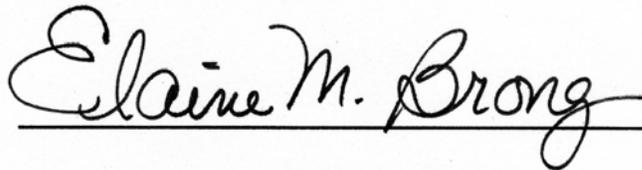


U. S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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

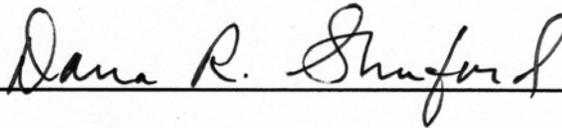
Prepared by

**Burns District Office  
Burns District  
August 2004**



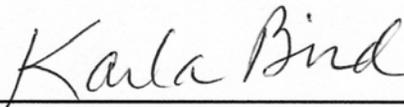
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**Elaine M. Brong  
Oregon/Washington State Director**



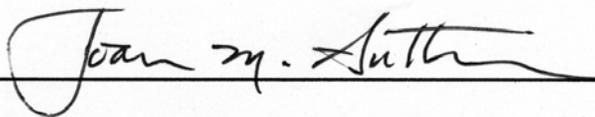
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**Dana R. Shuford  
District Manager  
Burns District Office**



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**Karla Bird  
Field Manager  
Andrews Resource Area**



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**Joan M. Suther  
Field Manager  
Three Rivers Resource Area**



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

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

2. Draft ( )                      Final (X )

3. Administrative Action (X)                      Legislative Action ( )

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

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

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

Incorporated as an appendix (U) to the Proposed RMP is the Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan. There will be a 30-day public comment period on this plan, which will coincide with the 30-day protest period for the Proposed RMP/FEIS as a whole.

5. Date comments must be received: The close of the 30-day comment/protest period will be announced in news releases, legal notices, individual mailings, and on the district planning web page ([www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning/Andrews\\_Steens\\_RMP/Andrews\\_Steens\\_RMP-EIS.html](http://www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning/Andrews_Steens_RMP/Andrews_Steens_RMP-EIS.html))

6. For further information contact:

Gary Foulkes  
Bureau of Land Management  
Burns District Office  
28910 Highway 20 West  
Hines, Oregon 97738  
Telephone: (541) 573-4541  
Email: [Gary\\_Foulkes@or.blm.gov](mailto:Gary_Foulkes@or.blm.gov)





## United States Department of the Interior



### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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[www.or.blm.gov/Burns/](http://www.or.blm.gov/Burns/)

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1610 (020) N

Dear Interested Party:

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Burns District Office has prepared for your review the attached Andrews Management Unit (AMU)/Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA) Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (Proposed RMP/FEIS). This document integrates all resource management activities in the Planning Area (all of the Andrews Resource Area plus a small portion of the Three Rivers Resource Area) into a single, unified land use plan that will replace the Andrews Management Framework Plan and subsequent amendments as well as parts of the Three Rivers RMP. The proposed land use plan and FEIS details and analyzes five land management alternatives, including the Proposed RMP. Within the next six months, two RMPs will be finalized through two Records of Decision (RODs). One RMP/ROD will address management of the CMPA while the second will address that of the AMU.

The Draft RMP/Draft EIS was made available for a 90-day public comment period in early October 2003. Approximately 5,600 comment submissions were received. Substantive comments pertinent to this land use planning process were summarized and are found, along with BLM responses, (Appendix T) in Volume 2 of the attached document. Significant changes since the Draft document are summarized in Chapter 1 and are underlined throughout the document.

Additional hard copies, as well as electronic versions, of the Proposed RMP/FEIS may be obtained at the address above. The document is also available on the internet at [www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning](http://www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning).

The Proposed RMP incorporates both proposed **land use planning decisions** and more specific proposed project level or **implementation decisions**. Land use planning decisions are those which consist of desired outcomes (goals, standards and objectives) and the allowable uses (including allocations, levels of use, and restrictions on use) and management actions necessary to achieve those outcomes. Land use plan decisions provide management direction and guide future actions. When land use plan decisions are proposed, the public has an opportunity to protest them to the BLM Director prior to their approval. The Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) does not have jurisdiction to review land use plan decisions. Thus, there are no further administrative remedies for resolution of protests. Implementation decisions generally constitute BLM's final approval allowing on-the-ground actions to proceed. These types of decisions require site-specific planning and NEPA analysis. Unlike land use plan decisions, implementation decisions are not subject to protest under

the planning regulations. Instead, implementation decisions are subject to various administrative remedies, primarily appeals to the OHA. Land use planning decisions can be distinguished from implementation decisions in that, although the former are themselves final and effective upon adoption, they normally require additional decision steps (such as permit approvals) before activities having on-the-ground impacts can be carried out.

In this document protestable proposed land use plan decisions are presented in the following resource categories:

- Rights of Way avoidance/exclusion areas;
- Land tenure zoning classifications;
- Designations of Special Recreation Management Areas;
- Visual Resource Management classifications;
- Off Highway Vehicle area designations;
- Designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern;
- Wild and Scenic Rivers suitability;
- Extent of allowable livestock grazing;
- Development of CMPA and AMU transportation plan criteria;
- Wildland Fire Management; and
- Wild Horse Herd Management Areas boundary changes.

