

# John Day Basin Resource Management Plan

Executive Summary of the  
Analysis of the Management Situation  
and  
Preliminary Public Involvement

Fall 2006



Fall 2006



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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**In Reply Refer to:**  
1610 JD (OR-054)

Greetings:

We are pleased to present to you a summary of what we have heard the public say to us during our initial efforts to update the management plans for the BLM Public Lands in the John Day Basin. This document also includes a summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) which evaluated existing management guidance, and summarized resource conditions and trends. We believe these two efforts, obtaining feedback from public land users, interests and stakeholders, and assessing the existing situation, has helped to focus the planning effort so that it will respond to identified concerns and problems.

The Central Oregon Resource Area began to work on updating the Resource Management Plan for BLM managed lands in 2005. One-day economic workshops were co-sponsored with several communities, several open forum public meetings were held, and contracts have been let to gather social, economic and resource data. The BLM also invited letters and email responses all of which resulted in a wealth of public response. We believe you will find the attached summary thoughtful and interesting.

Our next steps will be to work with you to develop alternative ways of addressing the identified issues. We will be holding public meetings, working with the Snake-John Day Resource Advisory Council, and with our Co-operators Group of governmental and tribal representatives. In addition, we will be available informally to listen to your thoughts and ideas. We are excited about a web-based tool developed for us by the University of Colorado at Denver to help understand the travel and access issues in the area around the North Fork of the John Day River. We encourage you to participate in a survey on this topic by accessing <http://agf.colorado.edu/JohnDayRMP>. The full AMS and other information about the project is on a CD enclosed with this Executive Summary. These same documents may be viewed over the internet at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/prineville>, or you may request a copy from this office.

We appreciate your time and involvement in the planning process so far and encourage your continued participation. You may contact us by any of the methods indicated on the opposite page.

Working together we can generate effective and innovative strategies that will guide your Public Lands into the future. Together we can develop guidance that effectively protects resources while contributing to the social fabric and economic resilience of those who use and enjoy these lands.

Sincerely,

Christina M. Welch  
Field Manager, Central Oregon Resource Area





## EDITOR'S THOUGHTS

The sun crested the ridge. Intermittent, sometimes intense rain had pelted the tent during the night. But now the growing light ushered in dawn on the North Fork John Day River. Crawling from the tent I beheld a brilliant blue sky and grass sparkling with drops of the night's rain. A layer cake of basalt rose above both banks of the river. To the south the slopes were murals of trees, brush and shrubs. To the north dark cliffs sliced grassy swales punctuated by cinnamon barked ponderosa pine. My companion and guide, the river ranger, still slept in his tent a few feet away.

A morning stroll was in order. Coffee in hand I ambled down the road that snaked parallel to the river. There was no sign of recent travel on the road. We had not seen another person since we had launched. We would not see another person for a day and a half. Ahead of me, it appeared that a small fire had burned through a rock outcropping onto a grassy bench. Drawing closer I realized the rock was not scorched, it was wet. The patch of "burned" grass was, in fact, the top of the dark volcanic rock over which soil had not yet formed, so bare that only sparse grass had gained a foothold. What appeared to be barren rock outcropping from the distance, up close was a sparsely planted rock garden with flowers and grasses in tenuous residence in random niches in the rock. A small gray hornet nest hung from a shallow indentation in the rock face. Since it was still cool the inhabitants were not yet up. Fine with me!

Wandering back to camp I reflected on the nature of a communal dwelling located in a stunning yet harsh environment. One cannot help but be struck by the beauty surrounding you in the John Day Basin. From the windblown sea of grass at Horn Butte, to the river canyons of the John Day, to the broad Fox Creek and Long Creek valleys, and to the highlands of Sutton, Rudio, and the Aldrich Mountains the basin provides an expanse and variety of natural landscapes. The rock outcropping is a microcosm of the basin—beautiful but harsh. The community of hornets is not unlike the communities in the basin—isolated. Many inhabitants scratch out a living but tenuously hang to their niche just as the hornets in their nest cling to the sloping ceiling of rock. Make no mistake this is a harsh land. During the summer the hornet nest is likely to experience temperatures off the rock as high as 130° or more. Inhabitants that survive the summer then must survive cold as low as -20° or lower.

