

**Richland School District Recreation & Public Purposes Lease/Purchase
Environmental Assessment EA#OR135-FY04-005**

Introduction/Background

The Richland School District #400 proposes to lease from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Spokane District, a 40-acre parcel of public land within the city of Richland for a school site. Reference location maps appended to this environmental assessment.

The school district previously held a lease (WAOR-15894) for this same parcel, for a period of 25 years, and which expired in February 2003. The lease was issued under the Recreation & Public Purposes Act (R&PP) on February 17, 1978 and was previously analyzed in Environmental Analysis Report #OR130-6-41, dated July 16, 1976. In 1976, the parcel was classified as suitable for recreation and public purposes. That classification is still in place. Due to lack of funding in the school district, the parcel was never developed.

In April 2003, voters in the Richland School District approved a bond for funds necessary to develop the new middle school. On October 12, 2003, the school district submitted an application to the Spokane BLM District for a new lease and option to purchase the subject property (WAOR-59648).

The property under application is legally described as:

T. 9. N., R. 28 E., Section 6, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Willamette Meridian, Benton County, Washington.

Purpose and Need for the Proposal

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to address the Richland School District's application for an R&PP lease of public land. Both the city of West Richland and the western section of the city of Richland have experienced significant population growth in the last decade. These two areas are the most rapidly growing areas of the school district. In particular, the city of West Richland has experienced substantial growth since 1990. The area's population more than doubled, and residential development has matched the demand.

In addition, during 2002 and 2003 alone, the city created more than 1,200 new platted lots. More than 300 new single-family residences have been built over the same period. Demographics indicate the homes are typically occupied by young families with one to two children. Nearly all the available building lots in West Richland contiguous to and in the vicinity of the 40-acre site have been platted for development.

Various studies predict that the area will experience additional growth over the next 25 years. The District expects a school population of approximately 800 students by 2006 for this school. Existing classroom spaces in central Richland are to capacity and require additional new facilities. The School Board desires that these facilities be located reasonably near the homes of students.

The Proposed Action addresses the need for expanded educational facilities to support the area's population growth.

Conformance With Land Use Plans

The proposed Recreation & Public Purpose Lease and option to patent the subject lands is in conformance with the Spokane Resource Management Plan (RMP)(1987). Page 4 of the RMP/EIS states the Management Framework Plans (MFP) prepared between 1977 through 1981 by the Spokane District will continue to be implemented to the extent they are not in conflict with the direction proposed in the RMP.

The parcel was specifically addressed in the BLM Spokane District Office Management Framework Plan Decision Summary of August 1981, which states that "The BLM lands activity in Benton and Franklin Counties will meet several public and Bureau objectives. The first is to use public lands to meet the needs for community expansion ... and public purposes. This will be accomplished by: (1) Allowing the city of West Richland 10 years to develop plans for BLM lots within the city limits for ... public purposes..." The identified use of this site was for development of a Richland Middle School facility. An R&PP lease has been held by the city of Richland for 25 years for this purpose.

The proposal is consistent with the city of West Richland zoning for the subject parcel. The parcel is zoned as public reserve. Building a school and athletic fields are permitted uses within a public reserve use district.

Description of Alternatives

Two alternatives were developed to address the Richland School District's R&PP lease application: Alternative 1 (Proposed Action) and Alternative 2 (No Action). Both alternatives are described individually below.

Alternative 1 (Proposed Action)

The Proposed Action is to issue a Recreation & Public Purposes Lease, with a purchase option, to the Richland School District #400 for the subject 40-acre parcel described above and shown on maps in the Appendix. This R&PP lease and purchase option is identical to one previously issued to the school district. The lease would be for a period of 25 years, unless terminated by the school district by exercising their option to purchase the 40-acre parcel. The land would be used to build a new West Richland Middle School facility to house 800 students currently housed in grades 6 through 8.

Proposed development/management of the parcel includes:

- Construction of a one-story building, about 90,000 square feet in size.
- Construction of a parking area for 325 cars.
- Provision for a bus drop and pickup area.
- Defined play and athletic areas for: football and soccer, track and field, softball, and

baseball.

- General play areas near the school for recesses and recreation.
- Landscaping of grounds, entrances, and exits.
- Maintenance of a 5-acre undeveloped site in the northwest corner of the parcel for Townsend's ground squirrel and burrowing owl habitat.

