Lakeview Resource Area

Resource Management Plan Amendment

Scoping Report

October 2012

BLM

Lakeview District - Lakeview Resource Area

October 2012

BLM/OR/WA/AE-12/026+1792

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview Resource Area
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Cover Picture is BLM Picture of Warner wetlands with Warner Mountains in Background

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For information about this report contact

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A detailed spreadsheet of all scoping comments received and BLM's response is available at

http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/rmp-amendment/index.php

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Lakeview Resource Area
1301 South G Street, Lakeview, OR 97630
www.blm.gov/lakeview

SEP 17 2012

In Reply Refer To:
1610 (ORL050)

Dear Reader:

In May of 2010, the Lakeview District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) initiated public scoping and tribal consultation regarding a proposed amendment to the Lakeview Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP was originally completed in November of 2003, and addressed management of approximately 3.2 million acres of BLM-administered public lands in Lake and Harney Counties.

The attached scoping document contains a summary of comments received during this process and the nine main issues that the BLM intends to address during this plan amendment process. You are receiving a copy of this document because of your interest in public land management activities in this area. This document is also available for viewing or down-loading from our website at http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/rmp-amendment/index.php.

I feel it is important to highlight that since the time this plan amendment was initiated in 2010, that Greater Sage-Grouse conservation has arisen as a national priority issue. In recent months the State Director made a decision to address Sage-Grouse management on BLM-administered lands in the Lakeview District within the on-going Oregon Sub-Region Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation RMP Amendments.

Once the Greater Sage-Grouse RMP Amendment effort is completed, the BLM expects to resume work on the Lakeview RMP Settlement Agreement Amendment. An updated plan amendment timeline estimate is included at the end of this Scoping Report.

I wish to thank you for your continued interest in public land management, and will keep you informed of progress on the Lakeview RMP Settlement Agreement Amendment in the future. If you have any questions about either planning effort, or would like to ensure that you are kept on our mailing list, please contact Paul Whitman (email: pwhitman@blm.gov or phone: 541-947-6110).

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Rasmussen
Field Manager

Enclosures

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Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to amend its resource management plan (RMP) for the Lakeview Resource Area of the Lakeview District. The current RMP for the planning area was adopted by the BLM in November 2003.

The planning decisions contained in an RMP are the basis for every subsequent on-the-ground action the BLM undertakes. An RMP ensures that the public lands are managed in accordance with the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act* (FLPMA) (43 United States Code [USC] 1701 et seq.) under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

An RMP is a set of comprehensive long-term decisions guiding the management direction, uses, and restrictions for resources administered by the BLM on public lands. In general an RMP does two things: (1) provides a set of goals and management direction for each resource or use, and (2) resolves multiple-use conflicts or issues, to the extent possible. In contrast, a plan amendment typically focuses on updating an existing RMP to deal with specific issues or is often limited to specific geographic areas. An amendment typically results in changes to some existing management decisions, while decisions for other issues, resources, uses, or areas are not modified.

The BLM has added a new priority since the BLM initiated preparation of the SEORMP and Lakeview RMP amendments and associated environmental impacts statements (EISs) pursuant to terms of the Ninth Circuit Court Settlement Agreement. The importance of conserving the Greater Sage-Grouse has recently become even clearer to the BLM, and it has embarked on a nationwide effort to improve Greater Sage-Grouse conservation on BLM-administered lands.

In 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published its listing decision, under the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA), for the Greater Sage-Grouse as "Warranted but Precluded." Inadequate regulatory mechanisms were identified as a major threat in the USFWS finding on the petition to list the Greater Sage-Grouse. The USFWS has identified the principal regulatory mechanism for the BLM as conservation measures in RMPs. In December 2011 the Washington Office BLM released a National Technical Team Report outlining potential conservation measures for the Greater Sage-Grouse conservation was published in December 2011. This unprecedented national planning effort has been split into two regions: a Rocky Mountain Region and a Great Basin Region. The Rocky Mountain Region will prepare numerous EISs to consider amending RMPs in the states of Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and portions of western Utah and western Montana. The Great Basin Region will also prepare multiple EISs to consider amending RMPs in California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and portions of eastern Utah and eastern Montana (see Appendix B). The BLM aims to incorporate objectives and conservation measures into RMPs by September 2014 in order to provide adequate regulatory mechanisms to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitat. These measures will be considered by the USFWS as it makes its final determination on whether to list the Greater Sage-Grouse under section 4 of the ESA. Therefore, these EISs will be prepared under expedited timeframes.

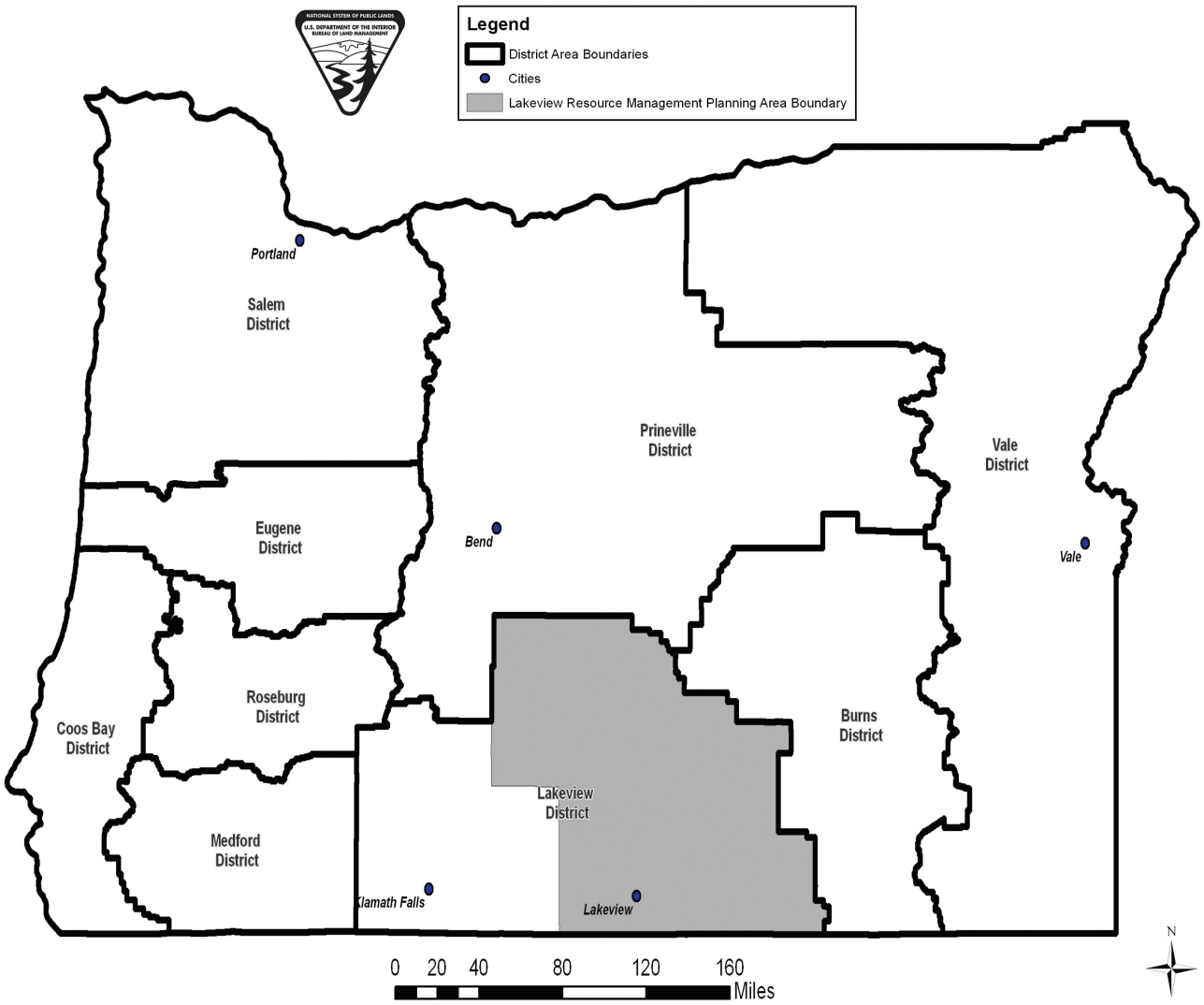
The BLM in Oregon is preparing a programmatic EIS for amending up to nine RMPs to incorporate conservation measures for the Greater Sage-Grouse. The Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendment effort will include the SEORMP (2002) and the Lakeview RMP (2003). Given the expedited timeframes and conservation need for the Greater Sage-Grouse, preparation and completion of the Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendments and associated EISs will come before all other planning efforts in eastern Oregon, including the SEORMP and Lakeview RMP Settlement Agreement amendments. Thus, the existing 2002 SEORMP and 2003 Lakeview RMP will first be amended to incorporate Greater Sage-Grouse conservation measures that are adopted by those two BLM districts at the completion of the Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendment effort.

Once the Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendment effort is complete, the BLM may resume looking at the Ninth Circuit Court Settlement Agreement amendment process for the SEORMP and Lakeview RMP.

Description of the Planning Area

The planning area encompasses approximately 3.2 million acres of public land within the Lakeview Resource Area (Map 1). The planning area is located in Lake and Harney counties in southcentral Oregon. However, the Lakeview Resource Area manages livestock grazing on approximately 2,265 acres of the BLM Surprise Field Office in northwestern Nevada through a cooperative agreement.

Map 1 - Lakeview Resource Management Plan Amendment Area



The planning area is bordered on the east by the Burns BLM District; on the south by the Modoc National Forest, Sheldon National Antelope Refuge, and BLM Surprise Field Office in Nevada and California; on the west by the Fremont and Deschutes National Forests; and on the north by the Prineville BLM District. Most of the public land is contiguous. Some small scattered parcels occur in the north end around Christmas Valley and in the south end near Lakeview (See Map 1 and Table 1).

Table 1: Land Status Within the Planning Area Acres by County

Ownership / Administration	Lake County	Harney County	Total
Bureau of Land Management			
Public domain	2,331,813	762,410	3,094,223
Acquired lands	85,622	26,070	111,692
Subtotal BLM	2,417,435	788,480	3,205,916
US Forest Service	1,025,019	0	1,025,019
US Fish and Wildlife Service	277,483	0	277,483
Department of Defense	2,623	0	2,623
Oregon State Lands	112,213	32,624	144,838
Private	122,0228	39,689	1,259,917
Other	83,571	0	83,571
Grand totals	5,138,573	860,794	5,999,367

(Other: meander-surveyed lake beds, local government, and acres of unknown ownership)

Purpose and Need

The overall purpose of this planning effort is to amend the Lakeview Resource Management Plan (Lakeview RMP) and develop a comprehensive plan to manage the BLM-administered lands in accordance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies.

Settlement Agreement Background

The BLM completed the Lakeview RMP in 2003 and Southeastern Oregon RMP (SEORMP) in 2002. Separate lawsuits were filed in District Court challenging each RMP. Both RMPs were upheld at the District Court level but were subsequently appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. On July 14, 2008, the Ninth Circuit Court ruled on the SEORMP case in *Oregon Natural Desert Association v. Bureau of Land Management,* 531 F.3d 1114 (9th Cir. 2008). Soon thereafter, the BLM filed a petition for panel rehearing of the court's remedy, and the matter was stayed during settlement negotiations. The Ninth Circuit Court also stayed litigation regarding similar challenges to the Lakeview RMP in *Oregon Natural Desert Association v. Gammon*, No. 07-35728 (9th Cir.), pending resolution of the SEORMP case and to allow for settlement negotiations between the parties. A settlement was reached in June 2010, and the BLM is now preparing an amendment to the Lakeview RMP that is consistent with the terms of the 2010 Settlement Agreement. A copy of the settlement agreement is available for review on Lakeview's RMP amendment website at http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/rmp-amendment/index.php.

Purpose

One primary purpose of the RMP amendment is to analyze a broader range of management alternatives for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, livestock grazing, and lands that the BLM has determined have wilderness characteristics, consistent with the provisions of the 2010 Settlement Agreement.

