



*Public Scoping  
Information  
Package*

# Baker Resource Management Plan

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United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Vale District  
Baker Field Office

# Baker Resource Management Plan

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*It is the Mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*



*Native Bleeding Heart*



*Bighorn Sheep*

# Baker Resource Management Plan

The Baker Field Office Resource Management Plan (Baker RMP) is a land use plan that encompasses approximately 428,563 acres of public land located in northeast Oregon and southeast Washington. The Baker Field Office (Baker FO) currently administers these public lands under the 1989 Baker Resource Management Plan. When completed, the revised Baker RMP will replace the existing land use plan. The land use planning process allows the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to designate and allocate uses on public lands, in coordination with state and local government, Tribes, land users, and interested public. Land use plan decisions establish goals and objectives for resource management (i.e., desired future conditions, protective measures, or best management practices), the measures needed to achieve these goals and objectives, and parameters for resources and resource uses on BLM-administered public lands. The planning process under which the Baker RMP is being developed will comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and BLM policies, manuals, and handbooks.

The purpose of the Baker RMP revision is to address to resource conditions that have changed, respond to new issues, and provide the Baker FO a comprehensive framework under which to administer public lands into the future.

The need for the Baker RMP revision is to develop a comprehensive plan that maintains, improves, or restores resource conditions; identifies desired future conditions; and provides for the economic needs of local communities over the long term.

## *Introduction*

## *Purpose and Need*



## *Review of the Current Direction*

An extensive review of current land management decisions/direction was conducted by a team of resource and planning specialists (the Baker RMP interdisciplinary team). The team reviewed the current plan to determine:

- Where key direction for resource and resource uses that may be carried forward into the revised RMP
- Where direction for resource and resource uses needs to be updated to address current laws, regulations, and policies
- Where direction is needed to address changed conditions on the public lands managed by the Baker FO
- If there are any new or expanded resource considerations that may require decisions
- What, if any tribal cultural and heritage practices or concerns were not previously addressed.

### Direction Carried Forward

BLM has two main categories for natural resources management: resources and resource uses. Resources are natural, biological, and cultural features that improve the quality of life, such as sage grouse habitat. Resource uses are the products, either tangible or intangible, that are managed from resources (e.g. mineral development, rights-of-way, etc).

Current land management direction that has proven to be effective and requires no change will be “carried forward” through the analysis process into the RMP.

## *Need For Change Topics*

In the 1989 RMP, some topics or issues were addressed and remain valid today. Other topics and issues were not addressed at all, while still others were addressed but not at the level of detail necessary for the situations we face today. This is why a revision is necessary, and this is why we would like your help to determine where our 1989 plan needs strengthening or revamping. We are calling these “need for change” topics.

Need for change topics have been identified for the following resources and resource uses to address current laws, regulations, and policies; changed conditions; and new or expanded conditions or opportunities on BLM-administered public lands.

### **Vegetation**

**Desired Future Condition**—Direction is needed to identify the desired future condition of the vegetation types that occur within the Baker FO planning area. The current plan provides direction for the uses of vegetation by livestock and wildlife, but do not provide direction for the desired future condition of the vegetative resources.

**Disturbed Lands**—Direction is needed for rehabilitating, reclaiming, and/or restoring public lands after ground disturbing activities, including disturbance that results from permitted/authorized activities. The current RMP does not provide direction for rehabilitation, especially with regard to concerns such as minimizing weed establishment and reducing weed spread.

### **Special Status Species—Flora (Plants)**

A special status species (flora) is a native plant that because of its limited presence, or existence of threats to its persistence, has been placed on the States of Oregon or Washington Special Status Plants List, BLM Special Status Species List, or federally listed as a threatened or endangered species. Special status species lists do not state what specifically should be done to protect a special status species and existing management plans provide little or no direction.

For the Baker FO area, we must identify management direction not only for individual species, but also, where appropriate, for the habitats in which they occur.

Currently over ten species have status in the State of Oregon and eighteen in the State of Washington which may need management direction. This direction would be based on a review of the scientific literature and current policies for the management of the affected species and their habitats.

**(Need For Change Topics)**

## Special Status Species—Fauna (Animals)

A special status species (fauna) is generally a native animal that because of its limited presence or existence of threats to its persistence, has been placed on the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) list as a threatened or endangered, BLM list for Bureau sensitive, species of concern, and/or species of local importance.

Other than recovery plans for federally listed species, special status species lists do not state what specifically should be done to protect these species. Existing management plans also provide little or no direction. Management plan direction will take a proactive approach to identify, protect, maintain and enhance special status species habitat with USFWS direction, review of the scientific literature, current policies for the management of the species and, their habitats.

## Cultural Resources

Management direction is needed to better address proactive management for identification and preservation of cultural resources that may be vulnerable to natural processes of deterioration (such as erosion and decay), dispersed recreation uses (such as off road vehicle use), unauthorized uses and vandalism. Direction is also needed to better identify and address traditional cultural properties (TCPs) and locations of traditional use or interest to Native American Tribes. Traditional cultural properties (TCPs) may include places such as Native American traditional fishing or plant gathering locations, or geographic locations of spiritual or sacred importance to Tribes.

## Native American Concerns and Treaty Rights

Wildlife, riparian/aquatic and water quality management direction addresses habitat needs and protection for several fish and game

**(Need For Change Topics)**

species of interest to Native American Tribes. Management direction is needed to better address access, protection and enhancement of important traditional cultural plant habitat and traditional procurement or gathering locations.

## **Paleontology**

Most current management direction for paleontological resources is carried forward, but new direction is needed for land tenure adjustment and management of off road vehicle uses in areas with important vertebrate and plant fossil localities.

## **Wildland Fire Management**

Planning direction for fire management continues to evolve and direction is needed to identify and delineate areas of appropriate management response (AMR) for wildland fires. AMR includes any action taken to meet resource objectives identified in the land use plans and incorporates a spectrum of tactical operations ranging from simply observing the behavior of the fire to aggressive and intensive suppression actions.