Mitigation Measures

The following actions and mitigation measures were identified to reduce the potential impacts associated with the Richland School District's proposed lease. These actions would be implemented as part of Alternative 1 (Proposed Action):

- If previously undiscovered cultural resources are encountered during construction, the disturbing activity will be halted and a BLM Archaeologist will be contacted. The cultural material will be protected until a BLM archaeologist has assessed the historic significance of the resource.
- As required by the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (43 U.S.C. 869 *et seq.*), all minerals will be reserved by the United States.
- If buried waste materials are uncovered during property excavation activities, work would stop and BLM would be notified as soon as possible so the waste materials can be assessed and removed.
- According to guidance of USC Title 16, Ch. 7, Sub. II, Sec. 703 of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), all project activities that may destroy active nests (such as leveling, grading, or clearing of vegetation) will not be conducted during the nesting season for migratory birds (March 15 through July 1)[Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) memo dated March 26, 2004]. Disturbance activities proposed to occur during the nesting period will be coordinated with the BLM wildlife biologist to determine if nesting is present within the footprint of the ground-disturbing activity.
- The BLM and the Richland School District will coordinate in determining if the service road (Melinda Drive) running along the northern boundary of the parcel can be fenced with the 5-acre area to sufficiently protect nesting habitat.
- The undeveloped 5-acre area in the northwest corner of the parcel will be subject to specific guidance to protect habitat for the burrowing owl and ground squirrel. This guidance will include:
 - Debris (including metal, paper and plastic litter) will be removed via the existing hardened road surface within the undeveloped 5-acre area in the northwest corner of the parcel.
 - The concrete slabs within the subject 5-acre area will be maintained to provide security habitat for ground squirrel.
 - The entire area will be surrounded by either a fence or rock barrier to prevent further intrusion and dumping, and to minimize disturbance to the owl and ground squirrel. The enclosure method will be determined at a later date, in coordination with ground squirrel specialists. This enclosure will also be designed to minimize predator perching habitat.

- To minimize disturbance to the ground squirrel and burrowing owl, any activities proposed within the 5-acre undeveloped area would be implemented between August 15 and February 15, which is outside the critical time period for burrowing wildlife.
 - The Richland School District will be responsible for conducting and funding annual monitoring of the undeveloped area to ensure the above measures are adequate to protect the burrowing habitat for both the owl and ground squirrel.
 - If plans are proposed in the future to make use of this undeveloped area, the school district will coordinate such use with a BLM wildlife biologist.
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- Before ground disturbance is allowed, ground squirrels that currently have burrows outside the undeveloped area will be live-trapped and moved to a suitable alternate location. The Richland School District will fund and coordinate with the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) in finding suitable permanent habitat for implementing relocation.
 - Measures will be implemented to ensure ground squirrel burrows and burrowing owl breeding habitat is protected as guided by the WDFW Priority Habitat Species policy.
 - Recognizing the natural opportunity to combine educational experiences with existing wildlife habitat, the BLM will cooperate with the school district to propose and implement habitat improvement projects. These projects could include installation of artificial burrows, interpretive signing, and/or other nesting/roosting habitat.

Alternative 2 (No Action)

The No Action Alternative would be to deny the Richland School District's lease application. The parcel would remain as open space.

Increased management and partnerships with local residents may be necessary to protect this area from resource damage.

Affected Environment & Environmental Impacts

This section focuses on those portions of the environment that have the potential to be significantly affected by either alternative (vegetation, wildlife, minerals, recreation, and socioeconomics). Primary issues identified with the lease application include: habitat for burrowing owls and ground squirrels, as well as minerals.

General Area Description

The 40-acre parcel is within the boundaries of the Richland School District. The parcel is situated directly north of a paved street accessing a well-developed, medium-density, residential subdivision. It is surrounded on three sides (west, north and east) by low density, high value homes.

A review of the aerial photo shows that the parcel appears to be disturbed, with several roads/trails cutting through it. The northwest corner of the parcel has a highly disturbed area, referenced on the topographic map as a borrow pit, and proposed (in Alternative 1) for a natural area by the school district.

There has been occasional unauthorized trash dumping.

Vegetation

Vegetation - Affected Environment

Portions of the northern boundary of the proposed site are connected to a vegetation community dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass. The vegetation is dominated by gray rabbitbrush with a cheatgrass, Sandberg's bluegrass, and bluebunch wheatgrass understory. The forb community varies widely, from those found in native sagebrush steppe such as yellow bell and big-seed desert parsley, to noxious weeds such as rush skeletonweed, yellow starthistle, and diffuse knapweed (PNNL memo dated March 26, 2004).

