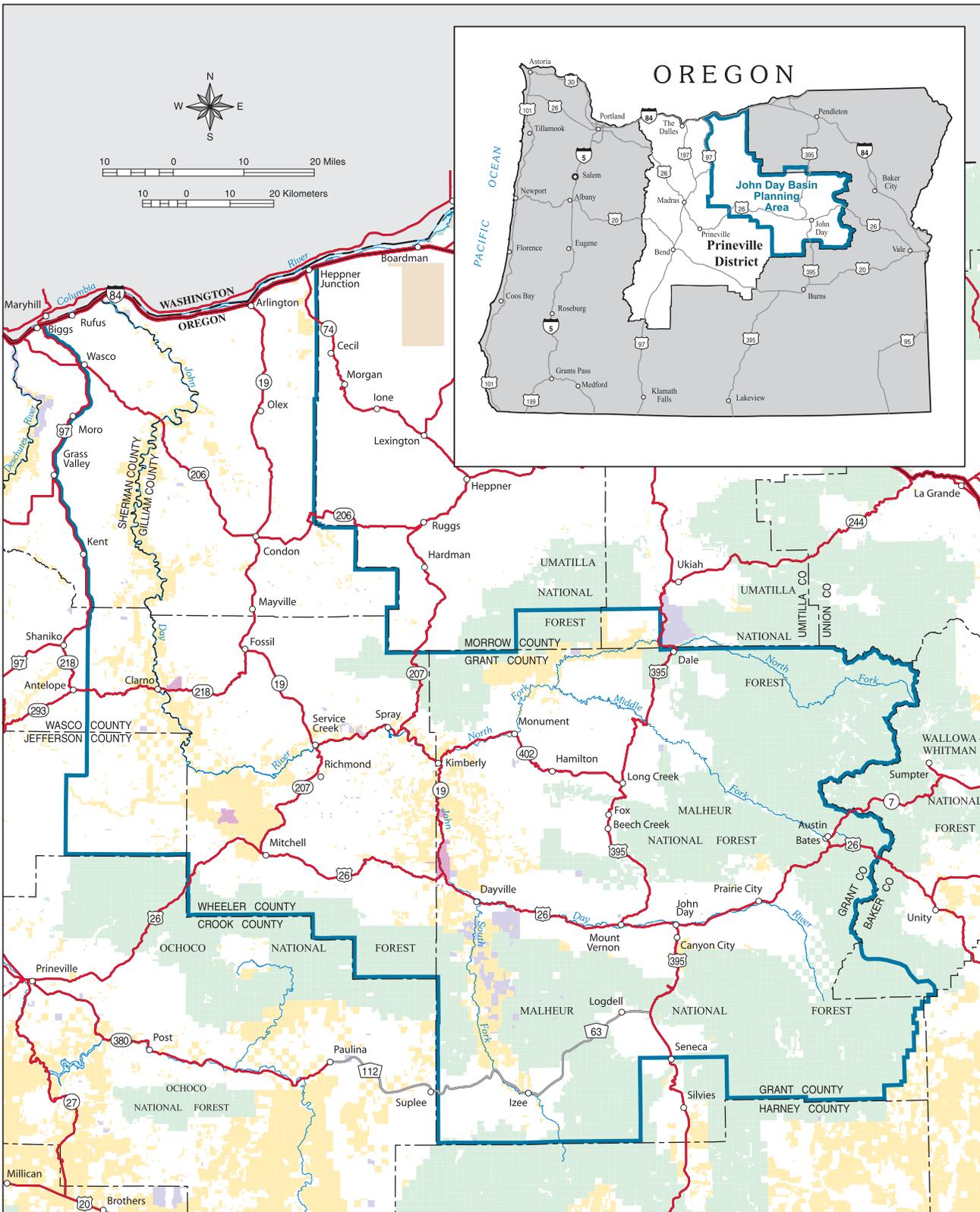

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND NEED



LEGEND

- Planning Area Boundary
- Interstate Highway
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- County Road

Administered Land

- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
- Other Federal
- State
- Private or Other

