

Scoping Report

Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement

October 2012

BLM
Vale District - Malheur and Jordan Resource Areas

October 2012



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Cover Photo: Owyhee River
Upstream From Three Forks Dome

Scoping Report

BLM Vale District, Malheur and Jordan Resource Areas Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement

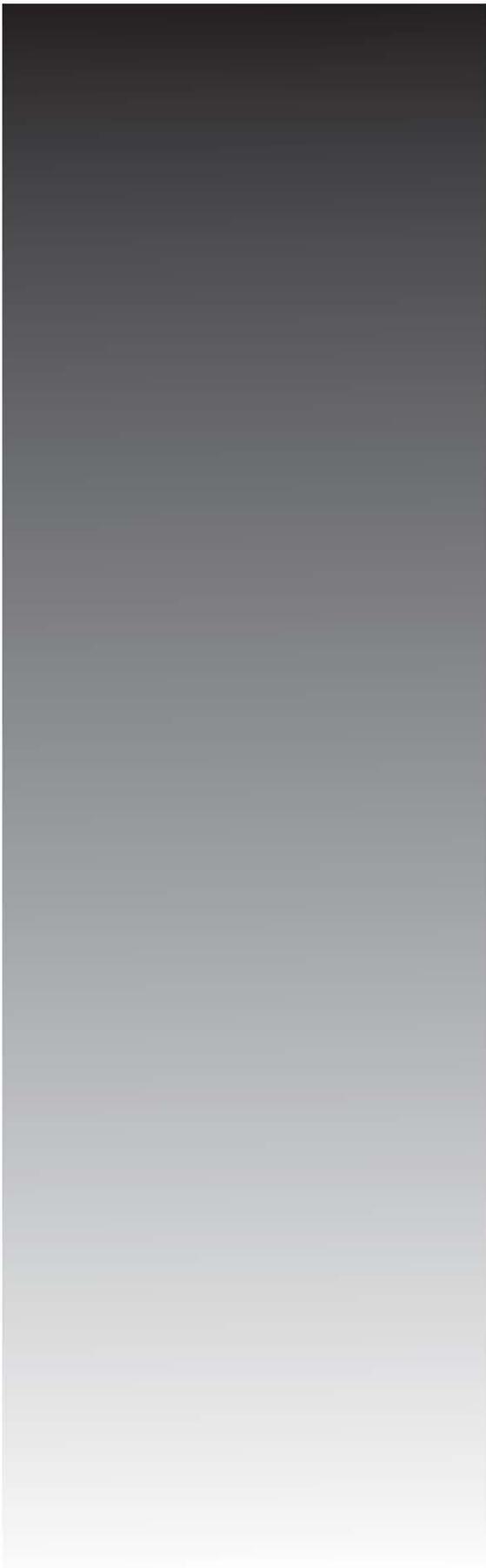
October 2012

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Or visit the project website at <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/seormpa/index.php>





United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, OR 97918

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1610 (ORV000)

OCT 11 2012

Dear Reader:

In May of 2010, the Vale District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) initiated public scoping and tribal consultation regarding a proposed amendment to the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan (SEORMP) pursuant to terms of the Ninth Circuit Court Settlement Agreement. The SEORMP was originally completed in September 2002 and addressed management of approximately 4.6 million acres of BLM-administered public lands in Malheur, Grant, and Harney counties.

The attached Scoping Report contains a summary of comments received during the scoping process and the nine main issues that the BLM intends to address during the SEORMP amendment process. You are receiving a copy of this document because of your interest in public land management activities in this area. The Scoping Report is also available for viewing or down-loading from our website at <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/seormpa/index.php>.

I feel it is important to highlight that since the time the SEORMP amendment process was initiated in 2010, Greater Sage-Grouse conservation has arisen as a national priority issue. In recent months the BLM Oregon/Washington State Director made a decision to address Greater Sage-Grouse management on BLM-administered lands in the SEORMP planning area, which is within the ongoing Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendments analysis area.

Once the Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendment effort is completed, the BLM expects to resume work on the SEORMP Settlement Agreement amendment. An updated planning timeline estimate is included at the end of this Scoping Report.

I wish to thank you for your continued interest in public land management and will keep you informed of progress on the SEORMP Settlement Agreement amendment process in the future. If you have any questions about either planning effort or would like to ensure that you are kept on our mailing list, please contact Brent Grasty (email: bgrasty@blm.gov or phone: 541-473-6341).

Sincerely,

Pat Ryan
Field Manager
Jordan/Malheur Resource Areas



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Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to amend its resource management plan (RMP) for the Malheur and Jordan Resource Areas of the Vale District. The current Southeastern Oregon RMP (SEORMP) for the planning area was adopted by the BLM in September 2002 to address the terms of a Ninth Circuit Court Settlement Agreement reached in June 2010. The Settlement Agreement is described in the “Background” section below.

The planning decisions contained in an RMP are the basis for every subsequent on-the-ground action the BLM undertakes. An RMP ensures that the public lands are managed in accordance with the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act* (FLPMA) (43 United States Code [USC] 1701 et seq.) under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

An RMP is a set of comprehensive long-term decisions guiding the management direction, uses, and restrictions for resources administered by the BLM on public lands. In general, an RMP does two things: (1) provides a set of goals and management direction for each resource or use, and (2) resolves multiple-use conflicts or issues, to the extent possible. In contrast, a plan amendment typically focuses on updating an existing RMP to deal with specific issues and is often limited to specific geographic areas. An amendment typically results in changes to some existing management decisions, while decisions for other issues, resources, uses, or areas are not modified.

The BLM has added a new priority since the BLM initiated preparation of the SEORMP and Lakeview RMP amendments and associated environmental impacts statements (EISs) pursuant to terms of the Ninth Circuit Court Settlement Agreement. The importance of conserving the Greater Sage-Grouse has recently become even clearer to the BLM, and it has embarked on a nationwide effort to improve Greater Sage-Grouse conservation on BLM-administered lands.