This parcel has not been field surveyed for Special Status plants. However, according to the Geographical Information System (GIS) coverage for Special Status Plants for the Washington Natural Heritage Program and the Border Resource Area, there are no records of Special Status plants either on the parcel or in close proximity to the parcel.

Vegetation - Potential Impacts

Under Alternative 1 (Proposed Action), some vegetation would be damaged or destroyed during facility construction.

It is highly unlikely that any Bureau Special Status plants are present on the parcel. One Bureau Assessment (State Sensitive) species, Piper's daisy (*Erigeron piperianus*), sometimes occurs in moderately disturbed habitats and has been found at a number of locations in Benton County. However, given the amount of disturbance that appears to have taken place on this parcel, this plant is likely not present on this 40-acre parcel. Also, if Piper's daisy were present, loss of any plants that might be on this parcel would not lead to the need to list this species.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action), some vegetation would be damaged or destroyed by the dispersed recreation, particularly unauthorized off-highway vehicle use, occurring on the parcel.

Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife Habitat - Affected Environment

Based on a wildlife evaluation and WDFW records (2002), the parcel is not known to contain habitat for any federally listed or proposed species, nor are these species known to occur in the area.

Three Special Status Wildlife Species are known to occur in the area: Townsend's ground squirrel (State Candidate), burrowing owl (State Candidate, Federal species of Concern), and the black-tailed jackrabbit (State Candidate). In addition, the parcel contains habitat for migratory landbird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act Executive Order (EO)13186 (January 10, 2001). The EO provides prohibitions regarding the "take" of migratory birds.

Because mating behavior by the western meadowlark was observed within the parcel, the meadowlark and other migratory birds may currently be nesting within the parcel, or be likely to do so.

The burrowing owl is declining throughout its range, particularly in California, Oregon, and Washington states and is federally listed in Canada. According to research records from the University of Arizona (BLM study, 2000-2003), there are two burrowing owl burrows on the parcel. One burrow was last active in 2000 and 2001, but was destroyed in 2002, presumably by activities resulting from nearby home construction. The second burrow, situated in the proposed undeveloped area, was active in 2002 and 2003. The burrowing owl has a strong site fidelity to a burrow or territory and is likely to inhabit the parcel during subsequent breeding seasons.

The Townsend's ground squirrel, subspecies *Spermophilus townsendii townsendii* (subspecies determination, as per com Dr. Paul Sherman, Cornell University, 2004) has been observed to occur throughout the parcel. According to Dr. Sherman and biologists with the WDFW, the Townsend's ground squirrel has declined throughout its range. Although concentrated burrow activity occurs in the northwest quarter of the parcel, active burrows and squirrels were observed throughout the entire parcel. Additional active burrows were observed during a joint field visit conducted by the BLM, WDFW, and PNNL than that documented in a memo provided by PNNL (Tiller, March 26, 2004).

The parcel also contains historic habitat for both sage grouse (a State Threatened and Federal Candidate species) and sharp-tailed grouse (a State Threatened and Federal Species of Concern). However, habitat for these species does not currently exist, nor are these species likely to occur within or around the parcel. This determination is based on the occurrence of poor site characteristics needed to support these species, such as a predominance of weedy species, lack of important shrub and forb cover, and a high level of disturbance from the adjacent city of West Richland.

Wildlife - Potential Impacts

Under Alternative 1 (Proposed Action), the lease of the BLM parcel for the proposed action would not affect any federally listed or proposed wildlife species and/or their habitat.

The black-tailed jackrabbit does not have strong site fidelity and could easily displace to surrounding suitable habitat. In addition, due to unregulated public use, the current site conditions no longer provide suitable habitat conditions. The proposed action would not likely contribute to the need to list this species.

Also, due to a lack of habitat on the 40-acre parcel, impacts to potential grouse habitat would not be affected.

Installing a fence or suitable barrier around the 5-acre undeveloped area would protect an active owl burrow from the expected increase in vehicular activity from the school development and from the surrounding human and associated pet disturbances. There would be a potential for permanent habitat loss due to the proposed facility construction. Disturbance or permanent habitat loss for one nesting burrowing owl pair would not likely contribute to the need to list the species.

