit, from the area's resources. This is because alternative seven leaves some land open for mineral leasing. Plan seven also continues to provide some land for private animal grazing, while at the same time saving all the AUMs on Abert Rim for allocation to wildlife. (The AUM allotment for wildlife is especially appropriate for supporting the recently reintroduced populations of California bighorn sheep.) OHV use is still allowed for the benefit of recreational users, but use is restricted to existing roads and trails. This alternative also' has merits in that most cultural sites will be preserved.

30 Posting signs requesting that visitors report if they see any digging, should have positive effects, both to deter digging and to alert staff about possible disturbances of cultural sites. I suggest similar signs stating the policy that OHV use is restricted to existing roads and trails and requesting that visitors report any violations.

The unique wildlife within, surrounding and passing through the lake area deserve preservation. The plans suggested in alternative seven look like they will help the wildlife in that they strive to keep the area in its current physical and vegetative state, or even return it to its historical state. The specific restrictions that have been made on sodium mining are essential to

30. Any of the alternatives restricting OHV use will require the posting of signs stating the restrictiona that apply. This would be done during plan implementation.

maintaining the unique concentrations in the lake water. The creation and implementation of a fire plan is important in that fire could increase the diversity of vegetation in the area. Fire plans, noxious weed control and the reintroduction of desert allocarya could also aid in regaining the plant populations that have been the base of the ecosystem in the past. I was impressed by the large numbers of resident and migratory birds that use the area and hope that maintaining historical lake water concentrations and surrounding vegetation populations will continue to support and augment such bird populations. It is my view that alternative seven provides the best combination of the goals and objectives listed for the project and will effectively maintain and even partially restore this rare environment.

31 In my reading of the EIS, I noticed spelling errors on the following pages: 4, omission page 6, 9, 26, 30, 32, and 40.

Sincerely,

Cindy Buchner

Cindy Buchner

31. This comment did not provide specific enough information to allow correction of all errors noted. Corrections were made for those errors located (pages 35-38).

Box 685
Issaquah, WA 98027
August 10, 1995

RECEIVED
AUG 16 1995
LAKEVIEW, BLM

Mr. Scott Florence, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
P. 0. Box 151
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

Dear Mr. Florence,

I support the adoption of Alternative 7, the preferred plan, for the Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Designating land which is outside the Abert Rim WSA as part of the ACEC will help preserve the wilderness qualities of the area recommended for wilderness.

I strongly advocate wilderness designation for truly natural areas, but I believe that ACEC designation is often more appropriate for areas which are not completely natural. Unfortunately the Wilderness Act makes no provision for the management of lands adjacent to designated wilderness even (32) though activities on adjacent lands can severely impact the qualities which led to wilderness designation. To create buffer zones around wilderness on Forest Service lands, areas which don't really meet the criteria for wilderness are being included in wilderness areas. ACEC designation is an excellent way to address this issue on BLM lands. Also, the criteria for wilderness designation are based primarily on human needs, whereas ACECs can be tailored to meet the needs of plants and animals. I hope that when congressional action is taken on Oregon's WSAs the areas recommended for non-wilderness and areas adjacent to wilderness will all be reviewed for possible designation as ACECs.

Please send me any information you have available which would be useful for hiking in the Abert Rim, Devils Garden Lava Bed, Diablo Mountain, and Hawk Mountain WSAs or other natural areas. I am particularly interested in legal access (33) to these areas from high standard roads, including cross-country foot access of up to several miles. I already have the Oregon Wilderness Study Report and the Lake Abert ACEC EIS which have been very helpful in trip planning. Is the extension of Forest Service road # 3615 which crosses private land in sections 13 and 14 of T. 36 S. R. 21 E. on Abert Rim open to hiking?

32. BLM policy concerning wilderness specifically states that buffer zones can not be created as part of the wilderness designation. However, management of the adjacent ACEC will likely benefit the preservation of the wilderness values of Abert Rim WSA. It is unknown at this time when Congress will take any action on designation of WSA's within the State of Oregon. It is not likely that all areas adjacent to future designated wilderness areas across the state will be reviewed as potential ACEC's. However, ACEC's can be nominated anywhere, anytime. and by anyhody. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires that the BLM consider such designation during its planning process. This occurred recently as part of the Resource Management Planning process for the 6 western Oregon BLM Districts. In eastern Oregon, the vale and Burns District era initiating a joint Resource Management Plan at this time. Contact one of those two offices if you desire to propose ACEC's for those areas. The Lakeview Resource Area of the Lakeview District is not expected to start a Resource Management Plan for at least two more years. There are a number of additional ACEC's within the Resource Area that have been proposed which will be evaluated at that time.

33. Information addressing these questions were sent in a. separate letter dated August 23, 1995.

(34) I noticed that Camassia was not on the list of plants *occurring* in the Abert Rim WSA. When I was there in June 1994 I saw some blooming in a seasonally wet swale near the corner of sections 10, 11, 14, and 15 in T. 36 S. R. 21 E.. I also saw Pedicularis and *Lewisia Rediviva* blooming in the same general area along the *rim.* If I *remember* right, *Zygadenus* was widespread and blooming though I didn't make a note of common flowers I expected to see. Had I not seen *Zygadenus* I probably would have noted its absence.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Lake Abert. Also.

Sincerely yours,

Doug Oien

Doug Oien

Box 685
Issaquah, WA 98027

34. With the exception of *Pedicularis sp.*, which our botanist has followed up on in a letter (dated August, 1995). the species mentioned have been added to Table 8 of Appendix A (refer to page 37 of the final document).

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF PORTLAND
Inspiring people to love and protect nature.

RECEIVED
AUG 18 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

7 August 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area'
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview. Oregon 97630

Re: High Desert Management Framework Draft Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in Lake County, Oregon - May 1995.

Dear Scott:

The Audubon Society of Portland, a 6000+ member chapter of the National Audubon Society, an organization whose mission is to promote the enjoyment, understanding and protection of the natural world , particularily native wildlife and their habitat, has a vital interest and concern for Lake Abert and its surrounding environment.

