

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The United States (US) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and environmental impact statement (EIS) to provide direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the Idaho Falls District, Pocatello Field Office (PFO) in southeastern Idaho and to analyze the environmental effects that could result from implementing the alternatives addressed in this plan. The affected lands are currently being managed under two separate land use plans: the Malad Management Framework Plan (MFP) (BLM 1981a) and the Pocatello RMP (BLM 1988a).

The land use planning process is the key tool used by the BLM to manage resources and designate uses on public lands in coordination with tribal, state and local government, land users and interested public. Generally, an RMP does not result in a wholesale change of management direction. Accordingly, this RMP: (1) incorporates new information and regulatory guidance since the previous plans and (2) concentrates on providing management direction where it may be lacking or requiring clarification to resolve land use issues or conflicts. Current management direction that has proven effective and requires no change will be carried forward into this RMP as well as through the analysis process.

The RMP is being prepared using BLM planning regulations and guidance issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 US Code [USC] 1701 et seq.) and BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1 (BLM 2005a). An EIS is incorporated into this document to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) (CEQ 1978), and requirements of BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1 (BLM 1988b).

1.2 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The resource management planning process is a key tool used by the BLM, in collaboration with interested public parties, to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to managing public lands. The RMP is needed to respond to changing ecological, socioeconomic, institutional, and regulatory conditions that have occurred since the approval of the Malad MFP in 1981 and the Pocatello RMP in 1988. Many new laws, regulations, and policies have created additional public land management considerations. As a result, some of the decisions in the MFP and RMP are no longer valid, or have been superseded by requirements that did not exist when they were prepared. Likewise, user demands and impacts have evolved, requiring new management direction. Additionally, the use of two separate plans to manage one administrative unit represents a fragmented approach and complicates decision making.

The purpose of the Pocatello RMP is to provide a single, comprehensive land use plan that will guide multiple use management of the public lands and interests administered by the PFO. The plan provides objectives, land use allocations, and management direction to maintain, improve, or restore resource conditions and provide for the economic needs of local communities over the long term. The RMP incorporates new data, addresses land use issues and conflicts, specifies

where and under what circumstances particular activities will be allowed on public lands, and incorporates the mandate of multiple uses in accordance with FLPMA. The RMP does not describe how particular programs or projects would be implemented or prioritized; rather, those decisions are deferred to more-detailed implementation-level planning.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The PFO area boundary defines the planning area assessed in this RMP. The planning area encompasses 5,142,100 acres in Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Bonneville, Caribou, Cassia, Franklin, Oneida, and Power Counties of southeastern Idaho (**Figure 1-1**). About 613,800 acres, or 12 percent of the planning area, are administered by the BLM. The US Department of Interior has been charged with managing the federal mineral estate. The BLM within the Department is the agency responsible for administering the mineral estate on behalf of the US. This includes split estate lands and most federal lands with surface managed by other agencies such as the USFS. Land ownership in the planning area is mixed and includes other lands administered by the federal government, the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, State of Idaho lands, and private property. Over 34 percent of the planning area land is administered by the federal government, including the BLM, the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service), and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). **Table 1-1** highlights the ownership pattern of the planning area.

Table 1-1. Acres of Land Status within the Planning Area

Land Status	Acres	Percentage of Planning Area
BLM	613,800	12%
Forest Service	1,102,400	21%
US Fish & Wildlife Service Refuges	35,900	1%
Fort Hall Indian Reservation	519,800	10%
State of Idaho	324,400	6%
Water	99,500	2%
Private	2,446,300	48%
TOTAL	5,142,100	100%

Note: Numbers rounded to nearest 100 acres

Management direction and actions outlined in the RMP apply only to BLM-managed public lands in the planning area, and to federal mineral estate under BLM jurisdiction that may lie beneath other surface ownership. No specific measures have been developed for private, state, or other federal lands. However, given that private, state and other federal lands are interspersed with public lands, these lands could be influenced or be indirectly affected by BLM management actions.

1.4 SCOPING AND PLANNING ISSUES

1.4.1 SCOPING PROCESS

Early in the planning process, the public was invited to identify planning issues and concerns relating to the management of public lands and resources and uses in the planning area.

The formal scoping period began with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on November 14, 2001. The scoping period for receipt of public comments ended June 30, 2003.

A public scoping letter and briefing package were prepared and mailed to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Council, Land Use Policy Commission, federal, state and local agencies, interest groups, and members of the general public on April 23, 2003. The mailing list was compiled by the PFO and included over 800 entries. The scoping letter and briefing package were also made available for public view on the Internet in April 2003. The briefing package served to inform the recipients of the public scoping process, the scheduled open house scoping meetings, background information on the purpose and need for the planning activity and identified Need for Change Topics.

Public scoping meetings were held throughout southeastern Idaho in Montpelier on May 28, 2003; Malad on May 29, 2003; Fort Hall on June 5, 2003; Pocatello on June 10, 2003; and Soda Springs on June 11, 2003. The BLM provided the local media with press releases announcing the time, location and purpose of these meetings. The format for the scoping meetings featured informal, one-on-one discussion by individual interdisciplinary team (IDT) members with members of the public who attended (Chapter 5 details discussion on scoping and public collaboration). A key component of the scoping process was to provide the public the opportunity to identify issues and concerns to be addressed in the RMP based upon the Need for Change Topics presented at these open house meetings.