Need

The BLM updated its wilderness characteristics inventory during the 2003 planning effort but for only a small portion of public lands in the planning area. The 2010 Settlement Agreement requires BLM to update its wilderness characteristics inventory for all public lands (outside of existing wilderness study areas) in the planning area. The Settlement Agreement also requires BLM to analyze a broader range of alternatives for managing lands with wilderness characteristics, particularly with respect to OHV and livestock grazing uses.

Other Planning Issues

Purpose

A secondary purpose of the Lakeview RMP amendment is to address several other minor local planning issues that the BLM identified during internal scoping. None of these issues were substantial enough to require amending the existing RMP in and of themselves, but since an RMP amendment and associated EIS was already being considered, the BLM felt it was appropriate and efficient to also address them in this same planning effort.

Need

The BLM identified a need to consider the designation and management of significant caves for over a hundred caves where cave inventories have recently been completed.

The BLM identified a need to develop a travel management plan for the planning area.

The BLM identified a need to develop a recreation area management plan (RAMP) for the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA).

The BLM identified a need to address new utility corridor designations within the planning area. This need was identified in the 2010 Settlement Agreement and based on new information related to the construction of the Ruby Gas Pipeline.

The BLM identified a need to address climate change in accordance with emerging policies.

The BLM identified a need to consider whether the Foskett Dace Springs area met the relevance and importance criteria for designation as an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) and required special management.

Scoping and Tribal Consultation

Tribal Consultation

The BLM initiated government-to-government consultation regarding the Lakeview RMP amendment through correspondence (in April 2010) with The Klamath Tribes, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, Burns Paiute Tribe, Fort Bidwell Tribe, and Fort McDermitt Tribe. None of these tribes provided a formal response regarding any concerns or issues needing to be addressed in the plan amendment process.

The BLM will continue to consult, both formally and informally, with interested tribes and individual members to allow additional opportunities for their involvement in the RMP amendment process.

Scoping Process

The 1969 *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) requires that federal agencies initiate the scoping process in the early stages of developing an EIS to determine the scope and significance of issues related to a proposed action and alternatives (40 *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] §1501.7). Knowing the scope and significance of issues allows for accurate and timely completion of environmental analysis. Scoping helps identify issues important to the management of the area, as well as which issues warrant consideration. Scoping is designed to provide for and encourage public participation, as well as solicit public input to help formulate or refine alternatives and understand effects of the proposed alternatives.

The BLM provided information announcing the initiation of the RMP amendment process, how to submit comments, and the comment period. The information was distributed to the public, other agencies, and tribal governments through a number of means, including publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* (see Appendix A), publishing legal notices in regional newspapers, sending out scoping letters and news releases, and conducting scoping open houses. The BLM invited parties to identify planning issues and refine the planning criteria.

The BLM has also made information available on its RMP amendment website (http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/rmp-amendment/index.php). The website also announced the dates, times, and locations of the scoping open houses. The BLM will continue to update this website with information as the project progresses.

Notice of Intent and Legal Notices

The scoping process for the Lakeview RMP amendment began with publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register* on April 8, 2010 (Appendix A). Concurrently, the BLM published legal notices in five regional newspapers. These notices announced that the BLM was initiating the amendment process, provided a list of preliminary issues, announced open house meeting dates, identified the comment period (April 30, 2010 through July 7, 2010), and described how to submit comments to the BLM via email or postal mail.

Open Houses

The BLM hosted five open house meetings during the scoping period:

May 25, 2010 – Lakeview Oregon

May 26, 2010 – Hines, Oregon

May 27, 2010 – Bend, Oregon

May 28, 2010 – Christmas Valley, Oregon

June 2, 2010 – Portland, Oregon

A total of 85 people attended one or more these meetings, during which the BLM answered questions and provided information about:

- BLM's Planning Process
- Livestock Grazing Management
- Travel Management Planning
- Off-Highway Vehicle Use
- Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

The BLM also provided comment sheets at the open houses for attendees to complete and return during the meeting or mail in at a later date.

During the comment period (which ended on July 7, 2010), the BLM received a total of 65 submissions (letters, emails, or paper comment forms). Two additional comment letters were received after the close of the comment period. A summary of comments received and issues identified during scoping is included later in this document.

Additional Opportunities for Input

Lake County Open Houses

Between January 26 and February 9, 2012, the Lake County Commissioners sponsored four community open house meetings around Lake County (Lakeview, Adel, Paisley, and Christmas Valley). BLM was invited to participate. During these meetings BLM staff explained that they expected to develop a comprehensive travel management plan as part of the RMP amendment process, and the public was encouraged to review a series of maps and provide comments on the accuracy of its recent route inventory effort. Lake County Commissioners consolidated these comments and map notations and officially submitted them to the BLM in March 2012. BLM will review this information, update its route inventory where appropriate, and utilize this updated information as its existing route baseline during the travel management planning process.

National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy

Since the close of the scoping period, and as explained in the Introduction, the BLM Washington Office issued new guidance regarding the need to prepare a series of RMP amendments to consider the management, restoration, and conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat throughout its range.

The public scoping process for the Oregon Sub-Regional Greater Sage-Grouse EIS began with publication of the NOI in the Federal Register on December 9, 2011 (Appendix B). The BLM Washington Office held information/scoping meetings regarding the national Greater Sage-Grouse planning effort in Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, and Utah during January 2012 to present information about the strategy and provide opportunity for public input. Informational meeting were held in Ontario and Lakeview, Oregon, in January 2012.

The public was encouraged to submit any feedback on the strategy and plan amendment process to the Western Regional Project Manager at the BLM Nevada State Office. Public input will be used by the BLM Oregon State Office during preparation of its Oregon Sub-Regional Greater Sage-Grouse EIS, which will present alternatives for managing sage-grouse habitat on BLM lands in Oregon.

North Lake Special Recreation Area Management Plan Scoping

Scoping for the North Lake Special RAMP initially started in October 1995. A public meeting was held at the North Lake County School on November 6, 1995. The BLM re-initiated scoping and consultation for the RAMP in March 2005. Additional public meetings were held in Christmas Valley and Lakeview during this same time frame. An informal public open house was held in Christmas Valley on May 26, 2008, to update the public on the status of the RAMP.

Scoping Report

The BLM is publishing this Scoping Report as another means of providing the public, agencies, and tribes an opportunity to review the development of the issues to be addressed, prior to the release of the draft Lakeview RMP amendment/EIS.

Summary of Public Comments from Scoping

The following BLM summaries are provided to give the public an overview of the range of participation. A detailed spreadsheet of all scoping comments received and BLM's response is available at http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/Lakeview/plans/rmp-amendment/index.php. The BLM received a total of 65 submissions (letters, emails, online submissions, or paper comment forms) (note: the 65 submissions were submitted by 58 unique individuals or organizations). The submissions contained 532 individual comments and four different form letters from 27 individuals. Tables 2-5 summarize the RMP Scoping Comments by affiliation (Table 2), interest (Table 3), categories (Table 4), and comment demographics (Table 5).

The BLM also brought forward information from 15 letters, emails, or verbal comments received from previous scoping efforts conducted between 1995 and 2008 related to development of the North Lake Special RAMP adding another 107 individual comments (Table 4).

Table 2: Scoping Comments by Affiliation

Affiliation/Category	Number of Unique Submissions
Agency – Federal	1
Agency – State	1
Environmental – Groups and Individuals	7
Grazing Interests, Business, Individuals, and permit-tees	23
Motorized Recreation – Groups and Individuals	22
Non-Motorized – Group	1
Opposed to More Wilderness – Individual	3
Supports Multiple Use – Individual	1
Unknown	1
Total	58

Table 3: Scoping Comments Summarized by Interest Category

Letter Emphasis	Number of Submissions
Access Protection	4
Beyond Scope or No emphasis	4
Economic Development	1
Environmental Protection	1
Grazing Support	23
Non-Motorized – Recreation	1
OHV Use Support	18
Opposed to Wilderness	5
Protect Military Training Area	1
Resource Protection	2
Wilderness Advocate	12
Total	58

Table 4: Comment Categories (RMP and NLRA Scoping)

Category	Number of Comments
Substantive Comments	286
Comments or Issues that are Beyond the Scope of Analysis	51
Comments directing BLM to follow Existing Law or Regulations	15
Comments or Issues That Represent Decisions Already Made by Plan, Law, or Regulation	17
Comments or Issues That Do Not Require a Response or Can Be Answered More Directly Outside the Planning Process	9
Non-substantive Comments and Duplicated Form Letters	285
Total	662

Issue Identification

The primary purpose of scoping is to give people an opportunity to identify the issues that need to be addressed during the planning process. The BLM Land Use Planning Handbook defines planning issues as disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, or related management practices. While many issues may arise during scoping, not all of the issues warrant analysis (BLM H-1790-1, section 6.4.1). Analysis of an issue is only warranted if it contributes information that may help resolve disagreement about the best way to manage or use a resource or resolve an undesirable resource condition.

Issue identification for the Lakeview RMP amendment first involved determining if the comment(s) submitted related to BLM's purpose and need for the proposed amendment (described above). Comments, concerns, or issues that fall outside the stated purpose and need are generally not carried forward into the plan amendment process. Comments, concerns, or issues that fall within the stated purpose and need can be carried forward into the plan amendment process and addressed in one of many ways. Some comments/issues are used to refine the planning criteria. Other comments/issues can be addressed through the range of alternatives developed or the analysis of effects.

The alternatives will include management goals, objectives, allowable uses, and actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes. The alternatives will include a range of management directions for all of resources and resource uses. The BLM will then analyze the effects of the alternatives and determine to what degree each alternative addresses the issues and meets the amendment's stated purpose and need.

Table 5: Comment Demographics

City	State	Number
Salem	OR	1
Seattle	WA	1
Adel	OR	6
Burns	OR	1
Grand View	ID	1
Lakeview	OR	3
Langlois	OR	1
Paisley	OR	4
Plush	OR	2
Salem	OR	1
Unknown	OR	1
Unknown	Unknown	1
Bend	OR	2
Helena	MT	1
Hillsboro	OR	1
Keno	OR	1
Klamath Falls	OR	3
Pocatello	ID	1
Roseburg	OR	1
Vancouver	WA	1
Unknown	Unknown	11
Unknown	Unknown	1
Manzanita	OR	1
Corvallis	OR	1
Bend	OR	1
Halfway	OR	1
Lakeview	OR	1
Chiloquin	OR	1
Denver	CO	1
Portland	OR	2
Bend	OR	1
Chicago	IL	1
Ashland	OR	1
TOTAL		58

Issues That Will Be Addressed

Issues 1–9, described in the following section, were identified either internally by the BLM at the initiation of scoping (see the NOI in Appendix A) or from the public comments received during the scoping comment period. Issues 1–9 will be addressed in the Lakeview RMP amendment EIS. Each issue is identified, representative public comments are provided (a detailed spreadsheet of all scoping comments received and BLM's response is available at http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/rmp-amendment/index.php) questions to be resolved under each issue, followed by the BLM response on how the information will be utilized in the draft EIS.

Issue 1: Wilderness Characteristics

There was considerable debate in some comments as to whether additional lands with wilderness characteristics are present in the planning area or whether such lands should be protected or left open for other uses.

A range of recommendations were made from designating all Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) proposals as wilderness study areas (WSAs) to eliminating all current WSAs. Management suggestions ranged widely from eliminating all uses from existing WSAs to allowing all historic uses in existing and any future WSA proposals, including grazing, energy development, and vehicle access.

Representative Public Comments

The agency must walk the fine line between adhering to these conflicting mandates. For example, in one Alternative, the BLM may consider identifying lands with wilderness characteristics and developing general management guidance on how those lands are to be managed. BLM should not, however, develop an Alternative that formally establishes Wilderness Study Areas, or could be interpreted as making a recommendation to Congress on lands to be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

BLM must make all new information regarding wilderness characteristics available for public review and comment prior to utilizing such information to develop draft alternatives.