Having reviewed the Plan A[redacted] t and Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), we support Alternative 2. Our position on Alternative 2 and the reasons for selecting it over the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Preferred Alternative @Iterative 7) are as follows, together with some issues not addressed in the plan amendment and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Background

35 The plan amendment and EIS for the proposed Lake Abert ACEC is the result of Lake Abet-t being nominated for an ACEC by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (7 August 1992) and Oregon Waterfowl and Wetlands Association (10 August 1992). Although the plan amendment and EIS document was produced as a result of the ACEC nominations, the true driving force that set the process into action was the fact that another proposal had to be addressed. Canadian Occidental Petroleum Limited (Canadian Oxy) applied to the BLM for leases on approximately 15,000 acres of the lake to mine the waters for sodium carbonate / bicarbonate (caustic soda) (BLM 1994). Canadian Oxy states in their lease application letter that Lake Abert's waters are capable of sustaining a

35. The background information presented is generally accurate except that in June, 1995, Canadian Oxidental withdrew their lease application. Further, the mineral extraction process described represents only one of several possible mineral development scenarios. At this point in time another company could apply for a lease and propose an entirely different mining plan. Therefore, the process specific impacts can not be accurately assessed until a company submits a mining plan of operations. Should a mining plan of operations be submitted in the future, a separate NEPA document would be prepared addressing the specific proposal.

5151 NW Cornell Road. Portland, Oregon 97210 503/292-6855 FAX 503/292-1021
Printed on recycled paper

150,000 ton / year caustic soda plant (BLM 1994). The caustic soda extraction process would involve running water from the lake through a submerged pipeline to an evaporation pond in the western portion of the lake, then piping the concentrated evaporate solution to a caustic soda plant, then returning the unused brine back to the lake (BLM 1994).

Our primary objection to the Preferred Alternative is that, were it implemented, it would permit the mining of Lake Abert's waters. The EIS does not adequately address the consequences of mining the waters of Lake Abert for caustic soda.

Aquatic Life

(36) The removal of up to 150,000 tons / year of sodium carbonate / bicarbonate would create an increased concentration of the other chemicals in the water. Mining operations therefore would change the water chemistry, pH, aeration, light penetration, etc. What effects will these changes have on the existing biotic communities? Will they promote conditions favorable for invaders? Will the invaders destroy the natives?

The aquatic life at Lake Abert consists primarily of two invertebrates, the alkali fly (*Ephydra hians*) and the brine shrimp (*Artemia salina*). There are no aquatic vertebrates. There are three major species of benthic algae, the diatom *Nitzschia frutulum*, the filamentous blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) *Oscillatoria spp.* and the filamentpus green algae *Ctenocladus circinnatus* (Keister 1992). The alkali fly and its larva both graze the benthic algae of the lake (Herbst 1988). as does the brine shrimp. If changes wrought by sodium mining have an appreciable affect *on* the algae, what becomes of the grazers? Would new species of algae replace the present forms and support the grazers? What if the grazers decline, do their excretions provide nutrients for the algae and cyanobacteria? What effects would occur between the green algae and the cyanobacteria when the (37) chemistry and pH are changed by mining operations? It has been shown in laboratory srudies that the cyanobacteria *Oscillatoria spp.* and green algae coexist under the right light conditions but, can wipe one another out if the light penetration changes one way or the other (Fogg & Thake 1987). Even if there were no serious affects on the production of the primary producers (algae / cyanobacteria) from changes in light penetration, aeration, temperature, etc, the mere fact that large quantities of salts are being removed will lower the salinity and alkaline levels of the lake. In very wet years when natural dilution of Lake Abert's waters occur, the water boatman (*Corisella decolor*), damselfly nymphs (*Enallagma*) and other predatory insects and larvae become fairly common (Herbst 1988). This, coupled with the removal of salts through mining could virtually destroy the brine shrimp population. Brine shrimp can live in freshwater very well (they do in the laboratory), but are totally defenseless against predation, therefore they exist only in hypersaline environments where high salt concentrations eliminate would be predators (Burgis &Morris 1987). The algae *Ctenocladus* may also be unable to compete in less saline /alkaline waters (Blinn 1971). Many of the above questions have no immediate answers. Though much has been written about the brine shrimp and alkali fly, there has been no intensive study from a microbiological point of view of any of the hypersaline alkaline (>pH9) lakes of the Great Basin (Javor 1989).

36. For the reason described above in response #35, it is impossible to adequately evaluate the site-specific impacts of a Potential mining operation at this time. Refer also to comment response X29. The intent of this Plan amendment is to provide a general framework of limits/restrictions under which mining could be allowed while still protecting the important and relevant resource values for which ACEC designation is proposed. A separate plan of operations and associated NEPA document would be required Prior to approving any mineral leasing operation, which would tier to the framework contained in this plan amendment. This is stated in the "Minerals Management" descriptions for Alternatives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 (pages 28, 33, 34, and 35) of the draft document. These kinds of questions/issues will be addressed in a site-specific NEPA document prepared in response to a mining applicant's proposed plan of operation, as the kinds of detail necessary to address them are not available at this time. However, the limits set by Goal 1, objective b, as revised (refer to page 20 of the draft document and page 25 of the final document) is intended to minimize impacts to the all species dependent upon the aquatic system.

37. Same response as #36.

Waterbirds

Williams (1993) writes "...despite the lack of attention given *them,* salt lakes *are* significant components of the biosphere ... One important ecological value of salt lakes thar should receive particular mention is their role as feeding, refuge and breeding sites for many migratory or nomadic bird species, The loss of certain salt lakes of value in this respect may pose very serious threats to the continued viability of the bird species in question". The primary bird species in question here is the Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) and Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) which are among the most halophilic species of birds in the world (Jehl 1988). In addition to these two species, Lake Abert is used as a migratory stopover by other birds, mainly shorebirds, including many thousands of Western (*Calidris mauri*) and Least (*Calidris minutilla*) Sandpipers. Resident breeders, which nest on the open mud flats and margins of the lake, include a 1000 or more American Avocets (*Recurvirosta americana*) (Kristensen, et al. 1991), Willets (*Catoptrophorous semipalmatus*), Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), Long-billed Curlew (*Numerius americanus*) and about 40% of Oregon's inland population of the Snowy Plover (*Chardrius alexandrinus*) (Keister 1992). These bird species rely on the rich and abundant supply of invertebrates in Lake Abort, which in turn rely on the vast amount of algae growing in the lake's waters. If the primary producers are affected by sodium mining it will effect the chain all the way up.

