

Proposed Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement

BLM
Prineville District Office

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Volume 2 – Chapters 4 and 5 and
Summary of Public Comments



Public Lands USA: Use, Share, Appreciate

Introduction

In the fall of 2000, the Prineville District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) reinitiated the Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan (UDRMP) Environmental Impact Statement (formerly the Urban Interface EIS) in an effort to respond to growing concerns over the expanding and changing needs of the urban interface areas. The RMP will revise needed sections of the Brothers/La Pine RMP and the Two Rivers RMP in response to changing issues identified through consultation and coordination with interested and affected groups and individuals. This chapter includes a brief description of the process used during the preparation of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan to keep people informed about and involved in the decision process.

Information Sharing

Public Notices

Federal Register

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register in 1995. The announcement contained a request for comments on concerns over managing public lands, and issues to be addressed in the RMP. The Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS was published in the Federal Register in October 2003.

Plan Updates

The BLM also prepared periodic plan updates that were posted to the website and mailed to the entire UDRMP mailing list. Eight updates were mailed between January 2002 and July 2004. News releases were sent to a list of about 40 media contacts, and subsequently broadcast on local television and radio stations, and printed in local newspapers.

Published Documents

Analysis of the Management Situation

In October 2001, the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) was published. The document identified preliminary issues based on internal meetings of BLM specialists and managers, meetings with tribal and local government representatives, calls and letters from the general public received over the previous ten years, and public scoping meetings conducted during earlier attempts to amend the existing RMP. Comments on the AMS served as a resource for members of the Issue Team during the collaborative process. The AMS also included an Issue Team Application and an invitation to participate in the collaborative planning process.

Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

The Draft Upper Deschutes RMP/EIS was published in October 2003.

Public Meetings & Field Tours

During the scoping / comment period for the AMS, public meetings were held in Redmond on October 16, 2001, in Prineville on October 17, 2001, and in La Pine on October 18, 2001. These meetings were advertised in local newspapers, and in the cover letter on the AMS (mailed to about 1,200 people in October 2001). The BLM also held public field tours to various sites of interest within the planning area as part of the scoping process. These field trips took place on October 20, 2001 in the area west of the Powell Butte Highway; on October 21, 2001 in the La Pine area; and on October 27, 2001 in the area east of the Powell Butte Highway.

Another round of meetings was held in November 2003 after publication of the Draft RMP/EIS to provide information to the public, answer questions, and facilitate public comments. These meetings were held November 12 in La Pine, November 18 in Prineville, November 19 in Redmond, and November 20 in Bend. There were also two meetings specifically to answer questions for the grazing permittees, in the morning and in the evening on November 13.

There were numerous other meetings open to the public, including Provincial Advisory Committee and Issue Team meetings (see further discussion of these meetings below under Collaborative Planning, BLM Process).

Web Site

A web site for the Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan (UDRMP) process has been maintained since publication of the AMS. The site includes links to copies of the AMS, Draft RMP/EIS, the public meeting schedule, meeting notes, and results of a social survey conducted by the University of Oregon as part of the planning process.

Collaborative Planning

BLM Process

The proximity of BLM-administered lands to local communities increases use demands and the need for partnerships and coordination to provide for multiple needs and reduce conflicts. Public and other government participation during this planning process occurred mainly in a community-based framework. This process included using groups chartered specifically for this process, as well as including other separate but related governmental collaborative processes like the South Redmond Collaborative Planning Group.

The collaborative process was designed to put governments and citizens together to resolve the significant planning issues. See Table 5-1 for a list of key public involvement events. The following groups contributed to the planning effort in a variety of ways:

Intergovernmental Cooperators

Includes federal, state and local governmental cooperators who provided special information or expertise in preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement, or who have jurisdictions overlapping or contiguous to BLM-administered public land.

Deschutes Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) & PAC Subcommittee

This is a committee formally chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to provide a broad representation of interests to advise federal land managers within the Deschutes Province. A subcommittee of the PAC was assigned to act on behalf of the full PAC during this process. The PAC recommended that BLM develop the range of alternatives that included Alternatives 1-6, and then go forward with consensus recommendations from the Issue Team (see below). The PAC holds quarterly meetings open to the public. The PAC membership list can be found in Table 5-2.

Issue Team

Issue teams are working groups chartered by the PAC to focus on specific planning issues. The Issue Teams included representatives of the general public, specific interest groups, permit holders, other stakeholders, and intergovernmental representatives. The Issue Team membership list is in Table 5-3.

Issue Subcommittee

The Issue Team broke into eight smaller teams which focused on clarifying issues and developing alternatives around specific issue categories. These teams met frequently to develop concepts around which the alternatives were designed. All Issue Team meetings were open to the public.

Preferred Alternative Subcommittee

After the descriptions of the range of alternatives were completed by the BLM, the Issue Team was again reorganized to focus on evaluating the range of alternatives and developing areas of consensus on a preferred alternative. For that process, the Issue Team was arranged into five smaller groups based on the interests each member identified early in the process. In some cases, these groups were similar to those organized around the issue categories. These teams rated and ranked the interest categories, rated the alternatives according to the categories, and selected members to act on their behalf to work on consensus on a Preferred Alternative. The results of the subcommittee work were returned to the full Issue Team. The larger group finalized the Preferred Alternative consensus recommendation that was forwarded to the PAC and subsequently to the BLM.

The Preferred Alternative Subcommittee reconvened after the DEIS public comment period ended to review the comments and determine where the group was in agreement on how to respond to the comments. The group then helped revise the Preferred Alternative to reflect areas of consensus. These changes were forwarded to the PAC for approval. The PAC approved all changes and forwarded them to the BLM with a letter of commendation on the process.

Other Collaborative Processes

In addition to the process designed for the Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan, the BLM also participates in other related interagency efforts to address community needs such as public land uses, ownership, transportation, and healthy watersheds. A brief summary of some of the more directly related on-going efforts and their relationship to this Resource Management Plan are described below.