There appears to be a disparity between WSA acreage that BLM identified twenty years ago, and what ONDA has identified. There should not, however, be any disparity about what the key factors of wilderness character are. If so, please look to 16 U.S.C. § 1133(c) when making inventory decisions. As to the acreage, please follow ONDA's recommendation to designate 1.7 million of your acres as wilderness, rather than your '89/'91 WSA process which found less than 500k acres. Anything less would likely result in more litigation coming at the expense of taxpayers. The Ninth Circuit mandates that you consider closures of significant portions of land to comply with NEPA. Oregon Natural Desert Ass'n v. Bureau of Land Management, 531 F.3d 1114 (9th Cir. 2008).

Inventoried lands possessing wilderness characteristics must not be automatically managed as de facto wilderness. Until and unless they are designated as WSAs by an act of Congress, the BLM is obligated to manage these lands under the multiple-use mandate.

Insure that the EISs disclose and discuss the ONDA wilderness report information as well as BLM's own, related data and analyses.

Recognize and protect the numerous vast unfragmented roadless areas, including by closing significant portions of them to motorized use and by limiting impacts from energy

development, mining, rangeland projects and other potentially wilderness-disturbing actions within areas that possess wilderness character.

Inventorying lands with wilderness characteristics will also provide important data on existing large blocks of habitat and how BLM can restore these blocks of habitat to better match the historic range of variability.

Identifying, restoring and protecting substantial roadless areas in the lands governed by the Southeastern Oregon and Lakeview RMPs can provide crucial benefits to wildlife, ..cultural resources…soils…solitude……economic values,….etc.

The wildlands located within the Vale and Lakeview District Offices help to define the character of these areas and are an important component of the quality of life for local residents and future generations, providing wilderness values in proximity to burgeoning urban and suburban areas. Their protection enables the customs and culture of this community to continue.

Please recognize and protect wilderness-quality lands and roadless areas, including areas outside of existing WSAs that possess wilderness characteristics. These areas are important for their value as an enduring resource of wilderness for the American people.

Administrative protection can and should be considered for lands with wilderness characteristics that are not currently protected. The Draft RMP amendments should also consider management alternatives that provide administrative protection for the wilderness characteristics of those lands currently designated as WSAs if they are not ultimately designated as Wilderness by Congress; their wilderness characteristics are already acknowledged by the BLM.

BLM must include various ways to protect these lands in each of the management alternatives. In addition to considering designation of new WSAs, BLM should propose protective management prescriptions or other protective status (including mineral withdrawals, non-motorized recreation prescriptions, ACEC designations, and prohibitions on new road construction and erection of structures such as cell towers) for these lands.

My comments pertain primarily to the Sand Dunes Wilderness Study Area and Lost Forest, and the impacts that off-road thrill craft have on the wilderness values there. ONDA has conducted a district-wide wilderness inventory and has determined that not only the Sand Dunes, but much of the Lost Forest, and a large area east of the Sand Dunes has wilderness character.

Questions to be resolved

- Are lands with wilderness characteristics present in the planning area (outside of existing WSAs)?
- How should lands that the BLM determines have wilderness characteristics be managed?

BLM Response

The 2010 Settlement Agreement requires the BLM to complete wilderness character inventory updates for all BLM-administered lands in the planning area (outside of existing WSAs) and consider the inventory information during the development of alternatives to be analyzed in the Lakeview RMP amendment. The inventories are to follow current BLM state and/or national wilderness inventory guidance. The inventories are to also consider citizen-provided information to determine if it represents valid new information regarding the presence of wilderness characteristics.

These wilderness characteristics inventory updates have been posted on the Lakeview District website as they are completed (http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/inventas.php). Hard copies have also been provided to interested parties upon request. The Lakeview RMP amendment will address a range of management alternatives for lands that the BLM determines to possess wilderness characteristics (outside of existing WSAs).

Issue 2: Grazing Management

Within the public comments received, grazing interests expressed lack of agreement with the Settlement Agreement's emphasis on additional grazing restrictions on public lands. Comments from others ranged from supporting continued livestock grazing on public lands to desiring complete elimination of grazing throughout the planning area. Grazing use was viewed as a cause of increased spread of noxious weeds by some respondents, while others saw grazing as a tool for the control of noxious weeds.

Representative Public Comments

Incentivize for and compensate long time federal grazing permittees who end grazing on public lands.

As a rancher ends his allotment it needs to be given to another at the going rate or kept on the books until another takes it up. Do not allow grazing allotments to end! Grazing on public lands should be encouraged whether it is WSA, Wilderness or Backcountry it needs to be allowed.

Exclude grazing from WSA areas. From Table 6, out of 3.5 million acres managed, only 261,000 acres are excluded from livestock grazing. Cut back on unsustainable grazing levels, and set a utilization standard to ensure overgrazing does not happen.

When managing cattle on public lands where riparian waterways are implicated, maintain (1) the physical integrity of the aquatic ecosystem, (2) the sediment regime of the aquatic ecosystem, (3) the riparian plant communities, and (4) the stream flow characteristics.

Grazing is very important to public lands. The BLM should do everything possible to make sure this continues to happen on our lands. Grazing removes more flammable tinder in one year than most realize. These dried grasses are all but spontaneous fire just waiting to happen.

Grazing on BLM land is a vital part of our operation as well as the operation of most ranches in Lake County. Without public land grazing, most ranches would no longer be viable and would ultimately have to be turned into something that was. This would invite development that would be detrimental to the area's natural beauty, resources, and wildlife. Wildlife do much better in a hay field than on a golf course. I believe that the grazing plan that was adopted as part of the current RMP addresses any concerns that need to be addressed and it should be left alone. The only adjustments should be to strengthen the ability of responsible grazing to continue on indefinitely.

Carefully review the legal aspects of grazing reductions, permit relinquishment, and other issues in the grazing portion of the alternatives to be set forth. Will the new alternatives comply with the Taylor Grazing Act and the Federal Land Policy & Management Act? I would like to see alternatives that may review reinstatement of suspended non-use on certain permits.

Properly managed livestock grazing has proven itself to enhance the environment and wildlife habitat. It also has an enormous impact to the local economy which is even more crucial with

a shrinking private sector. The arguments to reduce or end livestock grazing are political and philosophical and cannot hold up to environmental scrutiny.

ONDA's alternative dismisses the BLM's authority to address range land health issues individually by falsely implying that it is ecologically necessary to close any allotment or pasture, potentially for twenty years or more, should isolated management issues emerge.

Question to be Resolved

- How should livestock grazing be managed on lands with special resource values within the planning area?

BLM Response

The Lakeview RMP amendment will address a range of livestock grazing management alternatives.

Issue 3: OHV and Travel Management

Public comments regarding motorized vehicles and OHV use can be grouped into one of the following categories. OHVs are:

- necessary for BLM and permittee management activities,
- a valid recreational use of the public lands, or
- detrimental to the environment and needing to be restricted or removed.

Vehicle access was seen as a cause of increased spread of noxious weeds by some respondents, while others saw vehicle access as a necessary tool for the control of noxious weeds.

Representative Public Comments

The effects of further restrictions on OHV areas and roads needs to be analyzed to show that shrinking available areas will intensify environmental damage in those areas open and overcrowding.

The effects of government wide reduction of roads available for vehicle access to public lands for a variety of recreation uses are a concern.

The adverse effects of OHV use on campers and hikers who want solitude need to be displayed in the effects analysis. Congress worded the 1964 Wilderness Act to include some common sense and a real sense of Wilderness. The 1964 Act talked of huge expanses of land untrammeled by man, where the imprint of man is unnoticed. The true intent of the Act is not being followed. I do not support the continued efforts to create Wilderness areas that limit access. Americans with disabilities access is limited by the creation of Wilderness areas.

Close the wilderness quality areas to motorized use with the travel management plan.

We understand the courts have found flaws with some of the analysis in the previous plan, and some of those flaws concerned how the previous planning effort addressed lands with wilderness characteristics and recreational uses, including off-highway Vehicle use. As off-highway vehicle enthusiasts, we believe this supplemental planning effort provides an opportunity to improve recreational management, including enhancing and improving the opportunity and quality of the OHV experience in the planning area – AND – is also an opportunity to bring active management and real protection to important natural resources, including wilderness character.

This issue deals with the question of how lands that have wilderness characteristics will be managed. We are concerned because many of the areas that wilderness advocacy groups are saying have wilderness characteristics also experience meaningful historical use by motorized and/or mountain bikes. The BLM must not, through this planning effort, place itself and the recreating public in an awkward catch 22 by inappropriately defining lands with wilderness potential that have long received meaningful motorized/mechanized access. If the existing uses do not stop the lands from being identified as having wilderness characteristics, then certainly those historic activities should be allowed to continue.

It has been recognized, as a matter of fact and law, that continuation of motorized activities within areas proposed or recommended for Wilderness does not significantly degrade wilderness values. In the same vein, federal courts have recognized that temporary noise and disturbance associated with motorized activity does not adversely impact wilderness character and is not inconsistent with laws, regulations, and policies requiring the maintenance of wilderness character. See River Runners for Wilderness v. Martin, 2009 WL 2151356 (9th Cir, 2009).

Insofar as that can be reflected as a planning issue, we would suggest trail-based recreational experience be considered. Significance criteria such as loops, level or range of difficulty, scenic quality, destinations or other similar qualities OHV users appreciate in trails should be considered by the planning team.

In response to the increase in popularity of OHV recreation, the BLM should develop an Alternative that improves and enhances OHV recreation.

All that the current WSA has done is close lands to the public land users. Roads, ways, routes, trails and vast areas have been closed without all the public's input being considered. Considering only the anti-access groups words, to close vast amounts of lands to the American public is not right.

ATVs are a critical management tool that saves time and money as well as improves the overall way that grazing impacts the land. It is crucial that ranchers be allowed to use them responsibly to help manage grazing, especially for monitoring and fencing. I understand that in areas that are already wilderness or in wilderness study areas, OHV use needs to be restricted. However, other areas need to remain open to responsible use by permittees.

Re-evaluate the closure of existing Wilderness Study Areas to small all-terrain vehicles. Said vehicles are very important to present and future public needs to mention a few: a.) Access to archeological sites b.) Fire suppression c.) Noxious weed control d.) allotment boundary fence management e.) recreational hunting f.) designated grazing management and inventory g.) BLM enforcement agents.

The RMPs should enact broad ORV closures on lands with sensitive resources and establish a system of designated routes.

Close routes that will enhance wilderness values and restore wilderness characteristics; close routes that maximize opportunities for non-motorized recreation, including backcountry hunting and fishing; close routes that might adversely affect wildlife values, including big-game habitat; close routes in order to protect large blocks of roadless sagebrush habitat; and close routes that are causing soil erosion or otherwise might lead to spread of invasive weeds.

Use the ONDA wilderness and route inventory reports as a baseline inventory of route conditions and as a guide for which routes are obsolete, redundant, causing resource damage or should be closed or decommissioned for any other reason.

Any alternatives should allow for permit/leaseholders to use OHV as needed to perform duties on the rangelands. Fencing, herding, mineral distribution, and monitoring are some of the duties that routinely require OHV use.

The BLM should take this opportunity to complete travel management concurrently with the RMP amendments. The amended RMPs should also identify priorities for implementation of the travel management plan, which may also be instructive in the event that the agency expects that additional travel planning will be needed. Special management areas, such as ACECs, special recreation management areas and citizen-proposed wilderness, will include travel designations within their boundaries.

Concern regarding the construction, maintenance, closure decommissioning and use of road on soil and water, fire risk from recreation, weeds, fish and wildlife habitats, etc.

User created routes, closed roads and legacy roads impact our areas of concern and should be included in any analysis of environmental impacts from the proposed action and alternatives

EIS should include the current number of road miles and density and the change in road miles and density that will occur as a result of the plan.

Recommend prioritizing road density reduction in crucial winter ranges, along wildlife migration corridors, near impaired waters and sensitive and/or rare plant and animal habitat establishing numerical targets for decommissioning, maintenance, reconstruction and revision of designations could help guide management. These numerical targets could also be environmental, such as reductions of the amount of sedimentation delivered to streams, or decreases in the amount of fragmented habitat respects the need to base numerical targets on funding expectations.

Identify a road system that reflects long term funding expectations. We support giving priority to upgrading the most heavily used roads and restricting travel on classified roads that pose environmental threats and cannot be maintained due to lack of funds and other resources.

