

Chapter 1. Purpose and Need

1.1 Purpose and Need for the Plan

The purpose of this planning effort is to develop a Proposed Resource Management Plan (PRMP) that will provide overall management and long-term direction for the public lands and resources administered by the Surprise Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This PRMP is being developed in accord with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA). FLPMA requires BLM to “develop, maintain, and, when appropriate, revise land use plans which provide by tracts or areas for the use of the public lands” (43 USC 1712 [a]). Typically BLM uses a period of 15-20 years as a basis for impact analysis. A PRMP may be amended or revised at any time to reflect changed circumstances or new information.

The Surprise Field Office PRMP was developed in coordination with the Alturas and Eagle Lake Field Office Proposed Resource Management Plans to provide a consistent framework for managing public lands and resource uses in northeast California and northwest Nevada. A PRMP documents broad-scale land use plan decisions for all resources and resource uses. The PRMP determines which lands are open or available for certain uses, including any restrictions, and lands that are closed, or unavailable, to certain uses. The decisions derived from the plan will guide later site-specific implementing of management actions. This PRMP establishes the following:

- goals and objectives for resource management,
- measures needed to achieve goals and objectives, and
- parameters for using BLM-administered lands.

Current management direction for the Surprise Field Office is included in three land use plans and later amendments prepared in the 1970s and early 1980s: Tuledad-Home Camp Management Framework Plan (MFP), 1979; Cowhead-Massacre MFP, 1981, and Alturas RMP, 1984. New information, changed circumstances, and resource conditions since these plans were prepared require the revision of these existing plans into a single comprehensive PRMP.

Approval of a PRMP is considered a major federal action with the potential to significantly affect the quality of the human environment (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Section 1601.0-6). BLM has prepared this PRM and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ’s) regulations and BLM’s own procedures for implementing the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA). The FEIS portion of the document analyzes the effects of implementing the Preferred Alternative for the Eagle Lake Field office. The PRMP and FEIS are integrated into this document and are not separate reports.

1.2 Changed Circumstances

Population growth near Klamath Falls and Lakeview, Oregon, and the metropolitan areas of Reno, Nevada, and Redding, California, has increased the demand for use of public lands to support community needs and provide low-impact recreation. The Surprise Field Office has experienced a large increase in requests for land tenure decisions or adjustments and for land use permits and authorizations, including those for renewable energy development.

In addition to traditional consumptive uses, public interest has expanded in uses that emphasize aesthetic values such as open space and low-impact recreational opportunities.

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Changes in the type of recreation uses and the demand for diversified recreational opportunities can result in conflicts between uses and resource concerns that the old land use plans were not designed to address. We need to address these uses by how they affect ecosystem health; local communities; and state, regional, and tribal interests.

The number of plant and animal species recognized by California and Nevada as special-status species has increased. In addition, the decline of sage-grouse populations in the western United States has triggered BLM national, state, and local strategies with new guidance to address habitat requirements of the species. Vegetation communities continue to be impacted by both encroachment of western juniper into sagebrush-grasslands and from the invasion of annual exotic grasses and noxious weeds.

New protocol agreements between the BLM and the State Historic Preservation Offices of California and Nevada guide the protection, inventory, and conservation of cultural resources as they relate to other resources and land uses. Emphasis is being placed on finding and managing traditional cultural properties in accord with local tribes.

