

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

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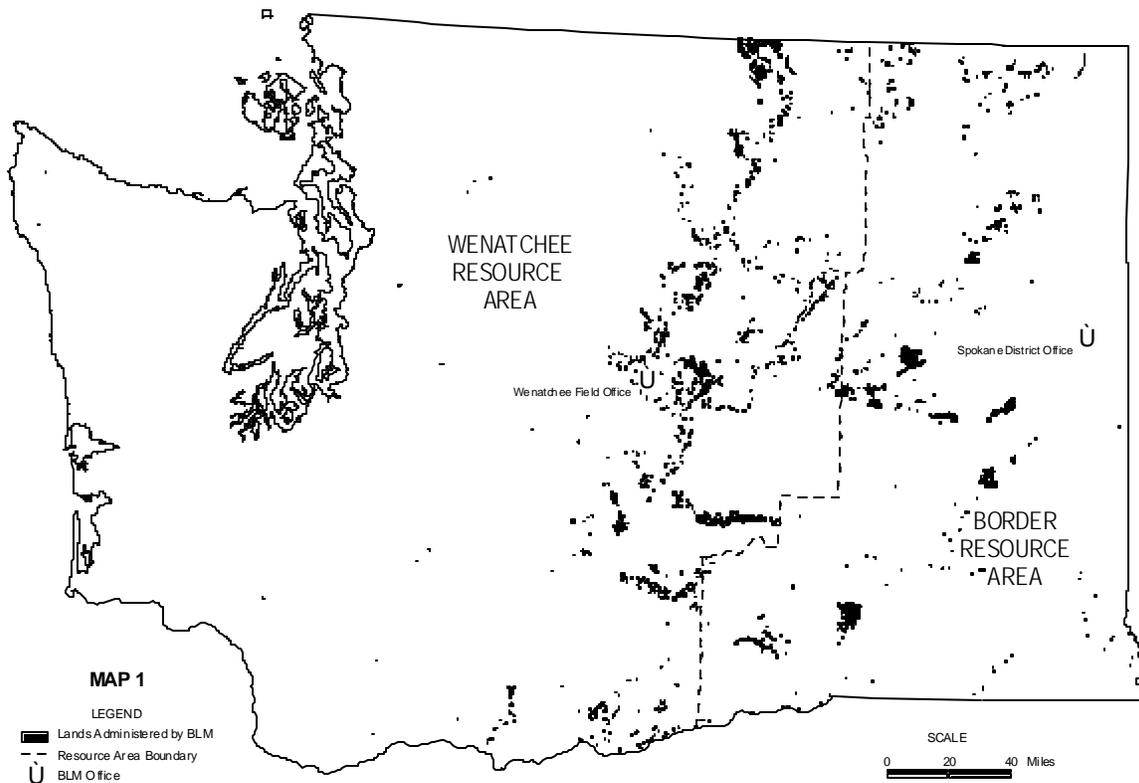
Planning Update

September 2000

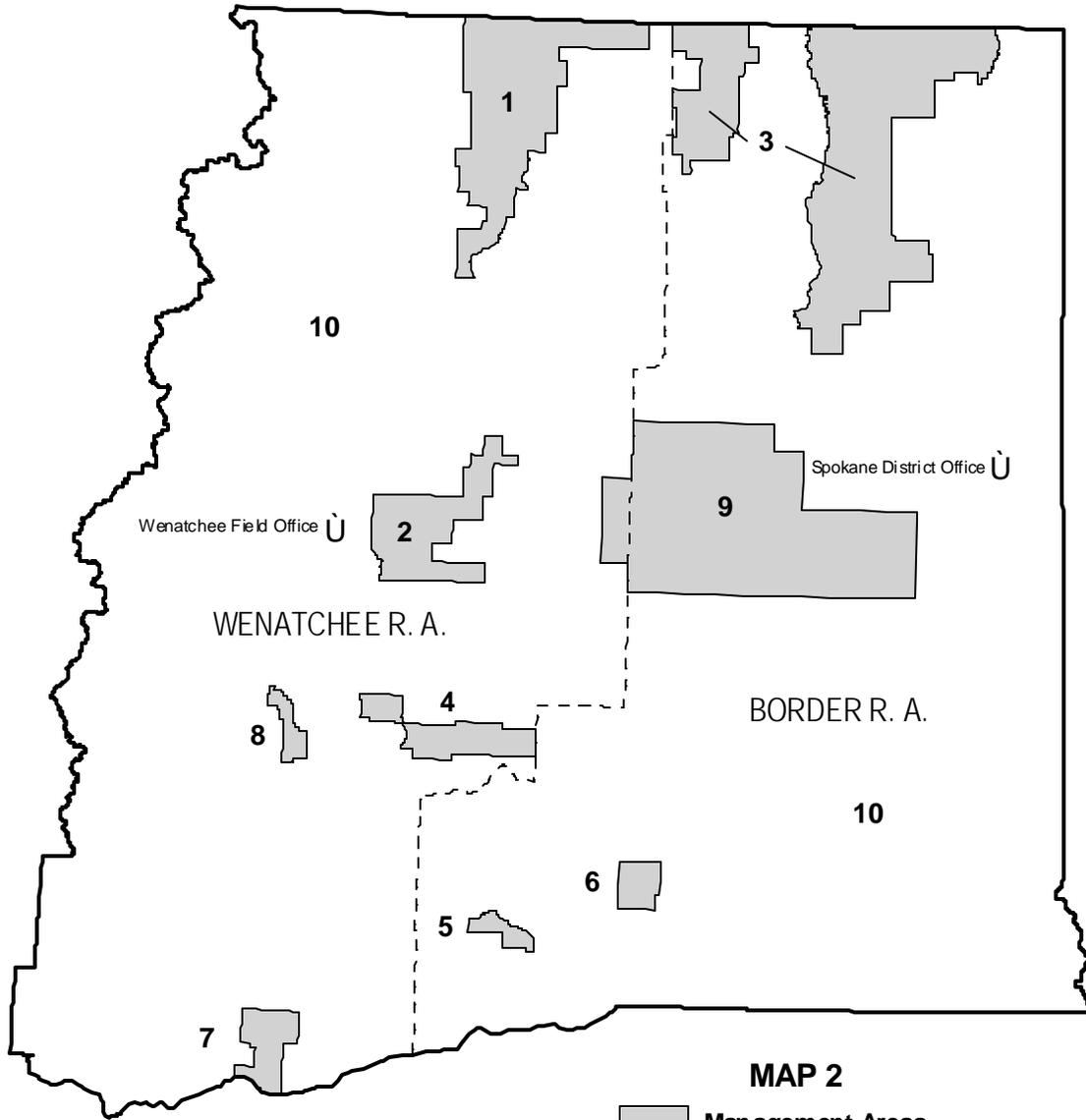
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BLM - Administered Lands in Spokane District



