



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Prineville District Office
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Greetings:

We are pleased to present to you the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) for the BLM administered Public Lands in the John Day Basin. This AMS evaluates existing management guidance, summarizes resource conditions and trends, and summarizes what we have heard the public say to us during our initial efforts to update and consolidate the John Day, Two Rivers, and Baker Resource Management Plans as they apply to the John Day Basin. We believe these two efforts – obtaining feedback from public land users, interests and stakeholders, and assessing the existing situation – has helped to focus the planning effort so that it will respond to identified concerns and problems.

The Central Oregon Resource Area began to work on updating the Resource Management Plan for BLM managed lands in 2005. One-day economic workshops were co-sponsored with several communities, several open forum public meetings were held, and contracts have been let to gather social, economic and resource data. The BLM also invited letters and email responses all of which resulted in a wealth of public response. We believe you will find the summary in Chapter 7 thoughtful and interesting.

Our next steps will be to work with you to develop alternative ways of addressing the identified issues. We will be holding public meetings, working with the Snake-John Day Resource Advisory Council, and with our Co-operators Group of governmental and tribal representatives. In addition, we will be available informally to listen to your thoughts and ideas. We are excited about a web-based tool developed for us by the University of Colorado at Denver to help understand the travel and access issues in the area around the North Fork of the John Day River. We encourage you to participate in a survey on this topic by accessing <http://agf.colorado.edu/JohnDayRMP>. Included with this document is a CD containing an electronic version of this document plus other information, including Records of Decision for each of the RMPs reviewed in the AMS. These same documents may be viewed over the internet at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/prineville>.

We appreciate your time and involvement in the planning process so far and encourage your continued participation. You may contact us by any of the methods indicated on the opposite page.

Working together we can generate effective and innovative strategies that will guide your Public Lands into the future. Together we can develop guidance that effectively protects resources while contributing to the social fabric and economic resilience of those who use and enjoy these lands.

Sincerely,

Christina M. Welch
Field Manager, Central Oregon Resource Area

EDITOR'S THOUGHTS



The sun crested the ridge and light beamed down, illuminating the tent wall. After a day and night of intermittent, sometimes intense rain the light announced the dawn of a new day along the North Fork John Day River. Emerging from the tent I encountered a brilliant blue sky and grass sparkling with drops of the previous night's rain. A layer cake of basalt rose above both banks of the river. To the south the slopes were covered by a jungle of green—trees, brush and shrubs. To the north I could clearly make out the dark cliffs separated by grassy slopes and punctuated by cinnamon bark ponderosa pine. My companion and guide, the river ranger, still slept in his tent a few feet away.

A morning stroll was in order. Though we were floating the river there is a road a few yards from our camp. I traveled down the road to a spot we had noticed the previous evening. The road squeezed between the river and a dark basalt outcrop some 20 to 30 feet high. From the distance it appeared that a small fire had burned through the rocks and some of the grassy bench above. After the rain there was no evidence of recent travel on the road. We had not seen another person since we had launched. We would not see another person for a day and a half. Approaching the outcropping I discovered we were misled by appearances. The darker rock was not scorched, it was wet. The patch of "burned" grass was, in fact, the top of the dark basalt rock over which soil had not yet formed, so hardly any grass had gained a foothold. What appeared to be barren rock outcropping from the distance up close was a sparsely planted rock garden with flowers and grasses establishing tenuous residence in random niches in the rock. A small gray hornet nest hung from a shallow indentation in the rock face. Since it was still cool the inhabitants were not yet up. Fine with me!

Ambling back to camp I reflected on the nature of a communal dwelling located in a beautiful yet harsh environment. One cannot help but be struck by the beauty surrounding you in the John Day Basin. From the windblown sea of grass at Horn Butte, to the river canyons of the John Day, to the broad Fox Creek and Long Creek valleys, and to the highlands of Sutton, Rudio, and the Aldrich Mountains the basin provides an expanse and variety of beautiful scenes. The rock outcropping is a microcosm of the basin—beautiful but harsh. The community of hornets is not unlike the communities in the basin—isolated. Many inhabitants scratch out a living but tenuously hang to their niche just as the hornets in their nest cling to the sloping ceiling of rock. Make no mistake this is a harsh land. During the summer the hornet nest is likely to experience 110° weather with temperatures off the rock as high as 130° or more. Inhabitants that survive the summer then must survive cold as low as -20° or lower.

It takes a special kind of person to adapt to these conditions in the basin--isolation, changing local economies, harsh climate, beautiful setting. These breed a community of fiercely independent yet interdependent inhabitants. They may quarrel amongst themselves but proudly note that when a member of the community is in need, everyone pitches in to help. But if they perceive a threat from outside the community even the hornets might learn something about defending "turf."

Humbled by the responsibility that has been entrusted to the BLM, it is with a profound sense of responsibility that our team of specialists embarks upon this planning effort. We will listen and we will learn. In the ebb and flow of social changes, economic shifts and ecologic variation, we will strive to balance the varied concerns and desires of those interested in using and preserving public lands for the benefit of generations to come.