In 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published its listing decision, under the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA), for the Greater Sage-Grouse as “Warranted but Precluded.” Inadequate regulatory mechanisms were identified as a major threat in the USFWS finding on the petition to list the Greater Sage-Grouse. The USFWS has identified the principal regulatory mechanism for the BLM as conservation measures in RMPs. In December 2011 the Washington Office BLM released a National Technical Team Report outlining potential conservation measures for the Greater Sage-Grouse. This unprecedented national planning effort has been split into two regions: a Rocky Mountain Region and a Great Basin Region. The Rocky Mountain Region will prepare numerous EISs to consider amending RMPs in the states of Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and portions of western Utah and western Montana. The Great Basin Region will also prepare multiple EISs to consider amending RMPs in California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and portions of eastern Utah and eastern Montana. The BLM aims to incorporate objectives and conservation measures into RMPs by September 2014 in order to provide adequate regulatory mechanisms to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitat. These measures will be considered by the USFWS as it makes its final determination on whether to list the Greater Sage-Grouse under section 4 of the ESA. Therefore, these EISs will be prepared under expedited timeframes.

The BLM in Oregon is preparing a programmatic EIS for amending up to nine RMPs to incorporate conservation measures for the Greater Sage-Grouse. The Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendment effort will include the SEORMP (2002) and the Lakeview RMP (2003). Given the expedited timeframes and conservation need for the Greater Sage-Grouse, preparation and completion of the Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendments and associated EISs will come before all other planning efforts in eastern Oregon, including

the SEORMP and Lakeview RMP Settlement Agreement amendments. Thus, the existing 2002 SEORMP and 2003 Lakeview RMP will first be amended to incorporate Greater Sage-Grouse conservation measures that are adopted by those two BLM districts at the completion of the Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendment effort.

Once the Greater Sage-Grouse RMP amendment effort is complete, the BLM will resume looking at the Ninth Circuit Court Settlement Agreement amendment process for the SEORMP and Lakeview RMP.

Description of the Planning Area

The SEORMP planning area includes the Malheur and Jordan Resource Areas of the BLM Vale District (Table 1 and Figure 1). The planning area covers 6.5 million acres, of which 4.6 million surface acres are managed by BLM. The planning area is bounded on the east by Idaho, on the south by Nevada, on the north by the Vale District’s Baker Resource Area, and on the west by the BLM Burns District’s Three Rivers and Andrews Resource Areas and the Malheur National Forest. Most of the public lands in the planning area are contiguous, with some scattered or isolated parcels.

Table 1. Planning area acres by county

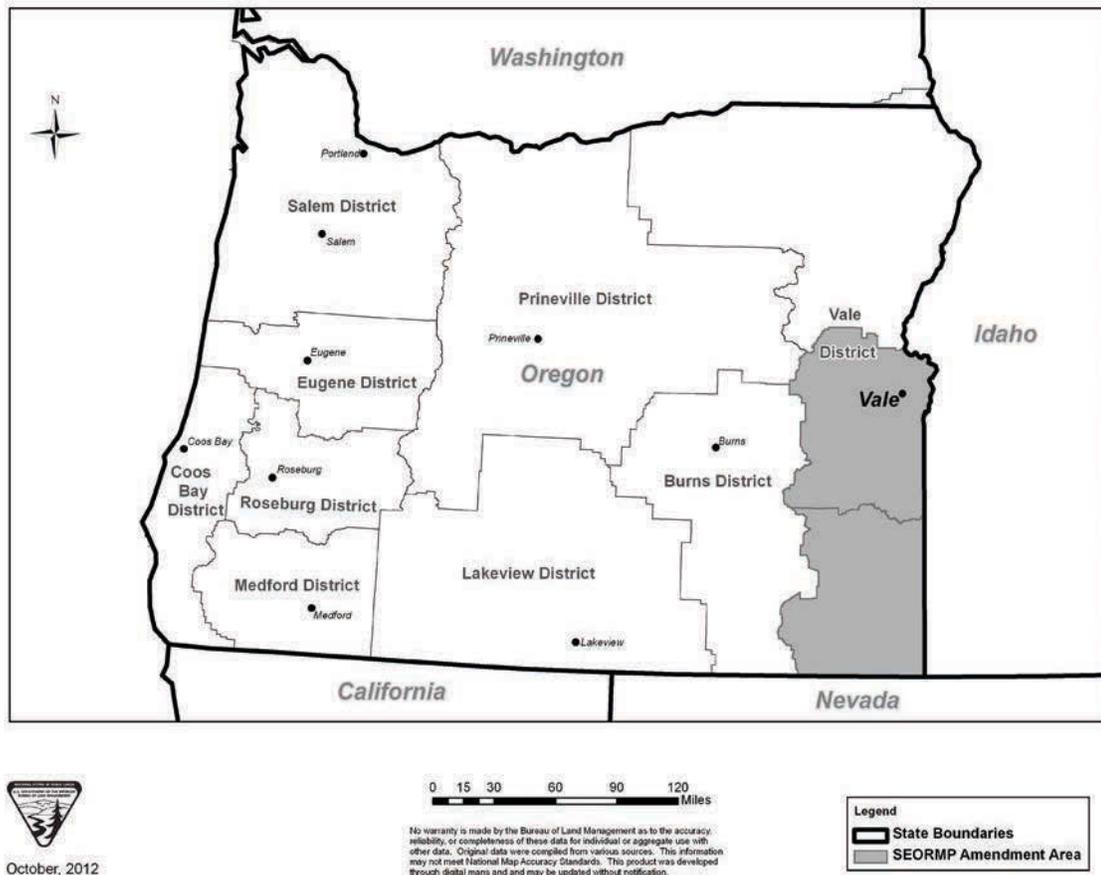
Ownership/Administration	Grant County (acres)	Harney County (acres)	Malheur County (acres)	Total (acres)
BLM administered lands	9,295	145,962	4,487,799	4,643,056
Other federal agencies	0	0	36,139	36,139
Reservation lands	0	0	18,181	18,181
State lands	0	31,198	277,392	308,591
Private lands	12,015	74,380	1,355,105	1,441,499
Other ¹	0	0	8,849	8,849
Total	21,310	251,540	6,183,466	6,456,315

Note: 1. Submerged lands and lands of unknown ownership

Purpose and Need

The overall purpose of this planning effort is to amend the 2002 SEORMP and develop a comprehensive plan to manage the BLM-administered lands in accordance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies.