Spokane District Management Areas



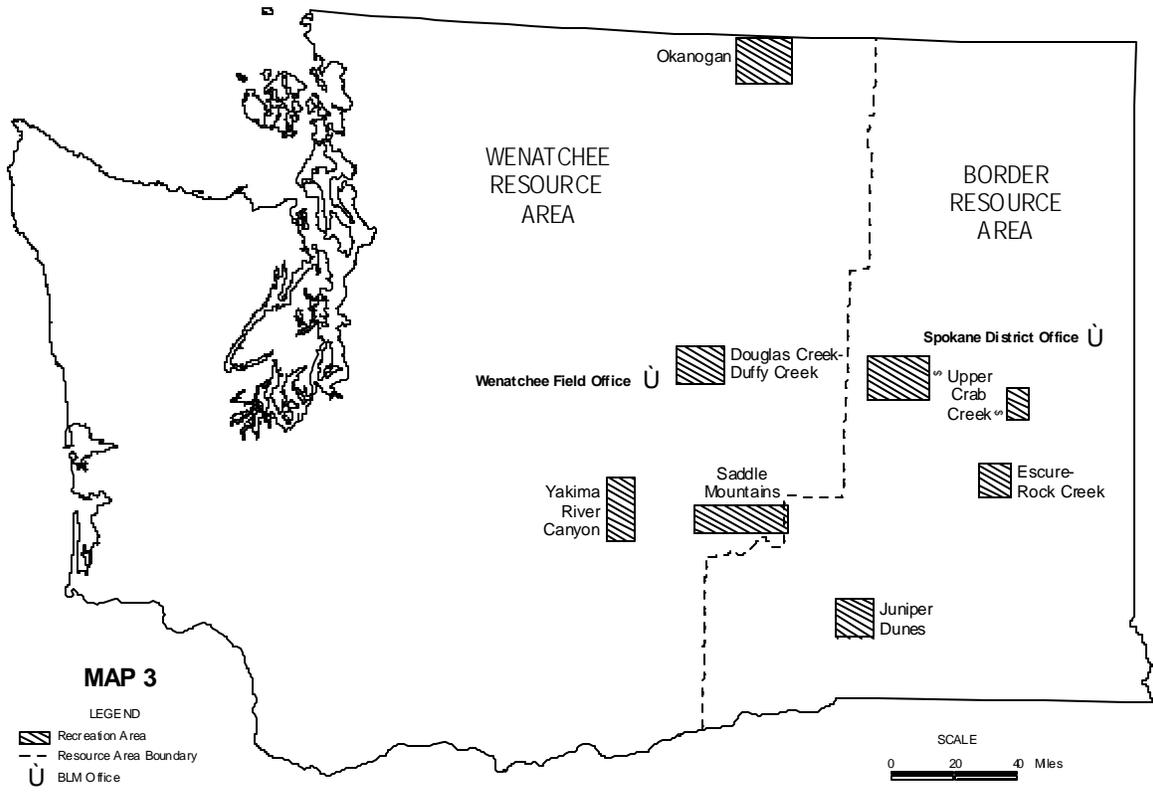
MAP 2

 **Management Areas**

- 1 Okanogan
- 2 Moses Coulee
- 3 Northeast
- 4 Saddle Mountains
- 5 Badger Slope
- 6 Juniper Forest
- 7 Rock Creek
- 8 Yakima River Canyon
- 9 Upper Crab Creek
- 10 Scattered Tracts



Main Recreation Areas in Spokane District



Planning Update - Spokane BLM District

This planning update is part of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) public outreach to inform and involve the public in management of public lands in the state of Washington. The BLM's Spokane District is comprised of two resource areas (Border and Wenatchee, see Map 1). Border Resource Area manages land in the eastern part of the state and is colocated with the Spokane District Office. Wenatchee Resource Area manages land in the western part of the state and is located in Wenatchee.

The planning update summarizes recent accomplishments in major resource programs. The update also identifies projects proposed for FY2001 and beyond where known. The Environmental Assessment Register located near the end of the update lists those environmental assessments started or projected within the near future. This EA list lets the public know of future projects and provides an opportunity for public participation in their analysis and implementation process. A section on the Volunteer program gives BLM a chance to publicly thank and recognize our volunteers, and to let the public know of upcoming projects that have volunteer opportunities.

In the past few years, the BLM has been placing many planning and informational documents on the Internet which provides ready access and up-to-date information about various activities to the public. The Spokane BLM District's website is: www.or.blm.gov/Spokane/. This update will also be available at that website. Anyone not having access to the Internet should notify our office to let us know of their specific planning areas of interest.

Please feel free to submit comments or suggestions for improving this update to make it more useful to you.

Joseph K. Buesing
District Manager

This mailer should bring you up-to-date with activities completed, planned, or in progress in both resource areas in the Spokane District. For additional information, contact the Bureau of Land Management, Attention: Kathy Helm, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, SpokaneDistrict, 1103 N. Fancher, Spokane, WA 99212 (509/536-1200).

Overview of Spokane BLM District

The Bureau of Land Management has management responsibility for almost 400,000 acres in the state of Washington.

The public lands managed by the BLM are grouped into 10 management areas: (1) Okanogan, (2) Moses Coulee (3) Northeast, (4) Saddle Mountains, (5) Badger Slope (sometimes referred to as Horse Heaven Hills), (6) Juniper Forest, (7) Rock Creek, (8) Yakima River Canyon, (9) Upper Crab Creek, and (10) Scattered Tracts. Map 2 shows the location of these management areas.

Program Summaries and Accomplishments

Soil, Water and Air Management Program

Water Quality: Since 1988, water quality has been monitored and analyzed at over 40 sites. Water quality analysis is done at both the field and laboratory levels and includes testing for physical, chemical and bacteriological water quality parameters. Twenty study areas are maintained as permanent baseline stations and monitored on a seasonal schedule. All surface water monitoring results are compiled in an annual water quality report, which is distributed on request to federal, state and local agencies.

Macroinvertebrate Inventories: To date, the Spokane District has inventoried aquatic macroinvertebrates in three drainages: Crab Creek, Douglas Creek, and Similkameen River. Inventory findings are published and distributed to various government agencies and interested parties, and are also available at the Spokane District and Wenatchee Resource Area offices. Additional inventories are proposed for select drainages in eastern Washington.

Air Resources: Four Remote Automatic Weather Stations (RAWS) are online and operational year-round on the Spokane District. The units provide valuable meteorological, hydrological and environmental data for the District's Fire Management, Hazardous Materials, and Mining programs. The District also maintains and monitors three radon and air particulate sensors at the Midnite Uranium Mine Project.