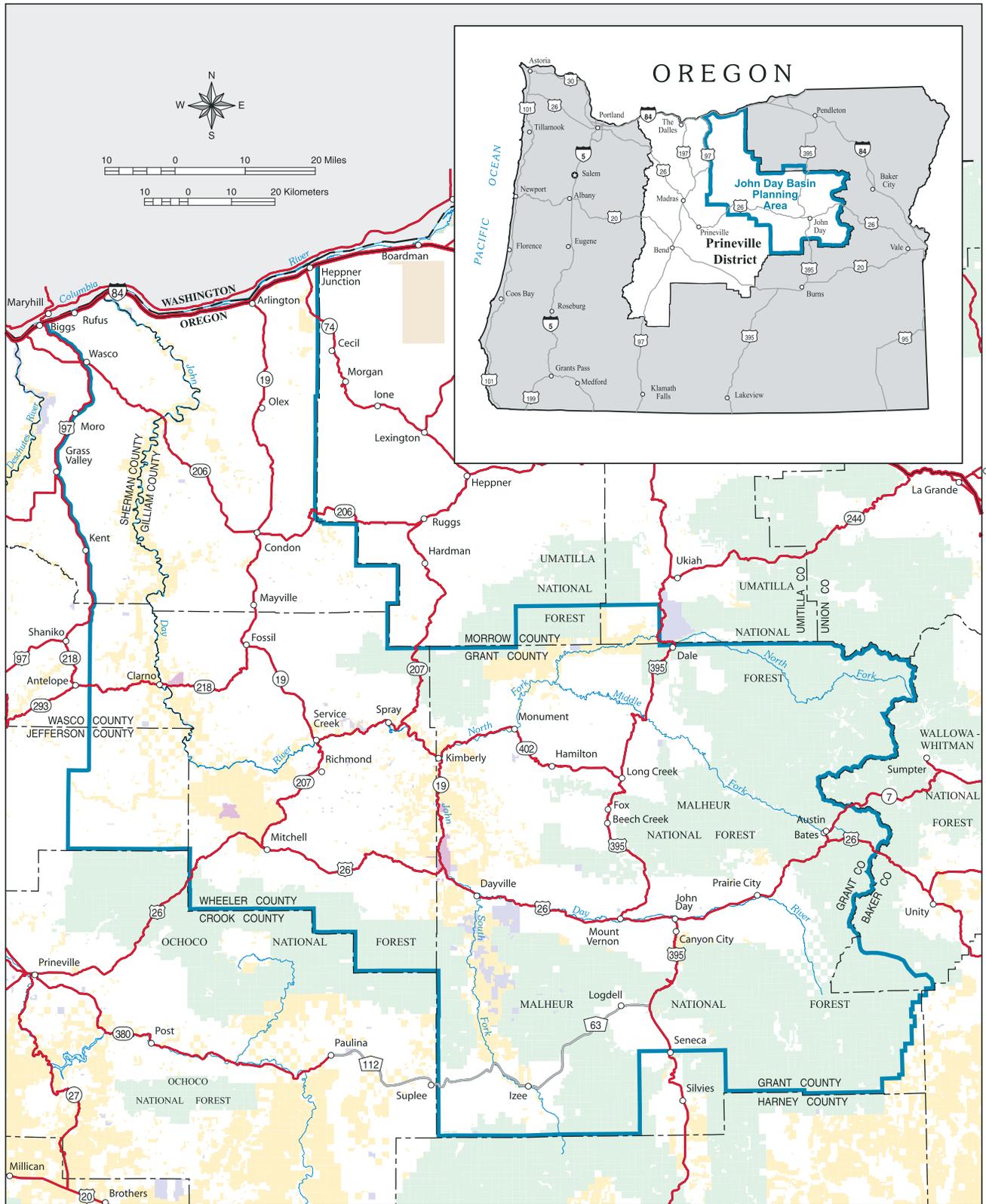
It takes a special kind of person to adapt to conditions in the basin— isolation, changing local economies, harsh climate, beautiful setting. These breed communities of fiercely independent—yet interdependent—inhabitants. They may quarrel amongst themselves but proudly note that when a member of the community is in need, everyone pitches in to help. But if they perceive a threat from outside the community even the hornets might learn something about defending "turf."