The parcel contains one of the largest colonies for Townsend's ground squirrel known to occur in the Tri-Cities area. Loss of habitat on this parcel could impact the productivity of the subspecies. Given the current lack of public land and continued development of 2.5-acre parcels surrounding the area, continued loss of habitat would occur. The proposed mitigation measures under this alternative are expected to reduce potential impacts to the species.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action), there would be no change from current impacts to special status species, with the exception of the burrowing owl. Continued unauthorized public use of the 40-acre parcel (such as off-highway vehicles and illegal dumping) could result in the potential for damaging nesting habitat of the burrowing owl. This alternative is more likely than Alternative 1 to provide long-term habitat for the Townsend's ground squirrel.

Cultural/Paleontological Resources

Cultural/Paleontological Resources - Affected Environment

The 40-acre parcel is within the territory traditionally used by members of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Yakama Indian Nation. A small strip along the western edge of the parcel was surveyed for the presence of cultural resources in 2003. No cultural resources were found, and extensive previous ground disturbance was noted. The rest of the parcel was examined by a BLM Archaeologist on February 2, 2004. No cultural resources were found, and much ground disturbance and modern trash on the surface were noted.

Both surveys were Class III surveys in which the surveyor walked transects across the survey area at 30-meter intervals.

There are no known paleontological resources in the immediate area. No paleontological material was noted in either survey.

Cultural Resources - Potential Impacts

Under Alternative 1 (Proposed Action), lease of the BLM parcel for the proposed action would not affect any known cultural resources since none have been identified to exist on the parcel. The excavation for school construction could damage previously unknown sub-surface cultural materials. However, the management action to stop activities should any cultural resources be found during facility construction should provide adequate protection for cultural resources.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action), denial of the school district's application would not impact known cultural resources since there are none known. With the No Action Alternative, there would be no large scale excavations that could damage previously undiscovered sub-surface cultural material. The continued recreational use of the parcel could increase erosion of the parcel's surface, which could result in damage to previously undiscovered sub-surface cultural material.

Paleontological Resources - Potential Impacts

There would be no impact to paleontological resources under either alternative, because none are known to exist in the lease area or its immediate surroundings.

Mineral/Energy

Mineral/Energy - Affected Environment

This BLM parcel has moderate potential for sand, gravel, and basalt resources. It is also prospectively valuable for oil and gas discovery. No other important mineral or energy resources are known at the site. There are no known mining claims located on this parcel.

Small-scale sand and gravel mining has occurred in the northwest portion of the parcel, probably 20 years previous. Waste-excavated material (dirt) and trash dumping has occurred on the parcel. Local water well lithologic records, test pit (10 foot maximum depth) data, and direct site observations indicate the presence of sand and gravel resources from surface to about 30 feet.

Mineral/Energy – Potential Impacts

Under Alternative 1 (Proposed Action), school development on this parcel would effectively create a permanent loss of the underlying mineral resource due to surface activities and subsequent inaccessibility. No mining of the sand and gravel resource would occur.

Considering the projected use of the general area of the parcel, it is highly unlikely that the sand and gravel resource could be successfully recovered. Oil and gas resources should remain accessible due to the limited surface area disturbance associated with the school district's proposed development.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action), physical surface access to the minerals resource would be maintained. However, current conditions at the site are not favorable for mining options due to conflicts created by the proximity of local residents and rapid residential development in the general area surrounding the subject parcel. Future mining would almost certainly have increased surface use conflict and therefore a greatly reduced chance of development as residential use of the area continues to increase. There are other more suitable sites nearby on which sand and gravel resources can be acquired for public use.

Given the residential nature of the surrounding area, however, mining would not likely occur on this 40-acre parcel. The area is already surrounded by residential structures, so an active mining operation at this site would quite likely be strongly opposed by local residents due to many factors, including visual effects, noise elements, and safety concerns that could be associated with a mining operation in such close proximity to residential areas.

Recreation

Recreation – Affected Environment

This 40-acre parcel offers dispersed/open space recreation within an urban interface area. Local residents have used the area for various activities, including walking, horseback riding, and some off-highway vehicle use. With its location (over a 2-hour drive from the Spokane BLM Office) and smaller size, this parcel is difficult to manage for recreation opportunities.

There are several BLM parcels within a 1-mile radius of this 40-acre parcel. These parcels range in size from about 2 acres to 25 acres and have legal and/or physical access. Horse Heaven Hills and Juniper Forest/Juniper Dunes Wilderness areas are located within 20 miles of this parcel and offer a variety of undeveloped, dispersed recreational opportunities.