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**PRINEVILLE DISTRICT
John Day Basin
Resource Management Plan**

2006

Map 1: John Day Basin Resource Management Plan

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INTRODUCTION

This Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) is the first step in revising and consolidating three Resource Management Plans that provide guidance for managing Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands within the John Day Basin: The Two Rivers Resource Management Plan (RMP) (1986) addresses management of BLM lands in the western portion of the Planning area. The John Day RMP (1985) addresses management of BLM lands in most of the eastern portion of the planning area, and the Baker RMP (1989) addresses management of BLM lands within small portions Morrow and Umatilla Counties that are within the planning area.

The new John Day Basin RMP will establish broad-scale desired conditions, goals, objectives and standards and guidelines for the management of BLM lands and resources within the planning area.

PURPOSE OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT SITUATION

The purpose of the AMS is threefold:

1. To summarize the existing conditions, trends, and management guidance for a specified “planning area,”
2. To explain the need for change by identifying preliminary issues; and to identify management opportunities, and
3. The AMS is required to provide an initial description of the biological, physical, social and economic components of the environment that will be affected by the decisions made in an RMP.

The AMS is the foundation for subsequent steps in the planning process, such as the design of alternatives and analysis of environmental consequences (43 CFR 1610.4-4) which will be documented in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements that accompany Draft and Proposed Resource Management Plans. The following briefly outlines the planning process.

Planning Process

➤ **Prepare Scoping Report and AMS**

- ✦ Refine Issue descriptions and characterize management situation with the AMS
- ✦ Develop planning criteria and identify planning opportunities

➤ **Prepare Draft EIS and RMP**

- ✦ Refine issues, alternatives, and impact analysis input
- ✦ 90 Day comment period

➤ **Prepare Final EIS and Proposed RMP**

- ✦ Develop an implementation and monitoring plan on preferred alternative
- ✦ Provide 30 day protest period and 60 day Governor’s Review

➤ **Prepare ROD and Approved RMP**

- ✦ Identify selected alternative and respond to public comments and protests
- ✦ Implement, monitor and evaluate

OREGON LAND EXCHANGE ACT OF 2000

In the year 2000, Congress passed the Oregon Land Exchange Act. In exchange for public lands disposed of by this Act, the BLM acquired approximately 44,000 acres near the North Fork of the John Day River (see Map 2) . The Act directs management of these lands:

“Lands acquired...within the North Fork of the John Day subwatershed shall be administered in accordance with section 205(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, but shall be managed primarily for the protection of native fish and wildlife habitat, and for public recreation.”

The Act also provides the foundation for future management decisions beyond the primary criteria:

“The Secretary may permit other authorized uses within the subwatershed if the Secretary determines, through the appropriate land use planning process, that such uses are consistent with, and do not diminish these management purposes.”

NEED FOR A NEW RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Central Oregon Resource Area, the BLM unit responsible for managing BLM lands within the planning area, must refer to three different management plans, each of which has been amended by one or more plan amendments, for direction. The complexity of this situation, in addition to changes in land uses, the acquisition of approximately 44,000 acres of land near the North Fork John Day River not covered by a resource management plan, and new information provided by the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) provides the impetus to complete a new, consolidated Resource Management Plan (RMP) for this area.