Roads are expensive to maintain and their negative environmental impacts are well documented. They create and transport sediment that impairs water quality and degrades stream and riparian habitat. They invite the spread of invasive weeds, which compete with native vegetation. They fragment and degrade wildlife habitat.

Questions to be Resolved

- How should motorized vehicle use, particularly off-highway use, within WSAs and lands with wilderness characteristics be managed?
- How should non motorized access be managed across the planning area?

BLM Response

The 2010 Settlement Agreement (http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/rmp-amendment/index.php) requires the BLM to analyze at least two alternatives that place additional limits on OHV use. For this reason, the Lakeview RMP amendment will analyze a range of alternatives that vary in the amount of areas falling within all three OHV allocation types (open, limited, and closed) based on a balancing of all resource uses and values.

In addition, current policy requires that BLM develop a comprehensive travel management plan (TMP), either concurrently with a given land use planning effort or within two years of signing a ROD for a given land use planning effort. TMPs must address both motorized and non motorized access needs. For these reasons, the Lakeview RMP amendment will address a range of motorized and nonmotorized travel management alternatives.

Issue 4: North Lake Special Recreation Management Area

Public comments expressed disagreement about the type and amount of recreation that should be allowed in the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Some want only non motorized recreation promoted, while others want extensive recreation site improvements to support OHV and other recreation uses over relatively large areas.

Representative Public Comments

Recommend taking a low impact hike in the Christmas Valley dunes area this Memorial Day weekend and see how enjoyable you find it with ORVs buzzing all over the place!! No control, no respect = maximal impact on other users. Hikers have been virtually forced to give up on the dunes, and the same encroachment by ORVs is being invited across the public forests and the grasslands of the area.

The ORV development of the Christmas Valley area is a symptom of a recreational disease, and BLM should not be in the business of accommodating and supporting communities that develop themselves to foster this disease to the detriment of the greater public good.

I want all of the Christmas Valley sand dunes open for the public to freely use. And everything that was closed should be re-opened.

Remove fence from sand dunes and only fence specific arch sites. Designate Christmas Valley Sand Dunes as motorized OHV recreation area. Install pit toilets in the camping area at the dunes. Dig a well at dunes and provide public water.

Virtue Flats and Christmas Valley Sand Dunes must include OHV USER and all motorized users.

Virtue Flats and Christmas Valley Sand Dunes are examples of but two areas that allow cross-country travel at this time. Other areas need to be found that would allow this type of travel even if it were exclusively a trail system on 80,000 acres or more in each district of BLM lands. Please take the OHV community seriously as you write the new TMP. We are here now, but in ten years we will have double. We are the growing public land user not the declining.

I have been concerned about the BLM lands in North Lake County for some time. There are some wonderful recreational and educational opportunities available. The area also has a very sensitive ecosystem that needs protection.

I'd like to express my thoughts on the vandalism first. BLM scheduling a meeting in North Lake County and getting their input and support is a very important first step. However instead of making it a meeting created and ran by government employees, why don't you approach the Christmas Valley Chamber ask for their cooperation, let them run the meeting and ask for residents ideas for public land management in their area and hopefully come to some kind of consensus. Maybe if you take that approach they will feel some ownership and help guard against the vandalism issue.

Obviously economic development and tourism is important to the businesses in the (North Lake) area, so protecting the environment and balancing the economics will be tricky. Put this one in economics sections

BLM needs to decide from their inventory of attractions, what they want to promote (brochures, signage, maps etc.). If you want to keep the public out of some of the sensitive

areas don't even promote them to the traveling public. It's frustrating to the tourist to have a brochure or map of a special experience and then find they can't even get to it on a decent road or there are no toilets or picnic tables when they get there. There are some wonderful tourist opportunities in North Lake County; Derrick Cave, Crack in the Ground, Sand Dunes, Ft. Rock and maybe more that I haven't experienced. When talking to the individual Elderhostelers, they wouldn't be interested in exploring those attractions on their own, in their present access condition. I hesitate promoting them to individual tourists to explore on their own. Perhaps with a frank discussion from the area residents you can help determine which should be made more accessible and which should be protected or withdrawn from the promotional material.

It is important to have the new lookout tower on Green Mountain be accessible to the public.

Good interpretive signs (needed) for Crack-in-the-Ground. Roadway indicator signs (needed to) Crack (in-the-Ground). Better signage (needed) to Sand Dunes.

Distribution system is needed for brochures; where they need to go (delivered). Chamber needs to do this! Communication (needed) between Christmas Valley/Silver Lake/Lakeview/ Fort Rock Museum.

We hope you can oversee the development of a balanced recreation plan for North Lake County that: 1) serves all users, 2) respects the legitimate rights of low impact visitors and users, 3) meets all of the guidelines of BLM national management policy for ORV/OHVs, and 4) is responsible to maintaining and improving the ecological condition of the natural resources under BLM management.

I recommend:

> *1) the use of very large boulders to use for road closures. Where boulders are not possible due to the type of equipment needed to install them, then I recommend using fencing. In view areas, wood rail fences; in other areas, wire fences.*
> *2)the closure of all user-created roads.*
> *3) more monitoring and presence of law enforcement. I also think issuing citations and fines are more effective than just issuing warnings.*
> *4) the permanent retirement of grazing allotments in all critical wildlife areas.*

Table Rock - Designated campsites, road closures on all user-created roads and sensitive terrain roads. Possible location of a porta potty. If there are livestock grazing allotments on Table Rock, I recommend permanently retiring them.

Sand Dunes - Install a permanent bathroom facility. Closure of all user-created roads leading to and from campsites to Sand Dunes. More signage located in more areas. I recommend closing critical archaeological areas to OHV use completely.

The Sand Dunes and Lost Forest areas are perfect places for solitude. I recommend the closure of these areas for a few designated days each year for non-OHV users. Example for hikers, photographers, birders, etc.

Lost Forest - Designated campsites, road closures on all user-created roads and sensitive terrain roads. Possible location of a porta potty. I recommend the use of more signage and located in more areas. If there are livestock grazing allotments in the Lost Forest, I recommend permanently retiring them. I recommend closing critical archaeological areas to OHV

Green Mountain - I believe that grazing should not be allowed in the vicinity of the top of Green Mountain, nor near the camping area.

I am also concerned about the outrageous, out-of-control, highly dangerous activities that occur in the Sand Dunes, especially during Memorial Day weekend. In my opinion, interim management policy for Wilderness Study Areas is being violated. Although interim management may allow historical uses, the current OHV abuses in the Sand Dunes WSA is anything but historic. The user numbers and user impacts have increased exponentially, as have illegal activities, serious injuries, and fatalities. I believe that BLM will find itself liable if its management does nothing to restore non-primitive recreation back to historic levels, and if it continues to encourage activities that cause injury and death. Designation of the OHV use area within the WSA undoubtedly violates both the spirit and the law of interim management policy.

The illegal activities that take place in the Sand Dunes WSA and Lost Forest are out of control. Not only do they cause irreparable damage to archeological, paleontological, and botanical resources, they are also a hazard to human health and life. Enforcement has been woefully inadequate to non-existent. Injuries are inevitable due to alcohol consumption, dense traffic, high speeds, blind jumps, and unrestrained children driving. Given the lack of staff and budget that would be required to bring the situation under control, I would contend that the simplest, most cost-effective course of action would be to close the Sand Dunes to motorized traffic altogether.

I think one of the worst things BLM can do is to provide more access routes to the Sand Dunes. Such an action would impair the wilderness character of lands contiguous with the Sand Dunes WSA on the east, it would encourage even more traffic, more difficult to enforce, and further violation of interim management. I do not see a need for more recreation site development, with the possible exception of portable toilet sites. Any developments should be on the north side of the WSA in locations not identified by ONDA as having wilderness character (see map).

One of our concerns is the ability for hunters to have access to our resources so that they can enjoy the great outdoors. In keeping with this we are asking to be kept informed of any transportation management changes on public lands. By transportation management changes we mean any activities such as road closures, restricting on and off road travel with any form of motorized or mechanical vehicle, including OHVs.

When planning any new recreation projects, or replacing various elements of campgrounds, trails, etc.- such as signs, picnic tables, surfaces, piers - please keep in mind the impact the project will have on people with disabilities. I wanted to offer my assistance, when appropriate, and hope that I may call upon you in return to help explain some of the new recreational/trail accessibility regulations which are due to come into effect in the not too distant future.

Our members are frequent visitors to the North Lake Recreation Area and take a very personal interest in seeing the quality of the experience we have on the public lands of the area improved and not diminished. We are low impact recreational users, and we do not want to see uncontrolled, unregulated, unenforceable high environmental impact development- especially for high user impact activities like OHVs - encouraged on these fragile semi-arid lands.

Here are some questions that we think specifically apply and that must be adequately addressed in any viable/responsible recreation management plan for the North Lake area that considers increased OHV use:

> *1) Is the boundary of the area open for OHV use clearly and fully marked?*
> *2) Is the area that is not open for OHV use clearly identified/signed and not just left passively open as a result of no designation or the intent to address in the future?*
> *3) Are the requirements of a Comprehensive Travel Management Plan met in fact and not just in name in the management plan with an overall open/closed area and*

trail system with appropriate signage?
4) How will OHV users- not the public- cover the special user costs for enforcing the open and closed boundaries for the area on a 24/7 basis during the entire use season since OHV users are interested in and their vehicles are equipped for use night and day?
5) How will OHV users- not the public -cover the costs for the special expense of enforcement to identify, process and punish OHV boundary violators?
6) How will ecological damage to the area be independently assessed on a regular schedule with what provisions for closure and restoration as needed?
7) How will OHV users - not the public - cover the costs of damage assessment and the needed closures and restoration?
8) How will the interests of non-OHV users of the dunes be accommodated such that in the wide open dunes area their experience will not be adversely affected by the constant buzz of ORV engines and/or the smell of ORV exhaust?
9) How will the immediately surrounding and uniquely important Fossil Lake and Lost Forest areas be adequately protected?

These are the kinds of questions that must be adequately answered in any consideration of recreation development for ORV/OHV use in the Dunes, or in any other location within the North Lake Recreation area. We cannot see how it is possible to answer these kinds of questions satisfactorily without either bankrupting the OHV users or requiring the public to neglect the interests of the vast majority of low impact users while subsidizing the costly and ecologically destructive play of a privileged few- play that is sponsored by Honda, Kawasaki, and Suzuki and the OHV associations these corporations support in the U.S. for their economic self-interest. Let Honda and the OHV users pay the full additional costs of their activities on public lands (as compared to low impact users)- ecological damage, injury liability, special area enforcement, etc. and see if they are still anxious to promote OHV development.

Ultimately the question to Lakeview BLM is whether it will have the courage to restrict the advance of the OHV onslaught on our public lands or elect to promote the OHV problem, succumb to the well-funded OHV lobby, do the bidding of Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki, and make ever larger ecological sacrifice zones out of our public lands. We expect that Lakeview management will recognize the fundamental underlying problem and select restriction rather than expansion for OHV recreational use in the North Lake SRMA.

I spent over two years under contract to Lakeview BLM and Fremont National Forest recommending motorized trail systems for designation and some for closure. The information thus gathered is still on file and speaks for itself. I have duplicate copies, as well. These motorized trails are on numbered BLM roads for the most part and their utilization adds a necessary dispersal for motorized recreation. The much-sought value of solitude can be enjoyed in this expansive trail system which still enjoys the protection of the "Limited Use" category.

Some concerns and thoughts that rise to the surface are:

1) Self-healing open areas for OHV are in short supply and motorized recreation needs that consideration for diversity and a viable alternative.
2) The values sought for a sand dune wilderness were thought to qualify despite historic OHV use. The only threat to those visible values is in the periphery of the dunes, a substantial sum of which is in private ownership. The best way to protect, I feel, is in the existence of a presence, preferably in the form of an on-site host.
3) The Fossil Area, Lost Forest and the Sand Dunes, all under the blanket of an Area Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), are prone to frequent vandalism largely due to remoteness of location and inadequacy of funding for some managerial presence.
4) Recreation funding may well be available from Oregon State gas taxes and from Federal Recreational Trail Funds. These funds, available singly or one serving as

a match for the other, could fund a host site, rest rooms and showers for the area. Apart from OHV, these amenities would compliment and enhance visitation to the area. In order to qualify, the Sand Dunes area would have to have at least a ten-year availability for OHV planning. The WSA status is not conducive to OHV planning. It would be necessary to petition for a legislative change in that status.
5) In this semi-remote area, resource protection can better be afforded by active management than by passive designation.
6) The possibilities of accommodation of both motorized and non-motorized values in an alternate time and space or seasonal use has yet to be explored.

