

FOUR RIVERS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

DRAFT PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria primarily identify the legal, regulatory, and policy authorities and requirements that direct or limit the ability of the BLM to resolve issues. BLM managers can also identify additional factors to guide decision making, analysis and data collection during planning.

Overall, planning criteria describe:

- the general and resource-specific standards, rules and measures that constrain or shape decisions;
- guide the development of the RMP/EIS to ensure it is tailored to the identified issues; and
- identify factors and data to consider in making decisions and gathering data to deter unnecessary data collection and analysis.

Planning criteria also streamline the plan's preparation; establish standards, rules, and measures to be used; guide and direct the resolution of issues through the planning process; and indicate factors and data that must be considered in making decisions. The following general planning criteria will be considered in developing the RMP/EIS.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) provides the authority for BLM land use planning. The following summary of FLPMA requirements is addressed in BLM Manual 1601.

Section 201 requires the Secretary of the Interior to prepare and maintain an inventory of the public lands and their resources and other values, giving priority to ACECs.

Section 202(c)(1-9) requires that, in developing land use plans, the BLM shall use and observe the following principles of multiple use and sustained yield:

- Use a systematic interdisciplinary approach.
- Give priority to the designation and protection of areas of critical environmental concern.
- Rely, to the extent it is available, on the inventory of the public lands; consider present and potential uses of the public lands.
- Consider the relative scarcity of the values involved and the availability of alternative means and sites for realizing those values.
- Weigh long-term benefits to the public against short-term benefits.
- Provide for compliance with applicable pollution control laws, including State and Federal air, water, noise or other pollution standards or implementation plans.

- Consider the policies of approved State and tribal land resource management programs, develop land use plans that are consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent possible consistent with Federal law and the purposes of this Act.

Section 202(d) provides that all public lands, regardless of classification, are subject to inclusion in land use plans, and that the Secretary may modify or terminate classifications consistent with land use plans.

Section 202(f) and Section 309(e) provide that Federal, State, and local governments and the public be given adequate notice and an opportunity to comment on the formulation of standards and criteria for, and to participate in, the preparation and execution of plans and programs for the management of the public lands.

Section 302(a) requires the Secretary to manage BLM lands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with available land use plans developed under Section 202 of FLPMA.

The BLM Planning Handbook H-1601-1 relies on available inventories (with updates) of the public lands, their resources, and other values to reach sound management decisions.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires the consideration and public availability of information regarding the environmental impacts of major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. This includes the consideration of alternatives and mitigation of impacts.

The Clean Air Act of 1990 requires Federal agencies to comply with all Federal, State and local requirements regarding the control and abatement of air pollution. This includes abiding by the requirements of State Implementation Plans.

The Clean Water Act of 1987 establishes objectives to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's water.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 requires Federal land managers to comply with all Federal, State, and local requirements, administrative authorities, processes, and sanctions regarding the control and abatement of water pollution in the same manner and to the same extent as any nongovernmental entity.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 requires:

Section 1531(b) provides a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved and provides a program for the conservation of such endangered and threatened species.

Section 1531(c)(1) requires all Federal agencies to seek to conserve endangered and threatened species and utilize applicable authorities in furtherance of the purposes of the Endangered Species Act.

Section 1536(a) requires all Federal agencies to avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of any species that is listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered or destroying or adversely modifying its designated or proposed critical habitat.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 requires Federal land management agencies to identify potential river systems and then study them for potential designation as wild, scenic, or recreational rivers.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 authorizes the President to make recommendations to Congress for Federal lands to be set aside for preservation as wilderness.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 protects cultural resources on Federal lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 expands protection of historic and archaeological properties to include those of national, State, or local significance and directs Federal agencies to consider the effects of proposed actions on properties eligible for or included in the National Register of Historic Places.

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 establishes a national policy to protect and preserve the right of American Indians to exercise traditional Indian religious beliefs and practices.

The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to establish grazing districts, or additions thereto and/or modify the boundaries thereof.

The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 provides that the public rangelands be managed so that they become as productive as feasible in accordance with management objectives and the land use planning process.

The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes and governs prospecting and mining for economic minerals, such as gold and silver, on federal public lands.

Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 authorizes and governs leasing of public lands for developing deposits of coal, phosphates, petroleum, natural gas and other minerals in the United States.

