

**SOUTH COAST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
PALM SPRINGS-SOUTH COAST FIELD OFFICE**

Proposed Planning Criteria

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to revise the South Coast Resource Management Plan (RMP). The South Coast RMP provides guidance for the management of approximately 300,000 acres of BLM administered public lands in portions of five Southern California counties: San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, and Los Angeles.

The BLM invites the public to participate in this planning effort. Citizens are requested to help identify issues or concerns and to provide input on BLM's proposed planning criteria. The following summarizes the existing plan and proposed planning criteria.

BACKGROUND

In 1994 the BLM completed the South Coast RMP to provide guidance for managing public lands in the South Coast Resource Area of Southern California. This planning area encompassed 296 parcels of public land totaling 129,000 acres and an additional 167,000 acres of non-federal surface with federal mineral estate scattered throughout Los Angeles, Orange, southwestern San Bernardino, western Riverside, and western San Diego Counties. The boundaries of the South Coast Resource Area have not changed since 1994 and the planning area will remain the same for this proposed plan revision.

The South Coast RMP addressed five major issues: 1) land tenure adjustment and use authorizations, 2) special status species (threatened, endangered, and sensitive), 3) open space, 4) recreation and public access, and 5) oil and gas leasing and sand and gravel development.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the plan revision is to update the South Coast RMP to: 1) ensure consistency, to the legal extent possible, with the various multi-species planning efforts and partnership agreements BLM is working to establish throughout the South Coast region, 2) re-evaluate management direction in light of new information and change in circumstances, 3) assess the impact of BLM management on threatened and endangered species listed since 1993 through formal consultation with the USFWS, 4) assess the energy related needs of the region and meet the objectives of the President's energy plan, and 5) address issues raised in scoping.

PRELIMINARY PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria (43 CFR 1610.4-2) are parameters which guide development of the plan revision to ensure the planning process is tailored to the issues and that unnecessary data collection is avoided. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, and the result of coordination with the public, Tribes, and other Federal, state and local government agencies. The following is a preliminary list of planning criteria for the SCRMP revision.

General Planning Criteria

- The plan will be completed in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and all other applicable laws.
- The planning process will include an environmental impact statement that will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.
- The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing public lands within the South Coast Planning Area.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference the *Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference all prior wilderness designations and wilderness study area findings that affect public lands in the planning area.
- The plan will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance detailed in Appendix C of the BLM's Planning Handbook.
- Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.
- The scope of analysis will be consistent with the level of analysis in approved plans and in accordance with Bureau-wide standards and program guidance.
- Geospatial data will be automated within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to facilitate discussions of the affected environment, alternative formulation, analysis of environmental consequences, and display of the results.
- Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints.

Specific Planning Criteria for the South Coast Planning Area

Development of alternatives will be based on the following proposed planning criteria:

- Promote long-term recovery and viability of native flora and fauna.
- Would not unduly burden Bureau resources and funding capability, including maintenance activities.
- Would consider the ability to manage and implement approved actions relative to the urban/wildland interface, the public/private interface, and border related national security concerns.
- Seek to achieve common goals set forth in Habitat Conservation Plans.
- Selection of the preferred alternative shall be conducted in close coordination with the local jurisdictions to promote land management consistency, effectiveness, and cost efficiency across jurisdictional boundaries.

These proposed planning criteria will also address the following specific elements:

Valid Existing Rights and Other Authorizations

Nothing in this proposed Plan revision shall be construed as terminating any valid lease, permit, patent, right-of-way, or other land use right or authorization existing on the date of approval of the SCRMP Revision. The SCRMP revision shall apply only to BLM-managed public lands and shall not be construed to affect activities on adjacent private, State, Tribal or other Federal agency lands.

Consistency with Other Federal, State, Tribal and local governments

In accordance with BLM planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.3-2, BLM planning documents shall be consistent with officially approved resource related plans, policies and programs of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian Tribes, so long as the guidance and plans are consistent with the purposes, policies and programs of Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands.

The need for definitive decisions and yet flexibility in BLM planning documents is of particular importance for multi-jurisdictional planning efforts such as the State's Natural Communities Conservation Planning program and multi-species habitat conservation planning, to which BLM continues to be a major contributor.

This planning process will involve Native American tribal governments and will provide strategies for protecting recognized traditional uses by Native Americans of the public lands and resources.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designations

The BLM will consider designating new ACECs or modifying existing ACECs in accordance with direction provided in 43 CFR 1610.7-2.

Wildlife Management

The BLM recognizes the State's responsibility to manage wildlife, and in accordance with regulations, BLM will consult with the California Department of Fish and Game before establishing no-hunting zones or periods for the purposes of protecting public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment.

Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area Designations

BLM planning guidance (H-1601-1) requires all OHV area designations to be conducted through the 43 CFR 1600 land use planning process. OHV area designations determine whether parcels of public lands are closed, limited, or open to OHV use. A Travel Management Plan, including route designations, may also be included in the planning process, though route designations are considered activity level plan decisions. The plan revision proposes to include a Travel Management Plan in addition to OHV area designations.

Cultural Resources

This plan revision will be consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act and other cultural resource laws, 36 CFR 800 and Executive Orders.

Planning and NEPA Guidance

The proposed plan revision will not amend the majority of the decisions, goals and objectives established in the 1994 SCRMP. However, these decisions will be evaluated and those that are determined to still be valid will be carried forward into the revised SCRMP.

Wilderness

Designated Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

The SCRMP revision will establish management guidance for all designated wilderness and wilderness study areas.

Management of Other Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

The SCRMP revision will evaluate lands outside of designated wilderness and WSAs (including acquired lands) for wilderness characteristics and determine appropriate means to manage them.

California Coastal National Monument

Issues and allocations that pertain to the California Coastal National Monument will not be considered within this planning process.