Questions to be Resolved

- How should the North Lake SRMA be managed?
- What types and levels of recreation should the SRMA provide?
- What role should BLM serve in promoting or providing opportunities for tourism in the SRMA?
- How should outdoor therapy groups be managed to meet the needs of these groups while ensuring safety of the public and adjacent property owners?
- Should other recreation sites be developed in the SRMA for public use?
- Can high use recreation areas such as the Sand Dunes be managed to allow continued recreation use while protecting other resources?
- Is there a need for any additional roads in the SRMA to provide access to areas currently inaccessible to BLM, commercial interests, or the public?
- Which roads in the SRMA, if any, should be closed or limited in their use?

BLM Response

Recreation use in the planning area is increasing, especially in the northern portion of Lake County. There is an increasing demand for both developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities. OHV use needs to be managed. There is a continued demand for access to public lands by outdoor therapy groups. This increasing use has resulted in conflicts with local residents. For these reasons, the Lakeview RMP amendment will include the development of a recreation management plan for the North Lake SRMA.

Issue 5: Utility Corridors

Views expressed in public comments focused on ensuring that the RMP amendment included an analysis of the effects of new utility corridor designations and other energy developments on access, wilderness character, and habitat fragmentation.

Representative Public Comment

Utilize this planning process to consider the latest science, reassess current land use, and adopt appropriate guidelines related to … energy facility siting - including new utility corridors.

Place new utility corridor designations north of Horse Mountain and south of the Poverty Basin and Alkali Buttes.

Given the rapid expansion of energy development in this region, particularly wind projects and associated transmission line projects and upgrades, BLM should seize this opportunity to pro actively address siting issues. Such an approach will greatly increase opportunities to responsibly develop clean, renewable energy and associated transmission while minimizing impacts to wildlands, wildlife and other sensitive resources and values in the area. Zoning for

development and avoidance areas is one of the best ways to address this issue, as shown by BLM's ongoing work to designate zones in numerous other planning processes.

Question to be Resolved

- Are new utility corridor designations needed?

BLM Response

The 2010 Settlement Agreement requires the BLM to address specific management direction for Corridor 7-24, established through BLM's West Wide Energy Corridors ROD in 2009. The 2010 Settlement Agreement can be accessed at http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/rmp-amendment/index.php. This designated corridor is currently unoccupied. In addition, the Ruby Pipeline project was recently completed across the southern portion of the planning area, mostly outside of a designated corridor.

For this reason, the Lakeview RMP amendment will address whether Corridor 7-24 should be retained in its current location or the location possibly adjusted. The amendment will also consider if the Ruby Pipeline corridor should become a designated corridor where future linear right-of-ways are encouraged to locate.

Issue 6: Significant Caves

No comments were received regarding the designation or management of significant caves.

Questions to be Resolved

- Should additional significant cave designations occur?
- What cave management direction should be applied?

BLM Response

After implementation of the 2003 Lakeview RMP-ROD, BLM's Washington Office issued expanded direction on the designation and management of significant caves. For this reason, the Lakeview RMP amendment will consider designating additional significant caves in the planning area and developing appropriate cave management direction.

Issue 7: ACECs

In general, ACEC designations were previously addressed in the 2003 RMP-ROD and will not be revisited. (See discussion in the "Comments or Issues that Represent Decisions that Have Already been Made via Existing Laws, Regulations, or Land Use Plan" section that follows). However, the BLM is proposing that the Foskett Springs area be designated and managed as an ACEC.

Representative Public Comment

Designate important water bodies and botanical reserves as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) under FLPMA. BLM must give priority to the designation and protection of areas of critical environmental concern.

Questions to be Resolved

- Does the Foskett Springs area meet the relevance and importance criteria for ACEC designation?
- Does the Foskett Springs area require special management?

BLM Response

The BLM is proposing the Foskett Springs area as an ACEC to ensure protection of the endangered Foskett Springs dace (*Rhinichthys osculus* spp.), an endemic fish species. If BLM can demonstrate that the habitat for this species is secure, the FWS may consider de-listing the species. For this reason, the Lakeview RMP amendment will address the effects of designating and managing the area as an ACEC.

Issue 8: Climate Change

Within the public comments received, views varied from climate variability being substantially affected by human activities to climate variability being a completely natural phenomenon. Commentors asked BLM to consider the effects of climate change on future management actions, as well as address the effects of its management actions on climate change.

Representative Public Comments

Impacts to the ecosystem from climate change include shrinking water resources; extreme flooding events; invasion of more flammable non-native plant species; soil erosion; loss of wildlife habitat; and larger, hotter wildfires. Many of these impacts have been catalogued in recent studies by federal agencies showing the impacts of climate change specifically in the United States such as the recent report entitled Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States, available at http://www.globalchange.gov/publications/reports/scientific-assessments/us-impacts.

The BLM State Office for Oregon/Washington has issued guidance on analyzing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing changing climate conditions in NEPA documents (IM No. OR-2010-012). This policy guidance states that this type of analysis should be included in resource management plans as these types of plans "typically have a long enough duration that climate change could potentially alter the choice among alternatives."

Off-road vehicle designations, oil and gas management stipulations, and renewable energy development may significantly increase or reduce greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change and must be analyzed under NEPA.

In addition to evaluating the impact of management decisions on climate change, including opportunities to reduce such impacts, BLM's environmental analysis must also evaluate the likely impacts of climate change on the affected environment.

BLM is required to take a hard look at direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to and from climate change in the planning areas governed by the RMP amendments.

Take an in-depth look at grazing and how various permitted uses of public lands contributes to the effects of climate change.

Climate change is beyond the control of man. The climate has been changing since the beginning of time.

Climate change is likely to impact the ability of the BLM to maintain or increase the resilience of the lands it manages.

BLM should adopt an alternative that will provide for land and watershed management that will both mitigate for climate change (i.e., store more carbon in the form of healthy plant communities) and prepare for climate change (e.g., by reducing cumulative stress from livestock, ORV use, fire suppression, weeds and so forth). Both of these objectives can be advanced by re-establishing natural disturbance regimes and reducing anthropogenic (man caused) disturbances.

Questions to be Resolved

- What are current and future predicted climate trends in the planning area?
- Do BLM management activities contribute to measurable greenhouse gas emissions?
- How much management flexibility should BLM employ to adapt to changing climate over the long term?

BLM Response

Recent Department of the Interior and BLM guidance require that BLM consider the effects of carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions during its land and resource management planning activities. For this reason, the Lakeview RMP amendment will address the effects of various management alternatives on carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions in the planning area. The amendment will also address whether or not the current state of the science is capable of accurately predicting future climate trends.

Issue 9: Local Social and Economic Concerns

Two widely divergent views were presented in the public comments as to what management would be most beneficial to local communities. Wilderness proponents opined that communities near designated wilderness areas have a growing economy. Proponents of resource uses felt that the local economy is heavily dependent on such uses, and further restrictions would be devastating. OHV users requested analysis of the continuing restrictions on OHV access and the associated adverse effects on public use and local economics.

Representative Public Comments

Settlement alternatives appear to give no consideration to the economic and social values that must be considered under NEPA.

OHVs of all three Classes contribute economic wealth to all communities. Especially the smaller towns such as Christmas Valley, Baker City, Halfway, Fields, Unity, Prairie City, etc.

OHV recreation supports the local economy to a greater extent than users of WSAs.

Permit relinquishment should be left alone. Current process has worked well and permits need to remain available to area ranches for the local economy.

These ranches, most of them small family businesses, form the base of the local economy, providing jobs, tax revenue, and a safe, domestic food source.

Cattle removal from Hart Mountain has harmed the environment and economy.

Properly managed livestock grazing has proven itself to enhance the environment and wildlife habitat. It also has an enormous impact to the local economy which is even more crucial with

a shrinking private sector. The arguments to reduce or end livestock grazing are political and philosophical and cannot hold up to environmental scrutiny.

Providing opportunities for quality, muscle-powered recreation on public lands can result in a significant economic boost to local and regional economies.

We request that your analysis of socioeconomic considerations in the Southeast Oregon and Lakeview Resource Areas follow the approach set out in this document.

Questions to be Resolved

- How should public lands be managed to meet social and economic needs?
- What is an appropriate role for BLM in providing economic support to local communities?

BLM Response

The communities in the planning area are generally small and isolated. The local economies rely greatly upon the public lands to provide economic benefits to local communities, including such things as recreation, livestock forage, and jobs. For this reason, the Lakeview RMP amendment will address the effects of various management alternatives on social and economic conditions in the planning area.

Comments, Concerns, and Issues That Will Not Be Addressed

This section addresses comments, concerns, or issues received during the scoping period that were reviewed by the BLM, but will not be carried forward into the Lakeview RMP amendment for the reasons stated herein.

Comments or Issues That Are Beyond the Scope of Analysis or Can Only be Resolved by Policy Change or Legislative Action

Representative Comments

Remove the (Sand Dunes) WSA and designate the area as Christmas Valley Sand Dunes OHV Area.

Remove WSAs from all public lands.

Designate more WSAs.

The BLM should change its policy.

Allow for the same improvements in existing Wilderness Study Areas as were allowed at the time of designation for example new fence construction, water enhancement and or development or access to areas.

BLM Response

Land use plans cannot be used to change existing laws, regulations, or BLM policies. Such actions are handled by Congress or the Washington Office of the BLM and are beyond the scope of the planning process. Comments such as the ones listed above can only be resolved through national level policy change or legislative action.

Specifically, BLM's authority to designate WSAs expired in 1991. Further, only Congress can decide whether to designate a WSA as wilderness or release the area from wilderness study.

Comments such as these fell outside of BLM's stated purpose and need for the plan amendment.

Comments Directing BLM to Follow Existing Law or Regulation

Representative Comments

Regulations are clear in directing BLM to allow ORV use only where it does not endanger or interfere with the other resources and users of the public lands.

You must follow regulation.

Follow FLPMA.

Ensure you follow NEPA.

BLM Response

Comments such as these represent statements asking BLM to comply with existing laws and regulations. BLM is fully aware of its responsibilities to prepare and implement RMPs that comply with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and other governing land use plans. An RMP is, by definition, a plan that balances multiple and often competing resource values and uses in accordance with a wide variety of complementary and contradictory laws, regulations, and policies. A summary of all of the laws, regulations, policies, and land use plans that apply to this planning effort will be included in Chapter 1 of the Lakeview RMP amendment/EIS.

See also the discussion of Planning Criteria that follows later in this document.

Comments or Issues that Represent Decisions Addressed Via Existing Laws, Regulations, or Other Land Use Planning Efforts

Representative Comments

BLM must maintain and restore aquatic ecosystems, not degrade them.

When managing cattle on public lands where riparian waterways are implicated, maintain (1) the physical integrity of the aquatic ecosystem, (2) the sediment regime of the aquatic ecosystem, (3) the riparian plant communities, and (4) the stream flow characteristics.

Please exclude livestock from meadows and riparian areas to eliminate future injury and to heal from past injuries.

Refrain from grazing near any water bodies and riparian areas. Depending on the area, comply with standards from the NWFP, PACFISH, and INFISH.

Designate important waterbodies and botanical reserves as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) under FLPMA. BLM must give priority to the designation and protection of areas of critical environmental concern.

Sage grouse do not live, breed, nor raise their young on these old roads or ways. I can drive right by them and they will not move a muscle. I can hunt upland game birds all day and not find even one on the trail. Amongst the sage is where I will find them as they freeze into momentary statues.

Please close routes within three miles of sage grouse leks, at least on a seasonal basis to protect sage grouse from disturbance during lekking and broad-rearing.