1.4.2 NEED FOR CHANGE TOPICS

Need for Change Topics were identified by the planning team through an extensive review of the Malad MFP (1981) and Pocatello RMP (1988). This resulted in the identification of land management direction for resources and uses that could be carried forward and management direction that needed to be changed to address: 1) new laws, regulations and policies, 2) changed conditions on the public lands, and 3) new and emerging demands on the public land. It is important to note that resolution of Need for Change Topics may require changes in management direction not only for that particular resource and use, but also changes in management direction for other interdependent resources and uses. For example, a management approach for protecting a sensitive plant species may require changing management direction for livestock grazing in the affected area. Thus, the need to change management for special status species may influence the management direction for other resource programs. Likewise, while livestock grazing was not initially identified as a Need for Change Topic, livestock grazing management direction varies by alternative in order to address resource concerns and specific management direction of other resources. The Need for Change Topics and land management direction to be developed in the Pocatello RMP is described by resource/use in **Table 1-2**.

Table 1-2. Description of Need for Change/Management Direction by Resource/Use.

Resource/Use	Description of Need for Change/Management Direction
Vegetation	Management direction is needed to: 1) identify desired future condition of vegetation types, 2) maintain or move riparian areas toward Proper Functioning Condition (PFC), 3) identify reclamation guidance for rehabilitating public lands after disturbance, including mining activities, fire or other ground disturbing activities.
Special Status Species	Management direction is needed for all special status species habitat (flora and fauna), including great sage-grouse, and other associated resource uses. This direction would be based on the most recent scientific guidance for the management of affected species.
Fire Management	Management direction is needed to: 1) identify wildland fire use (WFU) areas, 2) treatment levels, and 3) fire management restrictions.
Recreation	Management direction is needed to: 1) identify Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) areas as open, limited or closed and 2) identify over snow vehicle use limitations, 3) consider identifying the Oneida Narrows as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) providing enhanced direction for the increasing recreational use, and 4) protect river values and uses for the Blackfoot SRMA.
Lands & Realty	Management direction is needed to: 1) identify management areas or zones of public lands planned for retention or available to be considered for disposal, and 2) identify areas available for potential alternative energy development, such as wind, solar, or biomass, consistent with the President's National Energy Policy.
Minerals	Management direction is needed to address the process of mining and reclamation to ensure containment and control of hazardous substances such as selenium and other potential contaminants to make sure post mining land use is safe and productive providing for future well-suited resources/uses.
Special Designations	Management direction is needed for the consideration of an Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC) and Wild and Scenic River segments.

Public comments received by the planning team on these Need for Change Topics were reviewed, categorized and analyzed to identify specific issues and concerns to be addressed in the Pocatello RMP.

1.4.3 ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Issue identification is the first step of the nine-step BLM planning process. A planning issue is a major controversy or dispute regarding management of resources or uses on the public lands that can be addressed in a variety of ways. Analysis of the comments was completed and a Scoping Summary Report finalized in September of 2003 (BLM 2003a). After consideration of public responses, six major planning issues were identified.

The criteria used to identify issues included: 1) identifying if the effects would approach or exceed standards or a threshold, 2) would substantially change a resource, 3) would be controversial, 4) would offer a wide range of opportunities, or 5) would cause disagreement regarding their environmental impact. These issues drive the formulation of the plan alternatives and addressing them has resulted in a range of management direction presented in four alternatives. While other concerns are addressed in the plan, management related to them may or may not change by alternative.

A summary of the six issues and public comments are as follows:

Issue 1: Off-Highway Vehicle Management

How will the increasing OHV use and associated conflicts be managed within the planning area?

Off-trail vegetation and soil damage, erosion, damage to riparian areas, spread of noxious weeds, and disturbance to wildlife were identified as concerns by a portion of the public. Large acreages of the resource area, like the Pocatello front, are being modified due to trail pioneering and the development of alternative routes over time. A portion of the public believes the BLM must take strong steps to limit OHV use and to restore damaged lands as part of the process. Some public feel that cross county travel should be prohibited. A portion of the public said the BLM needs to restrict all OHV use to designated roads and manage roads as closed unless marked open. Motorized vehicle use must not be allowed in areas with sensitive or highly erodible soils, or at times of the year when soil conditions are inappropriate for such use. Illegal routes should be closed and fully restored.

Some winter users feel the "open" designation for over snow vehicle use should be reconsidered. Over snow vehicles interfere with backcountry skiers' outdoor experience and also cause avalanche dangers. Certain areas should be closed to over snow vehicles and left open for skiers and foot travel.

Other comments encouraged the preservation of the public's historical and lawful OHV use. OHV access over the existing roads and trails on public land should continue. OHVs can also be an excellent vehicle to access otherwise difficult to access areas. Education can encourage respectful recreation that is not damaging to the resource. A portion of the public feel that the BLM needs to work with and educate user groups, OHV dealers, and OHV manufacturers to promote responsible OHV behavior and direct users to appropriate places to ride.

Issue 2: Phosphate Mining and Selenium Release

How does the BLM best manage the process of mining and reclamation to ensure containment and control of hazardous substances such as selenium and other potential contaminants?

