

# SANDY RIVER BASIN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN

## CHAPTER 1



# **Chapter 1: Introduction and Planning Area Overview**

## **1.1 Plan Summary**

The Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan SRBIMP (EA# OR-080-08-16) was developed by the Salem District office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The plan describes the specific actions the BLM will undertake to manage lands within the Sandy River Basin for the next 15 years.

Primary management actions include non-native invasive species treatments, riparian vegetation restoration, projects associated with the Water Quality Restoration Plan, and recreation site and trail development. The establishment of two new recreation sites (at the former Marmot Dam site and the Sandy River-Salmon River confluence) and development of roughly 25 miles of non-motorized trail are outlined in this document.

While the plan will be used to manage BLM administered lands within the Sandy River Basin for the next decade or so, its effects on the Basin will be felt for a far greater length of time. The BLM recognizes the fact that the way the Basin is managed today will be evident for the next 50 years or longer. With planning for the long-term future in mind, the SRBIMP provides guidance to protect, restore and enhance resources within the Sandy River Basin.

***NOTE: All photos in this document are courtesy of Josh Kling/Western Rivers Conservancy.***

### **How the Document is Organized**

The Document is presented in five chapters:

***Chapter 1*** provides an introduction and explains the method of plan preparation and relationship to existing federal, state and county regulations.

***Chapter 2*** identifies management issues and concerns and sets broad goals for management of BLM lands within the Sandy River Basin.

***Chapter 3*** describes the desired future condition of a specific resource at some time in the future (typically 30-50 years). For each resource, specific objectives are described and management direction is identified.

***Chapter 4*** outlines specific management actions and projects that will be taken to resolve current resource management issues. Chapter 4 also includes an implementation schedule for proposed projects based on the timeframe of the plan (15 years).

***Chapter 5*** outlines the Benefits-Based Management framework that will guide recreation development and management activities within the planning area. It establishes recreation management zones and their targeted experiences and benefits.

Chapter 1 provides background and summarizes the purpose and need to develop a management plan for the Sandy River Basin, describes how the plan was prepared and how it relates to existing federal, state, and county regulations. It provides background on the planning documents which direct and provide the legal framework for planning direction and the subsequent management of BLM lands within the planning area.

## **1.2 Project Background**

The Sandy River Basin is located along the west slopes of the Cascade mountain range of Northwestern Oregon, east of the Portland metropolitan area. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for managing 14,850 acres within the Sandy River Basin.

In FY 2001 the federal budget included the first Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) appropriation for acquisition of critical lands within the Sandy River Basin. Critical lands were identified as part of the BLM's Conservation and Land Tenure Strategy for the Sandy River Watershed and Mt. Hood Corridor. The BLM's strategy has focused on securing LWCF monies for acquisition of key non-federal properties with high resource values, particularly lands that contain or have the potential to restore river frontage, wetlands or side-streams, fisheries habitat, to provide recreational opportunities, and to provide protection of scenic values.

Congress has continuously supported this project with annual appropriations from FY 2002 through FY 2008. To date the total funds allocated for this project through appropriation and reprogramming amount to \$10.75 million. Funds were allocated with the intent of preserving and enhancing natural resource values while providing complementary recreation opportunities.

These acquisitions are complemented by a land exchange completed in 1995 between the Bureau of Land Management and Longview Fibre. The exchange transferred 3,548 acres of private timberland valued at \$15.76 million to the BLM for management.

The BLM is also directly responsible for the management of several National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) units within the planning area: over 20 miles of the lower Sandy River and 8 miles of the lower Salmon River are components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Additionally, segments of the Barlow Trail portion of the Oregon National Historic Trail, an NLCS component, are on BLM-administered lands within the planning area. See Chapter 1.5.2 for an overview of how these lands have been classified under the 2008 Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan.

Several large scale rehabilitation projects have recently taken place within the planning area. Most notable is the decommissioning of Marmot Dam. In 1999 Portland General Electric (PGE) announced it would decommission its Bull Run Hydroelectric Project after nearly 100 years of operation. There was a broad range of public and private support for this project with partners including the State of Oregon, Western Rivers Conservancy, American Whitewater, and the United States Forest Service. The removal of Marmot Dam was an important step in this plan's aim to help improve fish habitat, protect the riparian environment along the river impacted by the project and expand recreational opportunities in the Sandy River Basin. The decommissioning of Marmot Dam was completed in the fall of 2008. Upon completion of conditions associated with the Federal

Energy Regulatory Commission's decommissioning process, public lands underlying PGE's dam operations will revert to BLM management.