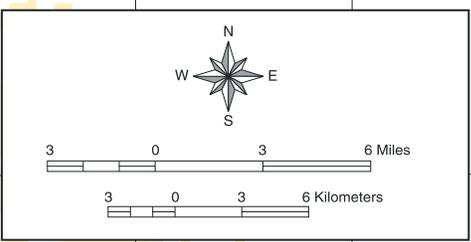
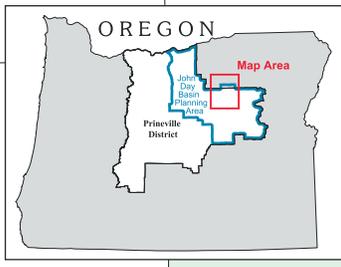
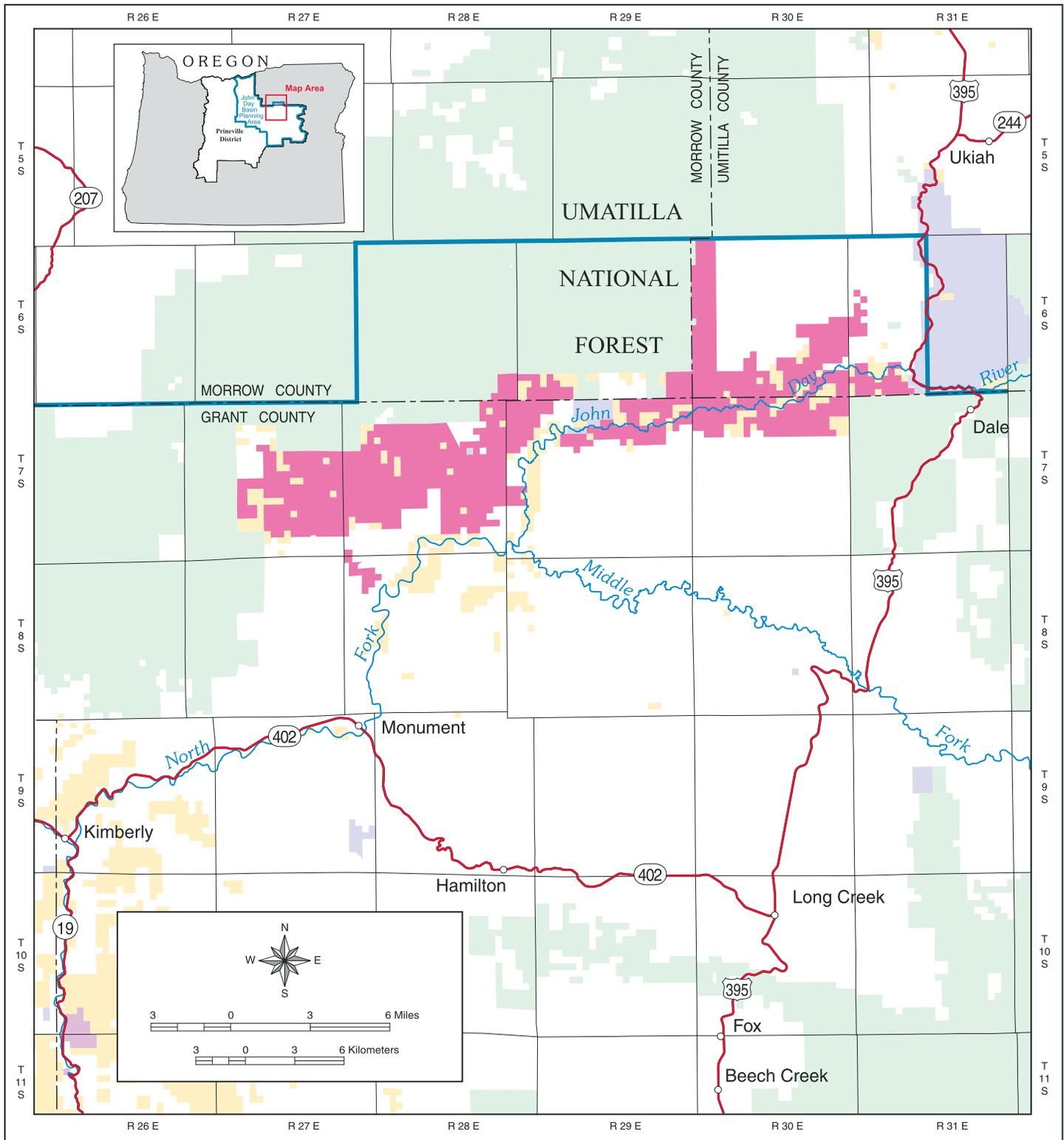
PURPOSE

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the BLM to develop and revise the RMPs that guide activities on BLM managed lands. A RMP is a set of comprehensive, long-range decisions concerning the use and management of resources administered by the BLM which typically accomplishes two objectives:

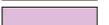
1. Provides an overview of needs, objectives and goals for managing BLM lands for multiple uses;
2. Resolve multiple-use conflicts.