Phosphate is the largest mineral resource in the PFO area. The BLM is mandated to promote orderly and efficient mining operations which maximize its mineral resources for the economic benefit of the public, while avoiding or minimizing environmental damage. Phosphate mining and processing are key components of southeast Idaho and Star Valley, Wyoming economies. Operators are required to return disturbed lands back to beneficial use at the completion of a mining operation, which is ensured through monitoring, reclamation, and reclamation bonds.

In 1996, the BLM and other regulatory agencies became aware of selenium releases from both active and inactive phosphate mines in the region. Recent investigations have shown that some types of waste rock generated by phosphate mining can release selenium and other contaminants to the environment. Elevated levels of selenium have been found in surface water, groundwater, vegetation, and in biota associated with phosphate mine activity. Locally, these occurrences exceed some state and federal water quality standards. Selenium has been linked to several

sheep kills on phosphate mine waste dumps. Federal and state investigations are currently evaluating the nature and extent of the selenium release and its effects on grazing, recreation, wildlife and human populations. Clean-up and remediation of affected sites would occur under an ongoing combined federal, state, and phosphate industry Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act project.

Issue 3: Public Access - Acquiring/Maintaining

How will the planning process address the need for acquiring and maintaining access to public lands while also protecting private property rights?

There is strong sentiment among the public that the RMP should solidify the rights of the public to access public lands. Some feel that the BLM must keep all historical routes to public lands open and, if possible, acquire rights-of-way on existing roads. A common concern is access to grazing allotments and farming areas. Public comments, with respect to access to BLM lands, included the following concerns:

- Some private landowners adjacent to public lands have locked gates and denied access;
- All individuals should have access to roads, streams, and rivers (such as the Blackfoot River public land) and that access should be kept open and available to the public for hunting, fishing, camping, floating, etc;
- Routes through private lands where the landowners do not want to provide access should be specifically identified and categorically removed from consideration; and
- Protection of landowner's property rights and litter control on public access to BLM.

Issue 4: Recreation Management

How will the increase in recreational use and demand for quality recreational opportunities be balanced within the planning area?

A portion of the public would like to see the Pocatello RMP recognize and start the process of managing the resources of the public lands with higher emphasis on recreational needs. It is easy to anticipate that increased population and use will bring increased pressure for the BLM to expand facilities. Planning efforts in southeast Idaho have shown a need for additional recreational opportunities in close proximity to the Pocatello and Idaho Falls areas. While dispersed recreation already takes place on BLM lands in the area, there will be an increased demand for destination recreation. These lands presently provide a wealth of dispersed recreation opportunities.

Others feel recreational use of the public lands, managed by the PFO, has environmental impacts, and these impacts can be severe depending on the use and on the habitat type. Recreation opportunities should not impact cultural, historical, tribal, paleontological, geological, biological, and other values. Certain types of uses are incompatible and must be separated so that user conflict is minimized. For instance, motorized use and hiking are generally incompatible. Management tools should include seasonal and visitor restrictions to prevent impacts to wildlife populations from increased use and recreation. Restrictions can take the form of seasonal closures, complete closures, or changes in use types or intensities. There

needs to be an emphasis on dispersed recreation instead of concentrating everything into a few small areas. The BLM was encouraged to operate from the frame of reference that demand will grow infinitely yet the land will always remain finite. Clearly, high quality recreational experiences depend on healthy habitats and ecosystems.

Issue 5: Sagebrush Ecosystems

What effects will future management of sagebrush ecosystems have on greater sage-grouse and sagebrush-obligate species?

Sagebrush plant communities across the West are besieged by an array of threats such as wildfire, weed invasions, conversion to agriculture and herbivory. Given the wide scale loss, fragmentation, and degradation of low elevation big sagebrush communities, the RMP should identify strategies to protect, improve, and restore them. Connectivity of sagebrush communities is a key component of greater sage-grouse habitat. Reestablishing connectivity of sagebrush communities, particularly communities occupied by sage grouse have long-term benefits for sage grouse populations. The RMP must focus on unfragmented core habitat for greater sage-grouse, pygmy rabbit, antelope, sage-steppe obligate migratory birds as well as gray flycatcher and other juniper dependent species. Actions are needed to ensure that there will not be a future need to list greater sage-grouse or other sagebrush-dependent species in Idaho as threatened or endangered. Efforts should be made to conserve and restore these species and their habitats.

Issue 6: Socioeconomics

How will social and economic benefits of commodity and amenity uses be balanced within the planning area?

A portion of the public feel amenities (nonconsumptive uses) derived from intact, healthy sagebrush communities, old growth pinion-juniper, wild and untrammeled vistas, native fish, wildlife habitat, properly functioning riparian areas, and clean water are more important than benefits derived from commodity (consumptive) type uses, such as timber harvesting, mining and livestock grazing. Particular comments indicate a desire that a higher emphasis be placed on recreational needs and less on extractive type uses.

Others feel commodity uses, such as livestock grazing, timber harvesting and mining, are appropriate uses of public lands and provide local and regional social and economic benefits. Some comments indicate management activities must operate within biological parameters in order to keep ecosystems healthy and to continue providing a stream of benefits to local communities and visitors alike.