Recreation – Potential Impacts

Under Alternative 1 (Proposed Action), school development would create a permanent onsite presence that could limit and/or restrict off-highway vehicle use.

Development of the site for public school grounds could offer a variety of recreation opportunities to local residents, including:

- Specific play equipment and athletic areas.
- General play areas.
- Interpretive/environmental education in a wildlife natural area.

Under Alternative 2 (No Action), open space/dispersed recreation opportunities would be maintained within an urban interface area with limited local access to public lands. However, if the area were not developed, there could be an increase in off-highway vehicle use.

Off-highway vehicle use could also create noise disturbance in the residential area.

Socioeconomic

The Richland School District has experienced significant growth within the city of West Richland and the western section of the city of Richland, which are currently the most rapidly growing areas of the school district. The city of West Richland has experienced a significant amount of growth since 1990. In addition, the City has created over 1,200 new platted lots during 2002 and 2003, and has built more than 300 new single family residences over the same period. Demographics indicate the homes are typically occupied by young families with one to two children. Nearly all the available building lots available in West Richland contiguous to and in the vicinity of this site have been platted for development.

| West Richland Population, 1990 to 2003 | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Year | Population | Increase | % of Increase |
| 1990 | 3,962 | | |
| 1991 | 4,020 | 58 | 1.5% |
| 1992 | 4,065 | 45 | 1.1% |
| 1993 | 4,510 | 445 | 10.9% |
| 1994 | 5,265 | 755 | 16.7% |
| 1995 | 6,420 | 1,155 | 21.9% |
| 1996 | 6,720 | 300 | 4.7% |
| 1997 | 6,930 | 210 | 3.1% |
| 1998 | 7,295 | 365 | 5.3% |
| 1999 | 7,625 | 330 | 4.5% |
| 2000 | 8,385 | 760 | 10.0% |
| 2001 | 8,735 | 350 | 4.2% |
| 2002 | 8,930 | 195 | 2.2% |
| 2003 | 9,355 | 425 | 4.8% |

The population of West Richland has more than doubled over the last 13 years, from about 4,000 residents to more than 9,000 (see above table).

Development of school grounds could offer increased recreation opportunities to an urban growth area. This action may encourage future expansion of both residential and commercial development.

Maintaining “open space” areas within an urban growth area may also be appealing to future residential development.

Loss of access to a potential mineral resource on this parcel should have no significant impact on socioeconomics of the area due to the availability of these resources at other nearby sites. Because no mining of sand and gravel resource would occur, the U.S. would not receive royalty payments.

Other Resource Elements Analyzed

Environmental Justice

No disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations are expected to result from implementation of any of the alternatives addressed in this EA.

Hazardous Materials Analysis

On March 9, 2004, the subject parcel was inspected for presence of hazardous materials (Spokane District R&PP Hazmat Report 2004). The purpose of the inspection was to visually identify any recognized environmental conditions at the property. The inspection was conducted in general accordance with BLM Manual Handbook H-2101-4 procedures and requirements for Initial Assessments.

In general, the south two-thirds of the property was found to be relatively undisturbed, with scattered small pits, soil mounds, and small concentrations of solid waste observed. No evidence of buried waste was observed on the parcel, and overall little solid waste was observed on the southern part of the property.

An abandoned gravel pit was present in the northwest corner of the property, and ground surface in the north one-third of the property appeared disturbed by past activities likely related to gravel mining operations. Various types of solid waste were present in and around the abandoned gravel pit, but no evidence of waste materials that may result in recognizable environmental concerns was observed in the gravel pit.

Several piles of debris were present on the northern part of the property. Also, several trenches (possibly related to past gravel exploration activities) were observed on the property south of the gravel pit. No evidence of waste dumping or burial was observed in the trenches.

Based on the visual inspection of the property, no evidence of recognized environmental condition was observed on the 40-acre proposed lease property. Although only solid waste was observed, there is a possibility for occurrences of historic disposal and burial of waste materials that may result in recognized environmental conditions.

The management action/mitigation to stop construction activities that uncover hazardous materials and to coordinate with the BLM for their removal is expected to provide appropriate mitigation.