The Lakeview RMP area includes prime sage grouse habitat. Take a fresh look at protecting sage grouse.

Grazing animals need water which ranchers supply. Ranchers and BLM make sure that the springs are flowing, reservoirs are full and not breached and creeks provide as much water as possible. By allowing grazing, the waters are there also for wildlife to partake. In fact, if you slowly drive up on one of these tanks on a hot afternoon, one will quite often see sage grouse dusting themselves or hunkered on the damp dark side with beaks open as they gasp in the hot summer air. Without grazing, these water holes would not have been there in the past, or in the future. This water has saved these grouse and millions of other wild animals for over a century now.

The threats to sage grouse habitat across the West are numerous. They include domestic livestock grazing, which can lead to the establishment and spread of weeds, erosion, denuded vegetation and associated lack of cover, pollution of water, and other impacts to sagebrush habitats; the proliferation of the non-native annual grass cheatgrass, which is spreading rapidly and replacing sagebrush; periods of drought and the effects of global climate change, which may exacerbate the expansion of cheatgrass and the loss of sagebrush habitat.

Barbed-wire fencing also negatively impacts sage grouse. Fencing is a mortality threat for sage grouse when flying grouse collide with the fencing. This is especially the case around late brood rearing habitat such as springs, seeps and wet meadows. Fences also provide perches for predators that prey on sage grouse. Nearly all of these threats are present in sage grouse habitat in Oregon, including within the planning areas, to one extent or another.

Because the Lakeview and Southeast Oregon land use planning areas cover almost 7 million acres of the most important core sage grouse habitat outside of Wyoming, it is important that BLM take a hard look in the EIS at impacts to sage grouse and sagebrush habitat.

BLM should also ensure that these plans set sideboards for renewable energy development that ensure such projects can be developed without degradation of the desert wildlands and damage to sensitive wildlife populations. Please develop alternatives which exclude energy development, including transmission and generation facilities, from areas of critical environmental concern and other special management areas including priority habitat for sensitive species such as sage grouse.

Inventorying lands with wilderness characteristics will also provide important data on existing large blocks of (sagebrush) habitat and how BLM can restore these blocks of habitat to better match the historic range of variability. Swanson et al. (1994) contend that managing

an ecosystem within its range of variability is appropriate to maintain diverse, resilient, productive, and healthy ecosystems for viable populations of native species.

BLM Response

Comments such as these have already been decided or directed by existing law, regulation, or RMP.

In particular, the 2003 Lakeview RMP-ROD retained 4 existing and designated 13 new ACECs. Most of these were to protect native plant communities or special status plants. Two ACECs (Warner Wetlands and Lake Abert) were designated specifically to recognize important natural processes (wildlife habitat) associated with these water body/wetland complexes. In addition, the Twelvemile Creek area was recommended suitable as a recreational class wild and scenic river. For this reason, BLM believes that it has already adequately addressed the designation and management of "important water bodies and botanical reserves" in the planning area and these decisions are not being re-addressed in this plan amendment.

The majority of the comments regarding riparian and water quality management have also been previously addressed in the 2003 Lakeview RMP-ROD and do not need to be revisited. However, the Lakeview RMP amendment will still include a discussion of the impacts of various management alternatives on riparian areas, aquatic systems, and water quality.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the BLM published an NOI on December 9, 2011, to prepare EISs to amend RMPs throughout the BLM for Greater Sage-Grouse conservation. The BLM aims to incorporate objectives and conservation measures into RMPs by September 2014 in order to provide adequate regulatory mechanisms to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitat.

Comments or Issues That Do Not Require a Response or Can Be Answered More Directly Outside the Planning Process

Representative Comments

Not able to find any information on the BLM's websites as referenced in the Notice of Intent.

Please keep me informed.

Please add me to the mailing list.

Please send me a copy of the DEIS when it is available.

Please consider the enclosed material during your analysis.

BLM Response

This category includes comments that provided additional information or data, questions that could be addressed more directly outside the planning process, or comments that do not require a response.

Mailing lists have been updated to ensure interested parties remain on the list and receive future mailings.

All attached data, maps, information, bibliographies, or references were reviewed. Any information that BLM found to be relevant to the planning process will be included in the analysis and cited where appropriate. However, some of the material submitted included references to studies for unrelated environments or conditions that do not exist in the planning area and will not be considered further.

Non-substantive Comments

Representative Comments

I believe that…

I visited the area and observed…

I prefer ….

I do not favor more restrictions on….

BLM Response

These types of comments generally represent statements of opinion or personal experience, comments that are conjectural, or are not supported by scientific or factual evidence. Such comments do not rise to the level of substantive planning issues and will not be considered.

Differences Between Lakeview RMP and SEORMP Amendments

The primary purpose and need statements for amending the SEORMP and Lakeview RMP are identical. Every effort will be made to present the analysis in a consistent fashion between the two EISs. However, resources, geographic, social, and economic characteristics, and current management differ between the two planning areas and will be fully described and analyzed as separate plan amendments. The secondary purpose described above under "Other Planning Issues" reflect specific issues that will be addressed in the Lakeview RMP amendment. The SEORMP amendment/EIS scoping report is being released at approximately the same time as this Lakeview RMP amendment scoping report. Please review the SEORMP amendment scoping report to consider the unique planning issues to be analyzed through the Lakeview SEORMP amendment process.

Planning Criteria

Planning criteria guide the development of the plan amendment by defining the decision space or the general sideboards for the planning effort. Planning criteria are generally based upon applicable laws, national and BLM state director guidance, and the results of public and governmental participation (43 CFR 1610.4-2). Planning criteria ensure that the plan amendment is tailored to the substantive issues and avoids unnecessary data collection or analysis. Planning criteria include compliance with FLPMA, NEPA, and other relevant laws and are listed in the attached NOI (Appendix A).

Data Summary / Data Gaps

In preparation for this plan amendment process, the BLM has updated many data sets, including but not limited to roads and trails, wilderness characteristics, caves, and fire history. These data sets will be used to describe the current environmental conditions in the planning area, as well as design management alternatives and assess environmental effects. The status of two key data sets is discussed in more detail below.

Road and Trail Inventory

The Lakeview BLM staff began updating its road and trail inventory in 2005. This update has focused on re-assessing the location and condition of existing BLM roads and trails, as well as confirming the presence of many new routes on BLM lands in the field. The BLM began this road inventory update process by comparing existing routes in its ground transportation (GTRN) data set with recent digital ortho photos taken in 2005 and 2009. BLM staff digitized potential new road lines using the ortho photos as a backdrop and a "heads-up" digitizing process. The BLM then created field maps and then verified the presence and condition of the majority of these routes in the field. The results were recorded on field maps or, in some cases, were collected using global positioning system technology. This field data was then used to update both the GTRN and Facility Asset Management System (FAMS) data sets.

The BLM Washington Office also commissioned a field condition assessment for all roads currently in the transportation system (that is, the FAMS database) with an assigned maintenance level of 3, 4, or 5. Between 2005 and 2007, approximately 60 percent of these roads in the Lakeview District had detailed the field condition assessments. The results of this assessment were reviewed by the District Engineer were used to update the FAMS database.

The GTRN and FAMS updates were completed on the majority of the BLM-administered roads and motorized routes in the planning area in 2011.

Wilderness Characteristics Evaluations

Wilderness Characteristics Evaluations (inventory updates) have been completed on approximately 70 percent of the planning area in accordance with BLM's current wilderness inventory guidance. The evaluations have been posted on the BLM's website as they are completed (visit http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/inventas.php). Hard copies have been provided to interested parties upon request. The wilderness evaluations for the remainder of the planning area will be completed before publication of the Draft Lakeview RMP amendment/EIS, and a summary of the results will be completed before publication of the Draft Lakeview RMP Amendment and a summary of the results will be included therein.

Next Steps in the Planning Process

The BLM has completed the public scoping portion of the planning process and initiated tribal consultation. Over the next few months the BLM will complete the development of a reasonable range of alternatives, analyze the effects of the alternatives, and publish a draft Lakeview RMP amendment/EIS. The draft document will identify the BLM's preferred alternative, which is the alternative the BLM predicts would best meet the purpose and need and best fulfill BLM's statutory multiple-use mission and responsibilities.

The public will be provided a 90-day opportunity to review and comment on the draft Lakeview RMP amendment/EIS. The BLM will respond to substantive comments it receives and, if necessary, will

- modify one or more of the alternatives;
- supplement, improve, or modify the analysis;
- make factual corrections; or
- explain why comments are not substantive or do not warrant further agency response.

The BLM will then prepare a proposed draft Lakeview RMP amendment/Final EIS that incorporates the appropriate changes and provides a 30-day protest period.

After resolving all protests, the BLM will prepare and publish the approved Lakeview RMP amendment-ROD, which will describe the agency's approved plan and rationale for making its decision. A summary and time line for completing the remaining steps in the planning process are included in Table 6.

Table 6: Estimated Timeline for Completing Remaining Steps in the Lakeview RMP Planning Process

Remaining Planning Steps	Approximate Completion
Complete the Draft RMP amendment/EIS and publish for review	Fall 2014
End of 90-day review period	Winter 2014-2015
Analyze comments and publish Proposed RMP Amendment/Final EIS	Spring 2015
End of 30-day protest period	Summer 2015
BLM Director resolves protests	Summer 2015
State Director approves RMP Amendment and signs ROD	Fall 2015
Publish and mail the RMP Amendment/ROD	Fall 2015

Appendix A: Notice of intent for Lakeview RMP and SEORMP Amendments

(E) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

Under section 4(b)(1) of the Act, we must base our assessment of these factors solely on the best scientific and commercial data available.

V. What Could Happen as a Result of This Review?

For each species under review, if we find new information that indicates a change in classification may be warranted, we may propose a new rule that could do one of the following:

(A) Reclassify the species from threatened to endangered (uplist);

(B) Reclassify the species from endangered to threatened (downlist); or

(C) Remove the species from the List (delist).

If we determine that a change in classification is not warranted, then the species remains on the List under its current status.

VI. Request for New Information

To ensure that a 5-year review is complete and based on the best available scientific and commercial information, we request new information from all sources. See "What Information Do We Consider in Our Review?" for specific criteria. If you submit information, please support it with documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, methods used to gather and analyze the data, and/or copies of any pertinent publications, reports, or letters by knowledgeable sources.

If you wish to provide information for any species included in these 5-year reviews, please submit your comments and materials to the Field Supervisor of the appropriate Fish and Wildlife Office (*see* **ADDRESSES** section).

VII. Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the offices where the comments are submitted.

VIII. Completed and Active Reviews

A list of all completed and currently active 5-year reviews addressing species for which the Pacific Region of the Service has lead responsibility is available at: *http://www.fws.gov/pacific/ecoservices/endangered/recovery/5year.html*.

IX. Authority

This document is published under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: March 15, 2010.

David J. Wesley,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1 Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 2010–7915 Filed 4–7–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLORV00000.16100000.DO0000 .LXSS072H0000 HAG10–0083]

Notice of Intent To Prepare Amendments to the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan (RMP), Malheur County, OR, and the Lakeview RMP, Lake County, OR, and Associated Environmental Impact Statements.

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, (NEPA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, (FLPMA) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Vale District (Jordan Resource Area and Malheur Resource Area) and Lakeview District (Lakeview Resource Area) in southeastern Oregon intend to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) to amend the Southeastern Oregon RMP (September 2002), Vale, Oregon, and the Lakeview RMP (January 2003), Lakeview, Oregon, and by this notice are announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the two RMP amendments with associated EISs. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until July 7, 2010. The date(s) and location(s) of any scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newspapers and the BLM Web sites at: *http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/valermp.php* and *http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/lakeviewrmp.php*. In order to be included in the Draft EISs, all comments must be received prior to the close of the 90-day scoping period or within 30 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. We will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of both Draft EISs.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues related to the Southeastern Oregon RMP Amendment/EIS by any of the following methods:

- *Web site: http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/valermp.php.*
- *E-mail: SEORMP@blm.gov.*
- *Fax:* 541–473–3144.
- *Mail:* Bureau of Land Management, Vale District Office, 100 Oregon St., Vale, Oregon 97918.