This document defines goals and objectives for the management of future uses, identifies recreation management strategies, outlines restoration and rehabilitation approaches including appropriate vegetation management actions, incorporates available new data, and attempts to resolve issues identified during public scoping.

This Management plan takes the concepts presented in selected action (EA alternative D) from the SRBIMP EA#OR08-08-16 and refines them further to address resource enhancement opportunities through the implementation of the selected alternative. Through partnerships with local communities, recreational user groups, and various state, regional and local governments, these management strategies will be implemented to protect the outstanding natural and resource values of the Sandy River Basin and provide for sustainable recreational opportunities.

### **1.3 Purpose and Need**

Recent property acquisitions and exchanges, increases in recreation use, population growth, and undesirable resource conditions have triggered the need to develop a management plan for BLM administered lands in the Sandy River Basin.

Acquiring non-federal properties through the Land and Water Conservation Fund program described in section 1.1 allows the BLM the opportunity to restore river frontage, wetlands, riparian areas, fisheries habitat, provide recreational opportunities and protect scenic values. Currently, many of the recently acquired lands have infestations of invasive weeds and past removal of the forest (e.g. pastureland) on these parcels which has led to undesirable resource conditions.

Unregulated and unauthorized forms of recreational use (establishment of social trails, unmanaged overnight uses, etc.) have resulted in impacts to basin wide resources. To effectively meet predicted increases in recreation demand, developed recreation opportunities need to be provided within the planning area to minimize potential impacts to the resources that these activities depend upon.

The purpose and need of the management actions described in this planning effort are to:

- Restore natural ecosystems on lands recently acquired by the BLM.
- Provide recreational opportunities in the form of facilities and trail development that would control unauthorized uses and reduce the risk of resource degradation.
- Reduce the fire hazard associated with current forest conditions.
- Reduce fire risk associated with increased recreational use and residential population growth in rural interface areas.
- Implement management strategies consistent with the Salem District Management Plan.
- Accomplish the management goals and objectives described in Section 2.2.

### **1.4 Method of Plan Preparation**

The Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan was developed from management alternatives analyzed in Environmental Assessment #OR-080-08-16 and public comments received from scoping. Released in August 2008, the Environmental Assessment described in detail the planning framework, resources and management issues and opportunities. It also presented four scenarios for managing BLM administered lands within the Sandy River Basin. Additionally, the Environmental Assessment weighed environmental consequences of management alternatives. Based on public input from organizations, private landowners, stakeholders and land management agencies a preferred alternative (*Alternative D*) was identified. The preferred alternative and comments regarding changes to the preferred alternative paved the way for drafting the Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan.

Where the SRBIMP EA describes management of resources in general terms and assesses environmental impacts, this final management plan lists specific actions to be taken to manage Basin-wide resources. This plan sets management direction, stipulates management standards and guidelines and sets forth an implementation schedule for priority projects.

## **1.5 Relationship to Bureau of Land Management Planning**

Management actions identified in the SRBIMP are in conformance with the *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan – Salem District* (2008 RMP). The analysis supporting this decision tiers to the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management*, October, 2008 (2008 Final EIS).

In addition, the following plans and reports have guided the development of the SRBIMP\*.

- Sandy Gorge ACEC Management Plan (1987)
- Sandy Wild and Scenic River and State Scenic Waterway Management Plan EA (July 1992)
- Sandy Wild and Scenic River and State Scenic Waterway Management Plan (September 1993)
- Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (1995)
- Salmon Wild and Scenic River Management Plan (1993)
- Sandy River Acquisitions EA (2002)
- Sandy River Navigability Study (2002)
- Sandy River Basin Characterization Report (2005)
- Sandy River Basin Watershed Analysis (2007)
- Sandy River Basin Vision Document (2007)
- Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan EA (2008)
- Sandy River Water Quality Restoration Plan (2008)

*\*The above documents are available for review in the Salem District Office.*

## **1.6 Planning Area Overview**

The Sandy River Basin contains 14,850 acres of BLM administered lands. The planning area was broken into two zones (Upland and Riparian) in order to spatially identify resource-specific values, restoration considerations and recreation opportunities.