Figure 1. SEORMP amendment / EIS planning area



2010 Settlement Agreement

Background

The BLM completed the SEORMP in 2002 and the Lakeview RMP in 2003. Separate lawsuits were filed in District Court challenging each RMP. Both RMPs were upheld at the District Court level but were subsequently appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. On July 14, 2008, the Ninth Circuit Court ruled on the SEORMP case in *Oregon Natural Desert Association v. Bureau of Land Management*, 531 F.3d 1114 (9th Cir. 2008). Soon thereafter, the BLM filed a petition for panel rehearing of the court's remedy, and the matter was stayed during settlement negotiations. The Ninth Circuit Court also stayed litigation regarding similar challenges to the Lakeview RMP in *Oregon Natural Desert Association v. Gammon*, No. 07-35728 (9th Cir.), pending resolution of the SEORMP case and to allow for settlement negotiations between the parties. A settlement was reached in June 2010, and the BLM will be preparing an amendment to the SEORMP that is consistent with the terms of the 2010 Settlement Agreement. A copy of the Settlement Agreement is available for review on the SEORMP amendment website at <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/seormpa/index.php>.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the RMP amendment is to analyze a broader range of management alternatives for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, livestock grazing, and lands that the BLM has determined have wilderness characteristics, consistent with the terms of the 2010 Settlement Agreement.

Need

The BLM updated its wilderness characteristics inventory during the 2002 planning effort, but for only a small portion of public lands in the planning area. The 2010 Settlement Agreement requires BLM to update its wilderness characteristics inventory for all public lands (outside of existing wilderness study areas) in the planning area. The 2010 Settlement Agreement also requires BLM to analyze a broader range of alternatives for managing lands with wilderness characteristics, particularly with respect to OHV and livestock grazing uses.

Other Planning Issues

Purpose

The secondary purpose of the SEORMP amendment is to address several other planning issues that the BLM identified during internal scoping. None of these issues were substantial enough to require amending the existing RMP in and of themselves, but since an RMP amendment and associated EIS was already being considered, the BLM felt it was appropriate and efficient to also address them in this same planning effort.

Need

The BLM identified a need to address grazing management for areas within the congressionally designated Owyhee Wild and Scenic River that currently remain allocated for livestock grazing and trailing.

The BLM identified a need to address climate change in accordance with emerging policies.

The BLM identified a need to consider right-of-way allocations for wind energy developments within existing areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs).

The BLM identified a need to address subsurface mineral management of split-estate lands under consolidated state land blocks located in the SEORMP planning area.

Tribal Consultation

Consultation was initiated with six Native American Tribes: Burns Paiute Tribes, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribes, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. The tribes were invited to identify any resources or properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to members of the tribes that might be affected by the proposed management changes to the SEORMP.

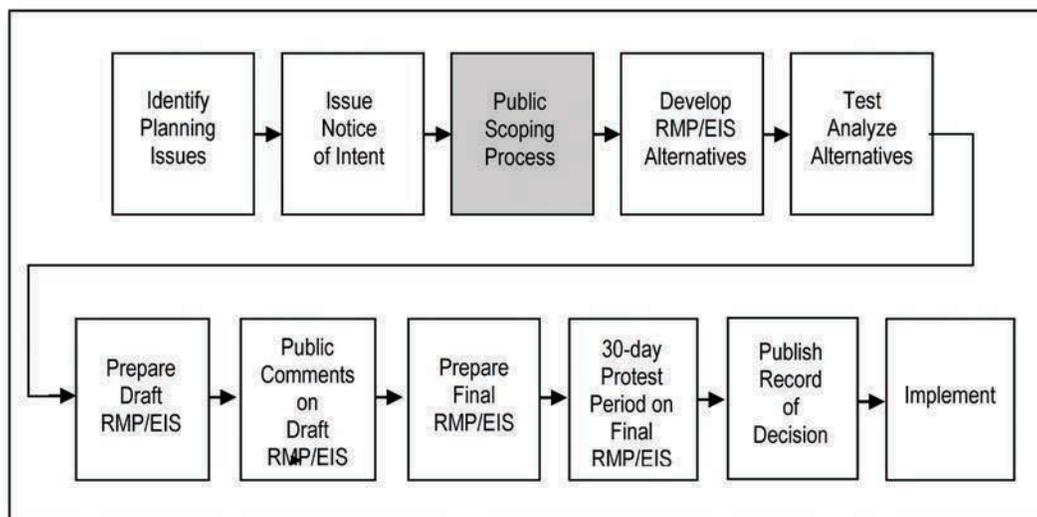
The tribes were also provided the opportunity to request government-to-government consultation and to discuss this project in greater detail. The BLM will continue to coordinate, formally and informally, with interested tribes to allow for their continued involvement throughout the SEORMP amendment/EIS planning and environmental analysis process.

Scoping Process

The 1969 *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) requires that federal agencies initiate the scoping process in the early stages of developing an EIS to determine the scope and significance of issues related to a proposed action and alternatives (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §1501.7). Knowing the scope and significance of issues allows for accurate and timely completion of environmental analysis. Scoping helps identify issues important to the management of the area, as well as which issues warrant consideration. Scoping is designed to provide for and encourage public participation and to solicit public input to help formulate or refine alternatives and understand effects of the proposed alternatives.

There are many steps (Figure 2) in the SEORMP amendment/EIS planning process, and scoping is an essential step that helps ensure issues are identified and considered throughout the planning and environmental analysis process.

Figure 2. The SEORMP amendment/EIS planning and analysis process



Notice of Intent, Legal Notices, and Letters

The public scoping process for the SEORMP amendment/EIS began with publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on April 8, 2010 (Appendix A). The NOI announced that the BLM was initiating the amendment process for the 2002 SEORMP Record of Decision (ROD), identified the period during which the BLM would accept scoping comments, and described how to submit comments to the BLM. The NOI also listed planning issues the SEORMP amendment would address and planning criteria the SEORMP/EIS would follow.

The BLM mailed approximately 350 scoping letters to agencies, organizations, and individuals. The letters provided information about the planning process and invited comments. Legal notices were published in the following newspapers: *Malheur*

Enterprise (Vale, Oregon), *Argus Observer* (Ontario, Oregon), *Humboldt Sun* (Winnemucca, Nevada), *Idaho Statesman* (Boise, Idaho), *The Bulletin* (Bend, Oregon), and *The Oregonian* (Portland, Oregon).