Noxious Weeds and Pest Control

Noxious Weeds: Conservative estimates place noxious weed infestations on public lands within the Spokane District at approximately 5,000 acres. These infestations occupy more than 400 parcels throughout Washington.. The current Spokane District Noxious Weed Control Environmental Assessment proposes treatment on some 3,200 acres of land within 13 counties in eastern Washington and San Juan County in western Washington. To date, nearly all proposed project sites have been treated using chemical, biological, mechanical and cultural noxious weed control methods. Also, more than 600 acres have received follow-up weed control treatments. The Spokane District coordinates weed control with several counties, Washington Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Washington State University.

Pest Control: In 1993, large outbreaks of Mormon crickets occurred within portions of the Juniper Dunes Management Area. An initial treatment was done that year. Annual followup spot treatments of hatching beds have significantly reduced cricket populations to a manageable level. This pest control is done on BLM-administered lands to protect crops of economic concern on adjacent private lands.

Recreation

Recreation Sites

Most recreational use in the Spokane District occurs in seven areas, which are identified on Map 3 and listed below:

- Yakima River Canyon (Roza, Lmuma Creek, Umtanum, Ringer Road, Cowiche Canyon)
- Juniper Forest, Juniper Dunes Wilderness
- Douglas and Duffy Creeks
- Saddle Mountains
- Okanogan (Split Rock, Palmer Mountain and Chopaka Lake)
- Upper Crab Creek Area (Lakeview Ranch, Twin Lakes, Coffeepot Lake, and Fishtrap Lake)
- Rock Creek Ranch (Escure property)

The Yakima, Cowiche, Douglas Creek, Wilson, Fishtrap, and Hog Lake sites have wildflower viewing areas.

Yakima River Canyon

The Yakima River Canyon has three developed recreation sites: Roza, Lmuma Creek, and Umtanum. These sites are used each year by thousands of people for camping, picnicking, boating, rafting, fishing, hunting, bird watching, wildflower viewing, and general sightseeing.

Roza recreation site includes four permanent vault toilets, eight beach picnic sites, five campsites, a concrete boat launch, and a rafters' take-out beach area. The parking area is paved and signed to minimize traffic congestion. On weekends during peak summer use, a law enforcement ranger is on duty. Modifications planned for the Roza site are a handicap-accessible ramp/walkway from the parking lot to the picnic area and interpretive signing. In 1997, BLM began charging a site use fee at Roza and Lmuma Creek from May through September.

Lmuma Creek includes seven campsites, two vault toilets, a graded parking area, paved access road and traffic and parking signing. Future plans include a permanent boat launch and a wildlife viewing area with interpretive signing at the south edge of the recreation site.

Popular uses of the **Umtanum** Recreation Site are hiking, hunting and fishing. Site management includes maintaining a suspension footbridge (the only access to public lands across the river), vault toilets, and six camp/picnic areas. Future plans include a wildlife viewing area on the knoll just north of the bridge, interpretive signs, and implementation of a user fee program to help defray maintenance costs.

Ringer Road is a nature area at the north end of the Yakima Canyon. In 1998, BLM held a National Public Lands Day event at Ringer Road. A work crew installed two wildlife viewing benches, marked 2 miles of foot trails, and installed a bulletin board/kiosk information station. A month later, through an

interagency effort, a 100-foot pole fence was built along one side of the parking area. Future plans include building a bridge across Spring Creek and extending the trail system to make additional BLM areas accessible to the public.

Cowiche Canyon is composed of the uplands and lowlands surrounding Cowiche Creek. The Cowiche Canyon Conservancy (CCC) manages the lowlands along the creek where an old railroad grade has been remade into a non-motorized trail, complete with 10 bridge crossings of the creek. Trails also connect this lower trail system with primitive trails on BLM-administered land in the uplands of Cowiche Canyon. Future plans include interpretive signing and trail mapping.

Juniper Dunes and Juniper Forest

The ***Juniper Dunes Wilderness*** has limited access with few developments. Improvements include fences to designate wilderness boundaries and control livestock, wildlife watering cisterns, and visitor registration boxes.

Juniper Forest is the multiple use area immediately outside the Wilderness boundary. Facilities are limited to informational signing, a visitor registration box, and an unimproved trail system. Popular uses of this area include ATV, motorcycle and 4x4 use, as well as hiking and horseback riding.

There is no public access to either the Juniper Forest or the Juniper Dunes. Access is at the discretion of the adjacent private landowner.

Douglas Creek and Duffy Creek

Douglas Creek is a popular stream for native trout fishing and, like other areas of the state, is being discovered by an increasing number of recreationists. Other visitor activities at the site include picnicking, camping, hiking, swimming and hunting. Primitive camping areas are showing signs of overuse. In 1997, permanent fire rings were installed in high use campsites.

In 1993, the BLM acquired from Burlington Northern Railroad an abandoned railroad line extending from Alstown into the Douglas Creek Canyon. Three separate easements are needed to connect a scenic trail through the canyon. The trail will enhance visitor appeal in this area, which already attracts almost 15,000 visitors annually for all activities.

Land at ***Duffy Creek*** was donated to BLM in 1996 and lies adjacent to the Douglas Creek block. At this time, a “Duffy Creek Allotment Management Plan” and an environmental assessment have been completed. Informational signing, pass gates, and road markings have been installed.

Saddle Mountains

The ***Saddle Mountains*** encompass 23,000 acres in southern Grant County, just east of the town of

Mattawa. Elevations range from about 490 feet at the Columbia River, to approximately 2,700 feet at Wahatis Peak. Sand dunes on the western toe slopes are formed by the consistent strong winds along the Columbia River. Dominant vegetation is big sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass.

A recreation management plan for the Saddle Mountains areas was completed in April of 1997. The plan defines areas open for casual use, and identifies petrified rock collecting areas and other recreational opportunities.

Okanogan

The ***Split Rock Recreation Site*** is located in scenic Okanogan County on the southeast shore of Palmer Lake, which is popular for fishing and swimming. Facilities include: two vault toilets, a gravel parking lot, three picnic tables, the only sandy beach on the lake, and a concrete boat ramp. Because of repeated vandalism, BLM has increased patrols of this area and solicited community assistance to protect site investment. Future plans include picnic table replacement and interpretive signing.

The 40-acre ***Chopaka Lake Recreation Site*** is located in a mountainous setting on the shores of Chopaka Lake, one of Washington's best fly fishing lakes. This site is located adjacent to BLM's 5,518-acre ***Chopaka Mountain Wilderness Study Area***. Because of the site's primitive nature, its facilities are limited to primitive camp areas and a vault toilet.