You now have the opportunity to protest the proposed **land use planning decisions** contained in the Proposed RMP/FEIS. The BLM Planning Regulations, 43 CFR 1610.5-2, state that any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which may be adversely affected may protest the proposed land use planning decision(s). A protest may raise only those issues that were submitted for the record during the planning process. Protests must be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability of the FEIS in the *Federal Register*. The specific protest period closure date will be announced through one or more of the following: local news media, postcards or newsletters, or the Burns District website at the internet address above. To be considered timely, your protest must be postmarked no later than the last day of the protest period. Though not a requirement, we suggest you send your protest by certified mail, return receipt requested. Written protests must be submitted to the following address:

Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
Attention: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protests Coordinator  
WO-210/LS-1075  
Department of the Interior  
Washington DC, 20240

To expedite delivery in the Washington DC area, you may wish to send your protest via one of the express air delivery services to:

Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
Attention: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protests Coordinator  
WO-210  
1620 L Street NW, Suite 1075  
Washington DC, 20036

You may also wish to send a copy (in addition to the signed original sent via regular mail or express delivery) of the protest by FAX or e-mail to Ms. Brenda Williams at:

FAX: 202-452-5112 or e-mail: [bhudgens@wo.blm.gov](mailto:bhudgens@wo.blm.gov)

You are also encouraged (but not required) to forward a copy of your protest to the Burns District Manager at the address listed in the Burns District letterhead. To be considered complete, your protest must contain the following information at a minimum:

- Name, mailing address, telephone number and the affected interest of the person filing the protest.
- A statement of the issue(s) being protested.
- A statement of the parts(s) of the proposed plan being protested. To the extent possible, reference specific pages, paragraphs, and numbered sections of the document.
- A copy of all your documents addressing the issue or issues which were previously discussed with the BLM.
- A concise statement explaining why the proposed decision is believed to be incorrect. This is a critical part of your protest. Document all relevant facts, as much as possible. A protest that merely expresses disagreement with the State Director's proposed decision, without providing any supporting data, will not be considered a valid protest.

Proposed **implementation level decisions** contained in this document are **not** protestable under the BLM planning regulations. Rather, a separate appeal process for specific proposed actions will be offered at the time the Final RMPs and RODs are approved and made available to the public. Examples of implementation level decisions include:

- Allotment-specific permitted use levels;
- Allotment-specific livestock grazing systems;
- Specific range improvement projects;
- Specific vegetation and weed treatment projects;
- Specific fuel loading and hazard reduction projects;
- Specific recreational facility development;
- Setting appropriate management levels for wild horse Herd Management Areas;
- Some specific Area of Critical Environmental Concern management direction;
- Specific decisions in the Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan; or
- Specific road closures/restrictions and recreation development proposals.

Concurrent with the protest period for the Proposed RMP/FEIS is a 30-day public comment period for the proposed Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan. As the latter plan contains implementation level decisions and not land use plan decisions, the proposed management decisions contained within are not subject to protest. Comments on the proposed Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan may be addressed to Gary Foulkes at the address in the Burns District Office letterhead, email at [goulkes@or.blm.gov](mailto:goulkes@or.blm.gov), or comments may be submitted on the Burns District website at [www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning/Planning\\_Index.htm](http://www.or.blm.gov/Burns/Planning/Planning_Index.htm). In order to be considered, comments must be postmarked by the comment closing date which will coincide with the closing date for the protest period.

We appreciate your help in this planning effort and look forward to your continued interest and participation as the plans are implemented. For additional information or clarification regarding this document or the planning protest process, please contact Gary Foulkes (see above for contact information).

Comments and protests on the Proposed RMP/FEIS, and comments on the proposed Steens Mountain Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan, including names and street addresses, will be available for public review at the Burns District Office during regular business hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment/protest. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives, or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

Sincerely,

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

Karla Bird  
Andrews Resource Area Field Manager



# HARNEY COUNTY COURT

*Office of Judge Steven E. Grasty*

450 North Buena Vista, Burns, Oregon 97720

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Websites: [www.co.harney.or.us](http://www.co.harney.or.us) ♦ [www.harneycountyeconomicdevelopment.com](http://www.harneycountyeconomicdevelopment.com)

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June 23, 2004

RE: Andrews Management Unit/Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area

Dear Interested Party:

On behalf of the Harney County Court I would like to take this opportunity to thank the managers and staff of the Bureau of Land Management for their cooperation in the drafting and analysis of the resource management plan for the Andrews Management Unit/Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area.

Harney County has appreciated the opportunity to be a Cooperating Agency in this planning effort, as provided for under the Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1501.6. I believe that both Harney County and the Bureau of Land Management have benefitted from our participation as a Cooperating Agency.

While for the most part we are in agreement with the proposed action, we continue to oppose any restrictions on the private landowners right to access their lands in a reasonable manner. It is our opinion that the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management Act does not authorize restrictions based on "degree of use" and that the private landowners must have reasonable access to their lands.

Since the Andrews Management Unit and the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area are important parts of the economic foundation of Harney County, a balance must be established between public use and maintaining the resource values. We encourage the BLM to place a priority on developing its recreation project plan and transportation plan. Road closures are issues of public concern and should be coordinated with the allotment holders, recreational users, and Harney County. We encourage all public members to participate in these post plan strategies.

Harney County has sought throughout the planning effort to meet the needs of the local community. We believe that with few exceptions the plan achieves the sought after balance. We appreciate the input we have received from the public as well as the BLM in our efforts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven E. Grasty,  
Judge, Harney County Court

SEG:sj



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

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## ACRONYMS

*Reader note: Please refer to the list below for acronyms that may be used in this document.*

<u>ACRONYM</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
AML	Appropriate Management Level
AMP	Allotment Management Plan
AMS	Analysis of the Management Situation
AMU	Andrews Management Unit / The Planning Area outside of the Steens Mountain CMPA
APHIS	Agricultural Plant and Animal Health Inspection Service
AUM	Animal Unit Month
BCB	Back Country Byway
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CAA	Clean Air Act
CCD	Census County Divisions
CD	Compact Disk
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMPA	Cooperative Management and Protection Area
CWA	Clean Water Act
DEQ	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DO	District Office
DRC	Desired Range of Conditions
DRMP	Draft Resource Management Plan
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERMA	Extensive Recreation Management Area
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESI	Ecological Site Inventory
FAR	Functional At Risk
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FFR	Federal Fenced Range
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FMP	Fire Management Plan
GIS	Geographic Information System
HMA	Herd Management Area
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
ICBEMP	Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project
ID	Interdisciplinary
Malheur NWR	Malheur National Wildlife Refuge
MFP	Management Framework Plan
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRDG	Minimum Requirement Decision Guide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEA	Northwest Economic Associates
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NSO	No surface occupancy
ODA	Oregon Department of Agriculture
ODF	Oregon Department of Forestry
ODFW	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
OHV	Off-highway vehicle
ONDA	Oregon Natural Desert Association
ONHP	Oregon Natural Heritage Program
ORS	Oregon Revised Statute