The Vale District placed information about the SEORMP amendment/EIS, including the scoping process, on its website (<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/valermp.php>). The website identified ways to submit comments and included an online form that people could use to submit comments or request to be added to the SEORMP amendment/EIS mailing list. The website also announced the dates, times, and locations of the public open houses. The BLM will continue to update the website as new information is available and documents are ready for public review.

Open Houses

The BLM held six public open houses and invited comments on the BLM proposed issues and planning criteria and solicited feedback on additional issues and planning criteria to be considered. The BLM also invited the governor of Oregon, county commissioners, and a number of potentially interested state agencies to participate in the planning process.

May 24, Boise, Idaho

May 25, McDermitt, Nevada

May 26, Ontario, Oregon

May 27, Bend, Oregon

June 2, Portland, Oregon

June 24, Jordan Valley, Oregon

A total of 120 people signed the register at the six open houses, during which the BLM answered questions and provided information about BLM-administered lands and resources in the planning area and about the SEORMP/EIS process. The BLM also provided comment sheets at the open houses for attendees to complete and return during the meeting or to mail in later. The BLM informed attendees that it would accept written comments in person, by email, online, FAX, or postal mail for consideration during the scoping period.

The BLM developed six fact sheets that were handed out at the public open houses; the fact sheets were titled:

- Livestock Grazing Management
- Travel Management Planning
- Off-Highway Vehicle Use
- Wilderness Character Inventory
- Owyhee National Wild and Scenic River Management
- BLM's Planning Process

Additional Opportunities for Input

National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy

Since the close of the SEORMP amendment scoping period, and as explained above, the BLM Washington Office issued new guidance regarding the need to prepare a series of RMP amendments to consider the management, restoration, and conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat throughout its range.

The public scoping process for the Oregon Sub-Regional Greater Sage-Grouse EIS began with publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register* on December 9, 2011 (Appendix B). The BLM Washington Office held information/scoping meetings regarding the national Greater Sage-Grouse planning effort in Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, and Utah during January 2012 to present information about the strategy and provide opportunity for public input. Specifically, informational meetings were held in Ontario and Lakeview, Oregon, in January 2012.

The public was encouraged to submit any feedback on the strategy and plan amendment process to the Western Regional Project Manager at the BLM Nevada State Office. Public input will be used by the BLM Oregon State Office during preparation of its Oregon Sub-Regional Greater Sage-Grouse EIS, which will present alternatives for managing Greater Sage-Grouse habitat on BLM lands in Oregon. The ROD for that EIS will direct every BLM district in the state to manage sage-grouse habitat according to the conservation measures contained in the ROD.

Scoping Report

The BLM is publishing this Scoping Report as another means of providing the public, agencies, and tribes an opportunity to review the development of the issues to be addressed prior to the release of the draft SEORMP amendment/EIS.

Summary of Public Comments from Scoping

The BLM received a total of 36 written letters or emails during the scoping comment period, which ended on July 25, 2010.

The BLM reviewed the letters and emails for content and found many included more than one comment. Table 2 presents a summary of the issues that were raised during the scoping period.

Table 2: Summary of scoping comments

Comment Submission Category	Number of Comments
Issues that will be addressed in the SEORMP amendment/EIS	
Wilderness characteristics inventory	36
Livestock grazing management	57
Off-Highway vehicle use	26
Climate change	14
Wind energy development	15
Owyhee national wild and scenic river management	8
Minerals management	1
Travel management planning	48
Issues that will not be addressed in the SEORMP amendment/EIS	
Issues that can only be resolved through policy or administrative actions	87
Issues beyond the scope of the SEORMP/EIS	58
Greater Sage-Grouse and sagebrush habitat	18
Nonsubstantive comments	51

Issue Identification

The primary purpose of scoping is to give people an opportunity to identify the issues that need to be addressed during the planning process. The BLM Land Use Planning Handbook defines planning issues as disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, or related management practices.

Issue identification for the SEORMP amendment first involved determining if the comment(s) submitted related to BLM's purpose and need for the proposed amendment (described above). Comments, concerns, or issues that fall outside the stated purpose and need are generally not carried forward into the plan amendment process. Comments, concerns, or issues that fall within the stated purpose and need can be carried forward into the plan amendment process and addressed in one of many ways. Some comments/issues are used to refine the planning criteria. Other comments/issues can be addressed through the range of alternatives developed or the analysis of effects.

The alternatives will include management objectives, allowable uses, and actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes. The alternatives will include a range of management directions for all resources and resource uses. The BLM will then analyze the effects of the alternatives and determine to what degree each alternative addresses the issues and meets the amendment's stated purpose and need.

Many comments did not fit the definition of planning issues and could be characterized as (1) providing the individual or organization's background, feelings, or positions; (2) a statement that provided information concerning law, regulation, or policy that the respondent felt needed to be reviewed or changed; (3) were beyond the purpose and need identified for the plan amendment; or (4) requested to be on the mailing list or be notified of further involvement opportunities.

While many issues may arise during scoping, not all of the issues warrant analysis (BLM H-1790-1, section 6.4.1). Analysis of an issue is only warranted if it contributes information that may help resolve disagreement about the best way to manage or use a resource or resolve an undesirable resource condition.

Issues That Will Be Addressed

Issue 1: Wilderness Characteristics

Representative Public Comments

- 1. Given the stated purpose of the preparation of the Southeastern Oregon RMP and Lakeview RMP Amendments, and the information compiled by the public regarding lands with wilderness characteristics, the range of alternatives for these lands should include a number of alternatives to protect their wilderness values.*
- 2. Wilderness characteristic inventories should not exist. There are already to [sic] many W.S.A's which have already either have recommended or non recommended status. These should be acted on by congress and managed accordingly. Livestock have grazed these areas for over 100 years and have not yet ruined the characteristics that got these areas recommended to start with. Evidently congress feels that these areas haven't been affected one way or another as they choose not to act on the issue.*

Question to be Resolved

- How will areas with wilderness characteristics, found outside designated wilderness study areas WSA(s) and within the SEORMP amendment/EIS planning area, be managed to protect wilderness characteristics?

BLM Response

The BLM will include a range of management alternatives in the SEORMP amendment/EIS for areas outside of designated WSAs that the agency has found to possess wilderness characteristics. No congressionally designated wilderness areas exist on BLM lands in the planning area.