In a land exchange in 1996, BLM acquired 7,600 acres on ***Palmer Mountain*** and opened the area for the public. Vehicle use is allowed over part of the mountain, with the remainder of the roads and trails limited to non-motorized traffic. The area contains a small lake, Washburn Lake, which was stocked with trout in 1997. Facilities are limited to informational bulletin boards and road signs. Recreation use has primarily been associated with hunting and fishing.

Upper Crab Creek

Lakeview Ranch is located 8 miles north of Odessa, Washington. In May 1991, the BLM acquired approximately 2,600 acres in a land exchange to consolidate public ownership. The character of the acquired lands is a sagebrush-steppe plant community within the channeled scablands setting. Land features include scenic canyons, cliffs, and basins. Many draws and coulees have pothole ponds and springs that provide additional habitat for migrating waterfowl. Historically, the area provided habitat for sharptail and sage grouse, a habitat type rapidly dwindling in the state.

Since acquisition of this property, a concrete boat launch, camping and picnic areas have been developed and several miles of trails signed to accommodate increasing recreational demands. The BLM has held wild horse adoptions at this location in conjunction with special community events. BLM's issuance of special recreation use permits for organized horse rides to tour the scablands has enhanced tourist attractions in the Odessa area.

Twin Lakes and Coffeepot Lake are both recent acquisitions in the Spokane District's land exchange program. Since BLM's acquisition of these two areas, camping and picnicking facilities have been

developed near the lakes at both sites. Vault toilets and information kiosks have also been added.

Fishtrap Lake is located 30 miles southwest of Spokane in Lincoln and Spokane counties. In years past, this area was primarily used for hunting and fishing, but increased public ownership has led to heightened interest in other activities, including hiking, horseback riding, camping, picnicking and wildlife viewing. Most use is associated with fishing on Fishtrap Lake in the early spring and Hog Canyon Lake during winter.

Escure/Rock Creek Ranch

In a land exchange in 1999, BLM acquired the 12,800-acre ***Escure Ranch*** property. Located along the Adams-Whitman county line, the Escure/Rock Creek Management Area is a large expanse of annual grassland, basalt cliffs and pothole lakes in the heart of the Palouse. Wildlife and fish (in Rock Creek) abound. An interim management plan was prepared in 1999, with plans for a final management plan in a couple of years. Currently, special use restrictions apply to protect the area until planning is completed.

Special Use Permits

Special Recreation Permits are issued for various events. The 15 special recreation permits issued by the District during 1999 were as follows:

Wenatchee Field Office

- Two horseback events (endurance ride, poker ride)
- Three commercial river shuttle/rafting guide
- Two motorcycle cross-country events

Border Field Office

- Two horseback riding events
- Two dog trial events
- One hang glide training permit
- One orienteering event
- Two miscellaneous

As of June 2000, Spokane District Special Recreation Permits had issued 10 permits, as listed below:

Wenatchee Field Office

One horseback poker ride
One commercial river shuttle permit
One motorcycle cross-country event

Border Field Office

One hang-glide training permit

Four dog trial events
One horseback poker ride
One orienteering event

Fee Demonstration Program

In 1997, BLM began charging site use fees at its Roza and Lmuma Creek developed recreation sites in the Yakima River Canyon. In 1998, these two sites were part of the Fee Demonstration Program. From May 15 through September 15, a \$2.00 per day/per vehicle fee is charged for use of these two sites. The fee, paid at self pay fee stations onsite, covers all approved activities at each site, including camping, parking, picnicking and boat launching. Frequent Yakima Canyon visitors can purchase a \$15 Seasonal Use Permit sticker. Approximately \$10,000 a year has been collected from each of these two sites. This money funds vandalism repairs, provides additional visitor services on weekends, maintains picnic and campsites, and helps cover administrative costs. Future plans are to add Umtanum to the Fee Demonstration Program as well.

For additional information about recreation in the Spokane BLM District, contact Diane Priebe, District Outdoor Recreation Specialist, at 509/665-2100.

Wilderness

The Juniper Dunes Wilderness, located in Franklin County 15 miles northeast of Pasco, Washington, encompasses about 7,140 acres. Designated in July 1984, this wilderness contains some of the largest sand dunes in Washington, ranging from 200 to 1,200 feet wide and up to 130 feet high. The sandy, warm dunes environment (as high as 100 degrees in the summer) supports various grasses, shrubs, and western juniper groves. This unique habitat is home to a variety of mammals, reptiles and birds and is especially valuable habitat for birds-of-prey. The majority of the actions in the Juniper Dunes Wilderness Management Plan have been completed.

The Chopaka Mountain Wilderness Study Area is located in far northern Okanogan County on the east slopes of Chopaka Mountain and Hurley Peak and includes 5,518 acres of public land. Because this WSA is located next to the Chopaka Lake Recreation Site, much of its use is associated with fishing, hunting, and camping.

The BLM will soon begin a wilderness study of Patos Islands, located in the San Juan Islands of northwest Washington. BLM's wilderness study process will be used to evaluate suitability of the islands for wilderness. When completed, the determination of suitability will become BLM's recommendation to Congress.

For additional information about Wilderness values in the Spokane BLM District, contact Diane Priebe at 509/665-2100.

San Juan Islands

The Spokane District manages several properties in San Juan County to protect their fragile ecological values. Management emphasis is on protection of their natural values and, in the case of Turn Point, unique historic buildings.

Turn Point Light Station, constructed on Stuart Island in 1893 to provide service to maritime traffic, is now a popular visitor destination in the San Juan Islands. Annual visitation exceeds 11,000 people and is steadily increasing even though Stuart Island lacks commercial ferry service and must be accessed by either private boat or aircraft. To accommodate high use levels, BLM installed a composting toilet at the Turn Point Light Station and contracts with a local individual for site maintenance. Future plans include developing interpretive signs and materials.

Patos Islands are located in the most northern portion of the San Juan Islands. The largest of the two islands totals 240 acres. This island was reserved by the U.S. Coast Guard until 1993, at which time most of the island was returned to BLM jurisdiction. The Coast Guard still manages the light station at the western end of the island. Pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, BLM is required to evaluate islands under BLM jurisdiction for suitability for wilderness designation. Although BLM's statewide wilderness inventory was completed during the 1980s, Patos Islands were not studied as they were still under Coast Guard jurisdiction.

The four areas BLM manages on the south end of ***Lopez Island*** are designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) due to plant and wildlife habitat. Special management restrictions apply. The Lopez Island sites are monitored frequently by volunteers from the San Juan Preservation Trust and BLM staff.