The planning area is near Portland, Oregon on the west side of the Cascade mountain range, a region exhibiting faunal, floral and topographic diversity. The wet coastal maritime climate of western Oregon is characterized by mild temperatures, wet winters, a long frost-free period, and narrow daily fluctuations in temperature. Annual precipitation in the Sandy drainage ranges from 40 inches near the mouth to 110 inches near its source with the heaviest rainfall occurring in the late fall and early winter. The river area incorporates portions of two major physiographic zones, the Willamette Valley and Western Cascades regions.

The Sandy River Basin encompasses six watersheds including the lower, middle and upper Sandy watersheds and the Bull Run, Zigzag and Salmon River watersheds. The Basin drains an area of roughly 508 square miles (or 321,635 acres). The Sandy River flows about 56 miles in a northwesterly direction from the side of Mount Hood and joins the Columbia River near Troutdale at the Columbia River, Mile 120.5.

Land use and ownership varies widely in this complex planning area with over 900 private land owners. Land ownership patterns form a mixed patchwork of discontinuous parcels, especially in the Basin's western portion. Several political jurisdictions are located within the Basin, including portions of Multnomah and Clackamas counties; portions of the cities of Gresham, Troutdale, and Sandy in the lower part of the Basin; and entire small, unincorporated communities.

The rural, predominantly forested Sandy River Basin is a popular place for a variety of recreational activities such as hiking, sightseeing, fishing, and kayaking. The Basin is home to historic Timberline Lodge, ski resorts, numerous federal, state, regional, and local forests and parks, and two designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. See Figure 1 for the location of the planning area.