Pursuant to FLPMA, the BLM maintains current inventory information for a variety of public land resources, including areas with wilderness characteristics. The *Wilderness Act* criteria include size (greater than 5,000 acres or contiguous to lands currently managed to protect wilderness characteristics), naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The Vale District is finalizing its public lands inventory of lands with wilderness characteristics. The district used previously completed wilderness characteristics inventories, citizen-provided inventory information (such as photos, write-ups, and maps), and new BLM inventory data from field reviews, photographic interpretation, and interdisciplinary team staff discussions to identify public lands outside of designated WSAs that may meet wilderness characteristics criteria. The Vale District will use the updated inventory information to inform the environmental analysis and land use planning decisions that are part of the SEORMP amendment/EIS process.

Designated wilderness study areas will remain as such until released or designated as wilderness by Congress. The BLM no longer has the authority to establish new WSAs under section 603 of FLPMA or to manage lands outside of designated WSAs under the agency's "Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands under Wilderness Review" (H-8550-1). However, under sections 201 and 202 of FLPMA, the BLM has an obligation to maintain inventories of wilderness characteristics, and the agency has the discretion, through the land use planning process, to manage inventoried lands to protect their wilderness characteristics. In September 2011, the BLM Washington Office issued Instruction Memorandum No.2011-154, the "Requirement to Conduct and Maintain Inventory Information for Wilderness Characteristics and to Consider Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in Land Use Plans." Two attachments released with the memoranda provided instructions to the BLM for conducting the inventories and for considering lands found to possess wilderness characteristics. The updated inventories for the SEORMP planning area followed these protocols, and the SEORMP amendment/EIS will incorporate the factors identified for consideration.

Issue 2: Grazing Permit Relinquishment

Representative Public Comments

1. *Please amend the land use plans to allow for voluntary relinquishment of grazing permits.*
2. *In adopting the first iterations of the SEORMP, BLM failed to seriously consider alternatives that would cut back on unsustainable grazing levels.*
3. *Compensating federal grazing permittees to end their grazing on public lands is an equitable way to resolve long-standing conflicts between domestic livestock grazing and environmental protection, recreation and other legitimate uses of public lands.*

4. *Other BLM districts in Oregon have since adopted mechanisms providing for voluntary permit relinquishment and we ask BLM to now include relinquishment in this land use plan.*

Question to be Resolved

- How will the BLM process voluntary grazing permit relinquishment upon receipt from a permit holder?

BLM Response

RMPs identify uses, such as livestock grazing, that are allowable, restricted, or prohibited on public lands. RMPs also identify lands where specific uses are excluded in order to protect resource values. A grazing permit authorizes use of public lands that an RMP has designated as available for livestock grazing. Grazing preference is a superior or priority position against other parties for the purpose of receiving a grazing permit (43 CFR 4100.0-5). The process of grazing permit relinquishment ends a party's preference.

The BLM will address a range of grazing management alternatives in the SEORMP amendment/EIS for permit relinquishment. The alternatives will consider the process to be followed upon receipt of relinquishment of a permit to graze livestock on public land in the planning area. The process will specifically consider if grazing authorization would be made available for other applicants upon receipt of grazing permit relinquishment for use upon public lands in the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), which includes WSAs and wild and scenic rivers, and also for other lands with certain specific special designations in addition to NLCS lands.

Issue 3: Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines Not Met

Representative Public Comment

The applicable regulations within 43 C.F.R. Part 4100 prescribe a range of management actions and practices, including the development of range improvements, which are available to the BLM to meet applicable Rangeland Health Standards, not to mention applicable Land Use Plan objectives. As such, a one-size-fits-all management action to "close allotments or pastures" is unlawful at its best and irrational at its worse.

Question to be Resolved

- How will BLM manage livestock grazing upon determining that current livestock management practices are contributing to not meeting standards for rangeland health and guidelines for livestock management?

BLM Response

The BLM will propose a range of management alternatives in the SEORMP amendment/EIS that consider the appropriate actions it would take if it determines that existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands are significant factors in those lands failing to achieve the standards of rangeland health and are thus not in conformance with the guidelines established in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2. The proposed alternatives would include actions such as closing a grazing allotment or pasture, either for the duration of the plan or temporarily, on those lands not in conformance with rangeland health standards.

Issue 4: OHV Designations

Representative Public Comments

1. *Off-road travel is creating new roads, causing erosion, damaging vegetation, disturbing wildlife, and destroying the scenic attributes of public lands. Off-road travel must be prohibited.*
2. *Nowhere on these lands should the BLM consider limiting or closure to OHVs. We need our motorized vehicles to access primitive areas for camping, hunting, sightseeing.*

Question to be Resolved

- How will the BLM designate and manage OHV access while providing for resource use and sustaining resource values in the planning area?

BLM Response

The BLM will include a range of management alternatives in the SEORMP amendment/EIS that consider motorized OHV use designations of *open*, *limited*, or *closed* areas based on balancing resource uses and values. Criteria for these designations are established in 43 CFR § 8340.0-5(f), (g), and (h), respectively. There are no restrictions of OHV travel in areas with an open designation. A limited OHV designation may limit travel to existing routes, designated routes by vehicle type, season of use, timing, or for other considerations. Motorized travel is not allowed in areas designated as closed.

Issue 5: Livestock Grazing within the Designated Owyhee Wild and Scenic River Corridor

Representative Public Comment

In (Wild and Scenic River) areas where gap fences are not keeping livestock off the river . . . adjacent pastures should be closed.

Question to be Resolved

- How will the BLM manage livestock grazing in the designated corridor of the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River, while maintaining the outstandingly remarkable values for which the river segments were designated?

BLM Response

The BLM will address grazing management for areas in the congressionally designated Owyhee Wild and Scenic River that remain allocated for livestock grazing and trailing. In 1993 the BLM published the *Main, West Little and North Fork Owyhee National Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan*, which identified livestock grazing concerns and impacts in the designated Owyhee River corridor. That 1993 management plan was challenged in the District Court of Oregon.

An April 2000 Order of Modified Injunction ordered the BLM to permanently eliminate domestic livestock grazing from all areas of concern identified in the 1993 management plan, commencing May 1, 2000. Those areas permanently eliminated from grazing by the April 2000 Order will remain permanently closed to grazing. The court further ordered

the BLM to complete an EIS to address domestic livestock grazing in the Owyhee WSR corridor. The BLM provides an annual report to the court concerning management of domestic livestock grazing in the Owyhee River corridor, but to date, the BLM has not completed the ordered EIS. Addressing livestock grazing management in the designated river corridor in the SEORMP/EIS will be consistent with the court's order.