ORV	Outstandingly Remarkable Value
OWRD	Oregon Water Resources Department
PFC	Proper functioning condition
PILT	Payments In Lieu of Taxes
PL	Public Law
PM	Particulate Matter
PNC	Potential Natural Community
PP&L	Pacific Power and Light
PRIA	Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978
PRMP	Proposed Resource Management Plan
R&PP	Recreation & Public Purpose
RA	Resource Area
RAC	Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council
RMIS	Recreation Management Information System
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RNA	Research Natural Area
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	right-of-way
RTR	Redband Trout Reserve
S&Gs	Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands in Oregon and Washington
SBR	subbasin review
SEORMP	Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SMAC	Steens Mountain Advisory Council
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SRP	Special Recreation Permit
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TNR	Temporary Nonrenewable
TP	Transportation Plan
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDI	United States Department of the Interior
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WIS	Wilderness Information Specialist
WJMA	Wildlands Juniper Management Area
WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan
WQRP	Water Quality Restoration Plan
WSA IMP	Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River
WUI	Wildland urban interface
ybp	years before present

# Summary and Readers' Guide

## Introduction

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

After the 90-day public comment period on the Draft AMU/CMPA RMP (DRMP)/Draft EIS (DEIS) closed, the BLM analyzed all comments and prepared this Proposed RMP/FEIS. Upon review of the Proposed RMP/FEIS, the public will have 30 days to protest decisions believed adverse to their interests. After resolution of any protests, two RMPs/Records of Decision (RODs) (one for the AMU and one for the CMPA) will be issued.

The approved RMPs will replace the existing management framework plans (MFPs) that currently guide management in the Burns DO. However, valid decisions and guidance contained in these previous plans have been brought forward and will be incorporated into the approved plans. In addition, advances in resource management science, changes in laws, regulations, and public views will also be considered. Uses of public land, decisions, and directions will be identified for management of resources including vegetation; special status species; water resources and watershed; fish; wildlife and wildlife habitat; grazing management; wild horses; special designated areas; cultural and paleontological resources; social and economic values; fire management; wilderness; wilderness study areas (WSAs); parcels with wilderness characteristics; wild and scenic rivers (WSRs); areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs); recreation; off-highway vehicles (OHVs); energy and minerals; lands and realty; and transportation. Table S.1 has been prepared as a comparison summary of potential resource effects by alternative and is located at the end of Chapter 2. The reader needs to realize that this is only a summary and is not the complete analysis. The complete analysis can be found in Chapter 4.

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

## Significant Changes between Draft and Final

Over 5,000 public comments were received on the DRMP/DEIS. These comments, as well as consultation with the Steens Mountain Advisory Council (SMAC) for the CMPA, cooperating agencies, and discussions internal to BLM, resulted in some changes to the Proposed RMP/FEIS. Many changes are included in the text of the document in various chapters, and involve additional discussions of actions and environmental effects. Summarized public comments on the DRMP/DEIS and BLM responses are located in Appendix T.

In the Proposed RMP/FEIS there is no longer a Management Alternatives Summary Table as it essentially duplicates the text which still appears in Chapter 2. To assist the reader in locating the changes to management actions for the Proposed RMP/FEIS, the following summarized list is provided. The reader should refer to Chapter 2 for the actual changes to the management actions. Significant changes between the DRMP/DEIS and Proposed RMP/FEIS are underlined and are primarily located in the Preferred Alternative. Alternative D, the Preferred Alternative in the DRMP/DEIS is, as amended in this document, now titled Proposed RMP.

## Fish and Wildlife Special Status Species:

AMU: Borax Lake ACEC: includes a description of which specific resource management activities would be limited.

CMPA: Redband Trout Reserve (RTR): defines management of the area as for advanced ecological status.

AMU and CMPA: Bighorn Sheep: specifies updated policy for managing domestic sheep and goats in native wild sheep habitats. Clarifies that these standards would be applied to proposed new permits, or proposed conversion of livestock class. Management action also includes efforts to work cooperatively with private landowners to limit domestic sheep and goat, and wild sheep contact.

**Recreation:**

CMPA: Closes Kiger Gorge, East Rim, and Wildhorse Overlooks parking areas to camping.

CMPA: Incorporates a variety of possible recreation actions and defers analysis and decision until after the RMP is completed and a Comprehensive Recreation Plan is developed for the CMPA.

**Transportation:**

AMU: Requires the completion of an AMU Transportation Plan (TP) by December 2008.

CMPA: Requires the completion of a CMPA TP by December 2005.

CMPA: Provides for two gates on the Moon Hill Road to control vehicle use when the roads are wet or snowy.

CMPA: Allows permits to be issued for motorized use of the Riddle Brothers Ranch segment of Cold Springs Road.

**OHV:**

CMPA: Provides for two gates on the Moon Hill Road to control vehicle use when the roads are wet or snowy.

**Socioeconomic Section - Transportation:**

AMU: Clarifies that some roads may be closed, some maintained, and some new roads may be constructed following completion of the AMU TP.

CMPA: Clarifies that some roads may be closed and some maintained following completion of the CMPA TP.

**Cultural:**

AMU and CMPA: Defines flexibility for Section 110 (National Historic Preservation Act) inventory based on annual funding.

CMPA: Adds Fish Lake campground as an interpretive display location.

**Lands:**

AMU and CMPA: Minor changes to land tenure zone map and acreages.

AMU: Identifies lands containing mule deer winter range adjacent to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) for retention in Zone 1. Identifies some limited Zone 3 lands for reclassification to retention Zones 1 and 2.

AMU: Identifies lands near Frenchglen, Fields and Denio as available for conveyance through Recreation and Public Purposes Act, and eliminates discussion of County zone changes.

AMU: Clarifies decision to continue the existing road closure to Buckskin Mountain that was inadvertently left out of the DRMP/DEIS.

AMU and CMPA: Clarifies that acquisition opportunities within or adjacent to special management areas would be considered higher priority than acquisition of nonpublic lands elsewhere in the Planning Area.

AMU: Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) added to the definition of lands qualifying for retention in Zone 1.

CMPA: Riddle Brothers Ranch moved to Zone 1A from Zone 1B.

AMU/CMPA: SRMAs qualify for Right-of-Way (ROW)/Realty Use avoidance areas.