You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria related to the Lakeview RMP Amendment/EIS by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail: paul_whitman@blm.gov.*
- *Fax:* 541–947–6399.
- *Mail:* Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District Office, 1301 South G Street, Lakeview, Oregon 97630.

Documents pertinent to these proposals may be examined at the Vale and Lakeview District Offices.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing lists, contact Jill Silvey, Southeastern Oregon and Lakeview RMP Project Manager, telephone (541) 473–3144; address 100 Oregon Street, Vale, Oregon 97918; e-mail *SEORMP@blm.gov,* or Paul Whitman, Lakeview District Planner, telephone (541) 947–6110; address, 1301 South G Street, Lakeview, Oregon 97630; e-mail *paul_whitman@blm.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document provides notice that the BLM Vale and Lakeview District Offices intend to prepare RMP Amendments with associated EISs for the Southeastern Oregon and Lakeview planning areas. The two planning areas are located in Malheur, Lake, Harney, and Grant Counties in Oregon and encompass approximately 4.6 million acres of public land in the Southeastern Oregon planning area and approximately 3.2 million acres of public land in the Lakeview planning area. After the BLM completed the Southeastern Oregon RMP and the Lakeview RMP in 2002 and 2003, respectively, separate lawsuits were filed challenging each RMP. On July 14, 2008, the Ninth Cicuit ruled on the Southeastern Oregon RMP in *Oregon Natural Desert Association* v. *Bureau of Land Management,* 531 F.3d 1114 (9th Cir. 2008). Soon thereafter, the BLM filed a petition for panel rehearing of the Court's remedy (vacatur of the Record of

Decision). The matter has been stayed during settlement negotiations. The Ninth Circuit stayed litigation regarding similar challenges to the Lakeview RMP in *Oregon Natural Desert Association* v. *Gammon,* No. 07–35728 (9th Cir.), pending resolution of the Southeastern Oregon RMP case, and to allow for settlement negotiations between the parties. The BLM is preparing RMP Amendments/EISs consistent with the 2008 holding of the Ninth Circuit.

The two RMP Amendments/EISs plan to address the following issues:

- Consideration of information from updates of resource information related to wilderness characteristics;
- Development of a range of allocation alternatives with respect to ORV use, travel, and transportation; and
- Development of grazing management alternative(s).

The purpose of the public scoping processes is to determine other relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analyses, including alternatives, and guide the planning processes.

The BLM has also identified some preliminary planning criteria to guide development of the RMP Amendments, to avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis, and to ensure the RMP Amendments are tailored to the issues. These criteria may be modified and/or other criteria may be identified during the public scoping process. Preliminary planning criteria include compliance with all legal mandates of the FLPMA, the NEPA, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Administrative Procedures Act, the BLM planning regulations in 43 CFR part 1600, and other relevant laws. The following planning criteria will also guide the planning processes:

- The principles of multiple-use and sustained yield will be observed;
- A systematic interdisciplinary approach to integrate, physical, biological, economic, and other sciences will be used;
- Priority will be given to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern;
- The best available data regarding natural resources will be used, to the extent possible;
- Present and potential uses of public lands will be considered;
- The relative scarcity of values and availability of alternative means and sites for recognizing those values will be considered;
- Long term benefits to the public against short term benefits will be weighed;
- Tribal, Federal, and state pollution laws, standards and implementation plans will be complied with, to the extent possible; and
- Consistency and coordination with other programs, plans and policies will be sought.

You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria in writing to the BLM at any public scoping meeting, or you may submit them to the BLM using one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above. To be most helpful, you should submit comments either prior to the close of the 90-day scoping period or within 30 days after the last public meeting. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. The minutes and list of attendees for each scoping meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days after the meeting to any participant who wishes to clarify the views he or she expressed. The BLM will evaluate identified issues to be addressed in the RMP Amendments, and will place them into one of three categories:

1. Issues to be resolved in the plan amendment;

2. Issues to be resolved through policy or administrative action; or

3. Issues beyond the scope of the plan amendments.

The BLM will provide an explanation in the Draft RMP Amendments/EISs as to why an issue was placed in category two or three. The public is also encouraged to help identify any management questions and concerns that should be addressed in the RMP Amendments. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns.

The BLM will use an interdisciplinary approach to develop the RMP Amendments in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. At a minimum, specialists with expertise in the following disciplines will be involved in the planning processes: Rangeland management, wilderness, travel management, recreation, and wildlife.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7; 43 CFR 1610.2.

Larry Frazier,

Acting Vale District Manager.

Carol Benkosky,

Lakeview District Manager.

[FR Doc. 2010–7986 Filed 4–7–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–33–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLCAC09000 L16100000.DP0000]

Notice Re-opening the Comment Period for the Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Clear Creek Management Area, California

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces a re-opening of the comment period on the Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA). The original notice was published in the **Federal Register** on December 4, 2009 [74 FR 0232] and provided for a comment period to end on March 5, 2010. The BLM is re-opening the comment period to end April 19, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sky Murphy, BLM Hollister Field Office, 20 Hamilton Court, Hollister, California 95023, (831) 630–5039.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The original Notice of Availability provided for comments on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS to be received through March 5, 2010. The BLM is re-opening the comment period in response to and in light of the land use restrictions considered in the plan. Comments on the Draft RMP and EIS will now be accepted through April 19, 2010.

Karen Montgomery,

Acting Deputy State Director for Natural Resources.

[FR Doc. 2010–7999 Filed 4–7–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–40–P

Lakeview Resource Management Plan Amendment

Appendix B: Greater Sage-Grouse RMP Notice of Intent

accessioned into the applicant's collection for scientific research. This notification covers activities to be conducted by the applicant over a 5-year period.

Applicant: Duke Lemur Center, Durham, NC; PRT–56737A

The applicant requests a permit to import biological specimens collected from silky sifakas (*Propithecus diadema candidus*) in the wild in Madagascar for the purpose of scientific research.

Multiple Applicants

The following applicants each request a permit to import the sport-hunted trophy of one male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*) culled from a captive herd maintained under the management program of the Republic of South Africa, for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

Applicant: Ronald Bain, New Haven, MO; PRT–59367A.

Applicant: James Moses, Houston, TX; PRT–59496A.

Applicant: Glen Hudson, Weston, FL; PRT–59085A.

Applicant: Paxton Motheral, Fort Worth, TX; PRT–58509A.

Applicant: Lloyd Douglas, Aledo, TX; PRT–59287A.

Applicant: Jill Holstead, Houston, TX; PRT–59495A.

Correction

On October 28, 2011, we published a **Federal Register** notice inviting the public to comment on several applications for permits to conduct certain activities with endangered species (76 FR 66954). We made an error by omitting one animal in Leonard Voyle's application (PRT–57362A), which starts in the first column on page 66955. The omission is for an additional male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*), for a total of two animals, not one. All the other information we printed was correct. With this notice, we correct that error and reopen the comment period for PRT–57362A. The corrected entry for this application is as follows:

Applicant: Leonard Voyles, Richmond, TX; PRT–57362A

The applicant requests a permit to import the sport-hunted trophy of two male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*), culled from a captive herd maintained under the management program of the Republic of South Africa, for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

Brenda Tapia,

Program Analyst/Data Administrator, Branch of Permits, Division of Management Authority.

[FR Doc. 2011–31590 Filed 12–8–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLMT930000–12–L18200000–XX0000]

Notice of Administrative Boundary Change for Bureau of Land Management Offices in Montana To Eliminate the County Split of Lewis and Clark County

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The administrative boundaries between the Central Montana District Office, Lewistown Field Office, and the Western Montana District Office, Butte Field Office, are being changed. The administrative boundary change will realign Lewis and Clark County, currently a split county between the two offices, to the Western Montana District Office, Butte Field Office.

DATES: The boundary change is effective October 1, 2011.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary Benes by telephone at (406) 538–1945 or by email at *gbenes@blm.gov*; or Richard Hotaling by telephone at (406) 533–7629 or by email at *rhotalin@blm.gov*; or Scott Haight by telephone at (406) 533–7630 or by email at *shaight@blm.gov*. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–(800) 877–8339 to contact the above individuals during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individuals. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The primary purpose of the administrative boundary change is to improve service to the public and coordination efforts with local, Federal, State, and county agencies. The benefits of this change will result in the following improvements:

- Consolidation of resource receipts, workloads (*i.e.*, range, forestry, recreation) into one office location;
- Consolidation of law enforcement coordination between the county sheriff and one BLM office;
- Consolidation of fire response and coordination between the county interagency dispatch and one BLM office; and
- Improved coordination with local and county officials on a number of land resource issues such as lands and realty, rights-of-way, and land use planning.

The boundaries for the Butte Field Office are described as follows:

Butte Field Office

The Bureau of Land Management, Butte Field Office administrative boundary now encompasses all of Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Park, Silver Bow and the northern portion of Beaverhead Counties, in the state of Montana.

Authority: BLM Manual 1203 Delegation of Authority Sec 1202 and Sec 1201 relates to functions of BLM. The delegation manual shows the various delegations of functions to BLM officials, *et al.*, which includes ''Approve changes in District and Field Office boundaries.'' (See the table of delegations in the manual, specifically subject code 1202). This authority is retained by the Director, with concurrence by the ''Office of the Assistant Secretary'' (see footnote 3 in the 1203 Manual).

Jamie E. Connell,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 2011–31651 Filed 12–8–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–DN–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLWO230.11100000.PH0000]

Notice of Intent To Prepare Environmental Impact Statements and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statements To Incorporate Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures Into Land Use Plans and Land Management Plans

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), and the Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended by the National Forest Management Act 1976 (NFMA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service (FS) intend to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)

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and Supplemental EISs, and by this notice are announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues. The BLM is the lead agency on these EISs and Supplemental EISs and the FS is participating as a cooperating agency.

These EISs/Supplemental EISs will be coordinated under two regions: An Eastern Region and a Western Region. The Eastern Region includes BLM land use plans in the States of Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and portions of Utah and Montana. The Western Region includes BLM land use plans in California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and portions of Utah and Montana. For each of these regions, the FS will include those areas that were identified by the FWS as high priority areas for greater sage-grouse within the NFS units listed below.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the EISs/Supplemental EISs. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until February 7, 2012. The date(s) and location(s) of all scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newspapers and the BLM Web site for the Eastern Region at *http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/eastern.html,* and for the Western Region at *http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/western.html.* In order to be included in the Draft EISs/Supplemental EISs, all scoping comments must be received prior to the close of the scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. Comments that are specific to a particular area or land use plan should be identified as such. We will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft EISs/Supplemental EISs.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments related to the greater sage-grouse planning effort by any of the following methods:

- Eastern Region
  - *Web site: http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/eastern.html*
  - *Email: sageeast@blm.gov*
  - *Fax:* (307) 775–6042
  - *Mail:* Eastern Region Project Manager, BLM Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009
- Western Region
  - *Web site: http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/western.html*
  - *Email: sagewest@blm.gov*
  - *Fax:* (775) 861–6747
  - *Mail:* Western Region Project Manager, BLM Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Blvd., Reno, Nevada 89502

Documents pertinent to the Eastern Region will be coordinated through the BLM Wyoming State Office. Documents pertinent to the Western Region will be coordinated through the BLM Nevada State Office.