38

Jehl (1988) points out that " highly saline lakes, which are often shallow and susceptible to rapid ecological changes, are important concentration points for Eared Grebes and Wilson's Phaloropes ...". Lake Abert and other hypersaline lakes throughout western North America are of particular value to these birds. Again, to quote Jehl (1994) "The health of bird populations that use unstable habitats is to a large extent dependent on the availability of back-up sites that can be used when conditions change. Unfortunately there is not much redundancy left in the saline and alkaline lakes of the west. Owens and Winnemucca lakes have been lost to the demands of increasing human populations and will never be restored." During the early 1980's when weather patterns changed throughout western North America, breeding bird populations that normally use the Great Salt lake area shifted north to the Malheur basin, Warner Valley and Lake Abert. Had any of these lakes not been available, there would have been an additional stress placed on these already stressed populations. We cannot afford to degrade or lose these lakes. Lake Abert is particularly important as it is the only lake in this region that has adequate resources IO meet the requirements of halophilic birds.

39

Grazing

Lake Abert's western shoreline is dotted with numerous springs and seeps. These freshwater springs attract many hundreds of breeding shorebirds which nest in colonies and individually along the full reach of the lake's shoreline. Unfortunately *they also* attract cattle which at times severely trample the springs and nests. The BLM at present has plans to fence off 3.5 miles of shoreline to prevent cattle access. Although we greatly applaud this effort we feel that the BLM should extend the construction of this fence south to where the public lands meet State and private lands near the southern tip of the

40

38. Same response as for comment #36.

39. The BLM concurs that Lake Abert is an important habitat for breeding and migratory birds and that it is important to prevent the loss or degradation of this system. The BLM believes that the Preferred Alternative 7 will adequately prevent the degradation and loss of this system.

40. Refer to comment respone X6.

lake. Another alternative would be to remove cattle from the area until the breeding season is over, which may be as late as August 1. I have documented active Snowy Plover nests on Lake Abert's westside as late as July 17th.

Other Issues

Beyond the issue of mining operations altering or destroying the existing conditions of the lake, there is the concern of the amount of water entering Lake Abert via the Chewaucan River. This is an issue, however, that lies outside of the jurisdiction of the BLM. The allocation of the river's water is controlled by the Oregon State Water Resources Department. We have no specific answer for this one but, it is an issue that must be addressed because the ACEC process and designation is completely moot if the lake does not continue to receive an adequate water supply into the future. Some type of cooperative agreement and understanding needs to be worked out between the two agencies.

41

Also, the effects of the sodium mining industry on other industries must be considered. At present only one industry exists at Lake Abert - Oregon Desert Brine Shrimp - a small family owned and operated business which extracts brine shrimp from Lake Abert for use in the fish food industry. Oregon Desert Brine Shrimp, operating since 1979 without any detriment to the ecology of the lake, must be given consideration before allowing other industries to operate which have the potential to destroy it.

42

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Dan Sherman
for the Conservation Committee
Audubon Society of Portland

41. Refer to comment response #7.

42. The potential impacts to the existing commercial brine fishery would be evaluated as part any site-specific environmental analysis/NEPA document prepared in response to a specific mining plan of operations. See also respones to comment 136.

Keister, G.P. 1992. The Ecology of Lake Abert: Analysis of Further Development. A Special Report, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Hines, Oregon , unpublished report.

Kristensen. K.. M. Stem and J. Morowski 1991. Birds of North Lake Abert, Lake Co., Oregon. Oregon Birds 17(3): 67-77.

Williams, W.D. 1993. Conservation of Salt Lakes, Hydrobiologia 267: 291-306.

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101

RECEIVED
AUG 25 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

Reply To
Attn Of: WD-126

August 21, 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

Dear Mr. Florence:

The Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed designation of the Lake Abert area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Our review was conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Our comments are offered to assist in the preparation of the final EIS.

We have given the DEIS an EC-2 (Environmental Concerns-Insufficient Information) rating, since we believe that certain clarifications and additions would be beneficial. We recommend that a grazing-prohibition alternative be considered, and that potential noise impacts should be addressed. These and other comments are discussed in the paragraphs below. A summary of our comments will be published in the Federal Resister.

43

As a whole the document is well organized and easy to follow. However, we think you should reconsider your decision to drop an alternative which would prohibit grazing on public lands in the study area. This is an important issue that is not barred from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) consideration, even though the issue has been addressed in a previous EIS and may be constrained by other laws. A grazing- prohibition feature would probably be consistent with the spirit of Alternative 2. Such a discussion would tier to your Lakeview Grazing Management EIS of 1981, as you have done, but would also be integrated in substance into the present document.

Printed on Recycled Paper

43. An alternative considering the elimination of grazing within the entire planning area (Alternative 2 ACEC boundary) was considered. but dropped from further study as stated on pages 26-27 of the draft document. This discussion provides the reasoning for dropping from further consideration. The BLM disagrees that it need be considered further for the reasons described in the text.

A major portion of the area west of the lake has been intensively developed (large, non-native created wheatgrass seedings, pipelines, other water developments, etc.) at considerable cost to private interests and the Federal Government over the last 20 years specifically to accomodate livestock grazing. Grazing in this area has virtually no impact on native plant communities and allows the BLM greater management flexibility to remove grazing from more sensitive areas, such as riparian zones. For these reasons the BLM does not feel that elimination of grazing truely represents a 'reasonable" alternative as defined by NEPA. It should also be noted that an important component of the proposed plan is more emphasis on monitoring within the area (refer to Appendix D of the draft document). Should a significant change occur in the plant communities in the area which can be attributed to grazing, grazing management practices would be adjusted accordingly (refer to comment response #10 and page 35 of the final document).

Other commenters have recommended the elimination of grazing throughout the (Alternative 2) ACEC area to protect cultural sites and/or sensitive/native plant communities. The BLM is required to protect these resources from grazinq project impacts, with or without an ACEC. Through an existing agreement with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), it has been determined that livestock grazing upon all lands is not, in and of itself, a deterimental activity. Should monitoring or the allotment evaluation process reveal livestock are congregating on a specific cultural site due to the presence of an existing fence, waterhole, structure, etc., the impacts would be evaluated on a cane-by-case basis and mitigating measures implemented. In addition, most cultural sites are concentrated along the shoreline (riparian zones) and either currently are or soon would be excluded from grazing as a side benefit of excluding to protect riparian resources under the Preferred Alternative 7.

Only one sensitive plant species is known historically from the area (refer to page 56 of the draft document). It is proposed to be reestablished within an existing exclosure as a component of many of the alternatives. Grazing outside the exclosure would have no impact on this plant species.