Issue 6: Subsurface Mineral Management within State Land Blocks

Representative Public Comment

We strongly urge BLM to work with the state agencies to develop ways to provide management opportunities/alternatives for public use of minerals within the Oregon state land blocks. The opportunities for future use should not be diminished but protected and supported as part of the multiple use policies.

Question to be Resolved

- How will the BLM manage subsurface federal mineral resources of the Stockade State Block?

BLM Response

The SEORMP amendment/EIS will address a range of mineral management alternatives for certain specific blocks of state land where the federal government retained the subsurface mineral estate as part of completed land exchanges.

The nation's need for domestic sources of minerals from public lands is recognized in FLPMA. The BLM is responsible for implementing the *Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970*. When public lands are sold or exchanged under the *Small Tracts Act* [43 USC 682(b)], the *Recreation and Public Purposes Act* [43 USC 869], sales [43 USC 1713], or exchange [43 USC 1716], minerals reserved to the United States continue to be removed from the operation of the mining laws unless a subsequent land use planning decision expressly restores the lands to mineral entry. The 2002 SEORMP-ROD did not address the disposition of the mineral resources that were subject to land exchanges in the mid-1980s between the Oregon Department of State Lands and the BLM. Both agencies transferred surface rights but retained subsurface minerals and geothermal rights. That has resulted in a split-estate status for much of the isolated blocks of exchanged lands.

Issue 7: Greenhouse Gases / Climate Change

Representative Public Comment

The EIS should discuss these risk factors (climate change), and consider how management strategies under the various alternatives can contribute to the BLM's long term climate change adaptation strategy.

Question to be Resolved

- How will the BLM manage public land resources and uses in the planning area while considering greenhouse gas emissions and addressing changing climate conditions?

BLM Response

A growing body of information indicates that a change in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere has led to changing climatic conditions. Yet it is currently beyond the scope of existing science to identify a specific source of greenhouse gas emissions

or sequestration and designate it as the cause of specific climate impacts at a specific location. The analysis in the SEORMP amendment/EIS will examine human-caused contributions to changes in greenhouse gas concentrations; specifically, those direct effects resulting from actions implemented or authorized by the BLM, in addition to indirect effects from short- and long-term emissions and storage of carbon.

Climate change may also alter baseline conditions. The description of the affected environment in the SEORMP amendment/EIS will include the trend of issue-related elements of the human environment, such as climate change, which may be affected by implementing any of the proposed alternatives or may alter the effectiveness of an alternative action.

The SEORMP amendment/EIS will incorporate the provisions of DOI *Order 3289: Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources*. The order establishes a department-wide approach for applying scientific tools to increase understanding of climate change and to coordinate an effective response to its impacts on tribes and on the land, water, ocean, fish and wildlife, and cultural heritage resources that the department manages.

Issue 8: Wind Energy Development in Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Representative Public Comment

BLM should ensure that these plans set sideboards for renewable energy development that ensure such projects can be developed without degradation of desert wildlands and damage to sensitive wildlife populations.

Question to be Resolved

- How will the BLM manage applications for wind-energy testing and development in designated ACECs?

BLM Response

The BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) requires that land use planning efforts address existing and potential development areas for renewable energy projects, including wind energy. The BLM encourages the development of wind energy within acceptable areas, consistent with the *Energy Policy Act of 2005* and the BLM Energy and Mineral Policy.

The 2002 SEORMP was amended with the December 15, 2005, *Record of Decision for Implementation of a Wind Energy Development Program and Associated Land Use Plan Amendments*. The policies in the 2005 land use plan amendment directed the exclusion of ACECs from wind energy site monitoring and testing and development (IM WO 2006-216). Subsequent guidance (IM WO 2009-043) changed that policy to ensure consideration of the purpose and specific environmental sensitivities for which the area was designated. As such, all new, revised, or amended land use planning efforts will address and analyze ACEC land use restrictions individually, including restrictions to wind energy development.

Issue 9: Travel Management Planning

A number of public comments were concerning travel management planning, many of which identified a combined issue of how BLM will manage OHV use as it relates to travel management.

Representative Public Comments

1. *We recommend that the EIS discuss the identification of a minimum road system and include an alternative which minimizes motorized and non-motorized user conflict; concern regarding the construction, maintenance, closure, decommissioning and use of roads. Our road management concerns are focused on route density, maintenance and design and decommissioning.*

2. *Do not close old roads, ways, routes, and two tracks to motorized traffic and OHVs. Development of the travel management plan must include OHV users and all Motorized users. OHV play areas must include all three classes of OHV not favoring any one. Nowhere on these lands should the BLM consider limiting or closure to OHVs.*

BLM Response

The Vale District SEORMP amendment/EIS will analyze a range of OHV designations and make decisions identifying areas as open, limited, or closed to OHVs. A travel management plan for the planning area will not be included as part of the SEORMP amendment process. A travel management plan for the Malheur and Jordan Resource Areas will be completed after the ROD for the SEORMP amendment/EIS is approved.

Comments, Concerns, and Issues That Issues That Will Not Be Addressed

Issues That Can Only be Resolved Through Policy Change or Legislative Actions

A total of 87 comments consisted of concerns that could only be resolved through a change in law, regulation, or policy by the BLM. The decision space for any RMP is limited by law, the BLM's planning regulations (43 CFR 1610), national BLM policies and guidance regarding land use planning (primarily the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1), and the authority of the decision maker. The decision maker for the SEORMP amendment/EIS will be the Oregon/Washington BLM State Director. The scope of BLM land use planning does not include the authority to make decisions contrary to law, to change federal regulations, or to change national BLM policies or guidance during RMP development or amendment.

The public comments that can only be resolved through a change in law, regulation, or policy included those advocating new user fees, release of WSAs, and suggested revisions to rangeland health standards and guidelines. A number of comments restated requirements in law for consideration of economic and social consequences of federal actions, the requirement for public participation in the planning process, the need to consider cumulative impacts of alternative actions, and the requirement for inclusion of tribal government involvement. Although these comments do not identify issues that could be resolved in the SEORMP amendment/EIS, the BLM does recognize its responsibilities as stated in law, regulation, and policy.