1.4.4 Issues Considered but Not Further Analyzed

During scoping, several concerns were raised that are beyond the scope of this planning effort or represented questions on how the BLM would go about the planning process and implementation. There are several issues raised in scoping that are clearly of concern to the public but which are governed by existing laws and regulations (for example, water quality). Where certain management is already dictated by law or regulation, alternatives have not been

developed but management will instead be applied as “Management Common to All Alternatives.”

The Scoping Report (BLM 2003a) provides a comprehensive list of issues outside the scope of the RMP. The major issues considered but not analyzed further are summarized below and will not be analyzed further for the reasons stated.

Eliminate all livestock grazing. The BLM is mandated to provide for multiple uses, including livestock grazing. The Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (**Appendix A**) provides guidance to the BLM for evaluating the conditions of allotments. The BLM can adjust grazing activities to respond to land conditions.

Plan and zone private lands. The BLM does not have any authority to determine how private lands are used. Planning and zoning is done on a local level by county or municipal governments.

Control populations of beaver, raccoons, and predators, stock fish, and other wildlife management. The BLM manages habitat rather than populations and does not have the authority to determine what species will or should be controlled or reintroduced. The RMP may identify areas or parameters to be considered when other agencies propose wildlife management activities.

Implementation of Grasslands Reserve Program initiatives. The Grasslands Reserve Program is not administered by the BLM, rather by the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Forest Service.

Conduct special research. Various commenters requested that the BLM conduct specialized research, such as effects of pesticides and herbicides on aquatic species and effects of power lines, energy corridors, and wind energy sites on wildlife populations. The BLM periodically conducts specific research related to implementation activities on a project basis; however, the BLM is not a research agency but contributes funding to other agencies or institutions to conduct research. Research would be implemented on a case-by-case basis.

Provide a designated transportation network. The RMP provides direction in terms of what areas would be closed, restricted to designated trails or roads, or open. Travel management plans, that would provide specific route designations, would be prepared after the travel management direction is approved as part of this RMP.

Control the flow of water through the Oneida Narrows. The BLM does not have the authority to manage the release of water through Oneida Narrows. Management direction in the RMP recognizes the use of the water and flow variability.

Designate roadless areas as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). At this time the BLM can not propose any additional WSAs. Fourteen existing ACECs¹ (7 ACECs and 7 ACEC/Research Natural Areas [RNAs]) are re-designated with one new ACEC/RNA proposed and evaluated.

1.5 PLANNING CRITERIA

The FLPMA is the primary authority for the BLM's management of public lands. This law provides the overarching policy by which public lands will be managed and establishes provisions for land use planning, land acquisition and disposition, administration, range management, rights-of-way, designated management areas, and the repeal of certain laws and statutes. NEPA provides the basic national charter for environmental responsibility and requires the consideration and public availability of information regarding the environmental impacts of major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. In concert, these two laws provide the overarching guidance for administration of all BLM activities.

Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and guidelines that help to guide data collection, alternative formulation, and alternative selection in the RMP development process. In conjunction with the planning issues, planning criteria assure the planning process is focused. The criteria also help guide the final plan selection and provide a basis for judging the responsiveness of the planning options.

Preliminary planning criteria were developed prior to public scoping meetings to set the side boards for focused planning of the Pocatello RMP and to guide decision making by topic. These criteria were introduced to the public for review in May and June 2003 at all scoping meetings. The public was encouraged to comment on, and suggest additions to, these criteria at the meetings, through written correspondence and at the Pocatello RMP web site (www.id.blm.gov/planning/pocrmp), which has posted the criteria since April 2003.

Comments on the preliminary planning criteria were collected through June 30, 2003, and were incorporated, as appropriate. The final planning criteria, as summarized in **Table 1-3** were approved by the Acting District Manager in September 2003.

Table 1-3. Planning Criteria Summary

Resource or Use	Planning Criteria
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The principles of multiple use and sustained yield as set forth in FLPMA will be applied in the RMP. ➤ The RMP will comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. ➤ The RMP will be accompanied by an EIS that will comply with the NEPA.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All lands within the planning area will be managed in compliance with applicable local, state, tribal, and federal air quality laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans. This includes applicable conformity regulations for BLM initiated or authorized activities within designated nonattainment or maintenance areas.
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognize Idaho Non-Point Source Management Program Plans and relevant state water quality standards. ➤ Recognize Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) Total Maximum Daily Load program and other water quality programs. ➤ Incorporate appropriate management practices where applicable.
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incorporate program and activity Best Management Practices (BMPs), as appropriate. ➤ Incorporate Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. ➤ Incorporate guidance from scientific findings of the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project.

¹ During the RMP planning process all designated ACECs (7 ACECs and 7 ACEC/RNAs) were revisited and reviewed for appropriateness of the designation and management. Through this planning process, these 14 ACECs are being re-designated and management updated in the development of alternatives. All ACEC/RNAs are simply referred to as RNAs in this document.