**Wilderness (all CMPA):**

Clarifies many strategies for Steens Mountain Wilderness Area management.

Group size changed to 12 persons with 18 head of stock.

Length-of-stay limit changed to 14 days.

Recreational stock may graze freely in the No Livestock Grazing Area.

Adds miscellaneous management action for various wilderness activities not specifically covered by other actions.

Alternative C Percentage Change Guidelines are incorporated into the Proposed RMP/FEIS.

**Wilderness Study Areas:**

AMU/CMPA: Deletes analysis of 40- and 80-acre inholdings previously acquired within the Mahogany Ridge and Bridge Creek WSAs. These parcels were incorporated directly into WSA status at the time of acquisition, under the authority of the Land Tenure Adjustment Plan Amendment for the Andrews and Drewsey MFPs.

**Vegetation/Special Status Species:**

AMU/CMPA: Adds a management action to address management of special status species plants.

**ACECs:**

AMU: Borax Lake ACEC: Includes a description of specific resource management activities that would be limited.

AMU: Long Draw ACEC: Clarifies as being closed to leasing and salable minerals, but open to locatable mineral entry.

AMU: Pueblo Foothills and East Fork Trout Creek: same as Long Draw.

**Minerals:**

AMU: Adds clarification that opening of split estate federal minerals beneath nonfederal surface, when not affected by Stock Raising Homestead rules, would be considered occur on a case-by-case basis, in response to expressed interest in the federal minerals.

**Grazing:**

AMU/CMPA: Provides a description of allowable utilization levels.

AMU/CMPA: Provides for closure of specific areas to grazing.

AMU/CMPA: Clarifies intent to manage rangeland improvement projects for certain purposes.

AMU/CMPA: Deletes discussion of allotment relinquishment in RMP; defers decisions to site specific cases under authority of BLM grazing regulations.

**Other:**

The information provided above is intended to be a summary of the management action changes in Chapter 2. Other sections of the text and appendices to the Proposed RMP/FEIS have been modified. Allotment condition and trend and other information have been added in Appendix I. A compiled monitoring program for the Planning Area has been added as Appendix Q. Appendix R contains a general summary of known cultural resources.

A complete Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan is included as Appendix U and is available for comment for 30 days beginning on the date the Proposed RMP/FEIS is issued. A final Wilderness and WSRs Management Plan will be available at the time of publication of the ROD for the CMPA RMP. A final data status table has been prepared to document the actual data used in support of the decisions made in the RMP and is included as Appendix S.

The appendices new to this Proposed RMP/FEIS (Appendices Q, R, S, T, and U) are noted as complete revisions and have not been marked with underlining. Changes to text in the existing appendices have been underlined for ease in identifying new text.

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

**Chapter 1**

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

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

## Chapter 2

Chapter 2 presents the various management strategies for achieving the desired range of conditions (DRC). The RMP identifies a management framework for approximately the next 20 years. However, the long-term vision for accomplishing specific resource objectives may be 50 years or longer and may not be completely achieved during the life of the RMP.

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

- Alternative A – No action; continue current management;
- Alternative B – Minimal commodity production;
- Alternative C – Resource restoration and protection;
- Proposed RMP – Balance between commodity production and resource protection; and
- Alternative E – Emphasize commodity production.

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

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

## Chapter 3

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

## Chapter 4

Chapter 4 analyzes the effects of the management strategies (Chapter 2) on the existing condition (Chapter 3). A summary of this analysis is provided in Table 2.1. There are several general assumptions listed at the beginning of the chapter that apply to all alternatives. Also, there are assumptions at the beginning of some specific resource programs to help guide the reader through the thought process.

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

resource. Indirect effects on a resource include those which would result from actions proposed under a different resource.

### **Chapter 5**

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

### **Chapter 6**

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

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The BLM Burns DO, manages 3,275,694 acres of public lands located primarily in Harney County, Southeastern Oregon (Map 1.1). The Burns District is divided into two resource areas: the Andrews Resource Area (Andrews RA) and the Three Rivers Resource Area (Three Rivers RA). The two RAs are further divided into lands contained within the boundary of the CMPA and those outside the boundary; in the Andrews RA, the latter are titled the AMU.

The RMPs and resulting RODs (one each for the CMPA and AMU but for the purposes of this document will generally be referred to as the RMP) are intended to provide land use planning and management direction at a broad scale and to guide future actions. The regulations for making and modifying land use plan decisions, which comprise an RMP, are found in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1600. Land use plan decisions consist of desired outcomes (goals, standards, and objectives) and the allowable uses (including allocations, levels of use, and restrictions on use) and management actions necessary to achieve those outcomes. RMPs decisions can be distinguished from implementation decisions in that, although the former are themselves final and effective upon adoption, they normally require additional implementation decision steps (such as permit approvals) before activities having on-the-ground effects can be carried out. Implementation decisions generally constitute BLM's final approval for on-the-ground actions to proceed. These types of decisions require site specific planning and NEPA analysis.

## 1.1 Purpose of and Need for Action

Resource management of the public lands within the Andrews RA is currently directed by the Andrews MFP, which was completed in 1982 (United States Department of the Interior [USDI] 1982a). As used in this document, public lands are defined as “those lands administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the BLM.” As a result of recent legislation, changes in BLM management policies and regulations, and demands on resources, the Andrews MFP no longer provides the adequate and comprehensive planning direction needed for resource management within the Andrews RA. The Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-399) (Steens Act) (Appendix A) established the CMPA. The CMPA encompasses 496,136 acres of public, private, state, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lands within the Andrews RA and a small portion (53,343 acres) within the Three Rivers RA. The remaining portion of the Andrews RA, outside the CMPA, is identified as the AMU, encompassing 1,681,675 acres of public, private, state, and USFWS lands. Special areas created within the CMPA include the Wildlands Juniper Management Area (WJMA), the Steens Mountain Wilderness (which contains a No Livestock Grazing Area), new WSR designations, and the RTR. In addition, the Steens Act authorized five specific land exchanges, created a citizen's advisory council (SMAC), authorized establishment of a science advisory committee, and established a Mineral Withdrawal Area. Congress recognized that the CMPA provides for exceptional cooperative management opportunities and offers outstanding natural, cultural, scenic, wilderness, and recreational resources. To demonstrate that these resources are appropriately managed, the Steens Act mandated the BLM Burns DO prepare a management plan for the CMPA by October 30, 2004.