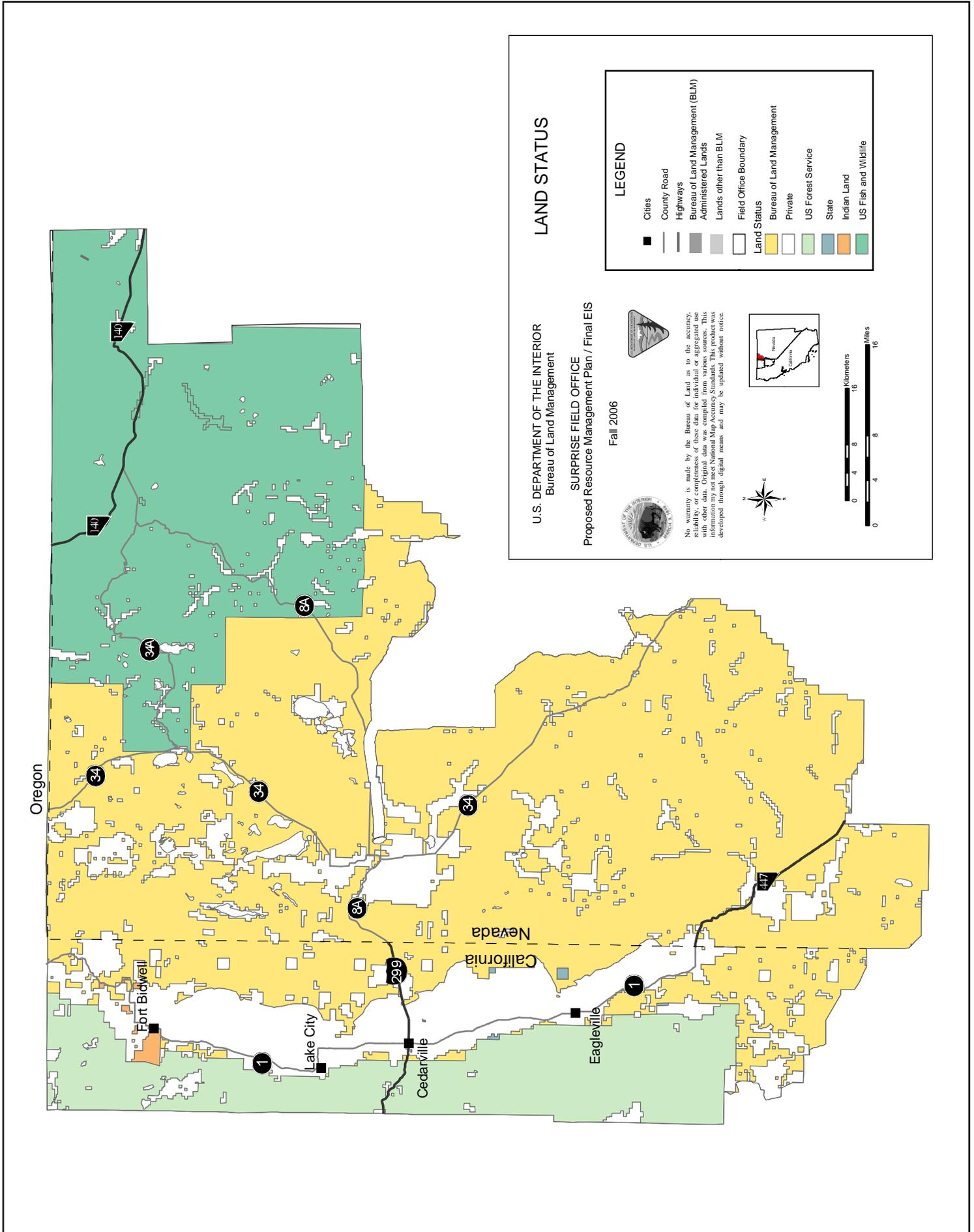
1.3 Planning Area and Map

This resource management plan discusses three distinct geographic areas: 1) the Surprise Field Office area boundary, 2) BLM-administered lands within this boundary that are the basis for planning decisions within this PRMP, and lands within the adjacent Black Rock-High Rock Natural Conservation Area for which the Surprise Field Office has certain management responsibilities.

The Surprise Field Office area encompasses 2,432,624 acres, not all of which is under BLM's management (Table 1.1-1, Figure 1.1-2). BLM administers minerals beneath lands owned by federal or nonfederal entities, such as a state or a private landowner. The planning and decision area for most resources and their uses in this PRMP consists of the 1,220,644 surface acres of public lands within the planning area under BLM jurisdiction. These lands vary from small, scattered parcels to large, contiguous blocks.

The Black Rock Desert–High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA) was established by act of Congress in December 2000 to conserve, protect, and enhance the resources of the historic Oregon and California Emigrant Trails and surrounding areas for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. The Winnemucca, Nevada, and Surprise, California, Field Offices jointly manage the 1.2 million-acre NCA planning area. Several livestock grazing allotments and four wild horse herd management areas within the Surprise planning area also cross into the NCA planning area. Although the Surprise BLM staff manages several resources and uses within the NCA, the *Black Rock-High Rock Resource Management Plan, 2004* addresses plan decisions for land uses within the NCA planning area. Previous decisions in the Black Rock-High Rock RMP are not incorporated into this planning document, and remain in force unchanged.

Figure 1.1-2 Land Status



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Table 1.1-1 Land Ownership in the Surprise Planning Area

Ownership	Acres
Bureau of Land Management	1,220,644
Indian land	4,253
Private	416,404
State	1,236
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	548,451
USDA Forest Service	241,636
Total	2,432,624

BLM-administered lands in the planning area are located in four counties: Lassen and Modoc Counties, California, and Humboldt and Washoe Counties, Nevada (Table 1.1-3, Map LANDS-1).

Table 1.1-3 BLM-Administered Lands in the Four-County Surprise Planning Area

County	Acres by County^a
Humboldt, NV	15,608
Lassen, CA	59,676
Modoc, CA	123,846
Washoe, NV	1,021,514
Total	1,220,644
^a All acreages are approximate.	