Energy Policy Act of 2005 authorizes the Department of the Interior to grant leases for activities that involve the production, transportation, or transmission of various energy resources.

Executive Orders 11644, and 11989 establish policies and procedures to ensure that off-road vehicle use shall be controlled so as to protect public lands.

Executive Order 13007 requires Federal agencies to the extent practicable, permitted by law, and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions to:

- Accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners;
- Avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites.

Executive Order 13112 provides that no Federal agency shall authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species unless, pursuant to guidelines that it has prescribed, the agency has determined and made public its determination that the benefits of such actions clearly outweigh the potential harm caused by invasive species; and that all feasible and prudent measures to minimize risk or harm will be taken in conjunction with the actions.

3.1 Specific Guidance

In addition to the general criteria listed above, the following program-specific criteria will apply to individual program decisions. Most of the program specific guidance comes from the Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1).

Air quality: Under the Clean Air Act, BLM lands were given a Class II air quality classification. This classification allows deterioration associated with moderate, well controlled industrial and population growth. All lands will be managed under Class II standards unless they are reclassified by the State as provided for in the Clean Air Act.

Water Quality: BLM will incorporate applicable best management practices or other conservation measures into the RMP for specific programs and activities. Water quality will be maintained or improved in accordance with State and Federal standards.

Vegetation Management:

- Identify the desired future conditions for vegetative resources, including the desired mix of vegetative types, structural stages, and landscape and riparian functions, and provide for native plant, fish, and wildlife habitats. Idaho Standards for Rangeland

Health establish the minimum standards that will be applied to the development of the desired future conditions.

- Designate priority plant species and habitats, including Special Status Species and populations of plant species recognized as significant for at least one factor such as density, diversity, size, public interest, remnant character, or age.
- Identify the actions needed to achieve desired vegetative conditions.
- Use the guidance provided in the Management Considerations for Sagebrush (*Artemisia*) in the Western United States: a selective summary of current information about the ecology and biology of woody North American sagebrush taxa.

Noxious Weed Control: Noxious weed control will be conducted in accordance with the integrated weed management guidelines and design features identified in the Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and the Final Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (PER) and the statewide Noxious and Invasive Weed Environmental Assessment (EA) of 2007.

Cultural Resources: Identify area-wide criteria and use restrictions that apply to special cultural resource issues that may affect the location, timing, or method of development or use of other resources.

Visual Resources: Manage visual resources in accordance with VRM objectives. Designate VRM management classes for all areas of BLM land based on an inventory of visual resources and management considerations for other resource uses. VRM management classes may differ from VRM inventory classes based on management priorities for land uses.

Special Status Species: BLM sensitive species will be managed such that BLM actions do not contribute to the need to list any species as threatened or endangered. Apply the guidance contained in the Framework to Assist in Making Sensitive Species Habitat Assessments for BLM Administered Public Lands in Idaho.

Fish and Wildlife: Work with State and Federal wildlife agencies to describe existing and desired populations and habitat conditions for major habitat types that support a wide variety of game and non-game species. Identify actions and area-wide use restrictions needed to achieve desired populations and habitat conditions while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationships.

Fire Management: Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated on a landscape scale through the planning process. The response to wildland fire will be based on ecological, social, and legal consequences of fire. The RMP will set the objectives for the use of fire and the desired

future conditions of the public lands. The following categories will be identified to achieve the desired future conditions.

- A. Areas where wildland fire is not desired at all. In these areas, emphasis should be placed on prevention, detection, rapid response, and non-fire fuels treatments. Fire suppression may be required to prevent unacceptable resource damage or to prevent loss of life and property.
- B. Areas where unplanned fire is likely to cause negative effects, but these effects can be mitigated or avoided through fuels management, prevention of human-caused fire, or other strategies.
- C. Areas where fire is desired to manage ecosystems but where there are constraints because of the existing vegetation conditions due to fire exclusion (more substantial nonfire fuels treatments may be necessary prior to the use of prescribed fire).
- D. Areas where fire is desired, and where there are no constraints associated with resource conditions, or social, economic, or political considerations.
- E. Broad treatment levels in areas B through D above.

