

# Introduction

This Resource Management Plan provides management direction for over 400,000 acres of BLM administered lands within the Upper Deschutes portion of the Deschutes Resource Area. Prior to this plan, management direction was provided by the Brothers/La Pine Resource Management Plan (“B/LP RMP”, USDI-BLM 1989). A significant amount of the direction provided in this RMP is not new, but includes continued management direction from unrevised portions of the B/LP RMP, as well as legal mandates and policy. Management direction from the B/LP RMP has been merged with new management to provide as integrated management direction as possible. Continued management direction for the planning area was described separately in the Proposed Resource Management Plan (USDI-BLM, 2005, pp. 125-158). Legal mandates and policy are summarized in Appendix A.

Mid-level plans or strategies such as the Central Oregon Fire Management Plan (USDA-FS, 2003), the Horse Ridge RNA Management Plan (USDI-BLM, 1996), and the Middle Deschutes and Lower Crooked River Wild and Scenic River Plans (USDI, USDA & Oregon State Parks & Recreation Dept., 1992), are incorporated by reference. These plans generally provide more specific site management guidance than a RMP.

Projects implementing this plan will generally require site-specific analyses, usually an environmental assessment.

This RMP describes the overall vision and goals for managing the planning area, and provides area-specific land use allocations and allowable uses as well as management objectives and guidelines for the conditions under which future uses might be authorized. These elements are presented in the RMP in the following sections:

## Goals and Vision

- **Goals** - broad, overarching purposes the BLM is mandated to achieve on public lands. These generally describe the legal basis and management direction provided to the agency by the laws, BLM policy and program direction.
- **Vision** - how lands within the resource management plan area would look or function into the future. These visions were developed with community members during the plan preparation process.

## Management Direction

- **Objectives** - resource or area specific outcomes against which future actions must be measured for consistency with overall plan purposes. All management direction included here applies across the planning area unless supplemented by area-specific management direction.
- **Allocations/Allowable Uses** - specific management direction for how certain resources will be emphasized, uses that may or will be prohibited, or conditions under which certain uses may be permitted.
- **Guidelines** - sideboards set in relation to how management objectives can be accomplished, or expected methods of achieving objectives. Often guidelines can be described as “mitigation” or “conservation measures” established to protect specific resources while retaining sight of the ultimate objective of the action. Guidelines are a toolbox from which one or more elements may be selected as needed to meet the overall management objective. All guidelines will be considered during site-specific use authorizations, and will be applied as needed, or may be supplemented or modified with other management techniques if they are demonstrated to better meet management objectives for the area. Guidelines also often indicate that emphasis will be given to development of certain facilities or certain actions. This guidance is provided to help direct future considerations and is not intended to represent a decision in principal about future actions.

- **Rationale** - the reasoning behind the development of specific objectives, allowable uses, or guidelines.

Management direction is also provided by the RMP maps published (or support maps available as pdf files on CD or on the Prineville District webpage: [http://www.or.blm.gov/Prineville/Deschutes\\_RMP/Home.htm](http://www.or.blm.gov/Prineville/Deschutes_RMP/Home.htm)). The maps display the Allocations/Allowable Uses presented in the RMP. The boundaries of the geographical areas displayed are based on natural features such as rivers and streams, roads, property lines between BLM administered lands and lands managed by other government entities and private land owners, and section lines. These boundaries may be modified without plan amendment, provided such adjustments do not integrally change the purpose of the land allocation.

A description of implementation and monitoring follows the section on management direction.

# Goals and Vision

## Ecosystem Health and Diversity

### Goal

Maintain, restore and support healthy upland, riparian, and aquatic ecosystems while sustaining economic values associated with public lands. Management actions will emphasize ecosystem sustainability and health throughout the planning area, while managing for expected increases in human population and use levels.

Recognize the role of fire in the ecosystem and use prescribed fire to maintain the disturbance cycle where practicable outside the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Provide guidance for fire suppression and fuels treatments based on resource values at risk such as homes, facilities, and important habitats. WUI areas, in particular, will be prioritized and scheduled for fuels treatments early in the implementation phase.