Hazardous Materials

The former Oroville Landfill received pesticide-contaminated debris after an agricultural warehouse fire in 1969. In 1996, after several studies to determine the extent of contamination and a preferred remedial alternative, BLM capped the disposal trench with a layer of highly impervious clay, followed by topsoil, and then successfully seeded the site to grasses. Monitoring of ground water and sediment, as well as site maintenance, will continue for at least 25 years.

Periodically, containers of hazardous materials are spilled or illegally dumped on public lands requiring response by BLM. These sites are cleaned up under a statewide Oregon and Washington environmental contract and the responsible party, where known, is billed for the costs.

For additional information about hazardous materials management in the Spokane BLM District, contact Jake Jakobosky, District Environmental Protection Specialist, at 509/536-1200.

Law Enforcement

The Spokane District responded to the following incidents in 1999. (Note: The number in parenthesis is the number of incidents of that type.)

Illegal dumping/littering (15)
Off-road vehicle violations/damage (7)
Illegal substances (7)
Fishing violations (7)
Vandalism/destruction of government property (4)
Dumped/abandoned vehicles (4)
Park/driving violations (4)
Assaults (3)
Wild horse violations (3)
Security details (3)
Grazing violations (3)
Realty trespass (3)
Violation/lack of commercial permits (2)
Camping violations (2)
Gravel theft (2)
Assist other law enforcement agencies (2)
Theft of government property (2)
Hunting/target shooting violations (1)
Fail-to-pay user fee (1)
Driving under the influence (1)
Arson (1)
Firewood theft (1)

Assistance to Other Agencies or the Public

Public assistance/locked out of vehicles (4)
Assist on disabled vehicles (3)
Search and rescue, two involving fatalities (3)
Assist on vehicle accidents (2)
Assist with felony van stop (1)
Drowning (river) (1)

Energy and Minerals

Fluid Minerals (Oil and Gas, and Geothermal Resources)

Oil and gas leasing interest in eastern Washington has increased in recent years. Currently, about 78,321 acres of BLM-administered land are under 66 oil and gas leases, and one lease on 400 acres is pending issuance. Two potential areas for underground natural gas storage are currently being evaluated on intermixed public and private lands at two locations in southern Washington (Canoe Ridge

and Paterson Ridge in Benton County) using different permitting and technical approaches. At Paterson Ridge, Columbia Gas Storage LLC first obtained an underground gas storage agreement with the BLM and is now conducting investigations on private land to evaluate the suitability of the area for storage use. At Canoe Ridge, Pacific Gas Transmission Company (PGT) is evaluating the suitability of the area before determining the need for a storage agreement. In 1999, PGT drilled one of two water test wells that were authorized by the BLM on federal mineral estate. In 2000, the second well will be drilled and additional studies will likely be conducted. Historical geothermal leasing interest has mainly been confined to the Cascade Mountains vicinity. Geothermal lease applications have been pending for the past 10 to 20+ years, awaiting response from the Forest Service, but there has been no recent activity on the ground.

Mineral Materials

This program mainly involves production of construction-type materials (sand, gravel, and stone) from public fee land and/or mineral estate. After initial production early in the year, an existing quarry site operated by Benton County started reclamation in 1999. Expansion of an existing quarry operated by Douglas County was reviewed and authorized in 1999. Two requests from the public for materials were evaluated but were not authorized due to ownership issues. During 1999, cases involving unauthorized removal of mineral materials were investigated and additional work will continue in 2000. During 2000, initial site work began on preparation of the Goose Butte Community Pit in Lincoln County, off Tokio Road.

Mining Law Administration

This program involves uses authorized by the mining laws (including 1872 Mining Law, as amended), with most activity confined to northeastern Washington. During fiscal year 1999, BLM conducted 42 inspections, reviewed 12 notices (less than 5 acres disturbance), completed review of two plans of operation (Crown Jewel Mine and Lamefoot Mine), and continued evaluation on other plans of operation (Empire Creek gold exploration project, and expansions of two existing open pit silica mines at Lane Mountain).

The BLM has identified about 262 project areas since 1981, where operations have been conducted on public lands in Washington under the mining laws. In 1999, BLM started inspecting inactive project areas where the operators/claimants have allowed their mining claims to lapse in recent years without reporting reclamation as being completed. The BLM is evaluating the adequacy of reclamation of those sites and will continue with that work and appropriate compliance and enforcement actions in 2000. The BLM is also investigating situations involving unauthorized occupancy of the public lands.

Abandoned Mined Lands

During 1999, BLM was involved in reclamation of two abandoned mine sites on public and private lands under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). Completion of reclamation work at these former lead/zinc/silver/copper operations is expected in 2000. Both sites were considered hazardous and involved threats to public health and safety. The Kaaba-Texas mine and mill facility is predominantly on private lands. A joint venture with EPA, BLM and others involves excavation of tailings from a floodplain, movement of the tailings into a repository,

stabilization, and revegetation of the disturbed areas and closure of mine openings. The Cleveland tailings are predominantly on public lands and involve a stream running through the old mill tailings. A voluntary clean-up by the BLM involves re-routing and armoring the stream around the tailings, and consolidating and capping the tailings in place. Initial site investigations were started on several other mines in 1999 to identify environmental and physical hazards and an ongoing inventory will be conducted to identify hazards related to abandoned sites on public lands.

Geologic Heritage Initiative

The BLM continues to participate in a regional interagency evaluation of Ice Age Flood features throughout the Northwest, with a focus on those features in Washington on public lands that may be of interest to the public.

For additional information about the above energy and mineral activities, contact the District Geologist, George Brown, at 509/536-1200.

Solid Mineral Leasing

Solid mineral leasing activity in the Spokane BLM District involves coal mining, uranium mine reclamation, and sand and gravel operations on BLM-administered lands and Indian lands throughout the state. During 1999, the District conducted 62 inspections at all solid mineral lease locations.

At the Midnite Uranium Mine, located approximately 45 miles northwest of Spokane on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Stevens County, BLM continued to have oversight and lead responsibilities for an Interim Agreement and Work Plan between the U.S. Department of Justice, Newmont Gold, and BLM. Through this project, data was collected for remediation/reclamation design at this site, which was formally listed on the National Priorities List by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). During 1999, the BLM prepared an environmental analysis for dewatering the backfilled pits (EA#130-00-03, dated December 1999) and conducted 27 inspections related to work plan activities.

The Centralia Coal Mine, located about 7 miles east of Centralia, Washington, involves private surface and public subsurface. The BLM is responsible for maximizing economic recovery of federal coal and verifying production. During the past year, the Spokane District conducted four inspections and approved continuance of a royalty rate reduction. The mine and two federal coal leases at this site are in the process of being sold and transferred from PacifiCorp to TransAlta, a U.S. subsidiary of a Canadian corporation.