Finally, various alternatives do propose excluding grazing from areas where deemed necessary to protect protect specific cultural sites, a sensitive plant reintroduction site, and/or wetland/riparian areas. The BLM feels that the varying levels of livestock exclusion built into the seven alternatives presented in the draft document adequately reflects the need to evaluate a range Of reasonable alternatives as required by NEPA.

Noise impacts are discussed further in response to comment #44.

Another area of concern is that the DEIS does not appear to address the issue of noise impacts. Since there is potentially some overlapping use between wilderness users and summer and winter off-highway vehicles, vehicle noise should be discussed. Consideration may be given to quietness as a resource that is impacted by vehicle noise. A good discussion of the impacts of wilderness-area noise can be found in EPA 910/9-85-125, (March, 1985). We have enclosed excerpts from that document for your perusal. (44)

Our other comments and questions to follow are listed, without priority, by resource as they appear in the Summary section:

Roads and Transportation

Are there any wilderness management goals that adjacent use by off-highway-vehicles (OHV's) would be inconsistent with? (45)

Rangeland

It's not clear how Alternatives 3 through 7 differ from the no action alternative with respect to use at Abert Rim, since each would exclude livestock grazing from that area. (46)

Animal Damage Control

This is listed in the Summarv but does not appear to be in the text. Shouldn't it be discussed just after Wildlife Impacts? What is APHIS? It's not in the Glossary. The reader needs to know more about pesticide programs in addition to their referencing to the Wilderness IMP. IMP is also not in the Glossary . (47)

Special Status Species

The botanical names for Desert Allocarya, Columbia Cress and Long-flowered Snowberry should be given in addition to the common names. (48)

Fire

The wording in Alternative 1 and Alternatives 2-7 is confusing. "Allow wildfire to burn with limited suppression...." and "All wildfires would be suppressed using a limited suppression strategy...." would appear to have equivalent meaning. (49)

The seed mix for revegetation would "emphasize" native species. If there are compelling reasons for using any exotics in the seed mix, they should be stated. (50)

Recreation

Alternatives 3-7 make reference to maintaining a "watchable wildlife site" and converting a road to a foot trail. Why are these not included in Alternative 2, which is the most environmentally-benign and protective alternative? (51)

44. Vehicle noise is not considered to be a significant issue or problem within the planning area. Vehicles within the Abert Rim WSA are limited to existing roads and trails and current use is low. Vehicle use outside of the WSA, much as along Highway 395 (which is outside of the ELM's authority to regulate) or elsewhere within the ACEC occurs within the context of "outside sights and sounds".

During the wilderness study process, a Senate report was issued directing agencies to disregard "outside sights and sounds" in the wilderness analysis. Sandia Mountain in New Mexico was an area under evaluation at that time. In that instance, the ruling that occurred stated that the lights and activities occurring in Albequrque beneath the wilderness study unit did not constitute an impact to the wilderness values of the area. Subsequently, roads, construction. or other man-made elements outside the boundaries of a wilderness study area or designated wilderness unit have no legal basis to be considered as impacting the wilderness values of an area.

45. Refer to comment response #44.

46. All alternatives are essentially the same with respect to grazing (non) use on Abert Rim. The difference is Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 would officially allocate all AUMs to wildlife, while Alternatives 1 and 6 do not.

47. A discussion of Animal Damage Control does appear in the text. Refer to pages 22-23, 29, 31-32, 34-35, and 63-64 of the draft document. APHIS stands for Animal and Plant Health Inspection service which is an agency under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Animal damage control (ADC) authority rests with the ADC section of APHIS. The environmental impacts of their program are discussed in other NEPA documents to which this plan amendment is tiered. The tew APHIS and IHP have been added to the glossary (refer to pages 36-37 of the final document).

48. The scientific names for the species mentioned are not included in the summary for the sake of brevity. They are included in the main body of the draft document, pages 22 and 56.

49. Both statements mean the same thing.

50. Refer to comment response 113.

51. The BLM concurs that this is a good idea. The proposed change has been made to the description of Alternative 2 (refer to pages 14 and 33 of the final document).

Tradifional Use Impacts

(52) The Summary should probably indicate that the Klammath Tribes, and possibly others, have a policy of opposing any surface disturbance on their ceded lands, as mentioned on page 24.

We hope these comments will be useful to you as you prepare the final EIS, and again apologize for our letter being a few days late. If you have any questions about our comments, please contact Doug Woodfill at (206) 553-4012.

Sincerely,

for, Joan Cabreza, Chief
Environmental Review Section

Enclosure

52. The BLM disagrees. The summary section is to be a brief summary of the major issues and points discussed in the main text. The reader needs to read the main text to more fully understand the impacts of each alternative analyzed.

RECEIVED
AUG 2 8 1995
LAKEVIEW, f3.L.M.

August 23, 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
PO Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

To Mr. Florence:

I am writing this letter to comment in strong favor of the Bureau of Land Management's proposal to designate Lake Abert as an area of critical environmental concern. I realize that my comment is a few days late, but I consider it to be no less important.

I stand to support Alternative 2. I am very impressed and excited that the Lake Abert Area is being recognized as an important cultural and wild area. I cannot understand how any modem government would not recognize the immeasurable value of vast, healthy, and in tact wild areas. Such areas are of great value to our nation as a whole, to generations yet to come, and to the life forms with which we share this planet.

The Lake Abert area is after all public land, and I. as a citizen, find the rich natural state and aboriginal history of the area to be an important resource to our nations citizens whether they be Oregonians or New Yorkers who have never before witnessed the vast, ancient beauty of Oregon's high desert, or imagined what it would have been like to live thousands of years ago in one of the tiny stone house sites along the shores of Lake Abert. (53)

I consider myself very lucky to have been able to camp out or just hike around in this area, and to explore its remarkably pristine beauty. I would like to know that generations after me will be able to do the same. For this reason, I support Alternative 2. The blatant destruction by cattle ranching and mining must come to an end. I am tired of seeing these special interest, money making groups steal from our public lands! It is time to start using our public lands for the public! (54)

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,

Justin Ramsey
1959 Sylvan St.
Eugene, OR 97403

(55) P.S. In addition, I suggest that the area above Abet-t Rim be designated as a back country, *cowless* wilderness area, for it is quite wild up there!