Issues Beyond the Scope of the SEORMP Amendment

Another 58 public comments identified issues that are beyond the scope of the SEORMP amendment because they are not directly related to the amendment process, but are substantive in other regards. Examples of these comments address an opportunity to "fix" something in the SEORMP amendment more appropriately addressed under plan

maintenance, clarification of management decisions in the SEORMP amendment, or the occasion where the comment may warrant a response to the writer in order to improve communications to reduce controversy or misunderstanding. These comments did not identify issues that would be addressed in the SEORMP amendment/EIS and are beyond the scope of the current planning and analysis process. The issues that are beyond the scope of the SEORMP amendment process include

- a need for weed control, explain that BLM is already doing this?
- the review of completed rangeland health assessments,
- reconsideration of ACEC designations,
- revisions to livestock management guidelines and decisions outside the Owyhee River corridor,
- changes to the designation of wild horse herd management areas,
- a need for additional activity planning within wild horse herd management areas, or
- a need for fire management policy changes.

Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Habitat

Representative Public Comment

Please also take a fresh look at protecting Greater sage grouse (and other sagebrush obligate species) and sagebrush habitat throughout these landscapes.

Question to be Resolved

- How will the BLM manage Greater Sage-Grouse habitat as a result of the 2010 FWS finding that listing the Greater Sage-Grouse (range-wide) as threatened or endangered under the ESA is “warranted but precluded” by higher priority listing actions, the compilation of information on Greater Sage-Grouse in the scientific monograph in the series “Studies in Avian Biology,” and the 2011 revisions to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s “Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon: A Plan to Maintain and Enhance Populations and Habitat”?

BLM Response

As mentioned in the “Introduction” section, the BLM published an NOI on December 9, 2011, to prepare EISs to amend RMPs throughout the BLM for Greater Sage-Grouse conservation. The BLM aims to incorporate objectives and conservation measures into RMPs by September 2014 in order to provide adequate regulatory mechanisms to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse and its habitat. These measures will be considered by the USFWS as it makes its final determination on whether to list the Greater Sage-Grouse under section 4 of the ESA.

Issues About Specific Land Use Designations

Some comments suggested that two additional types of land use allocation designations be considered in the SEORMP amendment/EIS process.

Public Comment

Commenters recommended that a wild horse herd management area (HMA) in the planning area be designated as a wild horse range.

BLM Response

Regulation (43 CFR 4710.3-2) and land use planning guidance (BLM Handbook 1601-1 Appendix C) provide that a designated HMA may be considered for designation as a wild horse range when there is a significant public value present, such as unique characteristics in a herd or an outstanding opportunity for public viewing. In the absence of specific information from an internal or external source identifying a specific HMA in the planning area and any recommended unique characteristics in the herd or outstanding opportunity for public viewing, consideration for designation of one or more HMAs in the planning area as a wild horse range is beyond the scope of the SEORMPA/EIS, and BLM will not address this issue in the SEORMPA/EIS process.

Public Comment

Commenters also recommended that all WSA lands be designated Back Country Byways.

BLM Response

Proposed changes to established guidance for WSA management is not within the scope of the SEORMPA/EIS process. Land use planning guidance (BLM H-1601-1, Appendix C) provides opportunity to designate BLM Scenic and Back Country Byways in accordance with guidance provided in BLM's Byways Handbook (H 8357-1). OHV designations and travel management decisions for the planning area will be resolved in the SEORMPA/EIS and subsequent travel management plan. Management of existing and proposed scenic or backcountry byways, as well as other similar designations, will be addressed in the travel management plan. These administrative designations should be consistent with the goals and objectives for the planning area.

Nonsubstantive Public Comments

Another 51 comments were considered nonsubstantive because they were primarily a statement of opinion or personal story. The SEORMP amendment/EIS will not address nonsubstantive issues.

The SEORMP amendment/EIS will address public issues regarding those changes in management direction that are required by the 2010 Settlement Agreement and other BLM-identified changes.

Differences Between the Lakeview RMP and SEORMP Amendments

The primary purpose and need statements for amending the SEORMP and Lakeview RMP are identical. Every effort will be made to present the analysis in a consistent fashion between the two EISs. However, resources, geographic, social, and economic characteristics, and current management differ between the two planning areas and will be fully described and analyzed as separate plan amendments. The secondary purpose described above under "Other Planning Issues" reflect specific issues that will be addressed in the SEORMP amendment. The Lakeview RMP amendment/EIS scoping report is being released at approximately the same time as this SEORMP amendment scoping report. Please review the Lakeview RMP amendment scoping report to consider the unique planning issues to be analyzed through the Lakeview RMP amendment process.

Planning Criteria

Planning criteria guide the development of the plan amendment by defining the decision space or the general sideboards for the planning effort. Planning criteria are generally based upon applicable laws, national and BLM state director guidance, and the results of public and governmental participation (43 CFR 1610.4-2). Planning criteria ensure that the plan amendment is tailored to the substantive issues and avoid unnecessary data collection or analysis. Planning criteria include compliance with FLPMA, NEPA, and other relevant laws and are listed in the attached NOI (Appendix A).

Principles of ecosystem-based management, as well as a continuing commitment to multiple use and sustained yield, guide BLM's land use decisions in the planning area. The commitment to multiple use will not mean that all land will be open for all uses. Some uses may be excluded on some land to protect specific resource values or uses. Any such exclusion will be based on laws or regulations or be determined through a planning process subject to public involvement.

Data Summary / Data Gaps

The BLM Vale District has continued to update and collect resources and land use information since the SEORMP-ROD was signed in 2002. The most current data will be used in developing the SEORMP amendment/EIS. All data is required to have complete documentation and have accuracies defined. Data used in the SEORMP amendment/EIS will conform to those requirements. Much of this data is in a digital spatial format, which enables the BLM to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. GIS provides the BLM and the public the means to more fully understand the geographic relationships of the alternatives and opportunities for resource management, and it is a fundamental component of resource allocation and decision making. The BLM also has continued to update its resource information through field inventories and monitoring. The most current available information will be used in the SEORMP amendment/EIS. Minor changes in numbers, acreages, and mapping between the 2002 SEORMP-ROD and SEORMP amendment/EIS are a reflection of using updated information.