In 1995, preparation of the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan (SEORMP) was initiated by the Vale and Burns Districts of the BLM. The SEORMP initially included the Andrews RA. However, as a result of the Steens Act, the Burns DO determined it appropriate to separate the Andrews RA from the SEORMP and develop a separate plan in order to address changes in land management resulting from mandates of the Steens Act. The RMP will provide the BLM with a comprehensive framework for managing public lands within the Andrews RA and the CMPA (Map 1.1.1). Completion of the RMP will meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), which mandates public land be managed for multiple use and sustained yield under an approved RMP. In addition, the Steens Act requires that “within 4 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop a comprehensive plan for the long-range protection and management of the Federal lands included in the Cooperative Management and Protection Area, including the Wilderness Area” (111(b)). The Steens Act states that the “...purpose of the Cooperative Management and Protection Area is to conserve, protect and manage the long-term ecological integrity of Steens Mountain for future and present generations.”A primary goal of this comprehensive plan is to develop management practices that promote long-term sustainability of a healthy and productive landscape and achieve the purpose of the CMPA. An RMP contains a set of comprehensive long-range decisions concerning the use and management of resources administered by the BLM. In general, an RMP does two things: (1) provides an overview of goals, objectives, and needs associated with public lands management and (2) resolves multiple use conflicts or issues that drive the preparation of the RMP. In addition, an EIS must be prepared to analyze the alternatives proposed in the RMP as required by the NEPA.

This Proposed RMP/FEIS also considers and, where appropriate, incorporates the science and findings derived from the assessments of the ICBEMP and the Interior Columbia Basin EIS and Proposed Decision (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA]/USDI 2000a). No ROD was finalized for the Interior Columbia Basin EIS and Proposed Decision; however, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was entered into by several agencies, including the BLM, to

implement the ICBMP Strategy (USDA/USDI 2003). The Strategy provides guidance for incorporating the science data and resource information developed by the ICBEMP into land use planning efforts. These findings are important in defining the complexity and scope of the issues being addressed in this Proposed RMP/EIS.

## **1.2 Planning Area**

The Planning Area encompasses the entire Andrews RA and that portion of the Three Rivers RA within the CMPA. The proposed plans cover a total of 1,649,470 acres of public land, with 1,221,314 acres in the AMU and 428,156 acres in the CMPA (these numbers do not include private, state, or USFWS lands). See Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the Planning Area.

## **1.3 Existing Management Plans**

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

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

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

## **1.4 Planning Process**

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

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

The underlying goal of an RMP is to provide efficient on-the-ground management of public lands and associated resources over a period of time, usually up to 20 years. The procedure for preparing an RMP involves eleven interrelated steps as shown in Table 1.1.1.

**Table 1.1.1: Steps in the BLM Planning Process**

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

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

Public involvement is an integral part of the BLM's resource management planning process. Public involvement activities for this RMP/EIS have included a mass mailing of a scoping brochure, holding public meetings, meeting with local government and tribal government officials, conducting a SBR (Appendix B), mailing the AMS Summary (USDI 2002), mailing a newsletter as followup to the publication of the AMS (USDI 2002), and other correspondence. From October 2001 through January 2002, the BLM conducted a SBR. This review resulted in the identification of a number of issues and management concerns to be addressed in the RMP.

The BLM began its public involvement in February 2002 with the mailing of a scoping brochure that briefly described the RMP/EIS process, outlined the planning schedule, and requested comments on the first major planning step, which constitutes identification of issues. The brochure was sent to approximately 1,220 individuals, organizations, and agencies. Additional copies of the scoping brochure were made available at the four scoping meetings. The BLM invited the public to identify issues or concerns they believed should be addressed during the RMP/EIS process. A Notice of Intent to prepare the DRMP/EIS was published in the *Federal Register* at the same time. The *Federal Register* notice also announced the dates and locations of the four public meetings that would be held. A news release with the same

information and a request for publication or announcement was mailed to 19 media groups including the Burns Times Herald, The Bulletin, The Oregonian, and KZZR Radio. BLM representatives attended meetings with Harney County to inform them of the DRMP/DEIS and to encourage them to make comments, request information, and generally be involved in the process. The same information was distributed to the Burns Paiute Tribal Government. Other meetings with the tribe were also conducted at key steps in the planning process. The Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council (RAC), the SMAC, cooperating agencies, and other participating partners were involved throughout the process.

Members of the public, local and tribal governments, other federal agencies, and state agencies were mailed copies of the AMS Summary and were asked to comment, particularly on the planning criteria and DRMP/DEIS alternatives. Approximately 2,313 comment letters were received. A followup newsletter outlining the primary comments was then mailed to 257 individuals in July 2002. An additional 143 copies of the AMS Summary were sent to interested individuals and organizations by request. The full version of the AMS was published and made available to the public in November 2002.

On October 3, 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Notice of Availability of the DRMP/DEIS was published in the *Federal Register* which initiated a 90-day comment period. A news release was sent to media groups including the Burns Times Herald, The Bulletin, The Oregonian, and KZZR Radio announcing availability of the DRMP/DEIS. Approximately 307 hard copies and 80 compact disc copies of the DRMP/DEIS were sent to individuals, agencies, and organizations. An RMP newsletter was also distributed to about 538 names on the mailing list announcing the availability of the DRMP/DEIS as well as announcing the public comment period and meeting dates. The DRMP/DEIS was also made available on the Burns DO website. During the 90-day public comment period, public meetings were held in Portland (October 27, 2003), Bend (October 28, 2003), Burns (October 29, 2003, and Frenchglen (October 30, 2003), Oregon, with a total of 103 people attending. The BLM received approximately 5,563 public comment letters on the DRMP/DEIS, a majority of which were form communications. Approximately 923 letters were individualized letters and 84 letters contained substantive comments, which are addressed in Volume 2 of the Proposed RMP. Comments made during the SEORMP process that were specific to the Andrews RA were also considered. The comment period ended January 5, 2004. The BLM continued to involve the Resource Advisory Council (RAC), the SMAC, and cooperating agencies throughout the process. See Table 5.1.1 in Chapter 5 for a summary of the key public involvement events.