53. Comments noted.

54. The BLM disagrees that all cattle grazing and mining must come co an end on public land. The BLM is required under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Taylor Grazing Act, the Mining Law of 1872, and a variety of other laws and regulations, to manage for multiple use. Mining and grazing are, and will continue to be, valid uses Of public lands (unless Congress amends the laws under which the BLM operates), as are wildlife and recreation. The challenge the BLM faces is find the balance of the most appropriate uses for a given piece of land.

55. Abert Rim is currently in wilderness study area (WSA) status. It is currently managed under the Wilderness Interim Management Policy (IMP) until such time a.8 Congress either officially designates it as wilderness or releases it from WSA status. Grazing is considered to be a "grand-fathered" use which is allowable under the IMP and even if officially designated. It is important to note that grazing has already been excluded from the "face" of Abert Rim (the western half of the WSA), primarily due to the development of range improvements west of Lake Abert and transferring the livestock use there.

RECEIVED
AUG 24 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

To: Scott Florence, District Manager - Lakeview BLM,

This summer we had the opportunity to do field work in the Lake Abert thanks to the BLM in Lakeview. We learned much about the area itself and something of the issues surrounding it. Following are some of our concerns regarding the Lake Abert ACEC and Abert Rim WSA.

(56) We are concerned that the public lands on the west shore of Lake Abert are not recieving enough protection from cattle. This area is highly significant due to its inaccessibility and we fear cows would rather concentrate there than on the cheatgrass infested plains uphill. The north shore as well is fantastic habitat an we would like to see cattle and OHV's fully excluded from the public lands there and its accompanying dune areas. The ACEC EIS draft seems, appropriately, to bring attention to this area.

(57)

Here we must also say that we are concerned that the dune areas within (and outside of) the ACEC. The dunes harbor a great variety of plant species due to varied topography and add to the overall landscape diversity. Grazing in this habitat is ridiculous. We realize the difficulties in changing these land use patterns, but

(58)

56. Refer to comment responses #6, 11, and 21.

57. It is assumed the commenters are refering to the stabilized dunes occuring on the north end of the lake. This area is considered to be a desert shrub plant community rather than a true sand dune commpunity and contains large tracts of intermingled private and state land. Therefore, management options are constrained in this area. The exchange of use agreement mentioned in comment response X17 has reduced livestock use substantially in this general area compared to previous management.

OHV use would be restricted to existing roads and trails under most of the alternatives evaluated which should adequately remove potential OHV impacts from tho area in question. Additional restrictions would be implemented depending on the alternative. Refer also to comment responses #14 and 58.

58. While the stabilized dune area does add diversity to the larger landscape, it is generally less diverse than a true, unstabilized dune system. The desert shrub community found there is dominated by shadscale, horsebrush and other salt-tolerant shrubs. Due to climatic condition6 grasses are scarce. The Resource Area botanist has monitored plant communities in this area over a lonq period of time and knows of no known sensitive plant species present and feels that past livestock grazing impacts have been slight due primarily to the lack of forage (grasses) in this area. The desert shrub community is found in isolated localities in southeastern Oregon, but is much more widespread to the south in Nevada. Refer also to comment response X57.

GRAZING IN THESE ENVIRONS IS UNSUSTAINABL AT BEST

WE HAVE CONCERNS REGARDING THE WSA AS WELL. IT IS GREAT THERE ARE NO CATTLE GRAZING ON THE FACE OF THE ABERT RIM, BUT GRAZING WITHIN THE WSA ON TOP OF ABERT RIM IS HAVING AN IMPACT ON THE AREA (INCREASING FORAGE COMPETITION, CATTLE IMPACTS ON SLOW GROWING VEGETATION DUE TO MOVEMENT PATTERNS, COW POOP EVERYWHERE, UNFORESEEN DAMAGE POTENTIAL, ETC.). THE WSA AND ACEC WOULD COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER BEAUTIFULLY, ESPECIALLY IF IMPLEMENTED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE. (

59

AS A FINAL POINT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE BLM WORK WITH ODF AND W, ODFW AND ANY OTHER RELEVENT AGENCIES IN DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP TO ENSURE LASTING HEALTH OF THE LAKE ABERT ECOSYSTEM. THIS COULD BE VERY EXCITING AND WOULD BE A MOVE IN THE DIRECTION NECESSARY FOR OUR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO FUNCTION PROPERLY IN THE FUTURE. THIS WE RIGHT IN PARTICULAR REGARD TO CONCERNS OF OVER-ALLOCATED WATER IN THE CHENAMCAN WATERSHED.

60

AGAIN WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE BLM IN LAKEVIEW FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE LAKE ABERT AREA. YOUR DISTRICT HAS DONE SOME WONDERFUL WORK TO PROTECT VITAL NATURAL AREAS OF NORTH AMERICA IN OREGON.

59. Refer to comment response #55.

60. The BLM does, and will continue to be, committed to working cooperatively with other agencies and private landowners within the planning area to better ensure the success of the proposed management plan. This is also stated as item #5 under "Management Assumptions C-n to All Alternatives", on page 25 of the draft document.

MAY YOUR WORK FURTHER THE GOAL OF SUSTAINING THE DWINDLING AND IRREPLACEABLE BIOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF OUR PLANET IN THIS ERA OF RAMPANT GREED AND SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS.

SINCERELY

JOHN W. HUNT
SIMONA S. ALTMAN
1117 OLIVE ST.
CHICO, CAL.
95928

440 w. 17th
Eugene, OR 97401

Oregon Natural Desert Association

July 16, 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Lakeview Resource Area
Lakeview District BLM Office
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630.

Dear Scott,

I am writing in response to the Draft Plan Amendment and EIS for the Proposed Lake Abert ACEC. First of all, let me say how exciting it is that BLM is considering special status for this area. Its cultural, biological, and scenic qualities certainly qualify it for ACEC designation and your agency deserves our thanks for recognizing this fact.

I have read the document and would like to express my preference for Alternative 2. This alternative seems to afford the highest degree of protection for the many natural values of the area. Due to the complexity of the alternatives under consideration, the document was a bit difficult to follow; I did not see limits on total dissolved solids and minimum lake levels listed under any of the alternatives. These should be included. I would like to see OHV and livestock use entirely eliminated from the ACEC (99,900 acres). Considering the especially significant archeological values of the area, it would seem advisable to place a higher priority on completing the Calss III archeological survey, say within 2 or three years.