Table 1-3. Planning Criteria Summary

Resource or Use	Planning Criteria
Riparian Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comply with Executive Orders 11990 (Floodplains) and Executive Order 11998 (Wetlands) ➤ Maintain, improve, and restore natural functions to benefit water storage, groundwater recharge, water quality, and fish and wildlife values. ➤ Design BMPs to maintain or improve resource integrity. ➤ Incorporate Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. ➤ Apply BLM Idaho Riparian Policy guidance as applicable. ➤ Incorporate Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan. ➤ Incorporate Visual Resource Management classifications.
Upland Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incorporate Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. ➤ Provide for the protection and restoration of native species. ➤ Provide for multiple use and sustained yield of forage for wildlife and domestic livestock. ➤ In consultation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), assure wildlife habitat is sustained.
Invasive/Noxious Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Integrate weed management guidelines and design features identified in the “Vegetation Treatment on BLM Land in the 13 Western States EIS” and the “Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program EIS.” ➤ Protect non-target and special status plant species during treatment(s). ➤ Incorporate Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. ➤ Consider availability of alternatives to mix or combine control methods to increase effectiveness of application techniques. ➤ Adhere to laws and executive orders requiring control of invasive species on federal land. ➤ Comply with Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species (February 1999).
Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation with Tribal Government(s) and the Idaho State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) to assist in evaluating planned cultural resources uses. ➤ Identify and protect of historical and cultural places. ➤ Protect, preserve, and enhance sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places. ➤ Through consultation with tribes, ensure that management measures are implemented in a manner that protects and provides access to sacred places in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and Executive Order 13007
Visual Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incorporate guidance described in BLM Manual Section 8400 – Visual Resource Management.
Special Status Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incorporate as applicable, Interior Columbia Basin Science Assessment guidance. ➤ Incorporate applicable conservation agreement and strategy plans (i.e., Bonneville Cutthroat Trout, and greater sage-grouse). ➤ Incorporate management actions that do not jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal species, or result in the destruction or modification of critical habitat. ➤ Incorporate Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. ➤ Incorporate management actions that protect sensitive species and do not contribute to the listing of species proposed for federal listing (candidate species).
Fish and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incorporate as applicable the Interior Columbia Basin Science Assessment guidance. ➤ Protect and preserve genetic integrity. ➤ Consider risks associated with federal listing of fish species. ➤ Protect and maintain the intrinsic and recreational values associated with native and appropriate nonnative species. ➤ Identify habitat needs in consultation with the IDFG. ➤ Protect critical deer and elk winter range and big game habitat.
Fire Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incorporate National Fire Plan direction. ➤ Ensure public health and safety in the wildland urban interface. ➤ Ensure the safety of the public and firefighters while protecting natural resources, historic properties, and private property. ➤ Coordinate with cooperators in developing community assistance plans.
Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement guidance and criteria contained in the PFO Programmatic Forestry Environmental Assessment, December 2000. ➤ Recognize the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Scientific Assessment, September 1999, and guidance contained in BLM Manual 5400/5000-12-a1. ➤ Incorporate Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. ➤ Need to enhance/protect wildlife habitat(s). ➤ Consider pre-European settlement stand composition. ➤ Address availability of access. ➤ Recognize public demand for forest products. ➤ Incorporate continuing effects of drought, insects, and disease. ➤ Inventory of Timber Production and Capability Classifications.
Livestock Grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conform with existing laws, regulations, and BLM policy pertaining to livestock grazing on public lands. ➤ Incorporate Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. ➤ Consider ecological site inventory information. ➤ Need to protect important biological resource functions that provide for soil stability, water quality, and healthy riparian and uplands vegetation communities, and maintain conditions for desired plant communities. ➤ Authorize use to minimize environmental impacts under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.
Recreation Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider availability of law enforcement. ➤ Consider need to provide for and enhance recreation opportunities to accommodate use and reduce impacts to resources. ➤ Consider lands identified as SRMA and those areas subject to special measures to protect resources or reduce conflicts among uses.

Table 1-3. Planning Criteria Summary

Resource or Use	Planning Criteria
Recreation Opportunities (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider need to ensure existing recreation facilities can be properly maintained prior to proposals and construction of new facilities. ➤ Consider need to provide and enhance recreation opportunities to accommodate use and reduce impacts to resources.
OHV Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Manage for public safety. ➤ Consider need to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other resources. ➤ Consider need to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats. ➤ Consider need to minimize conflicts between OHV use and other existing or proposed recreational uses. ➤ Ensure compatibility of OHV designations with designations and conditions on neighboring federal, state, county, and municipal subdivisions, taking into account safety, noise and other related factors. ➤ Comply with the BLM's National Off-Highway Vehicle Management Strategy. ➤ Comply with Executive Orders 11644 and 11989.
Rights-of-Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accommodate the West Wide Corridor Study Amendment and Programmatic EIS. ➤ Apply the appropriate policies and BMPs identified in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the <i>Wind Energy Development Programmatic EIS and Associated Land Use Plan Amendments, BLM 2005</i> ➤ Comply with Section 503 of FLPMA. ➤ Recognize the need to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate rights-of-way. ➤ Utilize existing/common rights-of-way to the extent possible. ➤ Identify public lands with existing rights-of-way corridors that may or may not be suitable for additional rights-of-way. ➤ Identify areas where corridors are not permitted. ➤ Identify conflicts with existing or potential resource values and uses. ➤ Consider Visual Resource Management classifications.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider the type and need. ➤ Consider conflicts with existing or potential resource values and uses. ➤ Comply with Section 205 of FLPMA. ➤ Consider cost and benefits.
Land Tenure Adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comply with Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act of 2000 and FLPMA of 1976. ➤ Facilitate access to public lands and resources. ➤ Maintain or enhance important resource values uses. ➤ Consider maintaining or enhancing local social and economic values. ➤ Improve management efficiency through the elimination of isolated tracts and consolidation of public lands.
Minerals and Energy Management/Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider the need to make public lands available for the orderly and efficient development of energy and mineral resources. ➤ Identify areas that are managed specifically to protect non-mineral resource values but may conflict with mineral resource development.
Special Designations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comply with FLPMA, Sections 201 and 202. ➤ Comply with Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review, BLM Handbook 8550-1. ➤ Rivers and streams will be analyzed for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) in accordance with BLM Manual 8351, Wild and Scenic Rivers Policy.
American Indian Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Manage to retain values that make cultural resources/areas significant to tribal members. ➤ Protect cultural use areas in cooperation with Tribal Government(s). ➤ Comply with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 and Amendments (post 1987) to the National Historic Preservation Act.
Treaty Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognize Fort Bridger Treaty rights with all associated management activities and uses.
Social and Economic Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognize the need to promote social and economic diversification and resiliency in southeastern Idaho. ➤ Recognize increasing demand for outdoor recreational opportunities. ➤ Recognize that local community economies are dependant on goods and services from public lands.