#### **1.4.2 Planning Issues**

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

- 1) BLM management of resource uses to improve and maintain the integrity of upland ecological communities;
  - How will livestock grazing be managed to sustain resource values while maintaining stable watersheds and the continued production of forage?
  - What areas previously ungrazed could be grazed and under what circumstances? Are there areas where, or situations when, grazing should be excluded?
  - What practices will be authorized and implemented to provide wildlife habitat and forage for livestock while maintaining other uses and values of public land resources?
  - Under what conditions is grazing compatible with management of areas such as WSAs, WSRs, and ACECs?
  - What are the visual considerations related to upland conditions, and how will the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) play a role?
  - What indicators will be used to identify levels of wild horse use compatible with sustaining a thriving, natural, ecological balance?
  - What practices will the BLM implement to manage wild horses consistent with the legislative mandate that all management activities be at minimum feasible level?
  - What practices will be authorized and implemented to provide adequate habitat and forage for wildlife while maintaining other resource uses and values?
  - What grazing practices are necessary to protect sensitive resource values such as riparian areas and special status species?
  - What new and existing rangeland projects, including seedings, are needed to improve rangeland resource values?
  - What rehabilitation practices will be implemented following rangeland project construction and maintenance that disturb established vegetation cover?

- What criteria should be considered for fire rehabilitation, for restoration of wildlife habitat, and to determine whether or not native or introduced species should be seeded to stabilize watersheds?
  - How should the BLM prioritize implementation of management practices to maintain desired conditions and improve undesirable conditions where feasible?
  - What criteria should be established to determine conditions and timetables for improvements?
  - What resource uses and management practices will be employed in geographic areas with lower management priority?
  - Is the current strategy of full wildland fire suppression compatible with upland management objectives?
  - How, and to what extent, should fire be used to manage western juniper and aspen woodlands?
  - Can cottonwood stands be restored along Donner und Blitzen WSR and the east side of Steens Mountain?
  - Can juniper treatments in corridors be accomplished?
- 2) BLM management of resource uses to improve or maintain the integrity of riparian ecological communities;
- How will riparian vegetation communities be managed to improve or maintain ecological status, species diversity, bank stability, water quality, and the timing of watershed discharge while providing for resource uses such as grazing, recreation, water development, mineral exploration and development, and woodland products harvest?
  - What areas previously excluded from grazing could be grazed and under what circumstances? Are there areas or situations when grazing should be excluded?
  - What are the visual considerations relating to riparian conditions, and how will the BLM's VRM play a role?
  - How will riparian systems be managed to improve or maintain habitat quality for fish, wildlife, plants, and invertebrates?
  - How will riparian and wetland areas be managed to incorporate State of Oregon water quality standards and approved management plans addressing water quality concerns?
  - Is the current strategy of full wildland fire suppression compatible with riparian management objectives?
  - How will management actions in upland communities be handled to be compatible with the needs of riparian communities?
  - How should management actions with potential to affect riparian communities be identified and prioritized?
  - What timeframes are acceptable to achieve riparian management objectives?
  - When does the establishment of juniper threaten other resource values, and what management actions can be used to control the invasion?
  - Is collection of baseline riparian information and proper functioning condition (PFC) on acquired and isolated stream segments necessary?
  - Should the riparian habitat inventory be redone?
- 3) BLM maintenance or improvement of woodland communities and how woodlands will be managed to maintain or improve rangeland and wildlife habitat;
- What should be done to preserve and manage the 20.1 acres of grand fir forested areas on public land on Steens Mountain?
  - Are there juniper woodland areas that should be preserved?
  - What types of woodland products should be harvested?
  - What are the potential effects of woodland management on wildlife, watersheds, soils, vegetation, recreation, aesthetics, and other resources?
  - What kind of woodland management is compatible with management of Wilderness, ACECs, WSRs, and other designated areas?
- 4) BLM provisions for wildlife habitat while considering other resource uses;
- To what extent will livestock management and brush control be conducted to meet the habitat requirements of wildlife?
  - Which areas, if any, are appropriate for reintroduction of wildlife, and what species could be reintroduced?
  - What management practices avoid conflicts between wildlife and livestock for vegetation, especially between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep?
  - What are the long-term strategies for managing wildlife?
  - To what extent will the BLM adopt Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) management objectives for game and nongame species of wildlife?

- What management practices best address areas of biodiversity, the needs of species at the limits of their range, and species assemblages?
- 5) Public land management contributions to the preservation of and increase in healthy, sustainable populations of species now considered in special status. Land management for successful prevention of habitat destruction, which would lead to listing of additional species;
- To what extent will livestock management and brush control be conducted to meet the habitat requirements of special status species?
  - Which areas, if any, are appropriate for reintroduction of special status species?
  - What are the long-term strategies for managing habitat for special status species?
  - To what extent will the BLM adopt ODFW management objectives for special status species?
  - What management practices best address areas of biodiversity, the needs of special status species at the limits of their range, and species assemblages?
- 6) BLM management of energy and mineral resources on public land;
- Are there areas where some types of energy and mineral development should be restricted or prohibited?
  - Are there areas where mineral development should be recognized as being the highest and best use?
  - How will energy and mineral development be managed to minimize resource conflicts?
  - What are the visual considerations relating to management of energy and mineral resources, and how will the BLM's VRM play a role?
  - How should recreational rock collecting be managed?
  - What reclamation practices will be implemented following mineral development activities?
  - Which remediation methods should be used for each identified abandoned mine site?
  - What leasing stipulations will be applied to the area outside of the mineral withdrawal?
- 7) Special area management within the CMPA and in the AMU;
- Should existing ACECs be retained under their current designations and management prescriptions?
  - Are there other areas that warrant special designations to protect unique or special values?
  - Would designating new special areas or eliminating existing special areas affect other resource values or management?
  - How will effects from nonconforming but acceptable uses and administrative needs in the Steens Mountain Wilderness be managed in order to meet objectives but also preserve wilderness characteristics?
  - How will wilderness values be protected against the effects of unauthorized uses such as OHV use and other mechanized or motorized transport?
  - What management actions are needed to protect and preserve wilderness values while offering opportunities for quality recreational experiences?
  - Where and under what conditions will access be permitted to provide reasonable use and enjoyment of private land within wilderness?
  - How will WSRs be managed as they relate to wilderness or other special areas?
  - How will the Historic District be managed with the continuing interest and visitation from the public?
  - What preventive measures will need to be in place to successfully manage the No Livestock Grazing Area?
  - How will the removal of livestock from the No Livestock Grazing Area affect natural ecological processes?
  - What management actions will be introduced to control the spread of western juniper and rejuvenate depleted aspen stands in the WJMA?
  - How will the RTR be managed to protect the habitat for the fish and provide for research and education opportunities?
  - How will land acquired subsequent to the Oregon Wilderness Inventory/EIS, and determined to contain wilderness characteristics, be managed?
- 8) BLM management of wildland fire, fuels, and prescribed fire to meet and be consistent with resource objectives, while protecting life and property. BLM and private land owners working together to manage wildland fires;
- While the BLM continues to protect life, property, and important resources from fire, are there areas where Appropriate Management Response strategies should be implemented? If so, where and under what conditions would these strategies be applied?