Taking into account the present needs in the basin, the purpose of the current RMP effort is three-fold:

1. Address all aspects of federal land management for the acquired lands in the North Fork John Day River area;
2. Address problems or concerns that have occurred since the completion of the previous RMPs, where these plans do not provide adequate guidance;
3. Address problems or concerns where the guidance in the existing RMPs is insufficient or inadequate in light of current needs or demands.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | BLM Land Prior to Act |  | Planning Area Boundary |
|  | BLM Lands-Acquisition Authorized by Oregon Land Exchange Act of 2000 |  | Administered Land |
| | |  | Forest Service |
| | |  | John Day Fossil Beds National Monument |
| | |  | State |
| | |  | Private or Other |

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**PRINEVILLE DISTRICT
John Day Basin
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**Map 2: North Fork John Day Acquired Lands
Oregon Land Exchange Act 2000**

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The RMP developed as a result of this process will amend and revise portions of the existing RMPs, and serve to describe management guidance for the acquired lands in the North Fork John Day River area. The legislative mandates and BLM policy documents described in Chapter 2 provide limits and direction for responding to the issues described later in this chapter.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

This resource management planning effort will address lands primarily within the John Day River Basin that are managed by the Central Oregon Resource Area (CORA) of the Prineville District BLM. In addition lands within the Deschutes River Basin that lie within the boundaries of the northern portion of the Central Oregon Resource Area and lands that are located within the John Day Basin but fall within the Baker Resource Area of the Vale District will be included within the planning process. Finally the planning area includes an area covered by the present John Day RMP that is south of the John Day River in the Silvies and Malheur River Drainages. There are only three parcels of BLM land, totaling about 400 acres, in this last area. The planning area (Map 1) includes over 450 thousand acres of BLM managed lands within several Oregon counties – Grant, Wheeler, Gilliam, Wasco, Sherman, Umatilla, Jefferson and Morrow. The boundary of the planning area also includes portions of Baker and Malheur counties but there are no BLM lands that are both within these counties and in the planning area.

For purposes of display of detailed map information and general location references in the text of this document, the BLM lands within the planning area can be grouped into several geographical areas. These areas include:

1. Lower John Day River – these lands primarily in the canyon but also include uplands north of Clarno, including lands as far away as Horn Butte.
2. Sutton Mountain/Bridge Creek – the lands upstream of Clarno to Service Creek, including the Bridge Creek, Bear Creek and Sutton Mountain areas. The south western portion of this area is outside of the John Day Basin.
3. Rudio Mountain/Johnson Heights – the area upstream of Service Creek to Dayville, including the Rudio Mountain, Squaw Creek and Johnson Heights areas.
4. South Fork John Day River – the area from Dayville and along the South Fork of the John Day River, Cottonwood, Birch and Rock Creeks, south to the Harney County and east and north of the Crook County line.
5. Upper Mainstem – the lands in the Upper John Day Valley including Little Canyon Mountain, Dixie and Standard Creeks. Three BLM parcels within the planning area are to the south of the John Day Basin in the Silvies River watershed.
6. North Fork John Day River – the lands upstream of Monument, along the North Fork of the John Day River to Camas Creek, and north of Highway 402.

KEY FINDINGS

The AMS details several findings that are summarized in the following discussion. These findings describe information or concerns identified prior to and during the development of the AMS. Many of these findings are concerns expressed by the public or identified by BLM. As with concerns identified by the public during the scoping process these may be considered “significant planning issues” if they require changes in RMP guidance and there is a lack of consensus concerning how to address the problems.

HYDROLOGY

Many streams are lacking the physical processes necessary to achieve proper functioning condition and will not reach desired conditions without changes in management. Juniper stands in densities and locations outside of the range of historic variability have altered hydrologic processes in the planning area.

Some rivers and streams within the planning area have been listed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality as water quality limited. The existing resource management plans do not provide the framework for fostering cooperative efforts to address problems identified in water quality limited streams.

