

Questions and Answers

John Day Basin Draft Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement

Q: How many comments did the BLM receive on the Draft?

A: The BLM received 1,385 responses in the form of letters, emails, faxes, telephone conversation transcripts and organized letter campaigns (See Appendix T for more detail regarding comments to the Draft EIS/RMP).

Q: What happens to the comments the public made to the Draft EIS/RMP?

A: When comment letters were received they were date stamped, given a letter log number, and scanned in as an electronic copy. Letter content was then analyzed for substantive comments using a content analysis process. The content analysis process used for this EIS is a method developed by the Content Analysis Enterprise Team (CAET), a specialized U.S. Forest Service unit, for analyzing public comment on federal agency land and resource management proposals. The BLM established a Content Analysis Team (CAT), which received training on this process and modified it slightly to meet the needs for this specific EIS. This method employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It is a systematic process designed to provide a mailing list of respondents, distinguish specific comments in each comment letter, and evaluate similar comments from different letters.

Through the content analysis process, the CAT analysts strive to identify all relevant issues, not just those represented by the majority of respondents. The breadth, depth, and rationale of each comment are especially important. The CAT's intention is to represent the public's viewpoints and concerns as fairly as possible, and to present those concerns in such a way as to facilitate systematic review and response by decision makers.

Substantive comments were used to modify alternatives, correct errors, or improve clarity of the document.

Q: How do I know if my comment was determined to contain substantive comments?

A: Substantive comments were summarized and responses provided in Appendix T. Several comments containing the same or similar subject matter may have been combined into one summary comment. When looking to see if your comment was addressed in the comment responses keep this in mind and look for summary statements that address the topic of your comment. The BLM used the CAT analysis process described above to determine which comments were substantive.

Substantive comments do one or more of the following:

- Question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the Draft RMP/EIS.
- Question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis.
- Present new information relevant to the analysis.
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the DEIS.
- Cause changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives.

Q: How do I know what changes were made between the Draft and Final?

A: The executive summary contains a summary of all the major changes between Draft and Final. Additionally, a section that discusses major changes between Draft and Final has been added in to the beginning of each chapter in the FEIS.

Q: Who makes the final decision to select what goes into the Preferred Alternative, and what process do they go through to come up with that decision?

A: The final decision regarding the content of the preferred alternative (Proposed Resource Management Plan) is made by the BLM State Director based on input from Prineville BLM staff, and review of comments from the public, organizations, tribes, state and federal agencies, and local governments. .

Elements included in the preferred alternative are selected based on how well they:

- meet the planning criteria (See Chapter 1 of the FEIS);
- meet statutory requirements;
- achieve the goals and policies of the BLM;
- respond to the purpose and need; and,
- resolve the issues pertinent to the planning effort.

Q: What if I don't agree with a proposed decision listed in the FEIS?

A: You may "protest" a proposed decision if you participated in the planning process and have an interest which may be adversely affected. A protest may raise only those issues that were submitted for the record during the planning process. The "Dear Reader" letter in the front of the FEIS identifies which decisions are protestable and provides directions for developing and submitting protests. Protest procedures and requirements are also contained in 43 CFR 1610.5-2.

Q. What will happen if my protest is submitted late or without the appropriate information?

A: Concerns that have not been raised previously in the planning process, concerns that are not germane to the planning process, and/or statements that merely reflect disagreement, express opinions, or make demands or allegations without the support of a concise statement on why the State Director's decision is in error will be identified as comments rather than valid protest issues. Although they will be identified during the protest resolution process, comments will not result in any changes to the plan, nor will they be further analyzed as part of the protest resolution process. Letters that only contain comments will be dismissed because they have not met the regulatory threshold requirements of a valid protest. Protests that fall into the above categories or are received after the protest deadline will be addressed by sending a letter to the protesting party dismissing their protest.

Q: Will the Protest Period be extended?

A: The regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2 do not allow for an extension of the protest period for any reason.

Q: When will the Record of Decision (ROD) be signed?

A: The ROD is currently scheduled to be signed in the fall of 2012. Changes to this schedule will be announced on the project website under Planning Bulletins:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/prineville/plans/johndayrmp/jdbdocuments.php>

Q: If I would like to appeal the Record of Decision, when and how would I do that?