- Which areas are appropriate for using prescribed/wildland fire as a management tool? How would this tool be used?
  - Which areas may be subject to constraints (e.g., Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) air quality standards) that could limit the use of prescribed fire?
  - Which areas should continue to have full suppression to protect important values?
  - What rehabilitation practices would be implemented following fire?
- 9) BLM management of recreation opportunities for both developed and dispersed recreation uses while meeting other resource objectives;
- What types and levels of recreation should the Planning Area provide?
  - How, when, and to what extent should the BLM improve recreation opportunities?
  - What conflicts with resource values or other uses would restrict recreation opportunities?
  - How should the BLM address Special Recreation Permit (SRPs) and any needed allocations?
  - Would changes in existing OHV designations affect recreation opportunities?
  - To what extent should the BLM develop facilities (campgrounds, trails, etc.) and generally improve recreation access opportunities to meet public demand, to provide for public health and safety, and to direct use away from areas of conflict?
  - What role, if any, should the BLM serve in encouraging tourism?
  - How should the BLM provide for public awareness of recreation resources and opportunities?
- 10) BLM administration of land status and values to improve management efficiency and cooperation with private land owners;
- Should some BLM administered land in the Planning Area be exchanged for other land with high public value if the exchange is consistent with the land tenure objectives of the BLM? If so, which land should be exchanged?
  - What effect does the Oregon Division of State Land's "Asset Management Strategy" have on management of public land?
  - Should some federal agency withdrawals be considered for revocation?
  - What land should be returned to BLM administration?
  - Should state or other nonfederal mineral estates under public surface ownership be acquired through mineral estate exchanges?
  - Where should the BLM consider exchanging BLM administered land for other land with higher public values or consider selling isolated or difficult-to-manage land? Should the BLM consider selling land for public purposes and community expansion?
  - What areas within the Planning Area should be identified as unsuitable for ROW routes for major utilities and roads?
  - What areas within the Planning Area should be identified as open for ROWs or other land use authorizations?
  - What mitigation measures would be appropriate for land that is suitable for ROWs routes?
  - Which land in the Planning Area should have current withdrawals or classifications revoked, continued or modified? Which land in the Planning Area not currently withdrawn should be withdrawn in order to protect Planning Area resources?
  - Where should utility corridors, avoidance, and exclusion areas be designated?
  - Is there land within the Planning Area that should be identified for retention, acquisition, sale, exchange, or other disposal in order to address management objectives and issues?
  - What criteria should be applied when considering acquisition from willing sellers of nonfederal land to be added to the Planning Area?
  - Are there public lands more suitable for administration by other federal, state, or local agencies?
- 11) Management of wild horses in the HMAs for maintenance of a sustainable, viable, healthy population for existence in thriving, natural, ecological balance with their habitat and other multiple uses of the area;
- How do goals and objectives of the CMPA affect the management of HMAs and wild horse populations?
  - Should the existing appropriate management levels (AMLs) for HMAs inside the CMPA boundary be changed considering the following:
    - reduced acreage within the HMAs,
    - effects of existing and potential fencing (inside the HMA) to implement the Act's No Livestock Grazing Area,

- potential effects of fence removal within the HMAs,
  - potential effects of fence additions in the HMA and outside of the No Livestock Grazing Area, or
  - potential effects of less water being available to horses in the area west of the No Livestock Grazing Area?
- Should the Alvord-Tule Springs and Coyote Lakes HMAs be combined and the herds managed as one population?
  - Are past decisions and current management practices still valid regarding HMAs and Herd Areas within the Planning Area?
- 12) Management of significant cultural sites and localities for protection and preservation. Use of interpretation as an education tool to increase the public's awareness and appreciation of the Planning Area's cultural resources. Gaining the scientific information to form the basis of this interpretation. Consideration and protection of American Indian interests, traditional practice sites, landforms and resources;
- How can cultural and paleontology inventories (beyond project-specific clearances) be focused primarily on areas most likely to contain significant intact properties most susceptible to effects such as erosion, livestock trampling, OHV use, artifact looting, and concentrated recreation use?
  - How can sites and localities be evaluated for significance and managed as such, given timeframes and constraints imposed by the needs of other resource management?
  - Can all data pertaining to sites and localities continue to be successfully tracked in an automated data base?
  - Can cost-share agreements with universities, research teams, undergraduate and graduate students, and the tribes continue to be implemented to gain scientific and cultural information that will form the basis for interpretation?
  - Will resources, both internal and external, be available for BLM cultural personnel to gain the training and experience required to make oral and written interpretive presentations as well as to prepare design and construction of interpretative panels and facilities?
  - Will active consultation with Indian tribes be ongoing and continue to establish baseline data for traditional religious sites and use areas?
  - Will a Planning Area tribal use plan be developed by the BLM with cooperation of the various tribes, and would it increase coordination with tribes?
- 13) Controlling and eradicating noxious weeds;
- Should the Burns District's Noxious Weed Management Program EA (EA OR-020-98-05) continue to be implemented in its present form or should it be evaluated and modified if necessary?
  - How will management of noxious weeds in special areas (including wilderness) be successfully conducted within the restraints required by the guidelines and requirements of those areas?
  - Can data in the Burns District weed data base be successfully broken out, summarized, and utilized specific to the Planning Area?
  - Can the BLM effectively increase cooperative work with other agencies to monitor locations and spread of weeds? If so, how can this be accomplished?
- 14) Management of OHV use in the Planning Area;
- What criteria will be used to determine whether current and future OHV use is compatible with OHV designations in the existing BLM OHV strategy?
  - What criteria will be used to determine whether OHV use is causing "considerable adverse effects" to Planning Area resources?
  - What changes should occur to current OHV designations if determined to be incompatible with the current BLM OHV Strategy or Planning Area objectives?
- 15) BLM management of resource uses to improve unacceptable aquatic habitat and water quality conditions (such as stream reaches listed as Water Quality Limited (303(d) by the DEQ or maintain aquatic habitat and water quality that are currently in acceptable conditions;
- Do water developments/alternative water developments (reservoirs, springs) need to have application made to the state for water rights? (For smaller water developments, the lag time will be approximately seven months to gain certificate.)