## **Livestock Grazing—Vacant and Unallocated Areas**

Lands recently acquired by BLM and areas not previously allotted for grazing need to be analyzed for potential grazing use. Management direction is needed to address vacant and unallocated areas to determine if they should, or should not, be made available for grazing, and especially with regard to areas along the Grande Ronde River.

## **Wilderness Characteristics**

The Baker FO does not manage any Congressionally-designated wilderness areas, and the current land use plans does not address wilderness characteristics outside of wilderness study areas (WSAs). The status of existing WSAs will not change as a result of this planning process, as only Congress may designate WSAs as wilderness or release them for other uses. However, BLM may

identify areas that possess wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation) and manage activities to protect or preserve these characteristics. There is an opportunity to identify and develop management direction for BLM administered public lands that may exhibit wilderness characteristics.

## Recreation and Visitor Services

**Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)**—SRMAs are designated where recreation is the principle management focus and funding and personnel are used to fulfill commitments made to provide specific “structured” recreation opportunities. There are three SRMAs in the planning area, Wallowa Wild and Scenic River, Grande Ronde Wild and Scenic River, and the Powder Wild and Scenic River. Management direction for these areas are current and appropriate through the specific river management plans developed for each area.

**Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs)**—ERMAs are public lands where recreation is unstructured and does not require intensive management (i.e., SRMA) or significant investments in trails or facilitates. ERMAs offer a variety of dispersed recreation activities through custodial recreation management, which addresses use and user conflicts, visitor safety, and or resource protection.

There is a need to review existing ERMAs to determine if they should remain as such or be changed to SRMA’s. This would also create a need to identify new ERMA areas and associated management direction.

## Visual Resources

The visual resource management (VRM) system provides a way to identify and evaluate scenic values to determine the appropriate levels of management. VRM is a tool used by the BLM to identify and map essential landscape settings to meet public preferences and recreation-related experiences today and into the future. VRM management classes are assigned for all BLM-administered public lands based on an inventory of visual resources and management

## (Need For Change Topics)

consideration for other land uses. VRM inventory consists of a scenic quality evaluation, sensitivity level analysis, and a delineation of distance zones. Based on these three factors, public lands are placed into one of four visual resource inventory classes: Class I, II, III, or IV—with Class I having the highest visual sensitivity and Class IV being the least sensitive. VRM classes need to be reviewed and updated, as necessary, and management direction is needed to better address VRM for the entire Baker FO area.

## Travel Management

**Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs)/Over Snow Vehicles (OSVs)**—There is a need to designate the Baker FO area as “limited” to existing roads and trails for OHV management as an interim measure until a Travel Management Plan is developed to “designate” roads and trails. Existing direction for the Baker FO provides a mix of designations including open, limited, and closed areas.

In addition, management direction is needed to address OSV use. Existing plans provide no OSV direction.

## Lands and Realty

**Land Tenure Adjustment**—Through the planning process the Baker Field Office and public have the opportunity to review the current zones identified in the 1989 plan. The zone concept may be expanded to include an additional zone that would provide flexibility for the authorized officer to consolidate lands through exchange for non-Federal lands within retention zones for areas with higher resource values

**Corridors**—Right-of-way corridors will also be reviewed, carried forward or modified where necessary ensuring conformance with the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Land in 11 Western States (ROD not yet signed).

**Alternative Energy Sources**—Direction is needed to allow for the development of alternative energy sources, such as wind energy, consistent with the President’s National Energy Policy. The existing plan does provide management direction for the development of alternative energy sources.

**Hydropower**—Ongoing re-licensing project for Hells Canyon Complex (P-1971) has several mandatory conditions and recommendations being considered for inclusion within the new license. These conditions and recommendations will be included within this RMP within the appropriate resource section. This RMP will also provide guidance within each resource section and the realty section for new hydropower licenses.

**(Need For Change Topics)**

## Caves and Karst

Currently there are no caves determined significant within the Baker FO. In keeping with the Federal Cave Protection Act of 1988, there is a need to identify and develop management direction for any caves that may be determined significant in the future, within the Baker FO area.

## Minerals

Minerals are classified as locatable, salable, and leasable. Locatable minerals include precious metals, base metals, and some non-metallic minerals. Saleable minerals are common variety materials such as sand, gravel, rock, and cinders. Leasable minerals include oil, gas, coal, and geothermal.

## Administrative Designations

The BLM uses “administrative designations” to provide unique protections for resources and resource uses when criteria, as defined by law are met. The following administrative designations will be considered in this plan.

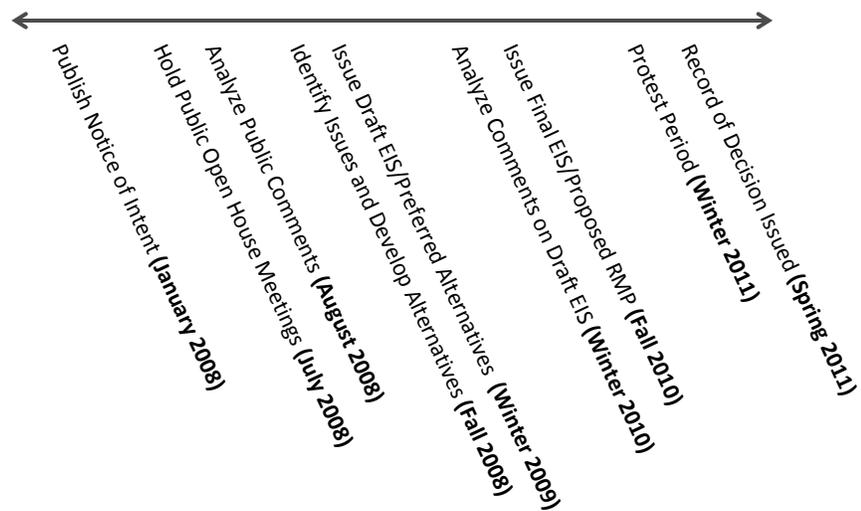
## Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

Existing ACEC designations will be reviewed and the designation of new ACECs will also be evaluated.