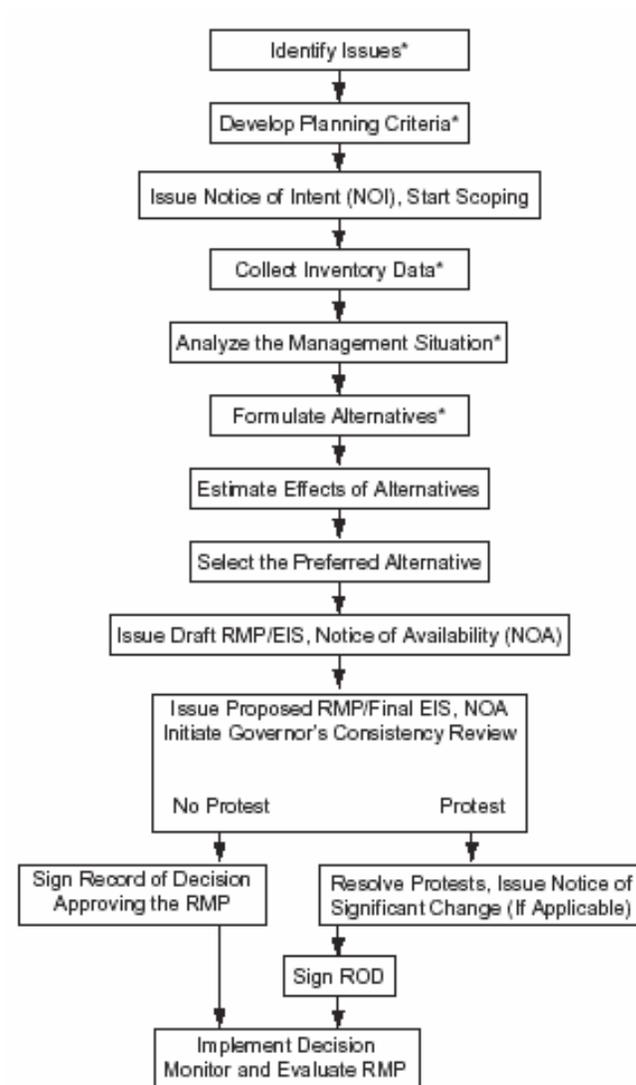
1.6 PLANNING PROCESS

An RMP guides the management of public lands in a particular area or administrative unit. RMPs are usually prepared to cover the lands administered by a certain field office. An approved RMP with the ROD describes the following:

- Resource conditions goals and objectives;
- Allowable resource uses and related levels of production or use to be maintained;
- Land areas to be managed for limited, restricted, or exclusive resource uses or for transfer from the BLM administration;
- Program constraints and general management practices and protocols;
- General implementation schedule or sequences; and
- Intervals and standards for monitoring the plan.

Preparation of an RMP involves interrelated steps as illustrated in **Diagram 1-1** and described in **Table 1-4**.