Two exploration plans were reviewed and approved for Pacific Northwest Aggregate and Wheeler Logging Company. These operating and proposed sand and gravel operations are located on three Yakama Indian Allotments adjacent to the Columbia River near The Dalles, Oregon.

For additional information about solid mineral leasing, contact the District Mining Engineer, Kelly Courtright, at 509/536-1200.

Rangeland

Grazing Allotments

The Rangeland Management Program administers livestock grazing activities on approximately 102,000 acres in the Border Resource Area and approximately 171,000 acres in the Wenatchee Resource Area. Grazing leases are normally issued for 10 year terms and are reviewed prior to renewal. In Fiscal Year 2000, 57 leases were scheduled for renewal, and 41 are scheduled for renewal in Fiscal Year 2001. Grazing bills are issued yearly, authorizing up to approximately 32,200 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) on 348 grazing allotments in the district. These grazing allotments range in size from 7 acres to 12,800 acres.

Half of the grazing fees collected are returned to the county from which they were collected, and half are returned to the BLM district for rangeland improvement projects to benefit wildlife and watershed resources while enhancing livestock grazing systems. Such projects include fencing, seeding, noxious weed control, and water developments.

Existing projects such as waterholes, spring developments, and fences are monitored and maintained, as necessary, either by range staff personnel or by the grazing lessees. Grazing use is supervised during the grazing season to ensure compliance with approved grazing authorizations. The range program also inventories vegetation; collects information about rangeland condition and trend, as well as actual livestock use; and monitors vegetation utilization levels on high-priority allotments. This information is evaluated to determine whether allotment goals and objectives are being met. Monitoring data is also used in assessing Standards for Rangeland Health.

The Spokane District has developed a schedule of reviewing all grazing allotments for assessing Rangeland Health Standards.

For additional information about rangeland management in the Spokane BLM District, contact Rich Hubbard, District Rangeland Specialist, at 509/536-1200.

Wild Horse and Burro Program

The Wild Horse and Burro Program is administered on the Spokane District by usually holding three satellite adoption in various locations in Washington each year. Approximately 100 animals are adopted each year by Washington residents. Compliance checks are done by visiting many of these animals every year. About 110 people each year receive title to the animals they have adopted. To date, over 3,500 wild horses and burros have been adopted in Washington.

The Washington Chapter of the American Mustang and Burro Association has assisted with all aspects of the Adoption Program for about 13 years and has also been of great help by assisting adopters in all aspects of animal husbandry and answering questions for potential adopters.

A wild horse and burro adoption was held in April 2000 in Spokane, in which 36 of the 45 animals available for adoption were adopted.

Wild Horse Adoption in Pasco, Washington - Sept. 22 & 23

A wild horse and burro adoption is scheduled for September 22-23, 2000 in Pasco, Washington. The adoption will be held at the Franklin County Trade, Recreation, and Agriculture Center (TRAC), on Burden Boulevard, near Interstate Highway 182 and the general area of Posse Stadium. About 35 wild horses and a few burros will be available for adoption. For recorded information about the adoption, call toll free at 1-800-997-2022. Internet users can check the Spokane District website at www.or.blm.gov/Spokane/. Photos of some animals to be at the Pasco adoption event are posted at this site.

For more information, including a map and directions to the adoption site in Pasco, please call the Spokane District Office at 509/536-1200.

For additional information about the wild horse and burro program, contact the District Wild Horse and Burro Natural Resource Specialist, Rick McComas, at 509/536-1200.

Wildlife Projects

The Spokane BLM District coordinated with the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council to install a wildlife viewing blind at Smick meadows in July 2000. This viewing blind will assist in researching wildlife use of this area.

Other wildlife viewing sites are proposed at other locations in the district.

Fisheries

In October of 2000, the BLM will place logs and large boulders in the bank of Yakima River, just south of Ellensburg, as part of a multi-year project called Ringer Road Fish Habitat Improvement Project.

Botany

During 1999, the district inventoried and assessed approximately 13,000 acres districtwide for special status species plants and plant community values. These botanical surveys were done in areas where the district has, or is planning, range, wildlife, lands, recreation and timber activities. Most of the inventories (10,000 acres) were related to the range program. Special emphasis was given to inventory *Spiranthes diluvialis* and *Howellia aquatilis*, two Federally threatened species found in Okanogan and Spokane counties, respectively.

In addition, the district reviewed 60 project sites that have special status species plants to ensure conservation and ecosystem health objectives were met. Special emphasis was placed on *Silene spaldingii*, a plant proposed for Federal threatened status.

Populations of Washington state special status plants were maintained and stimulated within 500 acres in Lincoln County and 160 acres in Yakima County through integrated noxious weed control and protection techniques.

Monitoring plans were implemented for 1,000 acres of special status species plants and plant communities. To assist with these monitoring efforts, nine exclosures were installed in the Horse Heaven Hills and approximately 1/4 mile fence was rebuilt in the Cowiche Area of Critical Environmental Concern area.

The district cooperated with the Biological Resources Division of U.S. Geological Service in the Horse Heaven Hills to develop and implement studies evaluating ecosystem health, particularly the microbiotic crust. Two lichen surveys were conducted through a contract, both in the Horse Heaven Hills.

Cooperative projects were developed to promote understanding and maintenance of plant community values in the San Juan Islands, Douglas and Yakima counties. Cooperators include the Washington Department of Wildlife, Native Plant Society, San Juan Preservation Trust, Cowiche Conservancy and Washington Natural Heritage program. A cooperative monitoring project has been developed with the Cowiche Conservancy.

Several public outreach projects were coordinated: an environmental education workshop on wildflower identification in conjunction with the Wenatchee Native Plant Society; three presentations on ethnobotany resources in Washington in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources cultural resources training program; Washington State Native Plant Society annual meeting; and the annual meeting of the Environmental Educators.

The district has agreements with the Washington Natural Heritage Program to coordinate and implement the plant inventory and information exchange on special status species plants. The district has been cooperating for the last three years in developing a Special Status Plant Photo Guide for the state to serve as training material for district staff and as an outreach tool for the general public.

Watchable Wildflowers, a Columbia Basin Guide, is available in more than 50 locations throughout the Northwest.

For additional information about botany in the Spokane BLM District, contact Pam Camp, District Botanist, at 509/665-2100.

Cultural Resources

During 1999, the Cultural Resources Program conducted inventories and reviews for more than 36 projects resulting in Class III inventory of about 3,000 acres and recording of 40 previously undocumented archaeological and historical sites. In consultation with the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP), two of the eight cultural sites formally evaluated were eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Eligibility of nearly 50 sites has been initiated in consultation with Native American Tribes and OAHP.