Our team of specialists embarks upon this planning effort with a profound sense of responsibility. In the ebb and flow of social changes, economic shifts and ecologic variation, we will strive to balance the varied concerns and desires of those interested in using and preserving public lands for the benefit of generations to come.



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**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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management



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

2006

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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 BLM administered 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 of Morrow and Umatilla Counties that are within the planning area.

The new John Day Basin RMP will establish broad-scale desired conditions, goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines for the BLM managed 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 the “planning area;”
2. To explain the need for change in management by identifying preliminary issues; and to identify management opportunities, and
3. 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 the 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.

## 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 under this Act, the BLM acquired approximately 44,000 acres near the North Fork of the John Day River. The Act directs how these lands are to be managed:

“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 over 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 OF JOHN DAY BASIN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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. An RMP contains 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:

Address all aspects of federal land management for the acquired lands in the North Fork John Day River area;

Address problems or concerns that have occurred since the completion of the previous RMPs, where these plans do not provide adequate guidance;

Address problems or concerns where the guidance in the existing RMPs is insufficient or inadequate in light of current needs or demands.

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 of the full AMS provide limits and direction for responding to the issues described later in this summary and in Chapter 5 of the full AMS.

## 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 of the Prineville District Bureau of Land Management (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 some 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 450,000 acres of BLM managed lands within several Oregon counties – Grant, Wheeler, Gilliam, Wasco, Sherman, Umatilla, Jefferson and Morrow. The outer boundary of the planning area also includes portions of Baker and Malheur counties, but there are no BLM lands within these portions of the counties.

To display detailed map information and general location references in 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 are 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.

The planning area as viewed today is a product of several variables, including climate, geology, soil, vegetation, and elevation. The Environmental Protection agency used the

combination of these variables to characterize pieces of the landscape with similar characteristics. These pieces can be characterized at different levels or Ecoregions. At a more general level the planning area is part of two Ecoregions, the Columbia Plateau and the Blue Mountains. To better understand the planning area refer to the full AMS document. See Map 2 and Table 1.

## COLUMBIA PLATEAU ECOREGION

The Columbia Plateau Ecoregion encompasses part of Oregon and most of eastern Washington. The Oregon portion of the Ecoregion extends from the eastern slopes of the Cascades Mountains, south and east from the Columbia River to the Blue Mountains. Millions of years ago, the region was covered by lava flows up to two miles deep. The centerpiece of the Ecoregion, the Columbia River, has greatly influenced the surrounding area, with cataclysmic floods and large deposits of wind-borne silt and sand. Over time, winds scoured the floodplain, depositing silt and sand across the landscape and creating ideal conditions for agriculture: rolling lands, deep soil, and plentiful flowing rivers including the lower parts of the Deschutes and John Day Rivers. The Ecoregion is made up entirely of lowlands, with an arid climate, cool winters and hot summers.

The Columbia Plateau produces the vast majority of Oregon's grain, and grain production is the heart of the agricultural economy. The Columbia Plateau produces the second-highest agricultural sales per year for any Ecoregion in Oregon. More than 80 percent of the Ecoregion's population and employment is located in the Umatilla County portion of the ecoregion, which includes Pendleton and Hermiston. Other population centers include The Dalles, Condon, and Heppner.

Almost all of the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion is privately owned.

## BLUE MOUNTAINS ECOREGION

The Blue Mountains Ecoregion is the largest Ecoregion in Oregon. The Ecoregion is named for its largest mountain range, the Blue Mountains. It is a diverse complex of mountain ranges, valleys and plateaus containing deep rocky-walled canyons, glacially cut gorges, sagebrush steppe, juniper woodlands, mountain lakes, forests, and meadows. Broad alluvial-floored river valleys support ranches surrounded by irrigated hay meadows or wheat fields. The climate varies over broad temperature and precipitation ranges because of elevational differences. Overall, the Ecoregion has short, dry summers and long, cold winters. Because much of the precipitation falls as snow, snow melt gives life to the rivers and irrigated areas.

Wood products and cattle production dominate the economy of the Ecoregion, but dryland wheat and alfalfa are important in the river valleys. The Ecoregion supports some of the finest big game hunting in the state and attracts tourists year-round, offering scenic lakes and rivers, geologic features, and alpine areas. It includes the cities of La Grande, Baker, Enterprise, and John Day.