# The Planning Process

The RMP planning process includes the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which provides continued opportunities for public involvement and incorporation of comments throughout the planning process. The decision the State Director will reach from the analyses of the proposed action and alternatives in the EIS will result in the preparation of the final, approved RMP for the Baker FO. The RMP will provide management direction for resources and resources uses into the future. Preparation of the EIS and RMP is expected to take place over an approximate four year period.

## RMP Timeline



## Relevant Issues

Public scoping, agency coordination, consultations, and discussions with interested parties, and the resulting comments from public information meetings, are anticipated to lead to the identification of relevant issues. These issues will be instrumental in leading to the development of alternatives for the RMP and will be analyzed in the EIS.

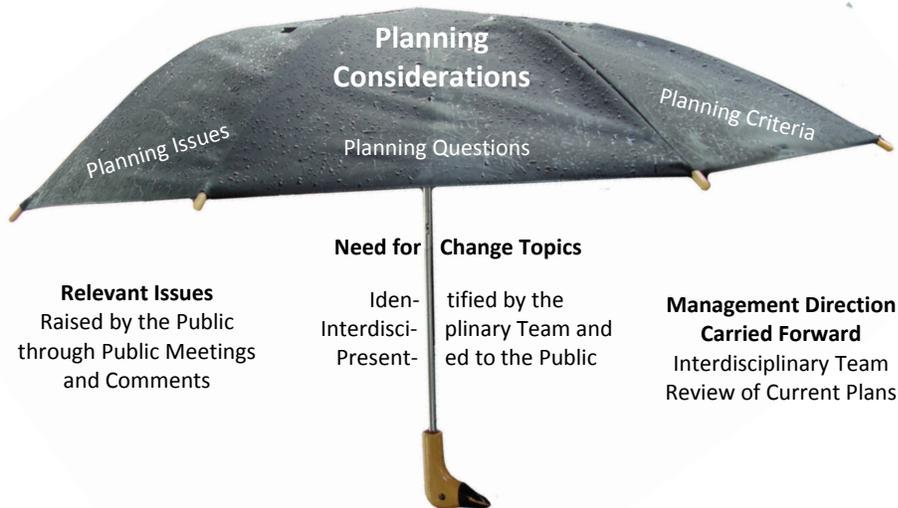
## Planning Considerations

Planning Considerations influence all aspects of the planning process including inventory and data collection, formulation of alternatives, estimation of effects, and selection of the preferred

**(The Planning Process)**

alternative. Planning Considerations are also used in analyzing Direction Carried Forward, Need for Change Topics, and Relevant Issues. Planning Considerations may be considered as the umbrella over which the entire Baker RMP planning process occurs. The next section, titled Planning Considerations, goes into more detail about specific Planning Considerations and how they are tied to the resources and resource uses currently identified for the Baker RMP process. Planning Considerations are not static, as they evolve and become refined throughout the RMP development process, especially as federal, state, and tribal governments; the public; coordinating agencies; and other interested parties participate in the planning process.

**Planning Considerations—The Umbrella Under Which We Work**



*For the Baker RMP, Planning Considerations are the umbrella over which Direction Carried Forward, Need for Change Topics, and Relevant Issues are considered. Public participation and input are important parts of the process.*

# Preliminary Planning Issues, Questions and Criteria

## Planning Issues

Under each resource heading, there is a short paragraph briefly explaining the current “state” of the resource and any preliminary issues or concerns that were identified through BLM’s initial review of the data and information available in preparation for the Baker FO RMP process. These issues are not set in stone as they will be refined through public involvement and the evolution of the planning process.

## Planning Questions

The planning questions are simply the planning issues or concerns framed as questions. This step helps to maintain focus and direction during information review, data collection, and analyses activities that will occur as the RMP process progresses.

## Planning Criteria

Information that will be considered in answering the planning questions is referred to as planning criteria. Planning criteria are prepared to ensure that decision making is tailored to the issues pertinent to the planning effort. Planning criteria serve as the cognitive boundary for focused consideration and analysis during the planning process. Planning criteria are finalized based upon public comment and then approved by the District Manager.

In this document, the potential planning issue is described first, followed by the planning question(s), and then the specific planning criteria to be used in addressing the questions. This information is

being provided to you for your review and comment. Please see page 45 for more information on providing your comments.

## Planning Issues

In conducting the Baker RMP revision effort, BLM will ensure compliance with all applicable local, state, tribal, and federal air quality laws, statutes, and regulations.

The RMP will identify desired future conditions and area-wide criteria or restrictions, in cooperation with the states of Oregon and Washington, Departments of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency, to ensure that air quality standards are being met.

## Planning Questions

- How will management activities be conducted to meet or exceed air quality standards?
- How will applicable smoke management requirements be achieved?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Federal Clean Air Act.
- Guidance from the Proposed Fire, Fuels, and Related Vegetation Management Direction Plan Amendment and FEIS (2008) regarding air quality.
- Guidance from the Oregon/Washington Airshed Group to minimize or prevent smoke impacts from management-ignited fire.
- Compliance with applicable local, state, tribal, and federal air quality laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans.

# *Air Quality*

# Water Quality

## Planning Issues

Prescribed fire, vegetation treatments, livestock grazing, road location and design, and recreational activities can all affect water quality and quantity on public lands. These activities are especially important when they occur on or near floodplains along streams and rivers. Natural events such as wildfire or floods can also have large effects. Several Oregon Section 303(d) listed streams within the planning area are affected by BLM management activities. Fragmented, complex ownership patterns often require that coordinated management across watersheds be employed. Both ground and surface water originating in municipal watersheds on public land can serve as sources of potable water.