In addition, the Cultural Resource Program has primary responsibility for cooperating and interacting with other land management agencies, Native American tribal governments, universities and public groups. Consultations and discussion of proposed undertakings and tribal concerns have been conducted with 11 tribes in the region. Consultations have included meetings with members of the tribal councils, staff, and members to discuss federal trust and cultural resource concerns. Field visits with tribal representatives and state agencies (including Washington Department of Natural Resources, OAHP and the public) have helped to identify resource and management concerns on public lands. In addition, Annual Root day celebrations were held with members of the Spokane Tribe, Eastern Washington University and public groups to celebrate "First Roots" on BLM-administered lands in Lincoln County.

The BLM works with local universities to provide cultural and environmental education to university students through cooperative agreements with Eastern Washington University and Central Washington University. The Channeled Scablands Environmental Field School, which is a Challenge Cost Share project, provides opportunities for students to learn of the unique geologic history of the region, past environmental conditions, fauna and flora, and current land management practices while learning archaeological field techniques. During the past year, students participated in subsurface test excavation of three prehistoric archaeological sites and cultural survey of approximately 200 acres of BLM-administered lands in the channeled scablands of eastern Washington.

The Central Washington University Archaeological Field School, a cooperative partnership with Central Washington University, provides archaeological field and laboratory experience to university students in the Saddle Mountains, an area of diverse cultural and resource values. During 1999, the students surveyed approximately 200 acres of BLM-administered lands, conducted analysis of artifacts, and learned to use GPS and GIS systems to map and document cultural resources. The data gathered in this region will be vital to future management of the diverse resource and recreational interests.

The Cultural Program provided support for a statewide poster and guide during Archaeology month, which is October every year. Along with other federal and state agencies, BLM provided education and outreach to area grade schools, as well as to local historical societies. The Cultural Program provided an educational program on artifact identification and cataloging to a local preservation group who assisted the BLM's Cultural program and partners, Eastern Washington University, Colville National Forest, and local university and grade school students in test excavation of an historic silent film studio near Spokane in 1998. Members of the preservation group assisted in sorting and cataloging artifacts for the repository.

In cooperation with the Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the Spokane BLM District began to develop and implement a new archaeological database system and GIS data systems for Washington state. The new system will help to more efficiently manage and exchange site information.

In addition, the District's artifact collection was prepared and submitted to the Museum of Anthropology at Washington State University.

For additional information about the Spokane BLM District cultural resources program, contact the District Archaeologist, Rich Bailey, at 509/536-1200.

Forestry

The Environmental Assessment for the Hunter Creek Forest Health Restoration Project (EA#135-07-05) is finalized and posted on the district's Internet site. Approximately one million board feet (MMBF) of timber is expected to be sold through this project in September of 2000.

For additional information about the Spokane BLM District forestry program, contact Al Gardner at 509/536-1200.

Lands and Realty

Land Exchanges

The Spokane District continued to make progress in achieving its land tenure adjustment goals. The most recent exchange (Rock Creek, described below) is an outstanding example of the benefits associated with the Spokane BLM District's land tenure adjustment program. Through the program, isolated parcels have been exchanged for lands that are more efficiently managed, provide habitat for plant and wildlife species, and expand public recreational opportunities. Since establishing its land exchange program, the Spokane District has transferred 250 isolated parcels into private ownership, and in exchange BLM has received several dozen parcels that are more consolidated for public use and enjoyment in eastern Washington.

Rock Creek: In FY-99, the District acquired a 12,800-acre tract of shrub-steppe habitat along Rock Creek (often referenced as Escure Ranch) in exchange for several isolated parcels of public land in northeastern Washington. The Rock Creek property represents one of the largest single ownerships acquired by exchange to date and highlights the public benefits associated with the District's land exchange program.

Acquisition of the Rock Creek property culminated a series of land exchange transactions completed in recent years in which the BLM traded 44 separate parcels of public land for over 20,000 acres of consolidated shrub-steppe and forest habitat. The public lands exchanged were remote and widely scattered parcels, which were difficult to manage due to their small size and fragmented nature. In contrast, the lands acquired contribute to the consolidation of public land ownership, as well as provide high quality habitat for plant and wildlife species and recreational opportunities made available through public access to large areas of open space.

The ranch on the Rock Creek property was developed by John and Marcos Escure over a 20-year period between 1930s and 1950s under the name of the Escure Sheep Company. Historic remains of sheep raising, an important industry in the history of Washington, are evident on the property. Numerous rock fences, walls and trails provide clues to past sheep-driving practices in the region.

The parcel has an exceptional diversity of wildlife habitat. This mixture of upland habitat combined with productive wetlands and large size make the Escure Ranch unique. The abundance of water is one of the most uncommon features of the ranch. The property has more than 100 acres of permanent surface water and much more intermittent water in the many potholes and ponds. Over 8 miles of Rock Creek meander through the ranch, supporting a healthy fishery. The many potholes and ponds found on the

ranch provide critical nesting habitat for migrating waterfowl species common to the Pacific flyway. The many riparian areas are important cover for year-round residents, including whitetail deer and mule deer.

Central Washington Assembled Land Exchange (CWALE): This land exchange involves properties in six central Washington counties (Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, and Yakima). Under the proposal, BLM is considering the exchange of up to 71 separate parcels of federal lands comprising 5,930 acres, for up to 9,665 acres of non-federal lands in six separate ownerships. The environmental assessment is nearing completion, and a decision on a first phase of the trade should be issued by fall. The exchange would eliminate scattered and isolated tracts of public land and improve the public land ownership pattern and management in the Moses Coulee, Okanogan and Saddle Mountains Management Areas. Through the exchange, BLM would gain a substantial increase in shrub-steppe habitat in the Moses Coulee Management Area (portions of Grant and Douglas Counties), important anadromous fishery values along Salmon Creek in Okanogan County, as well as important plant communities and cultural sites.

BLM-DNR State Land Exchange: The Spokane BLM District is also processing a land exchange with the State of Washington, Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This proposal would trade 4,121 acres of BLM-administered public lands for 6,190 acres of DNR lands. The environmental assessment and decision approving the exchange were finalized during 1999.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Acquisitions

The Spokane District has four current LWCF project areas approved and funded by Congress: Cowiche Canyon, Chadwick Hill, Rock Creek, and Yakima River Canyon. During fiscal year 2000, two properties (680 acres) were acquired in the Yakima Canyon project and one property (76 acres) was purchased in the Chadwick Hill area. An offer was also made on a Cowiche property, but was not accepted. The District may acquire two properties in the Cowiche area during the upcoming fiscal year. The two tracts just acquired in Yakima Canyon include valuable riparian and spring areas, bighorn sheep habitat, a recreation trail, and scenic backdrop seen from the Canyon highway. The Chadwick Hill tract was a key purchase because of its location within the project area. The parcel includes the top and cliff face of Chadwick Hill along with ocean waterfront, wetland and forested hillside. The property is home to bald eagles and peregrine falcons and contains three high quality plant communities, including the best example of the Douglas-fir/Pacific madrone/American milk vetch community in the state.