1.4 Planning and Scoping Process

Issues Raised during the Scoping Process

Issues related to resource management in the Surprise planning area were determined during the scoping process through public scoping meetings, field tours, socioeconomic workshops, and interactions with federal, state, tribal, and county collaborators. These issues, summarized below, were used to develop alternatives and are addressed in other sections of the resource management plan (e.g., effects on local economies).

BLM hosted six public scoping meetings in August and September 2003 to determine what issues are central to developing the three new RMPs for northeast California. A total of 205 people attended these meetings. Table 1.1-4 lists the dates and locations of these meetings. Four meetings were held within the planning areas. Other meetings were held in Redding, California, and Reno, Nevada, to ensure that BLM heard the concerns of user groups residing outside the planning area. BLM also conducted a field tour of the field office area in August 2003.

A community workshop was conducted to discuss economics and social values in December 2003. The workshop focused on presenting economic data and working with residents to arrive at a common understanding of the following:

- economic drivers of communities,

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- local social values related to places and natural resources,
- community goals and visions, and
- BLM’s role in the community.

Table 1.1-4 Public Scoping Meetings for the Surprise, Alturas, and Eagle Lake Planning Process

Date	Location
Scoping Meetings	
August 6, 2003	Cedarville, CA
August 13, 2003	Susanville, CA
August 20, 2003	Alturas, CA
August 27, 2003	Redding, CA
August 28, 2003	Reno, NV
September 10, 2003	Fall River Mills, CA
Field Tours	
August 9, 2003	Surprise Field Office
August 16, 2003	Eagle Lake Field Office
August 23, 2003	Alturas Field Office
Social and Economic Outreach Workshops	
November 20, 2003	Susanville, CA
December 2, 2003	Alturas, CA
December 3, 2003	Cedarville, CA

1.5 Issues Raised During the Scoping Process

Summarized here are the comments and issues submitted to date and the issues identified by the BLM that will be addressed in the planning process.

Issue Area 1: *How should upland ecosystems be managed?*

Vegetation has numerous values, both consumptive and non-consumptive, including wildlife habitat, wild horses, livestock grazing, forest products, and watershed protection. There is concern that resource use may be affecting the natural function and health of upland plant communities, soil productivity, and cultural resource site stability. The Northeastern California and Northwestern Nevada Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management adopted by the Secretary of the Interior in July 2000 will help frame decisions in the PRMPs. Management objectives are needed for upland vegetation, which will help determine allowable uses, treatment methods, and other activities.

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Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Current health, ecological status, and trends of the various ecosystems and plant communities, including those lands subject to juniper encroachment and other invasive species and noxious weeds.
- Current status and condition of habitat needed to support guilds or suites of species, including threatened and endangered and special status species, neo-tropical birds, and species disjoint from their population center or at the edge of their range.
- Options to restore and maintain healthy native plant communities.
- A mix of consumptive and non-consumptive uses.
- Options to maintain or improve soil productivity and site stability.
- Potential vegetative treatments, including seeding, grazing, mechanical, herbicides, biomass harvesting, fuel wood harvesting, and prescribed burning.
- Appropriate management of wild horses and burros.
- Policies regarding use of toxic substances, including pesticides.
- Management of species with cultural significance.

Issue Area 2: *How will forestry issues be managed, and how will forest resources be utilized?*

Forests have numerous values, both consumptive and non-consumptive. There is concern that resource use may be affecting the natural function and health of forest ecosystems and ecosystem components. Management objectives, which will help determine allowable uses, treatment methods, and other activities, are needed for forests.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Managing the resources to furnish a supply of forest products.
- Supporting traditional forestry uses.
- Maintaining healthy forests.
- Maintaining/enhancing habitat value/function of forests.
- Invasive and native juniper management.

Issue Area 3: *How will water resources be managed and utilized?*

Water quality and quantity in a region have far-reaching impacts on watershed health, ecosystem health, and the pursuit of various land or resource uses. There is concern that resource use, both within and outside of BLM's jurisdiction, may be affecting the quality and quantity of water in the area.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Protecting water quality and quantity.
- Making adequate water supplies available for domestic and commercial uses.
- Protecting existing water rights, and acquiring additional water rights.
- Use of water for power plant usage.

Issue Area 4: *How will visual resources be managed and preserved?*

Visual resources have a large impact on people utilizing land for recreation. There is concern that resource use may be affecting the quality of visual resources in the area.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Preserve visual nature of area while providing protection for the objects within the area and their identified uses.
- Reconcile uses (such as mining) with their potential visual impacts.
- Visual impact of the removal of junipers.
- Visual impact of man-made intrusions, including energy projects.