### Vision

**Vegetation** - The planning area contains large, un-fragmented blocks of healthy shrub-steppe plant communities, intermixed with old-growth juniper woodlands and large and small openings containing grasslands, meadow, and savanna. Shrub-steppe and savanna communities have a vigorous and diverse composition of native shrubs, grasses, and forbs spatially arranged in a mosaic of seral stages in large and small patch sizes appropriate to conditions of climate, landform and soils. Ponderosa and lodgepole pine forests are present in a diverse mix of seral stage, structure, stand size, and species composition. Ponderosa pine is dominant on suitable sites. The proportion of old forests and old woodlands is maintained at current levels with options for expansion in the future. Special status plant species are maintained or increased in their distribution and abundance. Noxious weeds and other invasive or non-native species are decreased in their distribution and abundance. Forest, woodland, savanna, treeless shrub-steppe, meadow, and riparian communities are healthy and properly functioning ecosystems sufficient to support quality wildlife habitat, hydrologic processes, and social and economic needs.

**Riparian and Aquatic** - In riparian areas, floodplains and wetlands, abundant and diverse vegetation controls erosion, stabilizes stream banks, heals incised channels, provides regulation of air and water temperature, filters sediment, aids in floodplain

development, dissipates energy, and mitigates floodwater impacts. As a result, these areas are resilient and provide water storage, groundwater recharge, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat.

The biologically diverse habitats ensure the presence of organisms and processes necessary to sustain native aquatic communities over the long term. Adequate spatial distribution of these communities maintains habitat continuity that is necessary to re-colonize populations after disturbance. A diversity of breeding habitats for aquatic species provides clean gravels, quiet backwaters, and emergent and submergent vegetation. Rearing habitats for larvae and fry are available in backwaters, shallow edges, and other protected sites.

**Watershed/Hydrologic Function and Water Quality** - As in riparian areas, upland soil and plant conditions provide for soil infiltration and permeability rates, soil moisture storage, and the release of water that are appropriate to soil, climate, and landform. Precipitation infiltrates into the soil and does not run off, limiting the amount of surface erosion and subsequent sedimentation, and improves water quality and quantity. Surface water and groundwater quality, influenced by agency actions, meets state water quality standards. Water quality is maintained equal to or above legal water quality standards, consistent with beneficial uses of water. Water quality supports stable and productive riparian and aquatic ecosystems.

**Wildlife** - Ecosystem processes are functioning properly, benefitting a variety of wildlife species by increasing the quality, quantity, and variety of habitat. Habitats support healthy, productive and diverse populations and communities of native plants and animals, including special status species and species of local importance, appropriate to soil, climate and landform. Habitats occur in large contiguous blocks, are adequately arranged spatially, and contain a natural diversity of animal and plant communities. Animal populations are present and move freely across the landscape. The amount and diversity of wildlife habitats are maintained or improved through time. Native plant communities exist in blocks of various sizes distributed in patterns across the landscape appropriate to site potential. Maintenance and restoration of healthy ecosystems throughout key areas and management of specific habitat components such as vegetation cover, forage, and roads, contribute to maintaining habitat conditions within the site potential of the area.

**Fire/Fuels Management** - Fuels in the planning area are managed to provide for protection of Communities at Risk (see glossary) from the undesired effects of wildland fire, while assisting in the attainment of other management goals. Safety of the public and fire fighters is the first priority in planning fuels management activities, while recognizing the role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change event.

**Air Quality** - Air quality is generally good. Public health is protected by holding the amount of smoke entering populated areas to a minimum. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are being met, with no significant deterioration of air quality. There are no human-caused visibility impacts to Class I areas.

**Special Management Areas (SMAs)** - The resources that led to the designation of special management areas such as caves, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are protected. Guidelines for the amount and type of public uses in SMAs are established. Opportunities and partnerships for public education, enjoyment and interpretation for these resources are fostered.