## Planning Questions

- How will uses and activities be managed to maintain or improve water quality and quantity for both ground and surface water?
- How should public lands along streams, rivers, and floodplains be managed?
- How will vegetation management (i.e. weed treatments) projects be mitigated to protect water quality and quantity?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Federal Clean Water Act (CWA).
- BLM Water Quality Restoration Plans
- Oregon and Washington state Integrated Reports and 303(d) Lists
- Oregon and Washington state Total Maximum Daily Load implementation plans.
- Approved best management practices (BMPs).

## *Soils Management*

### Planning Issues

Road construction, mining, timber harvest, vegetation treatments, livestock grazing, OHV use, and fire can all contribute to accelerated soil erosion. Natural events such as wildfire and floods can also cause large amounts of erosion. Allowed to continue, excessive erosion can deplete site productivity such that the site can no longer support sufficient vegetation to protect soils from further losses. The planning area contains some erodible soils that are sensitive to management or catastrophic events.

### Planning Question

- How will public lands be managed to protect and maintain soil productivity?

### Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Oregon/Washington Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (1997).
- Approved BMPs.

### Planning Issues

Many land use activities continue to affect the natural function and condition of upland vegetation communities. Livestock grazing, mining, rights-of-way, wildfire, roads, and OHV operation are the major examples. Structurally diverse and healthy upland plant communities provide habitat for wildlife, soil stabilization, and increased infiltration of precipitation (which helps move clean water to adjacent streams). Threats to these values include invasion by noxious and invasive plant species, increased wildfire frequency, deteriorating forest health, improperly managed livestock grazing, and OHV use. Sagebrush-dependent wildlife species have specific habitat needs that require management attention.

## *Upland Vegetation and Plant Management*

**(Upland Vegetation and Plant Management)**

## Planning Questions

- How will sagebrush steppe be managed to maintain or improve healthy upland plant communities?
- How will forest and woodland health be maintained or restored?
- How will old growth forests, if present, be managed?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.
- President's Healthy Forests Initiative (August 2002) and National Fire Plan (2000).
- Oregon and Washington Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (1997).
- The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Scientific Assessment, September 1999.
- BLM Interim Guidance for sage grouse habitat management (BLM Instruction Memorandum IM-2005-024) and/or Oregon State Guidance.
- Protect unique and critical habitats in consultation with the Oregon and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

## *Riparian and Wetland Area Management*

### Planning Issues

Riparian and wetland zones are some of the most productive and intensely-used areas on the landscape. Inventory and monitoring data over the past 10 years shows that very few riparian habitats in the planning area are "nonfunctional" and many areas that formerly were nonfunctional have either reached or are making significant progress toward proper functioning condition. Livestock grazing, road construction, mining, timber harvest, and recreation are the primary activities that have affected these areas.

While the riparian and wetland zones in the planning area cover less than 1 percent of the landscape, they are critically important for many natural resource functions. Healthy riparian and wetland

**(Riparian and Wetland Area Management)**

communities have high plant and animal species diversity and structural stability; provide fish and wildlife habitat, soil stabilization, stream bank building, and filtration of surface runoff; help improve water quality, water storage, and aquifer recharge; and provide enhanced recreation and aesthetic values. Riparian and wetland areas in the planning area include large and small rivers, streams, wet meadows, lakes, reservoirs, potholes, ponds, seeps, and springs. These areas contain a variety of riparian community or habitat types including coniferous and deciduous tree types, willow and non-willow shrub types, and herbaceous types.

## Planning Questions

- How will public lands be managed to maintain or improve (restore) riparian and wetland habitats?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Executive Order 11990 for wetland preservation.
- Executive Order 12372 referring to the CWA non-point source management plan per Sec. 319 of the CWA.
- Oregon/Washington Department of Environmental Quality guidelines.
- Oregon/Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife requirements.
- Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington. (1997).
- The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Scientific Assessment, September 1999.
- BMPs for water quality.
- Maintenance, improvement, and restoration of natural riparian functions to benefit species diversity, structural stability, water storage, groundwater recharge, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitats.

# *Special Status Species (Plants, Wild- life & Fish)*

## Preliminary Issues

Special status species are plant and animal species listed under the USFWS Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered, under State agencies lists like the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife status species lists, and/or BLMs sensitive species list. This planning area supports habitat for a number of special status species. Habitats for special status species are affected by roads, timber harvest, wildfire and wildfire suppression, livestock grazing, recreation activities, and invasion of non-native species. Fragmentation of land ownership increases the complexity of meaningful habitat protection.

Special status species are fish species listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered, under the State of Oregon's Special Status Species lists, and/or BLM's sensitive species list. The planning area supports habitat for a number of special status species, both plants and animals. Habitats for special status species are affected by roads, timber harvest, wildfire and wildfire suppression, livestock grazing, recreation activities, and invasion of non-native species. Fragmentation of land ownership increases the complexity of meaningful habitat protection

## Planning Question

- How will public lands be managed to promote recovery of listed species and prevent listing of sensitive species?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Use and recovery plans that have been written by USFWS
- Conservation Agreements and Strategy plans (e.g. sage-grouse).
- Biological opinions and/or letters of concurrence from the USFWS (e.g. Level One meetings)
- Oregon/Washington Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (1997).

- National BLM Planning Guidance for sage-grouse and working groups.
- Any habitat management plans
- The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Scientific Assessment, September 1999.
- A Framework for Incorporating the Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Component of the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy into the BLM and Forest Service Plan Revisions.
- Conservation Agreements and Strategy plans (e.g., Canada lynx, sage grouse).
- Aquatic conservation strategy components of the Inland Native Fish Strategy.
- Biological opinions and/or letters of concurrence from the USFWS and NOAA-Fisheries.

**(Special Status Species)**

## Planning Issues

The planning area contains a diversity of habitats for a wide variety of fish species. Habitat quality has been affected by roads, timber harvest, wildfire and wildfire suppression, livestock grazing, recreation activities, urbanization and invasion of non-native species. Fragmentation of land ownership increases the complexity of meaningful habitat protection. Maintaining fish habitat requires retention of the range of diverse, healthy plant communities, reliable water sources, connectivity of habitat, and recognition of the unique needs of some species.