(61)

I fully support closure to mining and predator control activities and the expansion of the archeological district, as well as reintroduction of sensitive plant and animal species.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Elaine

Elaine Rees
President

16 NW Kansas • Bend . Oregon • 97701 503•385-6908

recycled paper • please recycle

61. Comment noted regarding preference for Alternative 2. Refer to comment response #12 regarding limits on lake levels and total dissolved solids and comment response #11 regarding cultural surveys. The elimination of grazing from the entire area is addressed in comment response #43. The BLM does not feel that the complete elimination of OR" use from the entire planning area (Alternative 2 ACEC boundary) is warranted at this time, based on the current amount of use within the area. Refer also to comment response #14.

Comments noted relating to mining, predator control, archaeological district expansion. and reintroduction Of sensitive species under Alternative 2.

RECEIVED
JUL 21 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

July 19, 1995

Dear Mr. Florence,

I appreciate that the BLM is proposing special ● anagement for the Lake Abert area. I request the adoption of Alternative 2, with certain revisions. Please insure the lake's biological Health by specifying limits of total dissolved solids and ● ■ ♦ ○ ♦ ○ lake ● ♦ ● ● Please prioritize ● rchaelogical surveys of the area. Please use only native species in reseeding projects. And finally, please allow no cows on these public lands. Also vehicles should be made to stay on existing roads and pulloffs.

(62)

Thanks for considering my comments.

Susanna DeFazio
Walker Creek Road
Walton, OR 97490

Please do not add my name to your mailing list.

62. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 13, 14, and 43.

Scott Florence, Area Manager
BLM Lakeview Resource Area
PO Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

RECEIVED
JUL 20 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

Re: ACEC Management for Lake Abert

Thank you for proposing special management for the unique Lake Abert area.

Please choose Alternative and revise the final management plan to

* specify limits on total dissolved solids and minimum lake levels to ensure the lake's biological health

(63) * place a higher priority on completion of the Class III archeological survey; go beyond "as time and funding permit"

* specify that disturbances are reseeded with native species only

over ->

63. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 13, 14, and 43.

63 Continued. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 13, 14, and 43.

63

* restrict Off Highway Vehicles to existing roads,
* eliminate livestock grazing to protect cultural sites and native plants - YES!!

Thank you for your attention.
Please be true to good science, responsible stewardship and respecting the natural world. Choose integrity over minority special interest big money please.

Sincerely,

Melanie Allendale
PO Box 578
Detroit, OR 97342

written on ~~the~~ weekend camping trip at Wakeo Lake - very beautiful pristine waters and shoreline - yahoo!!

7/20

To whom it concern in the BLM:

RECEIVED
JUL 24 1995
LAKEVIEW B.L.M.

Thank you for thinking of special managment for the lake Albert area! I support alternative 2 and recommend the following revisions to the final document: specify limits on
(64) total dissolved solids and minimum lake levels to ensure the lakes biological health.

Place a higher priority on completion of the Class III archaeological survey, (current wording is "as time and funding permit").

Specify that disturbances be reseeded with native species only.

Eliminate live stock grazing to protect cultural sites and native plants

Restrict Off Highway Vehicles to existing roads,

43. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 13, 14, and

(65)

Dear Mr. Florence — 7-20-95

I am writing about the proposed to make Lake Abert an ACEC. With regard to the "Draft Plan", I support Alternative 2. This is a wonderful environmentally unique and sensitive area; I recommend special standards to maintain Lake Abert's Biological Health. I also support resolving with native species, elimination of livestock grazing in sensitive areas; and ORV use on roads only. Sincerely - E.Q. Sargent

65. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 13, 14, and 43.

(66)

DEAR MR. FLORENCE —

GLAD TO HEAR OF PLANS FOR LAKE ABERT ACEC. I'VE SPENT A LITTLE TIME IN & AROUND THERE, AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT GET MAXIMUM PROTECTION. GET RID OF THE COWS, ELIMINATE MINING, MANAGE FOR WILD LIFE INSTEAD OF CATTLE OR TOURISTS.

GOOD LUCK —

DENNIS PHILLIPS

66. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #15, 16, 43, and 54.

Sir.

My wife and I support Alt 2, (Not Alt 7) of the "Draft Plan Amendment and EIS" for the proposed ACEC for Lake Abert.

Please Eliminate livestock grazing to protect cultural sites and native plants &

(67) Also please restrict Off Highway Vehicles to existing roads. Please write us your plans.

Sincerely Kim & Donald Fontana

67. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #43 and 14.

BLM: Your proposed special status for 7/20/95 Lake Abert. Your proposal is good. Alternative #2 is best - we urge you do following.

1. Insure Lake's health by limiting dissolved solids maintain lake's minimum water level
2. Complete Class III Archeological survey. You must go beyond the minimum!
3. Reseed with native plants only.
4. Off Road Vehicles use existing roads only
5. Protect native plants & cultural sites by eliminating all grazing - Thank you

(68)

Arthur Boescher
13260 Nixon Ave
Milwaukie, Ore. 97222

68. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 13, 14, and 43.

SOCIETY
ADVOCATING
NATURAL
ECOSYSTEMS

RECEIVED
JUL 24 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

HCR 85, Box 13
Bates, Oregon 97817
(503) 421-3721
Phone/Fax

Consultants

William Boyer, ed. D.
Planning-Philosophy

Clyde L. Calvin, Ph. D.
Botany

Stuart Croghan, B. I.
Biology

Steven G. Herman, A. D.
Zoology

Karl E. Holte, Ph. D.
Botany

I. P. Jensen M. D.
Medicine

David Johns, J. D.
Pol. Sci.-Law

Virginia Lemon, Ph. D.
Nat. Resource Mgt.

C. D. Littlefield, M. I.
Zoology

Harry Lonsdale, Ph. D.
Chemistry

Marc Nims, M. S.
Geography

Consultants

Tonia Moro, J. D.
Law

Kathleen S. Myron, I.I.
Human Resource Mgt.

Bob Phillips, M. S.
Fisheries

Tom Pringle, Ph. D.
Math.-Computers

Kevin Shea, M. S.
Entomology

Patrick Shipsey, M. D.
Medicine

Stuart Sugarman, J. D.
Biology-Law

Caryn Throop, B. S.
Forestry

Harold Vinegar, B. S.
-- Wildlife

Walt Wolfe, M. S.
Biology

George Wuerthner, M. A.
Author-Ecology

20 July 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
Lakeview Resource Area-BLM
P. O. Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

Dear Area Manager Florence:

We are delighted to see the BLM taking steps to protect Lake Abert and its natural and cultural resources with an ACEC designation.