- *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern* - The special resources for which ACECs were designated are protected. Guidelines for the amount and type of public uses are

established. In addition, opportunities for public education and interpretation are fostered, along with partnerships to help protect and interpret these resources.

- *Wilderness Study Areas* - Wilderness Study Areas are managed to maintain wilderness suitability, consistent with the “Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review” (USDI-BLM, 1995).
- *Research Natural Areas* - Research Natural Areas are protected from human influences. Natural ecological and physical processes are allowed to occur. These representative natural plant communities are generally reserved for education and scientific study but are also available for some types of low-impact non-motorized recreation.
- *Caves* - Significant caves or caves nominated for significance under the Federal Caves Resource protection Act (FCRPA) remain in a natural condition, with cave resources monitored and managed. Graffiti and litter are absent and caves appear natural and provide a sense of discovery for visitors. Recreational and interpretive opportunities are created, consistent with the management of cave resources.

## Land Uses

### Goal

Manage the land in a manner that recognizes the nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands, while protecting the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, environmental, and archeological values. Preserve and protect public lands in their natural condition, and assure they provide, where appropriate, food and habitat for fish, wildlife and domestic animals, and land for outdoor recreation and other uses.

Promote healthy sustainable rangeland ecosystems; accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning conditions; promote the orderly use, improvement and development of the public lands; establish efficient and effective administration of grazing of public rangelands; and provide for the sustainability of the western livestock industry and communities that are dependent upon productive, healthy public rangelands (43 CFR 4100). Accomplish these goals consistent with multiple use, sustained yield, environmental values, economic and other objectives. Provide the military with a reliable long-term land base for training operations.

### Vision

Land uses, including but not limited to livestock grazing, mineral and commercial forest uses, occur in a pattern across the planning area, where economically feasible, socially compatible, and environmentally responsible, that support community and national demands and contribute to the local economy and quality of life.

The National Guard and Oregon Military Department (OMD) continue a long-term partnership with the BLM. The partnership demonstrates land stewardship that integrates resource objectives and goals of public lands with military training objectives.

## Visual Resources

### Goal

Identify and protect visual values on public lands, assuring the integration of environmental design arts in planning and decision-making.

## **Vision**

The scenic qualities of the planning area are maintained and improved over time. Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications identify the scenic importance of landscape characteristics and guide the design and development of future projects. Vegetation management emphasizes long-term over short-term visual objectives and seeks to create more naturally appearing landscapes over time.

## **Recreation**

### **Goal**

Provide a broad spectrum of outdoor recreation opportunities to meet the needs and demands of public land visitors. More intensive visitor management, resource protection, and facility investments are provided where the public has demonstrated a desire to use public lands for outdoor recreation, and outdoor recreation is a high priority.

### **Vision**

The planning area provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities for a growing demand. Local and out-of-area visitors enjoy activities on public lands that are close to urban and residential areas, such as hiking, running, mountain biking, and off-highway vehicle use. Commercial recreation opportunities provide a public service while protecting resource values and minimizing conflicts with other recreationists and adjacent landowners.

Local communities are integrally involved in developing and implementing management strategies for individual geographic areas within the planning area. Increases or improvements in facilities such as picnic areas, group use sites, interpretive sites or trails are developed through an integrated effort with other recreational providers and local communities. The number and types of facilities change over time to reflect demographic changes and the changing popularity of different types of recreation.

Public lands in the planning area are distinct from private lands and have a unique identity that fosters desired recreation opportunities for that area. Information on recreation opportunities, travel management, interpretation, and management goals and policies is readily available to visitors.

Areas within highly developed surroundings are managed for an emphasis on safety and compatibility with surrounding land uses. Designated access points and roads/trails are designed to minimize conflicts with neighbors as much as possible. Designated recreation trails, facilities, restored and maintained recreation sites and access points, and intensive recreation management help to meet increased demand. Public lands provide opportunities for regional trails that link communities. Local roads and trails provide a pleasing experience for users within a specific area that matches the recreation emphasis for that area.