## Planning Question

- How will public lands be managed to enhance fish habitat?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Scientific Assessment, September 1999.

## *Fish Habitat*

**(Fish Habitat)**

- A Framework for Incorporating the Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Component of the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy into the BLM and Forest Service Plan Revisions.
- Preserving biodiversity, genetic integrity and high quality habitats.
- Recognition of the intrinsic and recreational values associated with native and nonnative fish species.
- Habitat needs in consultation with other land management and regulatory agencies.
- Limit introduction and spread of invasive species and noxious weeds.
- Native American treaty rights and interests.

## *Wildlife Habitat*

### Planning Issues.

The planning area contains a diversity of habitats for a wide variety of wildlife species. Habitat quality has been affected by roads, timber harvest, wildfire and wildfire suppression, livestock grazing, recreation activities, urbanization and invasion of non-native species. Fragmentation of land ownership increases the complexity of meaningful habitat protection. Maintaining wildlife habitats requires retention of the range of diverse, healthy plant communities, reliable water sources, connectivity of habitat, and recognition of the unique needs of some species.

### Planning Question

- How will public lands be managed to enhance wildlife habitats?

### Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Preserving biodiversity, genetic integrity and high quality habitats.
- Recognition of valuable ridge habitat (e.g. sage-grouse)
- Recognition of the intrinsic and recreational values associated with native and nonnative wildlife species.

- Habitat needs in consultation with other land management and other regulatory agencies.
- Limit introduction and spread of invasive species and noxious weeds.
- Recognition and protection of habitats for migratory bird species.
- The use of habitat plans
- The use of information and technical manuals
- Implementing and following any Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) for wildlife habitat (e.g. Precious Lands)
- Native American treaty rights and interests

**(Wildlife Habitat)**

## Preliminary Issues

The planning area contains prehistoric and historic cultural resources, which provide a record of Native American and Euro-American use of public lands and associated natural resources. Some notable cultural resources in the planning area include the Oregon National Historic Trail in Oregon, and archaeological sites in the Nez Perce-Snake River National Register District in Washington. Inventory information is beneficial in protecting cultural resources from activities authorized by the BLM or affected by natural erosion processes, dispersed recreation activities, or vandalism while also making them available for scientific, social-cultural and other authorized uses. Protection opportunities for cultural resources include the identification and evaluation of resources, project avoidance, monitoring, stabilization, data recovery, and interpretation.

## *Cultural Resources*

## Planning Questions

- How will cultural resources, including potential traditional cultural properties (TCP's), be protected and managed?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Federal laws and regulations requiring protection and evaluation of

**(Cultural Resources)**

effects to cultural resources; including National Historic Preservation Act and Archaeological Resources Protection Act.

- Consultation with Tribal Governments and the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Protect, preserve, and enhance sites eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## *Native American Concerns and Treaty Rights*

### Planning Issues

The planning area includes public lands in Oregon and southeast Washington where several Tribes have reserved treaty rights or have traditional use interests. Federally recognized tribes include the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the Burns Paiute Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. Treaty rights include the opportunity for sustainable harvest of traditional foods (such as roots, berries, other culturally important plants, fish, or game) at traditional locations. There is also potential for the presence of important cultural or sacred sites, landscapes and traditional use areas of interest to the Tribes. Traditionally important places which have not been previously identified for protection and management will require consultation with Tribes to meet federal responsibilities and comply with historic preservation laws and regulations.

### Planning Questions

- How can treaty rights and federal responsibilities best be met and adequately addressed?
- How can significant tribal traditional use areas, traditional cultural properties, sacred sites or landscapes be protected?
- How can the opportunity for sustainable harvest of traditional foods be protected or enhanced; including water quality, and habitat for cultural plants, game animals, and fisheries?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Public land use: 1855 Treaty with the Nez Perce; 1885 Treaty with the Walla Walla, Cayuse, and Umatilla Tribes; 1855 Treaty with the Tribes of Middle Oregon; 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty.
- Identification of Tribal traditional interest areas
- Protection of cultural use areas in co-operation with Tribal Government
- Opportunities for co-operative management
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990
- National Historic Preservation Act, as amended
- Executive Order 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites) and Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Co-ordination with Indian Tribal Governments)

**(Native American Concerns  
and Treaty Rights)**

## Planning Issues

BLM lands within the planning area provide jobs and income to the local area and contribute a wide range of social and economic values. Market good such as minerals, timber, livestock, and recreation generate a portion of area jobs, income, payments to local communities and some revenue for the federal treasury. Other good from BLM lands such as outdoor recreation, scenery or clean water are valued by the people who use them but only a portion of this value is sometimes paid for in markets. The challenge is to accurately portray the costs or benefits associated with different combinations of these goods. Therefore, the values of traditional uses, increasing recreation use, alternative energy and niche markets must be considered alongside one-another and alongside the jobs and income they generate in the local area.

## Planning Question

- How will public land management affect social and economic conditions such as resiliency and sustainability of local economies?

*Socio-  
economic  
Effects of  
Public Land  
Management*

(Socio-economic  
Effects of Public Land Management)

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Community dependence on goods and services from public lands
- Increasing demand for recreational opportunities, alternative energy and new niche markets
- Social and economic diversity
- Disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. Executive Order 12898 requires Federal agencies to “identify and address the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

## *Visual Resource Management*

### Planning Issues

BLM is required to analyze impacts to scenic values from public land management actions and uses. The visual resource is managed by identifying visual resource values, establishing objectives for managing those values, and taking action to achieve the objectives. Conflicts with VRM values within the planning area are presented by increasing OHV use, rights-of-way, urban encroachment, range improvements, and energy developments.

### Planning Question

- Are the current visual resource classes appropriate to protect scenic values?

### Preliminary Planning Criterion

- Guidance described in BLM Manual Section 8400—Visual Resource Management.

## *Wildland Fire Management*

### Planning Issues

Wildfires occur within all plant communities in the planning area. The majority of these communities are sagebrush steppe, which has a historic fire-return interval of approximately 50 to 85 years. Fire suppression has led to unnatural accumulation of fuels, expansion

## **(Wildland Fire Management)**

of junipers into adjacent rangelands, and increased outbreak of insects and disease in forested areas. In addition, invasion by cheatgrass since the 1960s has decreased the fire return interval in some areas. These changes have altered fire regimes across the planning area by increasing the potential for large, severe fires and increased fire frequency. Native plant communities, especially those containing sagebrush, and the wildlife that depend upon them have been severely affected. Fire and fuels management is necessary to return fire's natural role into the ecosystem.

### **Planning Questions**

- What should be the landscape-level fire management goals and objectives?
- What is the appropriate management response to naturally occurring wildland fires?
- When and where should wildland fire use or prescribed fire be an accepted action in meeting overall resource management objectives?
- How can fire suppression activities be managed to minimize the adverse effects to resources while providing public health and safety and protecting private property?
- How will fire and fuels management activities be addressed throughout the Baker FO area, including within the wildland-urban interface?

### **Preliminary Planning Criteria**

- The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Scientific Assessment, September 1999.
- Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.
- President's Healthy Forests Initiative (August 2002) and National Fire Plan (2000).
- A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risk to Communities and the Environment – 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy, August 2001

- (Wildland Fire Management)**
- Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy – Implementation Plan, August 2001
  - Restoring Fire Adapted Ecosystems On Federal Lands A Cohesive Strategy for Protecting People and sustaining Natural Resources,

## *Cave and Karst Resources*

### Planning Issues

The planning area has no identified “significant” cave and karst formations. Significant cave resources within the planning area need to be identified.

### Planning Questions

- Are there any cave and karst resources within the planning area?
- Can they be managed to reduce resource and use conflicts?
- If found to exist, how are cave and karst resources to be protected.?

### Preliminary Planning Criterion

- Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988.

## *Paleontologic al Resources*

### Planning Issues

The planning area contains areas with vertebrate and plant paleontological localities that have potential to inform upon past environment, climate and biogeography. Opportunities for protection of scientifically important paleontological localities includes identification and evaluation, scientific study in cooperation with academic institutions and the John Day Fossil Beds, evaluation for land tenure adjustment, and management of dispersed activities such as off road vehicle use.

### Planning Question

- How will scientifically important paleontological localities be protected and managed?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
- Federal regulations for management and collection of fossil resources.
- BLM Manual (8270) Guidance for Paleontological Resource Management.
- Protect and preserve scientifically important paleontological localities for ongoing and future study.

## Planning Issues

The planning area contains approximately 25,716 acres of forests and woodlands and includes conifer stands dominated by Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine, aspen stands, and juniper. These areas provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, watershed protection, recreational and aesthetic values, and production of forest products. Fire suppression, plant succession, and recent prolonged drought conditions have changed the character of tree species composition and have increased stand densities in many forested areas. These changes have increased the risk of wildfire, forest insects, and disease epidemics and have created forest ecosystems that are less drought resistant.

Encroachment of juniper into sagebrush steppe is causing a decline in forage and habitat loss for a variety of wildlife species.

## Planning Questions

- What areas are available and have the capacity for planned, sustained-yield timber harvest or special forest product harvest?
- Where should juniper and aspen stands be actively managed for improved plant community health?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003.

(Paleontological Resources)

## *Forest and Woodland Management*

**(Forest and Woodland Management)**

- President's Healthy Forests Initiative (2002) and National Fire Plan (2000).
- The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Scientific Assessment, September 1999.
- BLM Manual 5400 – Sale of Forest Products (6/18/92).
- BLM Manual 5000-1 – Forest Management (Public Domain).
- Oregon/Washington Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
- Public access needs, public demand for forest products, effects on local economies.

## *Livestock Grazing*

### Planning Issues

Livestock can be properly managed to reduce conflicts with other resource values and public land uses. However, improper livestock grazing can be detrimental to many important ecological functions such as water quality, soil stability, wildlife and fisheries habitat, and native plant communities. The Baker FO currently authorizes livestock grazing on 358 allotments.

### Planning Questions

- How should livestock grazing be managed along riparian areas?
- How should livestock grazing be managed to reduce user conflicts and meet standards for rangeland health?
- What public lands are or are not available to livestock grazing?

### Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands in Oregon and Washington (1997).
- Importance of public land livestock grazing to local economies.
- Authorize use as provided for in the grazing regulations.

# *Recreation Management*

## Planning Issues

Public lands within the planning area provide for a wide array of recreation opportunities within varied settings. Water-based forms of recreation such as boating and fishing are popular on the Wallowa and Grande Ronde Rivers as well as the Snake River Reservoirs.

The Virtue Flat OHV Area is a very popular regional destination for motorized recreation. Use levels in both developed and undeveloped settings are increasing rapidly, accompanied by a slowly increasing demand for commercially permitted activities. Increased use has elevated demand for facilities, user information, and access. There are currently three SRMAs in the planning area: the Wallowa, Powder, and Grande Ronde Wild and Scenic Rivers.

## Planning Questions

- Are the current SRMA management plans appropriate to enhance recreation experiences and quality of life while reducing impacts to other resources?
- How will management of public lands affect the social and economic resiliency and sustainability of local economies?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Rapidly increasing demand for recreation opportunities and need to minimize effects to other resources.
- BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services and A Unified Strategy to Implement "BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services" Workplan.
- Unique management requirements of SRMAs.
- Ensuring proper maintenance of existing recreation facilities.
- Availability of law enforcement.
- FLPMA Sections 201 and 202.
- Recreation 2000.

**(Recreation Management)**

- BLM Manual 8351, Wild and Scenic Rivers Policy.
- M 2006-060, Incorporating Benefits-Based Management within Recreation and Visitor Services Program Policy Changes.

## *Travel Management*

### Planning Issues

Many tracts of public land within the planning area have no legal, or inadequate, public access. Population growth, rural and urban development, and increasing recreational activities have increased public desire and need for more access to public lands. If landowners are willing and funding is available, the BLM can negotiate and purchase easements for public access.