Diagram 1-1: BLM Planning Process



* These steps may be revisited throughout the planning process

Table 1-4. BLM Planning Process

BLM Planning Process Step	Description	Timeframe
Step 1 – Planning Issues Identification	Issues and concerns are identified through a scoping process that includes the public, Indian tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local governments.	November 2003
Step 2 – Planning Criteria Development	Planning criteria are created to ensure decisions are made to address the issues pertinent to the planning effort. Planning criteria are derived from a variety of sources including applicable laws and regulations, existing management plans, coordination of other agencies' programs, and the results of public and agency scoping. The planning criteria may be updated and changed as planning proceeds.	September 2003
Step 3 – Data and Information Collection	Data and information for the resources in the planning area are collected based on the planning criteria.	Ongoing
Step 4 – Management Situation Analysis	The current management of resources in the planning area is assessed.	November 2003
Step 5 – Alternatives Formulation	A range of reasonable management alternatives that address issues identified during scoping is developed.	June 2004
Step 6 – Alternatives Assessment	The effects of each alternative are estimated.	February 2006
Step 7 – Preferred Alternative Selection	The alternative that best resolves planning issues is identified as the preferred alternative.	July 2006
Step 8 – Resource Management Selection	First, a draft RMP/EIS is issued and is made available to the public for a review period of 90 calendar days. After comments to the draft document have been received and analyzed, it is modified as necessary, and the proposed RMP/Final EIS is published and made available for public review for 30 calendar days. A ROD is signed to approve the RMP/EIS.	Draft RMP/EIS: October 2006 Proposed RMP/Final EIS: Estimated September 2007 ROD: Estimated December 2007
Step 9 – Implementation Monitoring	Management measures outlined in the approved plan are implemented on the ground, and future monitoring is conducted to test their effectiveness. Changes are made as necessary to achieve desired results.	Ongoing after RMP approval

1.7 COLLABORATION

1.7.1 INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTERAGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

In the spring of 2002, the BLM invited the counties within the District to be involved in upcoming planning efforts as cooperating agencies. However, no counties within the Pocatello RMP planning area requested to be involved as cooperating agencies.

To enhance public participation, tribal, county, and city governments were contacted about the RMP and invited to submit comments. As a result, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, USFWS, and IDFG, submitted comment letters through the public scoping process.

In addition, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, IDFG, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, USFWS, and Forest Service were invited to participate on the BLM's IDT charged with developing the Pocatello RMP.

In 2001, the BLM representatives in the PFO briefed local congressional staffers for Congressman Mike Simpson and Senators Michael Crapo and Larry Craig. The PFO also has conducted periodic briefings with the Upper Snake River/Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory Council (RAC), including meetings held in May 2001 and November 2002. The RAC is a citizen-based group and provides an opportunity for individuals from all backgrounds and interests to have a voice in the management of these public lands.

1.8 TRIBAL RELATIONSHIPS AND TRIBAL RIGHTS AND INTERESTS

The relationship of the US Government with American Indian tribes is based on legal agreements between these sovereign nations. The 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty signed by the U.S. Government and the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes established the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Subsequently, a series of land cessations occurred which ultimately resulted in the present day reservation boundaries established in 1900. Even though the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes relinquished ownership of these lands, the 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty reserves off reservation treaty rights to Tribal Members. These rights include but are not limited to gathering, hunting, fishing, and livestock grazing, and practicing tribal cultural activities on unoccupied lands which includes public lands.

As a federal agency, the BLM shares in the federal trust responsibility to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes on the management of federal lands. The federal trust responsibility is related to traditional/cultural uses, as well as the health of the land and water resources and therefore to the socio-economic needs of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The unique federal-tribal relationship is founded upon treaties, which like the Constitution, are the supreme law of the land. Land management decisions need to recognize these rights and trust responsibilities. Consultation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Council is required on land management activities and land allocations that could affect these rights.

Prior to public scoping, a meeting was held on May 15, 2003, with the Land Use Commission and Resources and Wildlife staff specialists of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to offer information on the development of the Pocatello RMP and to solicit input. In addition, the Tribal Council, members of the Land Use Commission and resource staff specialists were sent individual scoping letters and briefing packages mailed in April 2003. One public scoping meeting was held on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation on June 5, 2003. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribe is participating as an IDT member in the preparation of the RMP.

1.9 RELATIONSHIP TO BLM POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

Since the development and approval of the Malad MFP (1981) and Pocatello RMP (1988) it has been necessary to amend these plans to provide additional broad land management direction. As the land use plan guidance is put into practice on the ground, implementation level planning is directed by BLM policy and program specific guidance. **Table 1-5** identifies approved plan

Table 1-5. Identification of Malad MFP and Pocatello RMP plan amendments and other documents considered for implementation level planning.

Amendments To The Malad MFP and Pocatello RMP	BLM Policy and Program Guidance Documents Considered During Implementation Level Planning
Plan Amendment/Environmental Assessment for the Monument RMP, Cassia RMP, Twin Falls MFP, and Malad Hills MFP (BLM 1990a)	Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM-ISO 1997, Appendix A)
Plan Amendment for the Malad Hills MFP for Exchange of 220 acres (BLM 1988c)	Programmatic Forestry Environmental Assessment for the Upper Snake River District, December (BLM 2000)
RMP Amendment to Designate 3,138 acres to Multiuse and 668 acres for Public Use (BLM 1992)	Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (BLM 1991)
RMP Amendment to Allow for a Land Exchange with Bingham County (BLM 1994)	National Fire Plan: Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (National Interagency Fire Center 2001)
Amendment for the Pocatello RMP to Designate 3,560 Acres of Public Land Known as Indian Rocks as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (BLM 1999)	National Fire Plan: Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (USDI and USDA 1995)
	Draft National BLM Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy (BLM 2003b)
	Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Final EIS (BLM 1985a)
	Supplemental EIS on Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program (BLM 1987a)
	Eastern Idaho Proposed MFP Amendment and Final EIS – Wilderness (BLM 1986)
	Final Resource Assessment for the Blackfoot River Wild and Scenic Eligibility and Tentative Classification Study (BLM 2002a)
	The BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services (BLM 2003c).
	The BLM's National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands (BLM 2001a)
	National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan (BLM 2002b)
	Final Resource Assessment, Bear River Wild and Scenic Eligibility, Bear River, Idaho (BLM 1995a)
	Final Resource Assessment, Blackfoot River and Bear River Wild and Scenic River Suitability Study (BLM 2003d)

amendments incorporated into the existing land use plans and other BLM guidance considered at the implementation level planning stages. These plan amendments and guidance documents provide a perspective of the many management considerations pertinent to the planning area.

Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (designation of West-wide energy corridors) is being implemented through the current development of an interagency Programmatic EIS. The final Programmatic EIS will identify plan amendment decisions that will address numerous energy corridor related issues, including the use of existing corridors (potentially including enhancements and upgrades), identification of new corridors, supply and demand considerations, and compatibility with other corridor and project planning efforts. It is likely that the identification of corridors in the Programmatic EIS will affect the Pocatello planning area, and the approved Programmatic EIS would amend the Pocatello RMP.

1.10 RELATED PLANS

BLM planning regulations require that BLM plans be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource related plans of other federal, state, local, and tribal governments to the extent those plans are consistent with federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands. Plans formulated by federal, state, local, and tribal governments that relate to management of lands and resources have been reviewed and considered as the RMP/EIS has been developed. These plans include the following:

- Caribou National Forest Revised Forest Plan and EIS (Forest Service 2003a);
- Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Management Plan – 1995 update (Wyoming Game and Fish Department 1996);
- Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project: Project Data (Forest Service and BLM 2001);
- Interior Columbia Basin Final EIS (Forest Service and BLM 2000a);
- Interim Guidance for Addressing Sage Grouse Conservation in Idaho's Land Use Plans: Draft (BLM 2004a);
- Idaho Grouse Management Plan (IDFG 1997);
- Guidelines for Management of Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitats (Giesen and Connelly 1993);
- Inland Native Fish Strategy Environmental Assessment Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (BLM 1995b);
- Memorandum of Agreement for Conservation and Management of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout among Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Forest Service, Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park and the IDFG (Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks et. al. 2000);
- Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Bonneville Cutthroat trout (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources 2000);
- Management Plan for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Idaho, 2003 (IDFG 2003a);
- Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Conservation of Spring Snails in the Great Basin (BLM et. al. 1998);

- Portneuf Valley Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) Air Quality Improvement Plan 1998-1999 (IDEQ 1999);
- Draft Portneuf Valley PM₁₀ Nonattainment Area State Implementation Plan, Maintenance Plan, and Redesignation Request (IDEQ 2004a);
- Best Management Practices for Mining in Idaho (Idaho Department of Lands [IDL] 1992);
- Draft Selenium BMP Catalog for Phosphate Mining (Idaho Mining Association and IDEQ 2004);
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's Final Area Wide Risk Management Plan (IDEQ 2004b);
- A View to the Future: A Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan for Idaho (SHPO 2002);
- Proposed Plan Amendments and EIS for Small Wilderness Study Areas, Statewide (BLM 1988d);
- Idaho's 2003 – 2007 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan, (Idaho State Parks and Recreation 2003).
- Comprehensive Management and Use Plan/ EIS for the California National Historic Trail, Pony Express National Historic Trail, Oregon National Historic Trail, and Mormon Pioneers National Historic Trail (National Park Service 1998).

1.11 POLICY

In the Fort Bridger Treaty of July 3, 1868, the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes reserved hunting, fishing, grazing and gathering rights to the tribes. All alternatives in the RMP consider this historic use.

Implementation of the RMP begins when the Idaho BLM State Director signs the ROD for the RMP. Decisions in the RMP would be implemented tied to the BLM budgeting process. An implementation schedule would be developed, providing for the systematic accomplishment of decisions in the approved RMP.

1.12 OVERALL VISION

Comments received during scoping represented a broad range of desires expressed by both individuals and organizations. These same desires were expressed by the planning team during discussion of the overarching vision for management of public lands in the planning area. As a result, the following vision statements were developed to provide overall direction for the planning process. Within the capability of the resources:

- Sustain and where necessary restore the health and diversity of forest, rangeland, and riparian ecosystems;
- Ensure that vegetation communities across the PFO area have the necessary structure and composition, ecological processes, and proper function to sustain native and desired nonnative plants and animals;

- Support a sustainable flow of benefits in consideration of the social and economic systems of southeast Idaho;
- Provide diverse recreational and educational opportunities;
- Minimize soil loss to promote the long-term health of the land and watersheds through advance planning and accepted management practices;
- Manage watersheds to provide for the proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling and energy flow;
- Reduce potential for emissions from uncontrolled wildland fire by using prescribed fire and other fuels management opportunities;
- Reduce/minimize emissions and impacts from mining and mineral processing, and other activities using BMPs and other applicable standards;
- Consider air quality sensitive areas and receptors in all planning and management activities;
- Provide wood fiber while maintaining a healthy and sustainable forest;
- Facilitate resource extraction with protection of newly identified and existing areas of biological, natural and cultural resources as well as identified values and uses; and obtain a balance between the economic health of the area and the long term health of nonconsumptive resources.