While the Blue Mountain Ecoregion contains some of the largest intact native grasslands in the state and several large areas managed for conservation values, habitats have been impacted by interrelated changes in ecological processes due to fire suppression, selective



**Table 1 – BLM Acres within Subeco-Regions and Geographic Areas**  
**Acres of BLM land in Geographic Areas**

Eco-region - Level 4	Lower John Day	Sutton Moun- tain	Rudio Moun- tain	North Fork	South Fork	Upper John Day	TOTAL
Pleistocene Lake Basins	12,603						12,603
Deschutes/John Day Canyons	79,319						79,319
Umatilla Plateau	10,351						10,351
Umatilla Dissected Uplands	885						885
John Day/Clarno Uplands	16,244	127,158	64,374	19,984	47,498	725	275,983
John Day/ Clarno Highlands		1,583	17,633	31,361	5,345	518	56,440
Maritime-Influenced Zone				2,503			2,503
Cold Basins						40	40
Melange					962	7,597	8,559
Subalpine-Alpine Zone						45	45
Mesic Forest Zone					446	115	561
Continental Zone Highlands					8,449	229	8,678
Continental Zone Foothills						184	184
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>119,402</b>	<b>128,741</b>	<b>82,007</b>	<b>53,847</b>	<b>62,700</b>	<b>9,454</b>	<b>456,151</b>

harvest practices, and unsustainable grazing. These changes have resulted in undesirable changes in vegetation that have increased vulnerability of forests to insects, disease, and uncharacteristically severe wildfire. Similarly, these changes have led to increased invasive species and increased vulnerability to wildfire in sagebrush shrublands and steppe.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Although the planning area containing BLM managed lands encompasses parts of nine counties (most of Grant, Wheeler, and Gilliam, and smaller portions of Jefferson, Umatilla, Sherman, Wasco, Morrow and Baker) there are sharply different characteristics of human history, values and lifestyles within. Wheeler and Grant counties are contained almost entirely within the John Day Basin and draw their social and economic characters from this area to a large extent. Gilliam, Sherman, Wasco, Morrow and Umatilla Counties include portions of the Interstate 84 corridor and benefit from the more diverse social and economic opportunities a thoroughfare of this nature offers. Jefferson County has closer social and economic affiliations with the Central Oregon. The social and economic context of the planning area can be characterized by trends and qualities of Grant and Wheeler counties since they are contained entirely within and make up most of the planning area. Most of the other counties that fall partially within the planning area exhibit somewhat different economic and population trends. However, the portions of these counties that lay within the John Day Basin may have economic and population trends similar to those of Wheeler and Grant Counties.

Grant County was established in 1864 from portions of Wasco and Umatilla Counties, making it the largest county in the state at that time. Subsequent boundary revisions through land transfers to Lake County (1874) and the creation of Harney (1889) and Wheeler (1899) Counties have shrunk Grant County to its present day configuration. The discovery of gold in the area in 1862 served as the impetus for population growth, and also created the original economic foundation. Within days of the discovery approximately a thousand miners were camped along the banks of Canyon Creek near present day Canyon City. Gold and placer mining has since declined in economic importance, but a few of tenacious prospectors and miners can still be found carrying on the legacy that first drew settlers to this area. As mining declined, farming and ranching grew in economic importance. In addition, Grant County, which includes parts of four national forests, became largely dependent on forest product industries. While forest activities have waned in the last several decades, Grant County still provides a home and limited resources to several lumber mills. Most recently recreational tourism has provided some economic benefit to the county. Hunting provides a flood of visitors to the area in late summer and fall as thousands of enthusiasts migrate to the area for several days to weeks at a time. The local towns provide limited services to these visitors through the end of hunting season, till the higher level of activity is replaced with the familiar calm of day-to-day living (State of Oregon 2006). The 2000 census puts Grant county population at 7,935 people, a slight increase from the 1990 levels.