We urge you to adopt Alternative 2 as being the surestand most effective protective mechanism for this unique area.

Also, we hope you will initiate policies to reestablish native plant species, bar off-road vehicle traffic, and terminate livestock grazing as additional measures to return this sensitive area to a more natural state. (69)

Thank you for a well-conceived plan.

With kind regards,

Denzel Ferguson, Ph. D.
Executive Director

Sincerely,

Nancy Ferguson
Communications Director

69. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #13, 14, and 43.

Harry W. Taylor
President

Denzel Ferguson
Executive Director

Donna J. Taylor
Secretary-Treasurer

Nancy Ferguson
Communications Director

RECEIVED
JUL 31 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

July 26, 1995

To Whom It May Concern:

I am encouraged by your proposal for special management for the Lake Albert area of southeastern Oregon. I support Alternative 2 with the following provisions:

70 1) specify limits on total dissolved solids and minimum lake levels to ensure the lake's biological health;

2) place a higher priority on completion of the Class III archaeological survey, providing adequate initial funding and target date;

3) specify that reseeding be with native species only;

4) restrict ATV's to existing roads; and

5) severely curtail or eliminate livestock grazing to protect cultural sites and native plants.

Please inform me of any progress you make in revising the Draft Plan Amendment and EIS. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely;

Sue Knight

Sue Knight, member of Oregon Natural Desert Association

70. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 13, 14, and 43.

Bob Wilson
SO9 Douglass Ave
Richland, WA 99352

RECEIVED
JUL 27 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

July 28, 199s

Scott Florence, Area Mgr
BLM
Lakeview Resource Area
P 0 Box 151
Lakeview. OR 97630

Dear Mr. Florence:

RE: Draft Lake Abert EIS

With so much of the Oregon high desert negatively impacted by excessive grazing and other. intensive land uses, I applaud the Lakeview District's recognition of its biological resources and the need to manage this unique area with the conservation of these resources considered. I do, however, strongly support alternative 2 of the "Draft Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement".

(71) Truly. the 99,900 acres in alternative of 2 is worthy of Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) status. With huge areas in Oregon's arid lands severely degraded by over grazing, with our western waters threatened by agri-industrial pollution, with our archaeological sites disappearing throughout the nation, and with our wildlife struggling in competition with livestock in virtually every BLM District, it is appropriate for the Lakeview District to preserve at least the area recommended in alternative 2 as ACEC.

Considering the vast biological importance of Lake Abert, it only makes sense to protect it within an ACEC, however alternative 2 should be amended to include:

71. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 14, and 43.

- restrictions of off road vehicles (ORV) co main, existing roadways.

- Eliminate livestock grazing.

- Specify biological and environmental limits to gauge ecosystem health, (i.e. total dissolved solids in lake water, indicator species population fluctuations, restoration of native species).

- Completion of archaeological surveys

The time has came to protect what remains of our natural heritage as well as our arid lands natural resources. They are sensitive and disappearing rapidly throughout the western United States. Here. at Lake Abert, a step forward can be taken to ensure future generations are not denied the opportunities we ourselves have had from our public lands.

Please strengthen, and put forth alternative 2 of the Draft EIS Plan.

Sincerely,

Bob Wilson

cc: Sec. of Interior, Bruce Babbic

71 Continued. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #11, 12, 14, and 43.

RECEIVED
AUG 14 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

8/9/95

Dear Mr. Florence,

We are writing you in support of alternative #2 for ACEC designation for Lake Abert.

Having visited and camped in the Lake Abert/Steens Mtn areas several times when living in Medford, we support the highest priority on protecting this unique Lake.

We also recommend that minimum water levels be designated and monitored for the lake (72)

Sincerely,

Bill & Victoria Barbour
10771 N.W. Harding Ct
Portland OR 97229

72. Comments noted. Refer to comment response #12.

RECEIVED
JUL 21 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

16 July 1995

I am pleased that the BLM is proposing protection for Lake Abert, one of my favorite spots in the state and one which I have visited ever since 1974. Alternative 7 is inadequate to protect the lake and basin. Alternative 2 should be adopted.

(73) In addition, the lake needs protection based on water depth minimums, salinity and dissolved solids limits, a complete closure to ORV use and livestock grazing. As a professional ecologist, the above are very important to protect this area.

Sincerely,

Dr. Randy Webb
200 Park Ave.
Eugene, OR 97404
503/689-1460.

73. The statement that Alternative 7 is inadequate to protect the lake and basin is unsupported opinion. Refer to comment responses #12, 14, and 43.

RECEIVED
AUG 18 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

638 1/2 S. Siskiyou Blvd.
Ashland, OR 97520
Aug. 11, 1995

Mr. Scott Florence, Area Manager
BLM Lakeview Resource Area
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

Dear Mr. Florence;

I was happy to hear that the BLM is proposing special management for the Lake Albert area. I would like to express my support for Alternative 2 rather than Alternative 7. The biological and archaeological resources of the area need to be fully protected. In addition, I would like to express support the following revisions to the final document: (74) 1. Specify limits on total dissolved solids and minimum lake levels in the lake. 2. Place a high priority on completion of the class III archaeological survey. 3. Specify that disturbances be reseeded with only native species. 4. Restrict Off Highway Vehicles to existing roads 5. Eliminate livestock grazing to protect cultural sites and native plants. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.

Sincerely,

Inga Graham
638 1/2 Siskiyou Blvd.
Ashland, OR 97520

74. **Comments noted.** Refer to comment responses **#11**, 12, 13, **14**, and 43

RECEIVED
AUG 18 1995
LAKEVIEW, OREGON

GRANT COUNTY CONSERVATIONISTS

HCR 77 Box 2070
John Day, OR 97845

8/15/95

Scott Florence, Area Manager BLM
Lakeview Resource Area
PO Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

Dear Scott Florence,
We wish to join the Oregon Natural Desert Association in supporting Alternative 2 of the Draft Plan Amendment + EIS which proposes that Lake Albert be designated ACEC. We also support their request that ORV use + grazing be minimized and/or restricted. (75)

Please do not put our name on mailing list.

Sincerely, Louise Dunkle

75. Comments noted. Refer to comment responses #14 and 43,

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF PORTLAND

Inspiring people to love and protect nature.