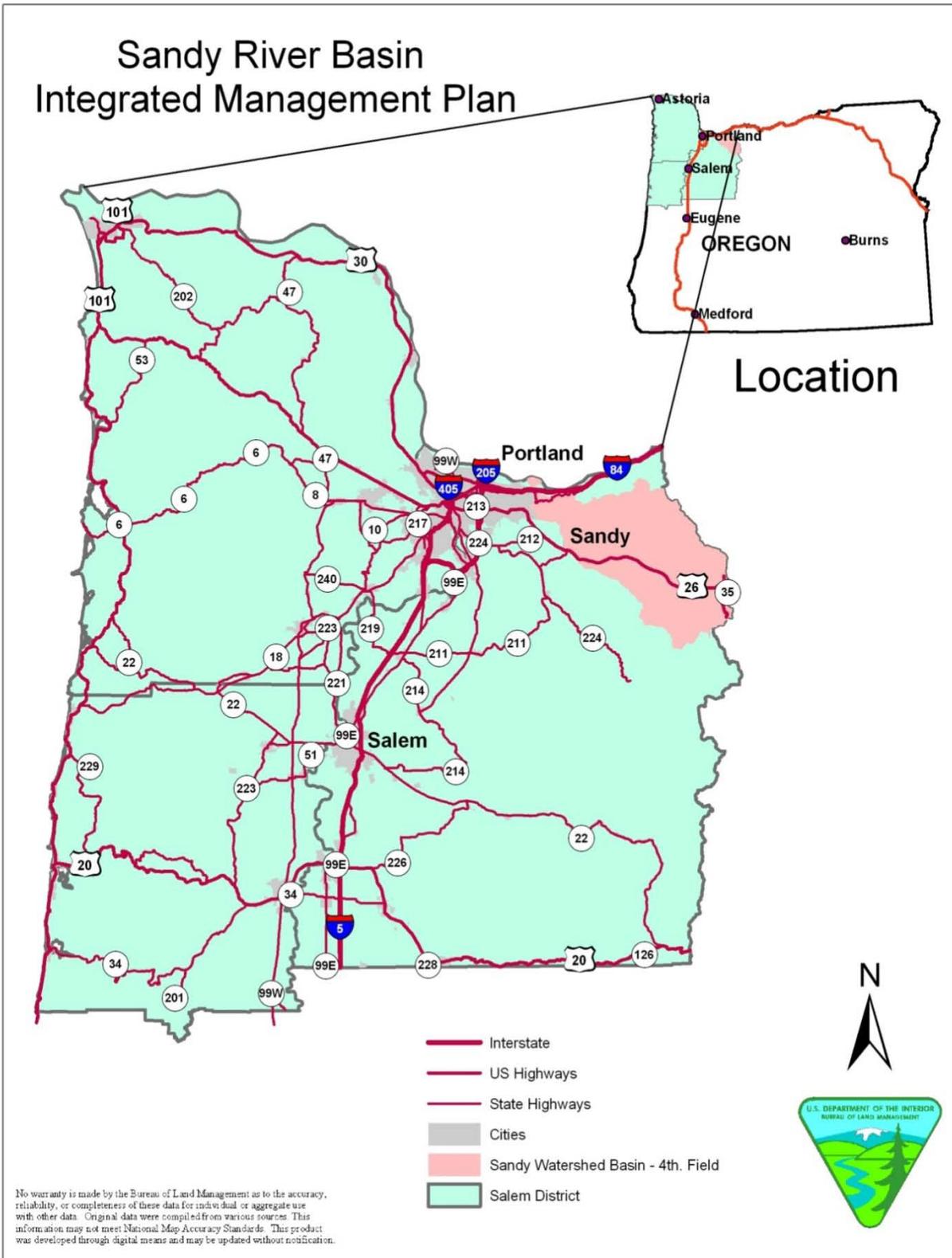
### **River Planning Area**

The River Planning Area boundary follows a topographical, river based corridor, stretching from River Mile (12) to River Mile (42). The boundary extends for a ¼ mile in both directions from the centerline of the river. The final boundaries were established to correspond with a typical Wild and Scenic river corridor, and best plan for the protection of outstandingly remarkable river values, fish and wildlife habitat, and vegetation. This boundary focuses restoration opportunities specific to riparian reserves. The river boundary also provides a logical framework for evaluating river access and river related recreation opportunities, experiences and associated benefits.

### **Upland Planning Area**

The Upland Planning Area boundary encompasses all BLM administered lands in the Sandy River Basin that fall outside of the ¼ mile River planning area boundary. The upland boundary was established to address varying land use allocations, congressional designations, and to identify resource conditions and opportunities not reflected within the River planning area.

Figure 1: Planning Area Location



## 1.6.1 BLM Land Use Allocations

Land use allocations are designations that determine what management actions are appropriate in a given area by defining objectives and providing management direction. The EA adhered to the land use allocation system established by the 1995 Salem District Resource Management Plan. Lands within the Sandy River Basin fell under the following land use allocations:

- *Congressional Reserve*
- *District Designated Reserve*
- *Connectivity*
- *General Forest Management Area*

Since the release of the EA, the new Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for the Salem District was signed (December 2008). The ROD/RMP established a new system of land use allocations for all lands within the Salem District. All BLM-administered parcels within the Sandy River Basin now fall under one of the following land use allocations.:

- *National Landscape Conservation System/ Congressionally Designated/ Acquired Lands*
- *Administratively Withdrawn*
- *Riparian Management Area*
- *Deferred Timber Management Area*
- *Timber Management Area*

A sixth allocation, Late-Successional Management Area, is not present within the planning area

Within the planning area, there is significant overlap between the previous and current land use allocations systems. For example, lands under the previous ‘Congressional Reserve’ allocation have been included in the new ‘National Landscape Conservation System’ allocation. The new allocation system does not alter broad management goals, but does have some influence on what actions (particularly silvicultural) can be taken in particular areas.

Listed below are the objectives provided for each land use allocation under the 2008 ROD/RMP; for a more current overview, the RMP is available online at:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/salem/plans/salemrmp.php>.

See Figure 2 for a map exhibiting the current land use allocations. It is important to note that due to ongoing map updates associated with the 2008 RMP, several small parcels have not been assigned a land use allocation or were inaccurately assigned.

### **National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS)**

#### ***Management Objectives***

Conserve, protect and restore identified cultural, ecological and scientific values of the NLCS lands. Manage acquired lands consistent with the purpose for which they were acquired.