Critical Elements That Were Considered

Other critical elements addressed in addition to those above (cultural resources, hazardous/solid wastes, threatened/endangered species) are listed below. No conflicts were identified between either alternative and the following critical elements.

- Air quality
- Wild and scenic rivers
- Prime/unique farmlands
- Floodplains
- Native American Religious Concerns
- Water quality (drinking/ground)
- Wetlands/Riparian zones
- Special area designations (including Wild & Scenic Rivers, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Wilderness)
- Invasive non-native species
- Adverse impacts to Energy

The 40-acre parcel does not have any special area designation.

Cumulative Impacts

Alternative 1 (Proposed Action)

The increased development on private lands surrounding the Richland area and the subject parcel has resulted in loss of existing and potential burrowing owl and ground squirrel habitat. For the purpose of this analysis, it is assumed that the proposed Richland school project could encourage further development of surrounding open spaces. It is not known at this time if the proposed actions would result in abandonment or loss of the owl nest burrow, even with the proposed mitigation measures.

Continued loss of burrowing owl and ground squirrel habitat on public and private lands could contribute to the need to list the species in the future. BLM and WDFW biologists do not currently know if providing a 5-acre area for future ground squirrel and burrowing owl breeding would be sufficient to maintain the population, given the likelihood for continued and increased habitat fragmentation, human disturbance, and associated domestic pet activity.

If school facility development occurs as proposed under Alternative 1, the incidences of off-highway vehicle use and debris dumping could increase on other nearby BLM land, potentially causing resource damage. After the 40-acre parcel is developed, local residents would have reduced local open space and/or dispersed recreation opportunities. However, there would be an improved play area for school and after-school activities, not only for school children but for neighboring residents.

This R&PP lease is not expected to present a shortfall of sand and gravel resources in the Tri-cities area, nor create a greater demand on similar resources in the Richland area proper

Coordination/Consultation With Other Agencies, Groups and Individuals

During the environmental analysis process, BLM staff coordinated with the following individuals regarding the Richland School District's lease application and proposed future uses of the 40-acre parcel:

- Robin Emmingham, Executive Director, Support Services, West Richland School District #400.
- Ian Horlacher, City Planner, City of West Richland.

A legal notice was placed in the Tri-City Herald on March 28, 2004, announcing the lease application by Richland School District and requesting that comments on the proposal be sent to the Spokane BLM office. No comments were received from the public.

The lease application was also discussed at Richland School District board meetings, which were open to the public.

Analysis of resources on the parcel involved coordination with the following:

- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife: David Karl, area habitat biologist, Regions 1 and 3; Mark Teske, habitat biologist, South-Central Region; and Dave Hays, wildlife biologist, Olympia WA. March 2004.
- Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Brett Tiller, senior research scientist. March 2004.
- Cornell University, Dr. Paul Sherman, co-author of Ground-Dwelling Squirrels of the Pacific Northwest. March 2004.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Level 1 team coordination – March 2004.

Formal consultation regarding the proposed lease was done with the following:

- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, The Yakama Indian Nation, and the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation was initiated by letters dated 29 January, 2004. There was no response to these letters as of March 8, 2004.

References cited in this environmental assessment are:

- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Priority Habitat Species List – January 2004; and 2002 Priority Habitat Species database.
- Annual burrowing owl survey and monitoring report, University of Arizona/BLM cooperative project, 2000-2003; and as per com. Dr. Conway, University of Arizona project leader, January 2004.
- BLM wildlife staff evaluation report (Spokane BLM District files-2004).

List of Preparers

This environmental assessment was prepared by an Interdisciplinary Team of various resource specialists. Some specialists conducted field trips to the parcel to gather site-specific data to include in this analysis. Others were responsible for proposal review during the environmental analysis process. Resource specialists who assisted in contributing to the resource analysis and preparation of this environmental assessment are:

- Rich Bailey, District Archaeologist
- Lori Baker, Outdoor Recreation Planner
- Barbara Benner, Botanist
- Kelly Courtright, Mining Engineer
- Mark Hatchel, Realty Specialist, Team Lead
- Kathy Helm, District Planner and Environmental Coordinator
- Jake Jakabosky, Environmental Protection Specialist
- Joe Kelly, District Fisheries Biologist
- Rick McComas, Natural Resource Specialist
- Madilane Perry, Archaeologist
- T. Michael Sweeney, Geologist
- Daniel Watterson, Environmental Protection Specialist
- Joyce Whitney, Wildlife Biologist