RECEIVED
AUG 18 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

August 15, 1995

Scott Florence, Area Manager
BLM
PO Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

Dear Mr. Florence,

Portland Audubon Society, its 7000 members and Board of Directors strongly support your proposal to increase protection of Lake Abert by elevating its status to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This designation is justified due to the lake's enormous importance to migratory birds. As you know, tens of thousands of birds use the lake each year.

Some of the notable species include Wilson's and red-necked phalaropes, American avocets, least and western sandpipers, eared grebes, ring-billed gulls, and western snowy plovers. The Lake Abert population of western snowy plovers is the largest in Oregon. This is particularly significant since the western snowy plover is a state-listed threatened species, and is a Category 2 federal candidate species. In addition, Lake Abert provides habitat for many other special status plant and animal species.

Although a long way from our members, Lake Abert is well known to them as a rich habitat for migrating birds and other animal life. Many of our members visit Lake Abert each year to enjoy the grandeur of the desert and the life that abounds there.

We strongly support your proposed ACEC designation and request that you strengthen elements of your management plan to address the following issues:

76 o pay special attention to the ten miles of marshes, springs and shoreline located along the west side of the lake which arc not proposed for fencing. All of these wetlands. because of their importance as nesting and foraging habitat for large populations of shorebirds, need protection from grazing. These wetlands should be protected by fencing.

77 o please make a strong commitment to work with the Oregon Water Resources Department, Forest Service and private landowners to protect sources of freshwater for Lake Abet-t. The biggest source of freshwater is the Chewaucan River and the ACEC plan needs to address how freshwater flows to Lake Abert will be maximized.

5151 NW Cornell Road, Portland, Oregon 97210 503/292-6855 FAX 503/292-1021

Printed on recycled paper.

76. Comments noted. Refer to comment response #6.

77. Refer to comment responses #7 and 60

(78) o develop management plans that examine land uses 'and activities within the entire. the Lake Abert basin to ensure high water quality and adequate freshwater flow. Restoration actions would be especially appropriate here.

Thank you for your leadership in proposing the ACEC designation for Lake Abert.

Sincerely,

Paul Ketcham
Conservation Director

78. This land use management plan has been developed within the context Of what is happening within the entire Lake Abert basin and recognizing the limitations of what the BLM can do to influence or restore, where necessary, the lake ecosystem. Again, refer to comment response #7 concerning water inflow.

RECEIVED
AUG 2 2 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

Scott Florence
BLM
Lakeview RA
POB 151
Lakeview. OR. 97630

ugust 13. 1995

Dear Mr. iiorence:

I realize that by the time you receive this, the comment period deadiine wiii be over. Nevertheless, I hope you will add my name to the list of people who support Alternative 2 for the ACEC status on Abert Lake. I fully support protecting the Great Basin water bodies as much as possible. In many ways. Abert Lake is fragile and as ecologically important as Mono Lake in Caiifornia. It's great that the BLM recognizes this, however, at the same time the present protection is not adequate to ensure that this will remain protected. I hope you will give maximum protection to this relatively rare natural resource.

79

Best,

George Wuertner
Box 3975
Eugene, Oregon 97403

P.S. please keep me apraised of future decisions regarding the lake.

79. Comments noted.

August 11, 1995

RECEIVED
AUG 21 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

Attn: Scott Florance, Area Manager
BLM--Lakeview Resource Area
P.O. BOX 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

We are writing to support Alternative 2 to designate Lake Apert be designated and Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

80

We have visited the area on a number of occasions and believe the larger ACEC is warrented (than the BLM draft recommendation) simply because the larger basin has significant resources (cultural and natural) which should be protected.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Ostertag
George Ostertag
29645 SW Rose Lane, #264
Wilsonville, OR 97070

80. Comments noted.

WILDERNESS WATCH
PACIFIC NORTHWEST OFFICE
4668 SW FLOWER PLACE
PORTLAND OR 97221

May 31, 1995

Mr. Scott R. Florence, Manager
B.L.M.
Lakeview Resource Area
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

Your reference - 1610/1613 (OI5)

Dear Mr. Florence:

The following are our comments on your EIS for the proposed Lake Abert Area.

81 We generally support inclusion of the entire planning area (Alt.2) in the ACEC. We further support the maximum level of protection for all the resources and values in the area and a minimum level of interference with the natural ecological processes..

Further we support Alternative 2 for all the elements in Tables S-1 and S-2 because they would provide the maximum level of support and protection to the Abert Rim W.S.B.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

A Voice For The Wilderness

Joseph F. Higgins
Chairman, Northwest Chapter

81. Comments noted.

RECEIVED
JUL 2 1 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

July 20, 1995

Mr Scott Florence, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
PO Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630

Dear Scott:

That's good news that you people have proposed that Lake Abert be designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Please consider my following comments for the upcoming Draft Plan Amendment and the Environmental Impact Statement.

(82) This is an important area from both the biological and the human side. I've visited the area many times, with great memories, after retiring from "active duty" in the Civil Engineering profession. The area needs to be protected to give us more time to study and better understand what went on there- the life and times, both of the Indian and of the other living things.

And the terrain and climate were probably also different. We need time and room to solve some of these unanswered questions.

Unless a wider area is preserved, than under your Alternative 7, we may lose our only chance to fill out the story.

Instead of Alternative 7, how about going for Alternative 2 which preserves more archeological area, and help restore the place to its "old" condition".

Sincerely,

Charles H. Inman

Charles H. Inman
814 Hillview Drive
Ashland, OR 97520

82. Comments noted.

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Pacific Northwest Region
909 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104-1060

RECEIVED
AUG 14 1995
LAKEVIEW, B.L.M.

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L7619(PNR-RE)
DES 95/25

AUG 9 1995

83. Comments noted.

Memorandum

To: Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management

From: Ron Hyra, Columbia Cascades System Support Office
Outdoor Recreation Planner

Subject: Lake Abert ACEC, Lake County Oregon

83 We have reviewed the subject plan for its impacts on recreation and cultural/historic resources of interest to this agency. We have no comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the plan.

Ronald Hyra

Ronald Hyra

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1996 - 790-118 / 21222 REGION NO.10

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Lakeview District Office
1000 South 9th Street
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300

FORWARDING AND ADDRESS
CORRECTION REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Bureau of Land Management
Permit No. G-76