## **Transportation and Utility Rights-of-way**

### **Goal**

Provide transportation and utilities facilities that protect public safety, protect the environment, conserve and protect resources, and enhance the productivity and use of public lands. Identify facilities as part of an approved transportation plan to allow for

allocation of construction and maintenance funds; and minimize damage to scenic and esthetic values, fish and wildlife habitat and otherwise protect the environment.

Collaborate with local communities to plan reasonable, safe access to or across public land in a manner that serves to protect and conserve sensitive resources and the environment.

## **Vision**

Residents and visitors travel freely and safely across local, regional, and national transportation corridors. Local, regional, and national needs for utility transmission are met. At the same time transportation and utility corridors are located in a manner that allows large portions of the planning area to appear natural and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation as well as habitat that supports plants and animals that have historically occupied the landscape.

# **Land Ownership**

## **Goal**

Retain public lands in federal ownership, unless disposal or acquisition of a particular parcel would better serve the national interest and the needs of state and local people, including needs for lands for the economy, community expansion, recreation areas, food, fiber, minerals, and fish and wildlife. Changes in public land ownership are considered where consistent with public land management policy and where these changes would result in improved management efficiency. Withdrawals are used to dedicate public lands to specific uses by protecting specific resource values over the development of lesser values.

## **Vision**

Large blocks of BLM administered land provide contiguous native ecosystems that support healthy plant and animal populations, contain special natural features, provide natural resources that meet community, regional, or national needs, and provide opportunities for a range of recreational activities. Lands identified as suitable for acquisition would serve to link or fill in spaces between larger blocks of BLM lands or to meet resource management objectives. Public lands are located in a pattern that can be efficiently and effectively managed. Public lands are available for federal and state projects, community growth, and projects for non-profit groups.

# **Public Health and Safety**

## **Goal**

Provide the public with recreation areas and facilities that are free from recognized hazards insofar as practical, and meet the requirements of BLM Manual H-2111 – 1: Safety and Health Management.

## **Vision**

BLM administered lands are available for activities that do not compromise the health or safety of land users or adjacent landowners, or diminish natural resource protection. Public lands are managed to discourage illegal activities such as dumping

and vandalism. Firearm-related property damage and garbage related to shooting is experienced infrequently. Natural and cultural resources are not damaged by firearm discharge or illegal activities. Firearm discharge and other recreational uses are managed concurrently to improve recreational opportunities and reduce user conflict.

## Archaeology

### Goal

Locate, protect, preserve, enhance, and interpret cultural resources in accordance with existing legal authorities.

### Vision

Cultural resources and "At-Risk," significant archaeological resources are managed in a pro-active manner for their various use categories (as defined in BLM Manual 8100). Information about the archaeology of the planning area is current. Residents of, and visitors to, the area have an opportunity to learn about the local prehistory and history of the region. Interpretation, education, inventories, monitoring, and law enforcement enhances protection and preservation of "At-Risk", significant archaeological resources.

## Management Direction

The management direction contained in this section includes new direction from the Upper Deschutes planning process, as well as existing direction from regulations, manuals and handbooks, and unrevised portions of the Brothers/La Pine RMP.

## Ecosystem Health and Diversity

### Vegetation

#### Ecosystem Maintenance and Restoration

Objective V – 1 applies to all plant communities. Objectives V – 1a through V – 1g apply only to the plant community specified.

#### *All Plant Communities*

**Objective V - 1: Maintain and restore healthy, diverse and productive native plant communities appropriate to local site conditions. Manage vegetation structure, density, species composition, patch size, pattern, and distribution to reduce the occurrence of uncharacteristically large and severe disturbances. Maintain or mimic natural disturbance regimes so that plant communities are resilient following periodic outbreaks of insects, disease and wildland fire. Identify opportunities to actively re-pattern vegetation on the landscape to conditions more consistent with landform, climate, biological, and physical components of the ecosystem, and considering social expectations and changes to the landscape driven by human influences.**

#### **Rationale:**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 ("FLPMA", 43 USC 1701) declares that the public land be managed in a manner that would: a) protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric,