

Community Character of the *Tri-Cities Human Resource Unit*

The Spokane Field Office contracted James Kent Associates (JKA) to collect information on communities in the planning area. They collected information within Human Resource Units (HRU) which are roughly equivalent in size to a county but seldom correspond to county boundaries. HRU boundaries are derived by JKA from seven cultural descriptors and by self-reporting of residents living in these areas. The Cultural Descriptors are Settlement Patterns, Publics, Networks, Support Services, Work Routines, Recreation Activities and Natural and Human caused Features of the Landscape. This document presents a synopsis of the information collected by JKA for the *Tri-Cities HRU*. **More detail can be found at the RMP website where the full JKA report is posted.**

The Tri-Cities HRU is comprised primarily of Benton and Franklin Counties. The Hanford facility of the Department of Energy has been a central part of the Tri-Cities economy since World War II. It is associated with the common perception that people in the area are highly educated. It is also blue collar with an industrial and agricultural employment component. The economic base of the area is primarily agriculture, retail, and nuclear-related industries related to the Hanford Site and the Energy Northwest power reactor. Tri-Cities has been undergoing steady to rapid growth. A Franklin County Commissioner said that the county was 17th in national growth in 2005-06 because of the presence of Hanford and cheap land. In 2008 the Hispanic population makes up 49% of the total in Franklin County, and 16% of the total in Benton County. The importance of the wine industry to the Prosser community has led it to become known as the wine capital of Washington State.

Community Concerns related to BLM

Citizens noted the importance of **recreation uses on BLM** such as hiking, biking, nature activities, and horseback riding. A **desire for trails** was expressed noting the need for multi-jurisdictional coordination. **Resource protection** relative to the loss of shrub steppe habitat was noted of concern. Specific areas mentioned included **Juniper Dunes** where horse people stated use is less frequent due to current access issues. **Badger Mountain Centennial Preserve's** hiking opportunities and importance as a visual landmark was noted as an example of eco-tourism's success in the area; opportunities for conservation and trail development with BLM are desired to continue this momentum. Access to **Juniper Dunes** for ORV, hiking, and horseback riding is needed; citizens noted vandalism, trespass and other problems are occurring because of a lack of access. Others noted a need for facilities improvements, conflicts amongst users, trash dumping, road maintenance, resource damage from ORV use, and increased law enforcement. **Willamette Heights** and the cities of **Prosser** and **Richland** are interested in additional trails systems, R&PP lease, open space, increased signage, communication of BLM's location in the area, land tenure adjustment, access easements, noxious weeds, wind development and transmission line corridors. Interest in **Saddle Mountains** focused on hiking, rock hounding, hang gliding, ORV opportunities and resource threats from ORV, noxious weeds and wind energy development.

Are there other concerns related to BLM in your area?