For additional information about the Spokane BLM District land exchange program, contact realty specialists, as follows: Kevin Devitt of the Border Resource Area at 509/536-1200 or Bill Schurger of the Wenatchee Resource Area at 509-665-2100.

Other Realty Actions

During FY99, the Spokane District processed 27 rights-of-way. To date in FY 2000, 18 rights-of-way have been processed.

District realty staff also provided data as part of the following:

- Customer service and outreach in support of commercial activities to public utilities and private corporations.
- Land, resource, and title information to the public, tribes, private organizations, service organizations, and government agencies.

For additional information about rights-of-way, contact Jerry Spessard, a District Realty Specialist, at 509/536-1200.

Fire Program

During 1999, the Spokane BLM District had 12 wild fires that burned 1,051 acres of BLM-administered lands. Six prescribed fires were conducted on 370 acres.

As of early August 2000, the Spokane District had 11 wild fires that burned 2,790 acres of BLM-administered lands of a total burned acreage of 6,419 acres. The 192,000-acre fire on the Hanford Reservation burned 1,080 acres of BLM-administered land.

To date in 2000, only 11 acres have been treated with prescribed fire. This acreage is expected to be the total for the year due in part to the severity of the fire season and also a 30-day moratorium on prescribed fire during the spring when the time for burning was appropriate.

Volunteer Program

Volunteers contributed over 10,500 hours in FY-1999 in the Spokane District. Approximately 8,800 volunteer hours were contributed to wildlife, range, recreation, cultural resources, wilderness and wild horse and burros programs. Fences were constructed; several trails were built and maintained; litter was collected, visitor signs were placed to identify public lands; shrubs and grasses were planted to improve wildlife habitat, reduce erosion and retard the spread of noxious weeds; and cultural resources were identified, documented and tested. Field schools conducted by Eastern Washington University and Central Washington University contributed over 1,200 hours to cultural site inventory and testing. In addition, volunteers contributed approximately 500 hours in administrative and clerical support. The volunteer contributions represent a costs savings to the government of nearly \$114,000 in labor costs for implementation of important resource management projects.

Among the projects accomplished were wild horse adoptions, International Migratory Bird Day surveys, fisheries surveys, and completion of a technical report on the importance of micro-habitats for larval amphibians and fish in eastern Washington.. Local groups, including the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council (Council) and Spokane Preservation Advocates (SPA), contributed volunteer support to wildlife and cultural resource management projects. The Council assisted with nesting and wildlife surveys and guzzler maintenance. Members of SPA assisted in preparing historic artifacts and records from archaeological excavations conducted in recognition of Washington State Archaeology Month.

In addition, hosted workers contributed 560 hours toward road and recreation site maintenance, fence construction, and general shop maintenance. Hosted workers provided over \$11,000 in support and maintenance for public lands management. In sum, volunteers and hosted workers contributed more than 11,000 hours to District programs valued at more than \$125,000.

The Spokane District works with a dedicated cadre of volunteers who actively support the management of public lands in Washington state. Volunteers can participate in a number of programs including recreation, wildlife, forestry, wild horse and burros, and cultural resource management. The following projects are open to volunteers:

- Recreation site maintenance
- Campground hosts
- Fence and trails building
- Wildlife/plant monitoring
- Cultural resources survey and public excavation

For more information about the Volunteer Program, contact the BLM at (509) 536-1200 in Spokane or (509) 665-2100 in Wenatchee.

Environmental Register

Listed below are some activities under preparation or projected for the upcoming year or beyond in the near future. Updates and additional detail for the environmental register will be posted on the district's internet site as they become available.

Solid Leasable Actions

Midnite Mine GW 53 Well Rehabilitation

CE OR-130-00-05 dated January 27, 2000

Location: Spokane Indian Reservation, Stevens County, Washington.

Eagle Point Sand and Gravel Pit - Mine and Reclamation Plan for Wheeler Logging

EA OR-134-00-02 dated December 16, 1999. An appeal has been filed on this EA.

Location: Klickitat County, Washington

Mine and Reclamation Plan for Pacific Northwest Aggregate (Sand and Gravel operation) -

Location: Klickitat County, Washington

Forestry/Silviculture/Fire Programs

- Hunter Creek Forest Health Restoration Project
- Lane Mountain Forest Health Restoration Project
- Red Marble Forest Health Restoration Project
- South Huckleberry Forest Health Restoration Project (Border Resource Area, Stevens County)
- Precommercial thin approximately 150 acres in Black Canyon area
- Prescribe burn project on approximately 250 acres in Salmon Creek and Mineral Hill area (Wenatchee Resource Area). About 50 acres of this project will be ponderosa pine restoration treatments.
- Tree planting on about 46 acres in Entiat Valley, as part of post-fire rehabilitation.

- Prescribe burn at least 830 acres in the year 2001, in addition to two projects in conjunction with the Colville National Forest.

Botany

- Design an interpretive wildflower brochure for Twin Lakes area.
- Develop and enter into a cooperative management plan for Cowiche Canyon ACEC set aside for protection of *Tauschia hooveri*.
- Design three interpretive signs for two watchable wildflower sites in Douglas and Cowiche Canyon.

Grazing

- Bob's Lake Allotment Management Plan (formerly Whitaker AMP)(Border Resource Area)
- Lamp Allotment Management Plan (Border Resource Area)
- South Sprague Allotment Management Plan (Border Resource Area)
- Martinez Allotment Management Plan (Wenatchee Resource Area)

Lands & Realty

- Process the following pending right-of-way applications:
Power Lines (WAW 02465 in Border R.A.; WAOR 55771, WAOR 55228, WAOR 55089, and WAOR 54327, all in Wenatchee R.A.)
Road Use - (WAOR 52849 in Border R.A. and WAOR 54980 in Wenatchee RA)
Buried Fibre Optic -WAOR 55455 (District-wide)

Fisheries

Ringer Road Fish Habitat Improvement (Wenatchee Resource Area)

Recreation

- Review Patos Islands in the San Juan Islands for wilderness characteristics.
- Construct Watchable Wildlife viewing site in the Yakima River Canyon. Site will include interpretive sign and bench.
- Plan and construct a 12-mile non-motorized trail from the town of Odessa to BLM's Pacific Lake recreation site. Trail will be constructed along existing jeep roads and cattle paths.
- Plan two parking areas, one accessible trail, and one non-accessible trail and information signs for a geological/sagebrush-steppe viewing area near Odessa, in the Channeled Scablands.