Though BLM and NFS lands in Utah are distributed between the Western and Eastern Regions, all such lands will be addressed in one EIS, or through ongoing plan revision processes. All comments applicable to the Utah EIS should be sent to the Western Region.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Chuck Otto, Eastern Region Project Manager, telephone (307) 775–6062; address 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009; email *cotto@blm.gov,* or: Brian Amme, Western Region Project Manager, telephone (775) 861–6645; address 1340 Financial Boulevard, Reno, Nevada 89520; email *bamme@blm.gov.* Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–(800) 877–8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In April 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published its listing decision for the greater sage-grouse indicating that listing was ''Warranted but Precluded'' due to higher listing priorities under the Endangered Species Act. The inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms to conserve the greater sage-grouse and its habitat was identified as a significant threat in the FWS finding on the petition to list the greater sage-grouse as a threatened or endangered species. The FWS has identified conservation measures to be included in the respective agencies' land use plans as the principal regulatory mechanisms to assure adequate conservation of the greater sage-grouse and its habitat on public lands. For the BLM, these land use plans are Resource Management Plans (RMP). For the FS, these are Land and Resource Management Plans (LMP). In view of the identified threats to the greater sage-grouse, and the FWS timeline for making a listing decision on this species, the BLM and FS propose to incorporate consistent objectives and conservation measures for the protection of greater sage-grouse and its habitat into relevant RMPs and LMPs by September 2014 in order to avoid a potential listing under the Endangered Species Act. These conservation measures would be incorporated into RMPs and LMPs through the plan amendment and revision processes of the respective agencies. The BLM and FS expect to prepare EISs to analyze proposed amendments to some land use plans that are not currently undergoing amendment or revision. For plans already undergoing amendment or revision, the BLM and FS will consider incorporating conservation measures either through the ongoing amendment or revision processes, or through supplemental environmental analyses as appropriate.

The BLM and FS intend to evaluate the adequacy of sage-grouse conservation measures in RMPs and selected LMPs, and consider conservation measures, as appropriate, in proposed RMP and selected LMP amendments and/or revisions throughout the range of the greater sage-grouse (with the exception of the bi-state population in California and Nevada and the Washington State distinct population segment, which will be addressed through other planning efforts).

The BLM currently expects to evaluate sage-grouse conservation measures in 68 planning areas, and the FS expects to evaluate sage-grouse conservation measures in 9 LMPs. The plans applicable to these planning areas are listed below.

BLM Wyoming has already begun undertaking a programmatic EIS specific to the greater sage-grouse. This programmatic EIS will analyze amendments to all of the State's RMPs not currently being amended or revised to address needed changes to the management and conservation of greater sage-grouse habitats. The ongoing RMP revisions in Wyoming will evaluate conservation measures through existing planning processes.

Below is a list of RMPs and LMPs that the BLM and FS intend to evaluate. Some RMPs/LMPs are already undergoing either revision or amendment. In cases in which an ongoing plan revision or amendment may not be completed by September 2014, the underlying completed RMP is also listed, as it may be amended. FS LMPs are denoted below in parentheses.

Within the Eastern Region, the potentially affected BLM RMPs and FS LMPs include:

- Colorado
  - Colorado River Valley RMP

revision
  - Grand Junction RMP revision (and existing 1987 Grand Junction RMP)
  - Kremmling RMP revision
  - Little Snake RMP (2011)
  - White River RMP Oil and Gas amendment
- Montana/Dakotas
  - Billings RMP revision (and existing 1984 Billings RMP)
  - Headwaters RMP (1984)
  - HiLine RMP revision (and existing 1988 West HiLine RMP)
  - Judith, Valley, and Phillips RMP (1992)
  - Miles City RMP revision (and existing 1985 Powder River and 1995 Big Dry RMPs)
  - North Dakota RMP (1988)
  - South Dakota RMP revision (and existing 1986 South Dakota RMP)
  - Upper Missouri River Breaks NM RMP (2008)
- Utah
  - Park City Management Framework Plan (MFP) (1975)
  - Price RMP (2008)
  - Randolph MFP (1980)
  - Salt Lake District Isolated Tracts Planning Analysis (1985)
  - Vernal RMP (2008)
  - Uinta National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003) (FS)
- Wyoming (please note that BLM Wyoming has already issued a Notice of Intent to begin an EIS that will amend all completed plans to address needed changes in the management and conservation of greater sage-grouse habitat)
  - Bighorn Basin RMP revision
  - Buffalo RMP revision (and existing 1985 Buffalo RMP)
  - Casper RMP (2007)
  - Kemmerer RMP (2010)
  - Lander RMP revision
  - Newcastle RMP (2000)
  - Pinedale RMP (2008)
  - Rawlins RMP (2008)
  - Rock Springs RMP revision (and existing 1997 Green River RMP)
  - Thunder Basin National Grassland LMP (not included in BLM Wyoming Notice of Intent above) (FS)

Within the Western Region, the potentially affected RMPs and LMPs include:

- California
  - Alturas RMP (2008)
  - Eagle Lake RMP (2008)
  - Surprise RMP (2008)
- Idaho
  - Birds of Prey NCA RMP (2008)
  - Bruneau RMP revision (and existing 1983 Bruneau RMP)
  - Challis RMP (1999)
  - Craters of the Moon NM RMP (2006)
  - Four Rivers RMP revision (and existing 1988 Cascade and 1983 Kuna RMPs)
  - Jarbidge RMP revision
  - Lemhi RMP (1987)
  - Owyhee RMP (1999)
  - Pocatello RMP revision
  - Shoshone-Burley RMP revision (and existing 1980 Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills, 1985 Cassia, 1975 Magic, 1985 Monument, 1981 Sun Valley, and 1982 Twin Falls MFPs/RMPs)
  - Upper Snake RMP revision (and existing 1983 Big Lost, 1985 Medicine Lodge, 1981 Big Desert, and 1981 Little Lost-Birch Creek MFPs/RMPs)
  - Curlew National Grassland Management Plan (2002) (FS)
  - Caribou National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003) (FS)
  - Sawtooth National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003) (FS)
- Montana
  - Butte RMP (2009)
  - Dillon RMP (2006)
- Nevada
  - Battle Mountain RMP revision (and existing 1997 Tonopah and 1986 Shoshone-Eureka RMPs)
  - Black Rock Desert NCA RMP (2004)
  - Carson City RMP revision (and existing 2001 Carson City RMP)
  - Elko RMP (1987)
  - Ely RMP (2008)
  - Wells RMP (1985)
  - Winnemucca RMP revision
  - Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) (FS)
  - Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) (FS)
- Oregon
  - Andrews RMP (2005)
  - Baker RMP revision (and existing 1989 Baker RMP)
  - Brothers-Lapine RMP (1989)
  - John Day RMP revision
  - Lakeview RMP amendment (and existing 2003 Lakeview RMP)
  - Southeastern Oregon RMP amendment (and existing 2003 Southeastern Oregon RMP)
  - Steens RMP (2005)
  - Three Rivers RMP (1992)
  - Two Rivers RMP (1989)
  - Upper Deschutes RMP (2005)
- Utah
  - Box Elder RMP (1986)
  - Cedar City RMP revision (and existing 1983 Pinyon and 1986 Cedar-Beaver-Garfield-Antimony RMPs)
  - Grand Staircase-Escalante NM RMP (1999)
  - House Range RMP (1987)
  - Kanab RMP (2008)
  - Pony Express RMP (1990)
  - Richfield RMP (2008)
  - Warm Springs RMP (1986)
  - Dixie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) (FS)
  - Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) (FS)

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues relating to the conservation of the greater sage-grouse and its habitat that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the process for developing the EISs/Supplemental EISs.

At present, the BLM has identified the following preliminary issues:

- Greater Sage-grouse Habitat Management
- Fluid Minerals
- Coal Mining
- Hard Rock Mining
- Mineral Materials
- Rights-of-Way (including transmission)
- Renewable Energy Development
- Fire
- Invasive Species
- Grazing
- Off Highway Vehicle Management and Recreation

Preliminary planning criteria include:

- The BLM and FS will utilize the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) *Conservation Assessment of Greater Sage-grouse and Sagebrush Habitats* (Connelly, *et al.* 2004), and any other appropriate resources, to identify greater sage-grouse habitat requirements and best management practices.
- The approved RMP amendments/revisions will be consistent with the BLM's National Sage-grouse Conservation Strategy.
- The approved RMP amendments/revisions will comply with FLPMA, NEPA, and Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508 and Department of the Interior regulations at 43 CFR part 46 and 43 CFR part 1600; the BLM *H–1601–1 Land Use Planning Handbook,* ''Appendix C: Program-Specific and Resource-Specific Decision Guidance Requirements'' for affected resource programs; the 2008 BLM NEPA Handbook (H–1790–1), and all other applicable BLM policies and guidance.
- The approved LMP amendments/revisions will comply with NFMA, NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, Regulations of the Secretary

of Agriculture at 36 CFR part 219 and FSM 1920 and FSH 1909.12.

• The RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will be limited to making land use planning decisions specific to the conservation of greater sage-grouse habitats.

• The BLM and FS will consider allocative and/or prescriptive standards to conserve greater sage-grouse habitat, as well as objectives and management actions to restore, enhance, and improve greater sage-grouse habitat.

• The RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will recognize valid existing rights.

• Lands addressed in the RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will be public lands (including surface-estate split estate lands) managed by the BLM, and National Forest System lands, respectively, in greater sage-grouse habitats. Any decisions in the RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will apply only to Federal lands administered by either the BLM or the FS.

• The BLM and FS will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where appropriate, to determinethe desired future condition of public lands and National Forest System lands for the conservation of greater sage-grouse and their habitats.

• As described by law and policy, the BLM and FS will strive to ensure that conservation measures are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions within the planning area boundaries.

• The BLM and FS will consider a range of reasonable alternatives, including appropriate management prescriptions that focus on the relative values of resources while contributing to the conservation of the greater sage-grouse and sage-grouse habitat.

• The BLM and FS will address socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives. Socio-economic analysis will use an accepted input-output quantitative model such as IMPLAN or RIMSII, and/or JEDI for renewable energy analysis.

• The BLM and FS will endeavor to use current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore greater sage-grouse habitats.

• Management of greater sage-grouse habitat that intersects with Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) on Public lands administered by the BLM will be guided by the *Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP).* Land use allocations made for WSAs must be consistent with the IMP and with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management.

• For BLM-administered lands, all activities and uses within greater sage-grouse habitats will follow existing land health standards. Standards and guidelines (S&G) for livestock grazing and other programs that have developed S&Gs will be applicable to all alternatives for BLM lands.

• The BLM and FS will consult with Indian tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage within greater sage-grouse habitats.

• The BLM and FS will coordinate and communicate with State, local, and tribal governments to ensure that the BLM and FS consider provisions of pertinent plans, seek to resolve inconsistencies between State, local, and tribal plans, and provide ample opportunities for state, local, and tribal governments to comment on the development of amendments or revisions.

• The BLM and FS will develop vegetation management objectives, including objectives for managing noxious weeds and invasive species (including identification of desired future condition for specific areas), within greater sage-grouse habitat.

• The RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will be based on the principles of Adaptive Management.

• Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenarios and planning for Fluid Minerals will follow the BLM Handbook H–1624–1 and current fluid minerals manual guidance for fluid mineral (oil and gas, coal-bed methane, oil shale) and geothermal resources. For NFS lands, the FS will use applicable and relevant policy and procedures.

• The RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will be developed using an interdisciplinary approach to prepare reasonable foreseeable development scenarios, identify alternatives, and analyze resource impacts, including cumulative impacts to natural and cultural resources and the social and economic environment.

• The most current approved BLM and FS corporate spatial data will be supported by current metadata and will be used to ascertain greater sage-grouse habitat extent and quality. Data will be consistent with the principles of the Information Quality Act of 2000.

• State Game and Fish agencies' greater sage-grouse data and expertise will be utilized to the fullest extent practicable in making management determinations on Federal lands.

The BLM and FS will utilize and coordinate the NEPA commenting process to help fulfill the public involvement process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), if applicable, as provided for in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). Native American tribal consultations will be conducted in accordance with policy, and tribal concerns will be given due consideration, including impacts on Indian trust assets. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with other stakeholders that may be interested or affected by the BLM's or FS's decision on this proposal are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate as a cooperating agency. The public is also invited to nominate or recommend areas on public lands for greater sage-grouse and their habitat to be considered as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern as a part of this planning process (BLM Manual 1613.3.31). Parties interested in leasing and development of Federal coal in the planning area should provide coal resource data for their area(s) of interest. Specifically, information is requested on the location, quality, and quantity of Federal coal with development potential, and on surface resource values related to the 20 coal unsuitability criteria described in 43 CFR part 3461. This information will be used for any necessary updating of coal screening determinations (43 CFR 3420.1–4) in the Decision Area and in the environmental analysis.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7, 43 CFR 1610.2.

Edwin Roberson,

Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning.

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