Issue Area 5: *How should riparian areas and wetlands be managed?*

Riparian and wetland vegetation provides the foundation for many resource uses on public lands, including habitat for wildlife and forage for domestic animals. Healthy riparian areas stabilize the soil, store water during spring, and release it throughout the year, prevent erosion, and improve water quality. There is a concern that resource uses may be affecting the natural function and health of riparian areas and wetlands.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Current health, ecologic status and trend of riparian/wetland plant communities.
- Current status of riparian and aquatic systems relative to habitat quality for and population status of fish, wildlife, plants, and invertebrates.
- Options to maintain or improve soil productivity, and soil and cultural resource site stability.
- Restoration and rehabilitation of riparian areas to proper functioning condition.
- Options to meet BLM standards and to promote hydrologic recovery including:
 - Meeting State numeric, narrative, and non-degradation standards
 - Meeting needs of aquatic assemblage of native species
 - Meeting needs of other beneficial uses

Issue Area 6: *How will wildland fire and prescribed fire be managed and utilized?*

Wildland fire is recognized as having a vital role in the health of ecosystems in the planning area. It can also have significant impacts on the communities, economies, and infrastructures.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Fire history in the area, and its effect and anticipated fire trends.
- The role of fire in upland and riparian ecosystems.
- Appropriate fire management response.
- Fuels management and the use of prescribed fire.
- Wildland-urban interface considerations and the National Fire Plan.
- Using fire to restore natural ecological systems to their proper functioning conditions.

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- Management of areas after fires (restoration).

Issue Area 7: *How should vehicular access and travel be managed on public lands?*

Currently, public lands in the area are generally accessible by motorized vehicles to agency personnel for resource management, to commercial enterprise for permitted use or extraction of public resources, and to the general public for recreation and enjoyment of public lands. There is a need to balance access to public lands with resource management and protection.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Areas where off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, season of use, or the existing transportation system is in conflict with other goals and objectives.
- Appropriate area designations of open, closed, or limited OHV use and selection of routes of travel to meet goals and objectives.
- The extent and condition of existing roads and ways, including an analysis of road and trail expansion, both sanctioned and unsanctioned, in the recent past.
- Expansion, restriction, or reclamation of existing roads and trails.
- Implementation of a “closed unless posted open” policy for OHV access.
- Assessment of safety and stability of existing roads and trails.
- Acquisition of legal access to promote resource management and public use.
- Clear delineation of adopted roads and trails network and limitations or restrictions on use.
- Impacts from OHV activity on other resources.
 - Sensitive resources (e.g., water, cultural resources, sensitive plants or habitats),
 - Property,
 - Maintenance costs,
 - Health and safety.

Issue Area 8: *How should public lands be managed to sustain cultural resources and traditional cultural properties of Native American cultures?*

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Tribal consultation and input.
- Inventories of archaeological and cultural resources.
- Impacts to sites from land uses, including wild horses.
- Archaeological looting.
- Development of a Tribal consultation protocol.
- Management of traditional cultural properties and ethnographic sites, including rock art/petroglyph and other types of sites.
- Resource extraction.
- Future monitoring and partnerships.

Issue Area 9: *How should the public lands be managed to meet the needs of local communities?*

The small communities which are associated with public lands in this area depend on public land resources for economic and social benefits.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Economic and social benefits to local and regional communities that are derived from the public lands.
- Management decisions supporting local/regional economies.
- Complement private uses rather than competing with private enterprises (e.g., camping).
- Benefits of biomass energy to community.
- The importance of these benefits to local and regional economies.
- Lifestyle and quality of life of local communities.
- Dependency of private ranch land on public land grazing and impacts from private land conversion.

Issue Area 10: *How will grazing and rangelands be managed?*

Livestock and wild grazing animals have a large impact on the habitat that they occupy. There is concern that current grazing and range practices may be affecting the health and appearance of ecosystems in the area.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Providing adequate forage in planning area lands to support existing permit levels.
- Furnishing adequate infrastructure to support domestic animal grazing.
- Minimize increase of invasive, undesirable species, such as juniper.
- Management of rangeland resources to ensure healthy and ecologically sustainable communities, and to provide appropriate habitat elements for wildlife species.
- Current conditions and management situations in Herd Management Areas.
- Current Appropriate Management Levels for Herd Management Areas.
- Management of neighboring non-isolated Herd Management Areas as herd complexes.