A goal of BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services is to "improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities on ... managed or partnered lands and waters." Under this goal, a primary objective is to "address comprehensive travel management through the land-use planning process and through statutorily required planning efforts to improve access and recreation opportunities and experiences."

OHV and OSV use has grown rapidly in recent years. The BLM has initiated new strategies to provide a foundation for the development of a comprehensive travel management program that includes provisions for limits on motorized recreation in some areas and for non-motorized recreation.

### Planning Questions

- Where is public access to public lands needed?
- Where are the appropriate areas to meet increased OHV/OSV demand or use?
- How will OHV/OSV use on public lands be managed to protect resources, reduce user conflicts, protect public safety, and provide quality recreation opportunities for all users of the public lands?
- Should single use designations be made as a part of resolving visitor use conflicts?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

(Travel Management)

- FLPMA Section 205.
- Executive Orders 11644 and 11989.
- Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services, BLM Workplan Fiscal Years 2003-2007.
- Bureau of Land Management National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use (2001).
- National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan (2002).
- The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Scientific Assessment, September 1999.

## Planning Issues

Land tenure adjustments can improve land management efficiency through consolidation of ownership. In addition, the public interest can be served through acquisition of lands containing values of high public interest or to improve legal access. The planning area contains many parcels of small acreages and presents opportunities for acquiring other lands containing values desirable for public ownership.

## *Land Tenure Adjustment*

## Planning Questions

- What criteria should be used to identify lands appropriate for acquisition, retention, and disposal?
- What resource values should remain in public ownership regardless of parcel size?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act of 2000.
- FLPMA Sections 203, 205, and 206.
- The need to retain and acquire access to public lands and resources.

**(Land Tenure Adjustment)**

- Acquisition of resources valuable for public ownership.
- Maintaining or enhancing local social and economic values.
- Improve management efficiency where possible.

## *Rights-of-Way*

### Planning Issues

The planning area contains utility, transportation, and communication rights-of-way. There has also been recent increased interest in development of wind energy resources. The locations of some of these sites may not be suitable for expansion into utility corridors, communication sites, and/or wind energy sites. It is important to identify or delineate those public lands suitable for rights-of-way to effectively manage the public lands and to minimize the impacts from the proliferation of separate rights-of way.

### Planning Questions

- What lands will be available for right-of-way corridors and wind energy development?
- What limitations should be placed on further development within existing or new utility, transportation, and communication rights-of-way corridors?

### Preliminary Planning Criteria

- FLPMA Section 503.
- The 1992 Western Regional Corridor Study.
- Minimize proliferation of separate rights-of-way by utilize existing/common rights-of-way to the extent possible.
- Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States (2005) and associated land use plan amendments.

## Minerals and Energy Management and Development

### Planning Issues

The development of mineral resources can affect other resources such as visual quality, cultural heritage, fish and wildlife habitat, forage availability, and soil stability. These effects can be minimized through carefully crafted mitigations including reclamation, containment of hazardous materials, and avoidance areas.

Abandoned mine workings, including tunnels, shafts, and highwalls may present potential safety hazards to the public and to wildlife and livestock. Some abandoned mines may have associated historic values while some abandoned mine workings may serve as important habitat for wildlife, such as bats.

### Planning Questions

- How will mineral authorizations and activities be managed to allow for mineral exploration and development while at the same time allow for multiple use and protection of natural resources?
- How should abandoned mine features be managed to protect public safety while providing for wildlife habitat and historic values?
- What are the needs of communities located in the Baker Resource area for mineral materials and the siting of community pits?
- What is the need and support for a designated recreational prospecting area?

### Preliminary Planning Criteria

- Mining law of 1872 as amended
- Mining and Mineral Policy Act (1970)
- National Minerals & Minerals Policy Research & Development Act (1980).
- Make public lands available for the orderly and efficient development of mineral resources.

## *Minerals and Energy Management and Development*

**(Minerals and Energy Management and Development)**

- Identify areas where special stipulations or requirements are necessary to minimize effects of development.
- Identify abandoned mine lands, including those that may be important for wildlife habitat.
- Identify areas that are to be withdrawn to protect non-mineral resource values.

## *Administrative Designations*

### Planning Issues

The planning area contains existing and potential areas requiring administrative designations for protection of unique resource values. These include research natural areas RNAs, ACECs, Historic Trails, and Wild and Scenic Rivers. These special designations provide specific management direction designed to protect the resource or unique characteristics for which the area was designated. There may be resources that are best protected by additional designations, and some designations may no longer be needed. Existing WSAs will remain unchanged by the RMP process.

### Planning Question

- What areas are suitable or require administrative designations to protect unique resource values?

### Preliminary Planning Criteria

- FLPMA Sections 102, 201, and 202.
- BLM manual 8351, Wild and Scenic River Policy.
- Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review, BLM Handbook

## What is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)?

FLPMA Section 103 (43 US Code 1702[a]) and 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1601.0-5(a) describes ACECs as “areas within the public lands where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.” Therefore, only BLM-administered lands are included in ACEC boundaries.

Designation of an ACEC in and of itself does not automatically prohibit or restrict other uses in the area. The one exception is that a mining plan of operation is required for any proposed mining activity within a designated ACEC. The ACEC designation is an administrative designation that is accomplished through the land use planning process. It is unique to BLM in that no other agency uses this form of designation.

The intent of Congress in mandating the designation of ACECs through FLPMA was to give priority to the designation and protection of areas containing unique and significant resource values. The BLM staff will follow guidance set forth in BLM Manual 1613 for the process of identifying and evaluating potential ACECs. The RMP will document the first three steps in the process: compiling a list of areas recommended for ACEC designation, obtaining information on relevance and importance, and evaluating each resource or hazard to determine if it meets both the relevance and importance criteria. The remaining two steps, public comment

## Planning Issues

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and BLM policy (Manual 1613 [BLM 1988a]) require the BLM to give priority to the designation and protection of ACECs during the land use planning process.