*\*See Chapter 3.2 for management direction specific to each NLCS unit type*

Lands under the NLCS allocation include:

- Sandy Wild and Scenic River (12.5 miles)
- Salmon Wild and Scenic River
- Two segments of the Sandy River Eligible for inclusion into the Wild and Scenic River System (26.8 miles)
- Lands included in the Bull Run Watershed Management Unit by the Little Sandy Protection Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-30)
- Lands designated as the Mount Hood Scenic Corridor under the Oregon Forest Resource Conservation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-208)

## **Administratively Withdrawn Areas**

### ***Management Objectives***

Lands under the Administratively Withdrawn allocation in the Sandy River Basin include:

- Areas dedicated to specific purposes such as roads, buildings, maintenance yards, quarries and other facilities and infrastructure
- Areas identified through the TPCC system as withdrawn from sustained yield timber production

Areas withdrawn from the harvest land base through the timber production capability classification (TPCC) system do not have specific management objectives in the 2008 ROD/RMP. They may be managed similarly to the adjacent or surrounding land use allocations.

Additionally, acquired and public domain lands within the Sandy River Outstanding Natural Area/Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) not included under the NLCS allocation are included under Administratively Withdrawn. ACEC designation identifies where special management attention is required. Per the 2008 RMP, these lands are closed to off-highway vehicles and proposed closed to locatable/salable mineral entry. Leasable mineral entry is listed as 'Open-No Surface Occupancy'.

Areas designated as Administratively Withdrawn with the Sandy River ACEC statues do not have specific management objectives in the 2008 ROD/RMP. This management plan will provide more specific management objectives and direction for these lands and will act as the ACEC management plan. Management for the Sandy River ACEC will be guided by the recognition of the following relevant and important values:

- *Historic, Cultural, and Scenic:* Two sites listed on National Register of Historic Places (Barlow Road and Rock Corral) and one prehistoric site eligible for listing. Scenic inner gorge of the Sandy River exhibits steep walls, deep trench-like pools and cliff-dwelling plant communities. Other portions of the ACEC have received recognition as the Mount Hood Corridor lands to protect visual resources.
- *Fish and Wildlife:* Stocks of Lower Columbia River Chinook, winter steelhead, coho and cutthroat trout are present. Peregrine falcons, bald eagles and harlequin ducks have been known to use the Sandy River Gorge.
- *Natural Process or System:* Value of lands as a whole greater than value of individual parcels. Riparian old-growth forests in the Middle Sandy are rare in the watershed

downstream from Marmot Dam. Bureau sensitive fungus species (*Bridgeoporus noblissimus*) reported present.

## Riparian Management Area

### *Management Objectives*

- Provide for conservation of special status fish and other special status aquatic species.
- Provide for riparian and aquatic conditions that supply stream channels with shade, sediment filtering, leaf litter and large wood, and streambank stability.
- Maintain and restore water quality.
- Maintain and restore access to stream channels for all life stages of fish species.

Riparian Management Areas surround perennial and intermittent streams, as well as natural lakes and ponds.

## Deferred Timber Management Areas

### *Management Objectives*

- Maintain substantially all of the existing levels of older and more structurally complex multi-layer coniferous forest through 2030.

## Timber Management Areas

### *Management Objectives*

- Manage forests to achieve continuous timber production that could be sustained through a balance of growth and harvest.

**Table 3: Land Use Allocations**

<b>Land Use Allocation</b>	<b>Acres</b>
<b>National Landscape Conservation System/ Congressionally Reserved</b>	7639
<b>Administratively Withdrawn</b>	2671
<b>Riparian Management Area</b>	641
<b>Deferred Timber Management Area</b>	47
<b>Timber Management Area</b>	3832
<b>TOTAL</b>	14830*

*\*Some parcels have not been assigned an LUA by the 2008 RMP.*



# SANDY RIVER BASIN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN

## CHAPTER 2



## Chapter 2: Management Issues and Goals

Chapter 2 identifies management issues and concerns and sets broad goals for management of BLM administered lands within the Sandy River Basin.

### 2.1 Issues and Concerns

A planning issue is defined as a matter of controversy, dispute, or general concern over resource management activities, the environment, or land uses. Listed below are issues that were identified through the scoping process and addressed within the EA.