Livestock Grazing: Decisions identifying lands available or not available for livestock grazing may be revisited through the RMP revision process. This analysis would consider other uses for the land; terrain characteristics; soil, vegetation, and watershed characteristics; the presence of undesirable vegetation, including significant invasive weed infestations, and the presence of other resources that may require special management or protection, such as special status species or ACECs.

For lands available for grazing, the land use plan would describe how those lands would be managed to become as productive as feasible for livestock grazing, including a description of possible grazing management practices, i.e., grazing systems, range improvements, changes in seasons of use and/or stocking rates. The plan will identify priorities for completing assessments based on specific natural resource objectives and conditions. Initial actions and assumptions for achieving Idaho's Standards for Rangeland Health will be identified.

Recreation: The public lands will be managed to enhance recreational opportunities. The BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services and the Unified Strategy will be used as guides. All lands will be evaluated to determine whether they fit the criteria for designation as either a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) or an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). For each SRMA selected, a market-based strategy will be developed to identify whether it should be managed for a *destination* recreation-tourism market; a *community* recreation-tourism market; or an *undeveloped* recreation-tourism market. SRMAs with more than one distinct, primary market will be divided into separate areas. Each SRMA identified will have distinct Recreation Management Zones. In each zone, the Land Use Plan will identify the recreation niche to be served; the specific recreation opportunities to be produced; the activities,

experiences and benefits that will be provided in that zone; the recreation setting that is required to produce the desired recreation experiences and benefits; and the administrative support actions necessary to attain recreation management prescriptions and settings.

Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management: The RMP will delineate travel management areas and designated off-highway vehicle (OHV) management areas. Comprehensive trails and travel management will address all resource use aspects (e.g. recreational, traditional, agricultural, and commercial) and all accompanying modes of travel on public lands. For motorized vehicle activities, all areas of public lands must be classified as Closed, Open or Limited. In Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), motorized and mechanized travel must be limited to ways and trails existing at the time the area became a WSA. Future travel designations may be made in the RMP for a WSA in the event it is released from study.

If it is not practical to define or delineate the travel management network during the land use planning process, a preliminary network must be identified and a process established to select a final travel management network. In this case, the RMP must produce a map of a preliminary route network; define short-term management for road and trail access in areas not completed; provide a clear planning and public participation sequence for road and trail identification; provide a schedule for areas not yet completed. If the decision on delineating travel management networks is deferred in the land use plan, all deferred work should normally be completed within five years of the signing of the Record of Decision (ROD).

Lands and Realty: Identify lands available for disposal; criteria under which proposed Section 205 acquisitions or interest in lands would occur; proposed withdrawal areas; where and under what circumstances land use authorizations such as major leases and land use permits may be granted; right-of-way corridors, avoidance areas, and exclusion areas. All public lands will be retained in Federal ownership unless determined that disposal will serve the public's interest. Criteria developed to identify lands for acquisition will be based on public benefits, management considerations, and public access needs. Specific actions to implement the land tenure decisions will include full public participation. Public lands will generally be available for transportation and utility rights-of-way except where specifically prohibited by law or regulation (such as WSAs), or in areas specifically identified for avoidance or exclusion to protect resource values.

Energy and Minerals: Identify areas open or closed to the operation of the mining laws, mineral material disposal, and non-energy leasing. In open areas, identify any area-wide terms, conditions or special considerations needed to protect resource values. Except where specifically withdrawn to protect resource values, public lands will be available for energy and mineral exploration and development based on applicable Federal and state laws and regulations. Mitigation measures will be developed to protect resource values.

Special Designations: Consistent with Section 202 of FLPMA, analyze nominations from the public for special designations; in particular, WSAs to be managed under the interim management policy. Update inventory of lands with wilderness characteristics in the planning area and identify decisions to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics (naturalness, opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation). Include goals and objectives to protect the resource and management actions necessary to achieve these objectives. For authorized activities include conditions of use that would avoid or minimize impacts to wilderness characteristics.

Riparian Areas, Flood-plains and Wetlands: Generally riparian areas, flood plains and wetlands will be managed to protect, improve and restore their natural functions to benefit water storage, groundwater recharge, water quality, and fish and wildlife values. The Clean Water Act and the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health will be used to establish the minimum standards that will be applied to the development of the desired future conditions.