## *Areas of Critical Envi- ronmental Concern*

**(Areas of Critical  
Environmental Concern)**

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

The BLM will analyze the ten existing ACECs to verify that they contain values that meet the relevance and importance criteria for continued management as ACECs. The BLM will also evaluate additional areas as potential ACECs by determining whether new areas contain the relevant and important criteria necessary for ACEC management.

## Planning Question

- What public lands within the Baker Resource Area meet the relevant and importance criteria to meet the requirements for designation and management as an ACEC?

## Preliminary Planning Criteria

- FLPMA Section 202 (43 U.S.C. 1712(a) gives priority to the designation of areas of critical environmental concerns
- (43 US Code 1712[c][3]), 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.7-2 explains the relevance and importance criteria
- BLM Manual 1613 (BLM 1988a) specifies the necessary constraints and mitigation measures for ACECs.
- BLM Handbook H-1601-1 Administrative designations – provides the process for evaluation and designation of ACECs

## Steps in the Process

This section summarizes the five main steps in the identification and evaluation of ACECs.

### 1 Nomination

BLM staff, other agencies, or members of the public may nominate ACECs at any time, but they are only designated during the BLM land use planning process. External nominations from agencies and

the public generally are solicited during an RMP's scoping process. In addition, BLM regulations require reconsideration of existing ACECs during RMP revision (BLM 1988a).

**(Areas of Critical  
Environmental Concern)**

## 2 Evaluation of Nominations for Relevance and Importance

Each nominated area is evaluated to determine if it meets the relevance and importance criteria listed in BLM Manual 1613. A nomination must meet one or more of the relevance criteria and the importance criteria to be considered a potential ACEC.

### Relevance Criteria

- Does the area contain one or more of the following values?
  1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to native Americans);
  2. A fish or wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species, or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity);
  3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relict plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features); and/or
  4. A natural hazard (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the RMP process that it has become part of a natural process.

### Importance Criteria

Does the value, resource, system, process, or hazard have substantial significance or value? Does it meet one or more of the following criteria?

**(Areas of Critical  
Environmental Concern)**

1. Does it have more than locally significant qualities that give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource?
2. Does it have qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change?
3. Has it been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA?
4. Does it have qualities that warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare?
5. Does it pose a significant threat to human life and safety or property?

# Glossary of Special Terms

## Area of Critical Environmental Concern

FLMPA and BLM regulations define an ACEC as an area “within public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.”

## Desired Future Condition

The condition of rangeland resources on a landscape scale that meets management objectives. It is based on ecological, social, and economic considerations during the land planning process. It is usually expressed as ecological status or management status of vegetation (species composition, habitat diversity, and age and size class of species) and desired soil qualities (soil cover, erosion, and compaction).

## Proper Functioning Condition

This term is used both as a monitoring method and as a condition description. Riparian wetlands function properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris is present to dissipate stream energy associated with high water flows. The functioning condition of these areas is influenced by geomorphic features, soil, water, and vegetation. Nonfunctional riparian areas are clearly not providing adequate vegetation, landform, or woody debris to dissipate steam energy and are not reducing erosion or improving water quality.

## Research Natural Area (RNA)

An RNA is a type of ACEC that is assigned through the ACEC designation process. RNAs may include acreage within BLM-administered public lands established and managed to protect ecological processes, conserve the biological diversity, and provide opportunities for observational activities associated with research and education.

## Travel Designations

**Closed Area Designation**—An area where OHV use is prohibited. Use may be allowed for certain reasons: however, such use shall be made only with the approval of the authorized officer.

**Limited Area Designation**—An area restricted at certain times, in certain areas, and/or to certain vehicular use. The restrictions may be of any type.

**Open Area Designation**—Any area where all types of vehicle use are permitted at all times in the area subject to the operating regulations and vehicle standards set forth in 43 Code of Federal Regulations 8341 and 8342.

# How you can become involved

The planning process will not be complete without your involvement. Your knowledge and concern for these lands complements our understanding and helps us to establish goals and objectives for the future management of these resources and resource uses.

Please review the identified need for change items for each resource and resource use provided in this information package. Where you have experience with a particular resource or resource use, or where you would be directly affected by an identified change in direction or new direction, please describe your concerns for us in a letter or e-mail.

Also, please include any specific information you may have to support this concern. We also ask that you review the Planning Considerations section (e.g., planning criteria) and provide comment as to how these can be improved or strengthened.

Your written comments will help the RMP team to incorporate your concerns and identify issues to be addressed during this planning effort. We look forward to your participation at the upcoming scheduled public meetings.

Your written comments may be e-mailed to [allison\\_kuehl@blm.gov](mailto:allison_kuehl@blm.gov) or sent directly to:

**Bureau of Land Management  
Attn: Baker RMP Planning Team  
PO Box 947  
Baker City, OR 97814-1408**

An Internet web site, provided below, is available to provide you with the latest information regarding the Baker RMP planning effort.

<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/bakerrmp>

## REMINDER

Please, to consider your comments during the alternative development process, we must receive your comments **no later than July 30, 2008**. To keep you informed, we can mail you materials similar to this briefing package throughout the planning effort. However, if you wish to remain on the mailing list, you must inform us in writing or attend one of the public meetings.

If we do not receive written comments from you OR a written request to stay on the mailing list OR if you do not attend one of the scheduled public meetings, your name will be removed and you will not receive any additional information by mail.





## **Continue To Participate**

Yes! I can't make any of the public meetings but please keep me on the mailing list!

My Name is: \_\_\_\_\_

My Street Address is: \_\_\_\_\_

My City, State, and Zip Code are: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to:

**Bureau of Land Management**  
Attn: Baker RMP Planning Team  
PO Box 947  
Baker City, OR 97814-1408





*Public Scoping  
Information  
Package*

# Baker Resource Management Plan

*June, 2008*



United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Vale District  
Baker Field Office