FOREST RESOURCES

Due to high stem densities and high basal areas the overall health of forest stands is declining. Trees have become stressed and are succumbing to insects and diseases. Insect populations have reached excessive populations in scattered stands across the planning area.

FIRE AND FUELS

A Fire Regimes and Condition Class Assessment of the John Day Basin completed in 2002 indicated that much of the area has missed at least one disturbance event or fire. As the trees die and fall to the ground the stands are accumulating excessive slash loads and are becoming more susceptible to high intensity-stand replacement wildfires.

Current RMP guidance does not address this problem of local and national policy for fuels within defined wildland urban interface areas and throughout the planning area have not been formally incorporated into existing RMPs.

RESTORATION

Vegetative conditions at some riparian and upland sites may not be capable of returning to historic ranges without active restoration.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Since the 1860's the Tertiary (65-2 million years ago) fossil resources of the John Day Basin have been both nationally and internationally recognized. The John Day Basin is one of the premiere Tertiary fossil mammal and plant areas in the world. Many fossil localities are on BLM managed lands.

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

Many of the BLM transportation resources in the John Day Basin have never been designated with a maintenance level or described within a maintenance schedule.

Many parcels of public land are not accessible to the public because there are no public easements on potential access roads.

The gating of roads (that do not have formal easements), by private landowners, that have historically provided access to BLM lands has increased in the last 10-20 years.

Access is limited for fire suppression and fuels management activities within the planning area. This increases response times for suppression activities which in turn lead to larger fire sizes and greater suppression costs.

RECREATION

There are no BLM designated motorized trail or motorized vehicle route systems despite increasing demand. There are also no designated hiking, horseback riding or mountain bike trails or any other designated non-motorized trail systems.

Use from OHVs and other motorized vehicles have continued to increase throughout the planning area. Due to new restrictions on OHVs on National Forests in and near the planning area we expect increased demand for use of BLM managed lands by OHV and other motorized vehicles.

BLM policy requires all OHV area designations to be completed at the RMP level. Existing Plans do not adequately address the impacts of widespread use by OHVs.

LAND TENURE ZONING DESIGNATIONS

Since the completion of the existing RMPs significant land tenure adjustments have occurred including acquisition of Sutton Mountain and the North Fork John Day lands. Some current zoning designations that identify whether BLM lands should be retained or disposed may not reflect new ownership patterns in the planning area.

SPECIAL DESIGNATION AREAS

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 required an eligibility and suitability assessment and determination to be conducted as a part of the resource management planning process. The John Day Basin includes several streams that have not been assessed.

Characteristics of wilderness such as solitude, naturalness and primitive recreation are resources which have not been previously inventoried in the North Fork John Day acquired lands area.

NORTH FORK JOHN DAY RIVER ACQUIRED LANDS

As a result of guidance provided in the Oregon Land Exchange Act of 2000, the full range of management direction from the existing RMPs cannot be applied to acquired lands adjacent to the North Fork John Day River. Consequently, there is no specific long-term direction for managing vegetation, fish and wildlife, fire and fuels, visual resources, transportation and access, recreation, OHV use, livestock grazing, silviculture, wilderness characteristics, and other resources or activities.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES

Based on the Key Findings of the Analysis of the Management Situation and input from the public, other governments and tribes we have identified several Planning Issues. The Planning Issues may be revised or refined as a result of comments received about the AMS. Planning Issues are problems that require changes in RMP direction to resolve.

An “issue” is defined as a topic of controversy, dispute or concern over resource management activities or land uses within the planning area boundary. In order to be considered “significant” by the agency, an issue must be well defined, relevant to the proposed action(s) in question, and within the authority and ability of the agency to address in the development of a reasonable range of alternatives or mitigation measures. The agency must consider the issue in the environmental analysis of the various alternatives.