The BLM initially determined eight issues that formulated the scope for this analysis. As a result of the scoping process, the BLM received over 215 comments specific to the identified issues. These issues were derived from public open houses, focus groups, mail outs, and media coverage. Comments were received from recreational groups, landowners along the river corridor, conservation groups, state and other federal agencies, and the general public. Issues were categorized and evaluated, serving as a base line towards the development of management goals and objectives.

Where possible, the chapter and/or section where these issues have been described and addressed are included.

<b>Planning Issues addressed in the SRBIMP</b>		
<i>Issue</i>	<i>Issue Components</i>	<i>EA Section</i>
<b>Need to look at present and future recreation demand throughout the planning area</b>	Increasing populations adjacent to and within the Sandy River Basin	3.1, 4.1
	High dependence on public lands for recreation opportunities	3.1, 4.1
	Important role that recreation plays in regional socioeconomic conditions	3.1, 4.1
	Possibility of resource degradation resulting from recreation use	3.1, 4.1
	Identifiable recreational experiences and associated benefits	3.1, 5.1
<b>Need to maintain, enhance and restore fish, wildlife, visual, cultural and botanical resources</b>	Threats to visual and scenic qualities	3.6, 4.5
	Protection of watershed from accelerated erosion and increased sediment input	2.3, 4.7, 4.14
<b>Need to manage non-native invasive species</b>	Presence of invasive species on BLM lands.	2, 3, 4
	Public education on preventing the spread of invasive species.	4.10
	Surveys to identify invasive species and implementation of an Early Detection Rapid	3.11.1

<b>Planning Issues addressed in the SRBIMP</b>		
<i>Issue</i>	<i>Issue Components</i>	<i>EA Section</i>
	Response (EDDR).	
<b>Need to address conflicts between vegetation management prescriptions and visual resource values</b>	Maintenance of visual quality objectives when planning timber management activities	3.6, 4.5
	Identification of restoration projects through timber program	2,3,4
	Appropriate management of various land use allocations, in accordance with Salem District RMP	2,3,4
<b>Need to work with landowners and county, state and federal agencies to deal with complexity of multiple jurisdictions</b>	Current lack of signage across administrative boundaries	4.4.3
	Need for law enforcement to uniformly enforce regulations across administrative boundaries	4.4.2
	Cohesion of inter-agency river and trail access opportunities	4.4.2
<b>Need to identify land ownership boundaries between BLM lands and other ownerships</b>	Unclear private-public property boundaries	3.1
	Impacts of unauthorized uses on federal lands	3.1, 4.1
	Dynamic nature of land ownership patterns due to acquisitions and exchanges	3.3, 4
<b>Need to plan for future growth and enforce existing laws and regulations in the rural urban interface</b>	Trash dumping, vandalism and private property trespass	3.1, 3.10
	Addressing fire danger	3.10, 4.3.2

**Table 4: Planning Issues**

## **2.2 Management Goals**

The following Basin-wide management goals were formed from interdisciplinary input, open houses, focus groups, design charettes and comments received from the public. Goals are intended to guide and help focus future management decisions to ensure that any recommended actions or set of actions result in the intended outcome of this planning effort.

- Develop a management plan that is reasonable, cost effective, viable, and protects and enhances resources within the planning area.
- Maintain and/or enhance the integrated ecological functions of rivers, streams, floodplains, wetlands and associated riparian areas.

- Protect and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife species. Protect and enhance stream channel conditions that provide high quality fish habitat.
- Protect the rivers' free-flowing character and protect and enhance its outstandingly remarkable values and special attributes: scenery, recreation, geological, botany/ecology, hydrology, water quality, wildlife and fisheries.
- Provide opportunities for a wide range of recreational opportunities within the planning area that adequately address recreation demand.
- Provide developed facilities and trails to concentrate public use as to not degrade the natural resources that high quality recreation experiences depend upon.
- Maintain visual resources within the planning area.
- Help reduce conflicts between recreationists and private property owners and reduce trespass on private property.
- Recognize and respond to the socioeconomic effects of future management strategies.
- Recognize the variety of needs from stakeholders and the interested public. Involve individuals as partners and facilitate the participation of active management within the planning area.