- Will workload and water quality monitoring objectives need to be determined under new management priorities? As the upper Donner und Blitzen drainage area is under new management strategies, should the BLM take steps to get the tributaries and main stream delisted from 303(d), or should the state focus on these areas?
  - To what extent will livestock management and brush control be conducted to meet fisheries habitat requirements?
  - What management practices for range and woodlands accommodate fisheries habitat requirements?
  - Which areas, if any, are appropriate for reintroduction of native fish species?
  - What are the long-term strategies for managing fisheries?
  - To what extent will the BLM adopt ODFW management objectives for fisheries?
  - What management practices best address areas of biodiversity, the needs of species at the limits of their range, and species assemblages?
  - How can grazing management techniques improve water quality?
- 16) BLM management of transportation issues in the Planning Area;
- What roads and trails are needed for administrative use and/or public access?
  - Where are easements or other use agreements needed to secure future access?
  - Which roads and trails should be open or closed to motorized vehicles or limited to nonmotorized, nonmechanical traffic, and where?
  - Which roads or trails should be seasonally closed for protection and/or improvement of resources or for public safety, and where?
  - To what standards should roads and trails be maintained?
  - Can roads or trails that no longer serve management purposes be abandoned and/or reclaimed?
  - Should new roads or trails be considered to provide access to important public resources, prevent environmental degradation, or to improve transportation?
  - What existing roads are needed to provide reasonable access to private land or areas involving other private rights or interests?
  - What areas may need new roads to provide future private access?
- 17) Changes in current resource uses and management practices affecting the economic and social status of rural communities in the Planning Area;
- How can public land management contribute to the economic stability of small rural communities in the Planning Area?
  - How would changing land use and tourism affect traditional rural life styles?
  - How would land tenure adjustments affect the economic stability of small rural communities in the Planning Area?
  - How, and to what extent, will the creation of the Steens Mountain specially designated areas affect communities and residents?

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

During the 90-day public comment period on the DRMP/DEIS, which ended January 5, 2004, the BLM received approximately 5,563 public comment letters a majority of which were form communications. Approximately 923 were individualized letters. Eighty four letters contained substantive comments which are addressed in Volume 2 of the Proposed RMP/FEIS Comments made during the SEORMP process that were specific to the Andrews RA were also considered. The comments were grouped into the following categories: Alternative Choices; Cultural; Development Issues (commercial, recreation, signs, trails, campgrounds, and toilets); Fire; Fish/Wildlife/Wild Horses; Geology/Mining/Energy; Lands (private, exchanges and easements); Livestock Grazing; OHV/Snowmobiles; Recreation (hiking, birdwatching, camping, horseback riding, fishing and hunting); Roads/Access; Socioeconomics; Special

Recreation (SRPs, outfitters, and the running camp); Vegetative Ecosystems/Riparian Areas and Streams; Wilderness/WSAs; and WSRs.

#### **1.4.3 Issues Eliminated from Detailed Study**

A number of issues were determined to be beyond the scope of the RMP. For example, issues related to private and state lands are not analyzed in the Proposed RMP/FEIS because the RMP prescribes management only for BLM administered land. Issues related to block grants for communities/counties/states, potential changes in federal law (e.g., laws relating to energy and mineral development and grazing), and release of WSAs are outside of the scope of the RMP because they are based on Congressional actions. Abandoned mine lands reclamation will not be analyzed in this document but will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis through individual NEPA analyses. Hazardous materials issues will not be discussed in this document, as they involve public health and safety; acting on hazardous materials situations is not discretionary. The issue of grazing permit relinquishment will not be analyzed in this document but be determined on a case-by-case basis under grazing regulation authority. Also, Environmental Justice considerations are not discretionary and will not be analyzed in this document.

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

#### **1.4.4 Planning Criteria**

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

Planning criteria help to accomplish the following:

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

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

This Proposed RMP/FEIS has been prepared using the best available information. Limited inventories were conducted to gather additional data for some resources.

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

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

here, but are mentioned to give the reader a broad perspective of all management direction pertaining to the Planning Area.

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

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

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

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

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

The Proposed RMP is consistent with the Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which was last updated in part by the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Plan: 1994-1999 (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department 1994). The Proposed RMP is also consistent with the Southeast Oregon Recreation Plan for Harney, Lake and Malheur Counties (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department 2000); the Oregon Wildlife Diversity Plan, Second Edition (Puchy and Marshall 1993); Noxious Weed Policy and Classification System (Oregon Department of Agriculture [OSA] 1997); Oregon's Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (ODFW 1992-1997); Oregon's Elk Management Plan (ODFW 1992); Mule Deer Plan (ODFW 1990); Oregon Cougar Management Plan Public Review Draft (ODFW 1993); Catlow Redband Trout and Catlow Tui Chub Conservation Agreement and Strategy (ODFW 1997); Oregon Natural Heritage Plan (Oregon Natural Heritage Advisory Council 1998); and the Oregon Outdoor Recreation Plan 2003-2007 (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Draft 2002).

### **1.6.1 Harney County Plan**

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

### **1.6.2 Malheur County Plan**

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

### **1.6.3 City of Burns Plan**

This Proposed RMP will be consistent with the Reformatted Comprehensive Plan for the City of Burns, Oregon (1997).

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

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

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

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

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

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