The following Planning Issues will be utilized to develop management guidance alternatives for the planning area. These alternatives, along with a description of the environmental consequences implementation of these alternatives would have on the public lands will be described in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

WATER RESOURCES

The public expressed concerns over the management of riparian areas:
 Management of riparian areas should be consistent according to resources
 Cooperative Management Efforts
 Water quality efforts should be supported in the RMP

FOREST HEALTH

The public expressed concern regarding the management of timber resources
 Management guidance should allow for a range of resource management objectives

FIRE AND FUELS MANAGEMENT

Much of the planning area has missed at least one disturbance event or fire
 Current RMP guidance is unclear with respect to management in wildland urban interface areas

PUBLIC LAND ACCESS AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

BLM policy requires resource management plans to delineate travel management areas. The need to identify roads and access to BLM and private lands has been anticipated by the BLM as the result of changes in land status and accessibility
 Public concerns include recent reduction in access as the result of closure of routes on BLM lands and adjacent private lands

OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE USE DESIGNATIONS

Designations are required by BLM policy, either open, limited or closed
The situation has changed since last plans.

The public expressed concern about OHV use in the Little Canyon Mountain Area—two viewpoints expressed:

- Close BLM lands to protect resources
- Designate large areas for OHV use to provide recreational opportunities

LAND TENURE ZONING DESIGNATIONS

Under 43 CFR 2400 the BLM is required to identify lands that should be retained, disposed, or acquired to serve the national interest. Though the John Day, Baker, and Two Rivers RMPs did this the subsequent Oregon Land Exchange Act of 2000 significantly modified land ownership in the John Day Basin creating a need to review and possibly change some land tenure designations.

Public concerns include BLM acquisition or disposal of lands in the Rudio Mountain area.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

Wild and Scenic River (WSR) suitability recommendations

Suitability recommendations are required by BLM policy

Public concerns have a wide range:

- Include wild and scenic rivers wherever possible to protect resource values
- Exclude wild and scenic rivers because they restrict public use

Consider designations to protect specific resource values such as paleontological values

Areas with Wilderness characteristics

Policy concerning wilderness review undergoing revision

Public Concerns have a wide Range:

- Protect lands with wilderness characteristics
- Do not protect land with wilderness characteristics because it limits multiple use management

Management of Acquired Lands in the North Fork of the John Day Area

The Oregon Land Exchange Act of 2000 requires a development of a management plan for acquired lands before multiple uses can be considered.

Guidance for all resources must be provided

Visual Resource Inventory and Designations (Scenic Quality, etc.)

Designations are required by BLM policy

Public concerns include a broad range

All issues described above (1-7) plus:

- Grazing (comments for both pro and con)

Resolving each issue provides an opportunity to consolidate and update existing management into a single RMP. As a result, guidance will be tuned to the latest science and follow direction provided by the legislative and executive guidance described in Chapter 2 of the Full AMS. The ultimate result of this process will be a management plan that provides for a range of uses, protects natural resources, and is sensitive to the needs of local communities.

CONTENTS OF THE AMS

The remainder of the AMS is organized as follows:

CHAPTER 2 – LEGAL AUTHORITIES

Listing of the laws and previous policy decisions providing a context for the types of decisions that must be made in an RMP.

CHAPTER 3 – AREA PROFILE

Describes the physical, biological, social, and economic components of the planning area based on information available at the time of publication.

CHAPTER 4 – EXISTING MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

Describes the current direction for resource management in the planning area. This information, combined with information presented in previous chapters, helps form the framework for developing the proposed management opportunities (see next chapter).

CHAPTER 5 – MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Describes the preliminary issues and management opportunities, including a range of actions and associated outcomes which will be analyzed in the RMP.

CHAPTER 6 – COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Summary of the collaborative planning process and a projected time-line for completion of the RMP and associated planning and decision steps.

CHAPTER 7 – SCOPING REPORT

Describes process for collecting feedback from the public and stakeholders. Describes key concerns of public and stakeholders

REFERENCES

LIST OF PREPARERS

GLOSSARY

APPENDICES

Provide detailed information referenced in text.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

Available on CD only. Contains Record of Decisions for all RMPs subject to amendment or revision by this planning effort. Also includes some key documents that provide guidance for day to day management within the John Day Basin.