A: You can file an appeal with the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) after the BLM State Director has signed the Record of Decision. Until the signing of the Record of Decision no formal decisions have been made and thus appeals **cannot** be submitted. The “Dear Reader” letter in the front of the FEIS identifies which decisions are likely to be identified in the Record of Decision as appealable decisions. Procedures for appealing a decision will be included in the Record of Decision.

Q: Why was the Spring Basin Wilderness added?

A: The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11) was signed into law on March 30, 2009. This Act designated the 6,382-acre Spring Basin Wilderness area, about six miles southeast of Clarno, Oregon as a Wilderness. Since this new wilderness area fell within the boundary of the JDBRMP it was included in the RMP planning process.

Q: Why does the Preferred Alternative now have a grazing decision tree to address lease relinquishment instead of the grazing matrix contained in the Draft?

A: Public comment on the grazing matrix indicated that it was complicated and addressed potential conflict rather than real conflict and demand. The decision tree was designed to retain the intent of the grazing matrix while addressing these two main concerns. The grazing matrix was retained in the other alternatives as presented in the Draft.

Q: Would the Animal Unit Months (AUMs) be adjusted if a portion of an allotment is relinquished and no longer grazed?

A: Yes, if only a portion of an allotment is relinquished adjustments to the lease(s) would be made as appropriate. Other adjustments may include the season of use and maintenance responsibilities.

Q: Why was the ‘Close Now’ category removed from the proposed grazing decisions?

A: The ‘Close Now’ category was part of the grazing matrix and addressed potential conflict not necessarily actual problems with an allotment. There are administrative procedures in place to close an allotment if actual problems occur, thus it was felt that it was not appropriate at the land use plan level to cancel active grazing leases without site specific analysis.

Q: Why was more Wilderness Character inventory done?

A: Upon review of BLM policy and guidance that provides direction specific to methodologies for conducting wilderness character inventory, it was discovered that areas adjacent to National Park Service land were not evaluated correctly.

Q: When will the interim travel management plan be in place?

A: Interim travel management proposals contained in the Proposed Resource Management Plan will be in effect after the Record of Decision is signed and appeals are resolved.

Q: When will the final travel management plan be written?

A: Final travel management plans will be completed within five years of the signing of the Record of Decision. This decision is contingent on appropriate budget and staffing levels to complete this work.

Q: Will the BLM be able to create or close roads or trails before the final travel management plan is written?

A: Interim travel management direction in the Proposed Resource Management Plan was added to provide criteria that would allow limited changes to the transportation system prior to the final travel management plan(s) being completed. All changes would need to be consistent with the criteria identified for the final travel management planning process.

Q: Why was the boundary of the Rudio open area changed?

A: The boundary in the Draft was coarsely defined. When the decision criteria were applied it was discovered that changes needed to be made to the boundary to protect sensitive resources and public safety.

Q: Why were the road density prescriptions in the North Fork changed?

A: Comments received on the Draft pointed out that our recreational setting descriptions varied in this area but our allowable road densities didn't. After review we determined it was necessary to apply the road density prescriptions consistent with other management objectives.

Q: Why was the management direction incorporated by reference from the John Day River Plan in the Draft added to the Final?

A: Management direction 'Common to All Alternatives' that was incorporated by reference in the Draft was added to the proposed actions in the FEIS to help the reader see all proposed management actions in one place. It was also necessary to provide clarity relative to exactly which of the decisions were being carried forward.

Q: Why was Appendix U added?

A: Adequate public meetings and development of a comprehensive management plan for the newly designated Spring Basin Wilderness could not be accomplished within the time frames of the JDBRMP process. Additionally, the legislated land exchanges have not been completed and thus the specifics of the land base have not been established. The interim management is intended to provide direction until a final management plan for the wilderness can be completed.

Q: Why was Appendix W added?

A: Although there are currently no known habitats occupied by sage-grouse on public lands managed by the BLM within the planning area, there is potential for future use. The direction within the JDBRMP addressed the majority of currently available sage-grouse management direction; however, a review of The Oregon Conservation Strategy for Greater Sage-grouse (Hagen, 2011), BLM IM-2012-044 and current scientific literature determined that additional direction did exist for occupied habitats. Appendix W was added to include this management direction for potential habitats and any future occupied habitats.

Additional answers to planning questions may be found in the document:

Questions and Answers - [Draft](#)