Issue Area 11: *What lands will be identified for retention, exchange, disposal, and acquisition?*

Scattered tracts of public lands present throughout the area often complicate management or limit access or opportunity for enjoyment by the public. Opportunity exists to increase public benefits by disposing of some public lands through sale or exchange, or to acquire offered lands in areas which would enhance public enjoyment and facilitate resource management.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Public lands that are central or not central to BLM's mission or RMP goals and objectives
- Isolated parcels of BLM lands and private in-holdings, especially in-holdings in WSAs.
- Effective management of isolated parcels.
- Existing rights-of-way and utility corridors.

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- Extending/continuing trails from other areas and states, including historic trails such as the Applegate, Lassen, and Noble emigrant trails.

Issue Area 12: *What lands are available for energy and mineral development?*

Potential for and interest in the development of renewable and non-renewable energy occurs across the planning area. Extraction of a variety of mineral materials occurs on public lands in the area and constitutes an important economic use of public land resources. Interest in decorative rock collection has also increased. Energy and mineral development may not be appropriate for all lands, such as those having special resource values.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- BLM's potential participation in the licensing process for power plants on adjacent lands that may impact BLM lands.
- Potential for renewable energy, such as wind, geothermal, and biomass.
- Compatibility of energy and mineral development with other resource uses, goals, and objectives.
- Establishment of utility corridors.
- Migratory bird routes.
- Impacts of mining on ground and surface waters.
- Potential impacts of decommissioning hydroelectric facilities.
- Timing of permits for renewable energy sources to coordinate with ongoing resource uses.
- Using woodlands as sources of biomass.
- Reclamation issues.
- Dismantling unused poles to reduce avian roosting/resting sites.

Issue Area 13: *How will recreation opportunities be managed?*

With the rapid population growth of urban areas in northeastern California and northwestern Nevada, the demand for recreation opportunities has increased substantially in recent years. In addition, a significant shift in the demographics of these urban areas, as well as in some of the more rural small communities, has noticeably changed the types of recreation experience traditionally sought on public lands.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Current extent and nature of demand for recreational opportunities in the analysis area.
- Compatibility with adjacent land uses and resources.
- Impact of OHVs and other recreation uses on hunting, grazing, water quality, riparian ecosystem health, scenic quality, wilderness characteristics, and wildlife, as well as other resources and land uses.
- Management of trails to address OHVs, hiking, and horse riding.
- Management of user fees - Where will they be required? How will the fees be used?
- Master trail plan updates, integrations, extensions, etc.
- Integration of commercial recreation operations and opportunities with BLM resources.

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- Changing demands for recreation on public lands
 - Hang gliding.
 - Additional water sources.
 - Primitive camping.
 - Scenic driving.
 - Rock hounding.
 - Accessible to disabled populations.

Issue Area 14: *How will fish, wildlife, and special status species be managed?*

Lands in the planning area are habitat for a range of fish, wildlife, and special status species. The habitat needs for healthy populations will be integrated into management decisions in the plan. Hunting and fishing activities are popular throughout the planning area as well and must be considered

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Habitat needs of special status species, including species listed as threatened or endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Habitat needs of fish and wildlife in the planning area.
- Importance of habitats on BLM lands to overall populations.
- Management of domestic livestock while considering wildlife needs.
- Implementation of population monitoring plans.
- State agency populations of interest.
- Demand for hunting and fishing.
- Interest in reintroduction of bighorn sheep.
- Sage-grouse conservation strategies.

Issue Area 15: *How should special values and special management areas be managed?*

Existing special management areas, including Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and Wild and Scenic Rivers require special management to protect particular values and/or resources. New areas may require special management, including free-flowing rivers and streams; unique vegetation types; habitats for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; cultural resources and unique geologic resources.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Resources and values to be managed.
- Manageability of the areas.
- Current and potential land uses.
- Existing special management area effectiveness and appropriateness.
- Travel and OHV usage in WSAs.
- Appropriate new designations.

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- Visitor educational opportunities.
- Review Wild and Scenic status of all streams and rivers.

Issue Area 16: *How will air quality be managed?*

Air quality is a region with far-reaching impacts on watershed health, ecosystem health, and the pursuit of various land or resource uses. There is concern that resource use, both within and outside of BLM's jurisdiction, may be affecting the quality of air in the area.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Maintenance of appropriate air quality.
- Coordination with neighboring power plants regarding emission levels and time periods.
- Assessment of impacts from fire management emissions.

Issue Area 17: *How will paleontological resources be protected and managed?*

There is concern that resource use, both within and outside of BLM's jurisdiction, may be affecting the integrity of paleontological resources in the area. Management objectives are needed.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Instatement of a paleontological resource protection policy.
- Management of scientific study so that it won't adversely impact paleontological resources.
- Management of recreation so that it won't adversely impact paleontological resources.
- Potential for paleontology ACECs.
- Establishment of paleontology collection areas.

Issue Area 18: *How will the PRMP planning process be organized?*

The planning process for the PRMP needs to provide for participation from a number of different stakeholders, and will be organized to maximize participation and incorporate as much input as possible. Objectives will help BLM staff organize the planning process efficiently.

Specific concerns that BLM will consider:

- Integration of BLM management with other agency and community plans.
- Making the process open to the public to the greatest extent possible.
- Completing the process in a manner fully compliant with law and regulations.
- Format the EIS to be easily integrated with future planning processes and documents in the region.
- Involvement of other major federal land management agencies, as necessary.
- Provide consistency in management between the three field offices and other BLM offices in Nevada, Oregon, and California.
- Involvement of partners/cooperating agencies in the planning process.
- Challenges associated with having a dispersed, rural public.
- Coordinate these planning documents with other regional land use plans, conservation plans, conservation strategies, and the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health in Northeastern California and Northwestern Nevada.

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- Create a framework for implementing policies, rather than identify specific locations for implementation or management activities.
- Education/outreach as a priority.
- Re-examination of the Management Framework Plans for the three areas to ascertain what succeeded and what failed within the plans - what goals have been achieved, what decisions have been actualized, etc.

1.6 Issues Considered but Not Further Addressed

Issues beyond the scope of the Surprise planning process or BLM's jurisdiction were also raised during the scoping process. Table 1.1-5 summarizes these concerns and explains why they were considered outside the scope of the PRMP.

Table 1.1-5 Issues Beyond the Scope of the Surprise Proposed Resource Management Plan

Issue Raised during Public Scoping	Reason That Issue Is beyond the Scope of the Surprise Planning Process
Ticketing and fines or penalties by BLM for those not using land properly	BLM enforces existing laws, regulations, and decisions to the best of its ability, given law enforcement and budgetary constraints. The level of fines for citations is not a decision a PRMP can make.
More funding by BLM to support law enforcement of off-highway vehicle use	Funding levels are determined by the President and Congress, not by a PRMP. This comment has been forwarded to management for consideration in developing future budgets.
Use of BLM lands for small hydroelectric facilities for private home use	Regional water quality control boards have jurisdiction over instream uses. Therefore, a PRMP does not address this issue.
Mitigation for hazards by the Army before BLM acquires land	Specific land acquisitions would require site-specific environmental review before completion. This issue would be addressed for a specific acquisition.
Involvement of local fire districts in BLM's fire training	BLM coordinates many training opportunities for local fire districts, including classes at Lassen Community College, refresher courses, and periodic joint training sessions with local volunteers.
Public involvement in plan implementation	Near the completion of the PRMP, BLM will involve the public in developing an implementation strategy for the plans. This strategy will include volunteer and other public participation opportunities.
Use of fees from extraction activities to fund plan implementation	Funds gathered as part of the sale or lease of minerals and timber are deposited into the United States Treasury. Distributing these Treasury funds is the authority of Congress. BLM will propose funding from Congress for plan implementation when the plan is complete, but the PRMP does not discuss the use of funds.

1.7 Planning Criteria and Legislative Constraints

BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610) require preparing planning criteria to guide development of all PRMPs. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide the development of the plan. The criteria determine how the planning team develops alternatives and ultimately selects a Preferred Alternative. These criteria ensure that plans address defined issues and that BLM avoids unneeded data collection and analysis. Planning criteria are based on the following: 1) standards prescribed by laws and regulations; 2) agency guidance; 3) the results of consultation and coordination with the public; other federal, state, and local agencies and governmental entities; and Native American Indian tribes; and 4) analysis of information pertinent to the planning area. Planning criteria may change as the planning process proceeds.

The planning criteria for the Surprise PRMP that were developed and refined through scoping are as follows. BLM will:

- Develop the PRMP in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA); National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); BLM planning regulations; and all other laws, regulations, executive orders, and policies.
- Establish economic and social baselines and consequences in coordination with local governments.
- Initiate government-to-government consultation with federally recognized tribes on federal land management agency obligations under tribal treaties and laws or executive orders relating to Native American reserved rights, religious freedoms, and traditional use areas.
- Designate areas where off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is allowed and prohibited and select specific routes in the planning process.
- Develop the PRMP that address wild and scenic river eligibility and suitability.
- Store all new data collected and its explanatory metadata in a data base. All metadata will meet the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) standards.
- Incorporate the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management into the PRMP.
- Coordinate resource inventory, planning, and management with other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Native American tribes to the extent consistent with administering the public lands.
- Provide opportunities for public involvement, including early notice and other opportunities for citizens, interested groups, and others (including Native American tribes) to participate and comment on the plan.
- Closely coordinate the planning effort with national and state fire management planning to provide needed program direction.
- Closely coordinate the planning effort with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Consultation Agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management for the Northeastern California Resource Management Plans.

The alternatives in this PRMP were developed according to the purpose and need; to address issues described above; to meet legal mandates, such as the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act; to satisfy many regulatory constraints; to support national policy, including BLM Strategic Plan goals; and to follow State Director guidance (see 43 CFR 1610.0-4[b]). A detailed list of legal and regulatory guidance is provided in Appendix A.

1.8 Collaboration

BLM planning is community-based, where interested groups and people—often with varied or opposing interests—work together to devise solutions with broad public support for managing BLM-administered lands. Cooperating local, state, tribal, and federal agencies have been part of the planning team for the PRMP to the fullest extent possible. During plan implementation, BLM will continue partnerships with these public and local, state, and tribal governments and agencies to select high priority projects and to resolve emerging issues.

The Council of Environmental Quality defines a cooperating agency as any agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise for proposals covered by National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CFR 1501.6). Any federal, state, or local government jurisdiction with such qualifications may become a cooperating agency by agreement with the lead agency. The following are formal cooperating agencies for this PRMP:

- Lassen and Modoc Counties, California;
- Washoe County, Nevada;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- California Department of Fish and Game;
- Nevada Department of Wildlife; and
- Nevada and California State Historic Preservation Offices.

The Northeast California Resource Advisory Council (RAC) contributed issues and reviewed goals, objectives, and management alternatives. Other groups that participated in the planning process include Humboldt County, Nevada; Fort Bidwell Community Council; and Modoc-Washoe Experimental Stewardship Group.

1.9 Public Comment Process

The Draft Surprise Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published in April 2006. BLM distributed approximately 250 copies of the Draft Surprise RMP. The public had 90 days, until July 27, 2006, to submit comments on the Draft EIS. During this period the BLM held seven public comment meetings, as follows:

Public Comment Meetings	
Date	Location
May 30, 2006	Susanville, CA
May 31, 2006	Alturas, CA
June 1, 2006	Cedarville, CA
June 12, 2006	Reno, NV Redding, CA
June 13, 2006	Fall River Mills, CA
June 12, 2006	Redding, CA
June 15, 2006	Dorris, CA

The public comment period generated 36 comment letters from individuals and groups. The number of comments that BLM analyzed and responded to was approximately 547. These comments and BLM's respond to them are summarized in Appendix K of this document.

1.10 Coordination and Consistency with Other Plans

Planning decisions in the Surprise PRMP will be compatible with existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal, and federal agencies to the extent practical, consistent with federal law and regulations (Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Section 202(c)(9)). BLM-administered lands in the planning area are located in two states and four counties. The lands also share boundaries with tribal lands. BLM manages land near or contiguous with Modoc National Forest and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).

BLM would consult with the military and jointly analyze any impacts to the military mission including: Military Operating Areas (MOAs), Military Training Routes (MTRs), air space, coastal, and ground access, when making any land use decisions on BLM property. This would be done at the earliest possible time to minimize impacts to current and future military mission uses. Examples of land uses that could impact the military mission include, but are not limited to: habitat improvement projects, environmental restoration projects, public utility development (e.g., erection of cell phone towers, electrical transmission lines, wind energy towers and solar array towers), large mining developments, recreational development (e.g., campgrounds, visitor centers), and land exchanges for the purpose of facilitating the preceding land uses.

Cooperating agencies helped BLM develop of a full range of alternatives, and the preferred alternative, which are consistent with management goals on lands adjoining BLM lands. For example, working with local county administrators helped BLM develop water resource alternatives that are compatible with the county general plans. USFWS, the Nevada Department of Wildlife, and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) worked in cooperation with BLM to help develop sound alternatives for wildlife habitats. Ongoing collaboration and consultation with tribal representatives ensure that the range of alternatives responds to tribal concerns. The following is a list of key plans that BLM staff has consulted in developing the RMP:

- Lassen County General Plan
- Comprehensive Land Use and Management Plan for the Federally and State Managed Lands in Modoc County
- Master Plan of Washoe County
- Humboldt County General Plan
- Modoc National Forest Plan
- Surprise Valley Chamber of Commerce Plans
- National Historic Trails Plan

Decisions in the PRMP are also compatible with decisions in land use plans for BLM-administered lands adjoining the planning area. These plans include recently completed RMPs for the Lakeview Field Office in Oregon and the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA) in Nevada.

Lakeview Resource Management Plan

The Lakeview RMP recommended to the California State Director, BLM that the Surprise PRMP designate one area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) and one wild and scenic river (WSR) segment that extend into the Surprise Field Office area. The Surprise PRMP proposes similar designations for this ACEC and the WSR, as agreed to in a memorandum of understanding with the BLM Lakeview Field Office.

Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area RMP

Portions of the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails NCA fall within the boundaries of the Surprise Field Office area. Because the BLM Nevada State Director approved a separate RMP for this NCA in July 2004, the Surprise PRMP will not address the NCA. Management of BLM-administered lands bordering the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails NCA will be compatible with the NCA RMP.

1.11 Changes between Draft RMP/EIS and PRMP/FEIS

The Draft Surprise RMP/EIS was published in April 2006. The public had 90 days, until July 27, 2006, to submit comments on the Draft EIS. All comments received were seriously considered, and many were used to assist in making changes or clarifications to the RMP. Changes made to the Draft RMP/EIS include the following:

- Changes to the Draft EIS Preferred Alternative.
- Clarifications, corrections, supplemental analysis, and additional information added to various chapters of the PRMP/FEIS.
- One new map was created and is included with this document. These changes are listed in Chapter 1 under changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and the PRMP/FEIS.

Changes to the Preferred Alternative

Based on the comments received from the public, cooperating agencies, and from internal discussions, Table 1.11-1 summarizes the substantive changes made to the Preferred Alternative, between the Draft RMP/EIS and the PRMP/FEIS. These are arranged by topic, and followed by bulleted descriptions of the changes made.

Table 1.11-1 Substantive Changes Made to the Preferred Alternative

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

- Clarification to the definition and management of cultural resource management areas.
- Additional text on North Hays CRMP actions, and other land acquisitions related to cultural resources.

Energy & Minerals

- Correction to leasable minerals: 980,442 acres are open; 6,277 acres are ‘no surface occupancy’.
- Corrections to mineral restrictions within ACECs: Bitner ACEC is ‘Open’ to locatable and saleable; ‘no surface occupancy’ for leasables. Massacre ACEC is within WSA, hence, ‘Closed’ to leasable and saleable; ‘Open’ to locatable with restrictions as per Wilderness IMP.
- Text added discussing wind energy development and design, in accordance with the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States, 2005.

Fire Management

- Clarification of the relationship between NorCal Fire Management Plan and Surprise PRMP decisions.
- Addition of Section 2.4.6 Fire Rehabilitation and Stabilization.
- Text added to state “full suppression AMR will be used in sage-grouse R-O habitat”.

Fuels Management

- Additional text describing how important wildlife habitats will be protected during fuels management projects, particularly low sagebrush, annual grass, sage-grouse and pygmy rabbit habitats.

Rights-of-Way/Utilities

- Designation of the potential California-Nevada (east-west) utility corridor as a right of way corridor.
- Clarification that all WSAs and the Bitner ACEC would be designated as right-of-way exclusion zones. In addition, all greater sage-grouse habitat and other species critical habitat would be designated as ROW exclusion zones. The Massacre Rim and Rahilly Gravelly ACECs would be right-of-way avoidance areas.

Livestock Grazing

- Language added to assure consistency between livestock grazing and the Vya, Massacre, and Buffalo-Skedaddle Sage-grouse Conservation Strategies.
- Change of language related to domestic sheep grazing near bighorn sheep habitat, in accordance with BLM’s “Guidelines for Managing Domestic Sheep and Goats in Wild Sheep Habitats” (BLM 1998).

Special Area Designations

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

- Corrections to energy and mineral restrictions within the Massacre and Bitner ACECs.

Wild & Scenic Rivers (WSR)

- Addition of Appendix H: Wild and Scenic River Inventory (Streams evaluated for eligibility).

Chapter 1: PURPOSE AND NEED

Travel Management

- Additional language to clarify the maintenance of existing private access rights in relationship to proposed route closures.
- Corrections to the Travel Route Inventory database and map.
- Language added to allow for off-road retrieval of big game during hunting season (except in WSAs).

Wild Horses and Burros

- Changes to glossary terms and definitions.

Wildlife and Fisheries

Federally Listed Species

- Deletion of language on Cowhead Lake tui chub as a 'listed' species, as per USFWS's withdrawal of the proposed listing.

Ungulates

- Additional information on bitterbrush as a very important browse species for mule deer and pronghorn antelope.
- Change of language related to domestic sheep grazing near bighorn sheep habitat, in accordance with BLM's "Guidelines for Managing Domestic Sheep and Goats in Wild Sheep Habitats" (BLM 1998).

Sagebrush Ecosystems and Sagebrush Obligate Species

- Clarification of text in how Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategies will be implemented to promote sage-grouse habitat.
- Additional impact analysis of sage-grouse habitat.
- Additional text describing how important sage-grouse habitats will be protected during fuels management projects.