Wheeler County was and still is mostly a ranching community with families close enough together to form small towns. After the discovery of gold in Grant County, The Dalles-Canyon City Military Road was established to connect the prospering gold fields with the government in The Dalles. To reduce Indian attacks, this road utilized the existing mail route through Mitchell. As a result, by 1884 Mitchell was a flourishing area, even sporting a hotel. The northern portions of the county witnessed the creation and demise of several logging based communities between the 1930s and 1970s (State of Oregon 2006). The county is internationally known for an extensive deposit of fossils from the Cenozoic Era (National Park Service, John Day Fossil Beds 2006). The 2000 census puts the county

population at 1,547 and even with over a 10 percent population increase since 1990, it is still the least populated county in Oregon, with less than half the population that lived there in the 1950s.

Grant and Wheeler Counties are both ethnically, primarily white (in 2000 95.7 percent and 93.3 percent respectively (Sonoran 2006)). While Grant County has had a colorful history in regard to Chinese immigrants, (2,468 Chinese miners in the gold fields of Eastern Oregon in 1879) in 2000 people of Asian background made up less than 1 percent of the population in both Grant and Wheeler Counties. People of Hispanic origin comprised 2.1 and 5.1 percent of the population in Grant and Wheeler Counties respectively in the year 2000 and Native Americans comprised 1.6 and 0.8 percent respectively (Sonoran 2006).

Since 1990 the average age of the population in both Grant and Wheeler Counties has increased. The average age in Wheeler County was 48 years in 2000, up from 44 years in 1990. Between 1990 and 2000 the largest and fastest growing age group is between 55 and 59 years old, while at the same time the age groups between 20 and 44 years old have shown a marked decrease. Grant County also displays an aging population. While the average age is lower than Wheeler County (42 years old in 2000) this is up from 36 years old in 1990. The largest and fastest growing age group is from 45 to 49 years old; while the population has grown from 1990 to 2000 the age group from 20 to 39 years old has decreased.

Members of the Umatilla Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs exercise rights to hunt, fish, and gather on lands ceded to the Federal government within the planning area. The BLM, as a federal manager of lands within the planning area, has a trust responsibility to provide the conditions necessary for Indian tribal members to satisfy their treaty rights. Currently, Native American tribes are not dependent on commodity resources from BLM lands managed by the Prineville District Office for their livelihood. They do, however, use resources on public lands for subsistence and cultural purposes.

## 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 and 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 1860s 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 has 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.*

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT—SCOPING REPORT

The Planning Team has invited public interaction through a variety of venues:

On February 21, 2006 public notice about the planning effort was published in the Federal Register. Simultaneously public notices were published in print and broadcast media throughout Oregon, with particular focus on the John Day Basin. In addition to notices published in media about 2,500 letters were sent to individuals; organizations; local, state, and federal governments and agencies; and tribal governments notifying them of the planning effort and requesting that each addressee provide the BLM with any information they considered relevant to the planning effort and to identify any concerns they might have about BLM managed lands within the planning area. Each notification provided a telephone number, e-mail address, and postal address through which anyone could express their views about public land management within the John Day Basin RMP Planning Area.

Prior to and during the above “scoping effort” the BLM contracted the expertise of sociologists and anthropologists (James Kent Associates) to spend time in the planning area visiting with local officials, business owners, travelers and residents in order to gather information on BLM land management concerns. In addition the BLM co-hosted, with the help of Wheeler County and the cities of John Day and Canyon City, several Economic Profile Workshops in the planning area, with the intent to explore economic and social trends within the area.

In March 2006 the BLM hosted a series of meetings open to the public throughout eastern, central and western Oregon, to gather public input and feedback on concerns and problems with BLM management in the planning area.

The John Day-Snake Resource Advisory Committee, an ongoing Committee set up to advise federal land management agencies in northeastern Oregon, southeastern Washington, and western Idaho has been consulted and will continue to be consulted about the planning process and the substance of the plan.

Finally, the BLM, in conjunction with several other governmental authorities including: Grant, Wheeler and Sherman counties, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has established a Cooperating Agencies group to cooperatively work with BLM throughout the planning process.

The findings from each of these venues are described in Chapter 7 of the full AMS. The key product from this process is the identification of the issues outlined below and discussed in full in Chapter 5 of the full AMS.

## **ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**

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 concern was expressed 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 needs 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:  
Open Designation.  
Limited Designation.  
Closed Designation.  
Situation has changed since last plans:  
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:  
Development of non-motorized and primitive recreation opportunities.  
Vegetation Management.

## 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.

Special Areas 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 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.

The issues mentioned above are described in greater detail in the full AMS. 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.







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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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