Several significant sets of new information have been acquired or collected by the Vale District since 2002. The Vale District is in the process of finalizing its wilderness characteristics and travel/transportation inventories.

The multi-year vegetation and soils inventory, known as the Ecological Site Inventory and collected through a cooperative effort with the United States Department of Agricultural Natural Resources Conservation Service, has completed approximately one million acres of the planning area, and this data will be incorporated into the existing general soils and vegetation information in the SEORMP amendment/EIS.

The Greater Sage-Grouse data is managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and will be used directly from that source in the analysis in both the Oregon BLM statewide EIS and the SEORMP amendment/EIS.

Data used in the SEORMP amendment/EIS and its ROD will be made available for public access as those documents are finalized and published.

There are no known significant gaps of data that are pertinent to the SEORMP

amendment/EIS. However, the BLM will incorporate appropriate new or updated information (should it become available) at appropriate stages of the analysis. New data will be required to meet federal requirements of adequate documentation.

Summary of Future Steps in the Planning Process

The Vale District has initiated the process of drafting the SEORMP amendment/EIS, which will propose a range of alternative actions to address the 2010 Settlement Agreement; the management, restoration, and conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat based on direction required by the BLM's statewide ROD; and other BLM and publicly identified issues. The draft SEORMP amendment/EIS will identify the BLM's preferred alternative, which would be the alternative the BLM predicts would best meet the purpose and need for the SEORMP amendment and best fulfill the BLM's statutory mission and responsibilities. The BLM will also consider economic, environmental, social, and other selection factors in determining which of the proposed alternatives will become its preferred alternative.

The SEORMP amendment/EIS will also describe the affected environment and both beneficial and adverse effects of the proposed alternatives in accordance with Council of Environmental Quality guidance for implementing NEPA.

The public will be provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft SEORMP amendment/EIS during the public comment period on that document. The BLM will respond to substantive comments it receives and, if necessary, will

- modify one or more of the alternatives;
- develop and evaluate suggested alternatives;
- supplement, improve, or modify the analysis;
- make factual corrections; or
- explain why comments do not warrant further agency response, citing cases, authorities, or reasons to support the BLM's position.

The BLM will then prepare a proposed SEORMP amendment/final EIS that incorporates the appropriate changes. The release of the final EIS will initiate a 30-day protest period.

After resolving all protests, the BLM will prepare and publish the approved SEORMP amendment-ROD, which will describe the agency's approved plan and rationale for making its decision. The management direction from the 2002 SEORMP-ROD that was not changed in the SEORMP amendment/EIS process will be carried forward into the amended SEORMP. A summary and timeline for completing the remaining steps in the planning process are included in Table 3.

Table 3. Estimated timeline for completing the remaining steps in the SEORMP amendment / EIS process

Remaining Planning Process	Approximate Completion
Complete the draft SEORMP amendment / EIS and publish for review	Fall 2014
End of 90-day review period	Winter 2014-2015
Analyze comments and publish proposed SEORMP amendment / final EIS	Spring 2015
End of 30-day protect period	Summer 2015
BLM director resolves protests	Summer 2015
State director approves SEORMP amendment and signs ROD	Fall 2015
Publish and mail the SEORMP amendment ROD	Fall 2015



Appendix A: Notice of Intent for SEORMP and Lakeview RMP Amendments

(E) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

Under section 4(b)(1) of the Act, we must base our assessment of these factors solely on the best scientific and commercial data available.

V. What Could Happen as a Result of This Review?

For each species under review, if we find new information that indicates a change in classification may be warranted, we may propose a new rule that could do one of the following:

- (A) Reclassify the species from threatened to endangered (uplist);
- (B) Reclassify the species from endangered to threatened (downlist); or
- (C) Remove the species from the List (delist).

If we determine that a change in classification is not warranted, then the species remains on the List under its current status.

VI. Request for New Information

To ensure that a 5-year review is complete and based on the best available scientific and commercial information, we request new information from all sources. See "What Information Do We Consider in Our Review?" for specific criteria. If you submit information, please support it with documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, methods used to gather and analyze the data, and/or copies of any pertinent publications, reports, or letters by knowledgeable sources.

If you wish to provide information for any species included in these 5-year reviews, please submit your comments and materials to the Field Supervisor of the appropriate Fish and Wildlife Office (see ADDRESSES section).

VII. Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the offices where the comments are submitted.

VIII. Completed and Active Reviews

A list of all completed and currently active 5-year reviews addressing species

for which the Pacific Region of the Service has lead responsibility is available at: <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/ecoservices/endangered/recovery/5year.html>.

IX. Authority

This document is published under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: March 15, 2010.

David J. Wesley,
Acting Regional Director, Region 1 Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 2010-7915 Filed 4-7-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLORV00000.16100000.DO0000
.LXSS072H0000 HAG10-0083]

Notice of Intent To Prepare Amendments to the Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan (RMP), Malheur County, OR, and the Lakeview RMP, Lake County, OR, and Associated Environmental Impact Statements.

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, (NEPA) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, (FLPMA) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Vale District (Jordan Resource Area and Malheur Resource Area) and Lakeview District (Lakeview Resource Area) in southeastern Oregon intend to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) to amend the Southeastern Oregon RMP (September 2002), Vale, Oregon, and the Lakeview RMP (January 2003), Lakeview, Oregon, and by this notice are announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the two RMP amendments with associated EISs. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until July 7, 2010. The date(s) and location(s) of any scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newspapers and the BLM Web sites at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/valermp.php> and <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview/plans/lakeviewrmp.php>. In order to be included in the Draft EISs, all comments

must be received prior to the close of the 90-day scoping period or within 30 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. We will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of both Draft EISs.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues related to the Southeastern Oregon RMP Amendment/EIS by any of the following methods:

- **Web site:** <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/plans/valermp.php>.
- **E-mail:** SEORMP@blm.gov.
- **Fax:** 541-473-3144.
- **Mail:** Bureau of Land Management, Vale District Office, 100 Oregon St., Vale, Oregon 97918.

You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria related to the Lakeview RMP Amendment/EIS by any of the following methods:

- **E-mail:** paul_whitman@blm.gov.
- **Fax:** 541-947-6399.
- **Mail:** Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District Office, 1301 South G Street, Lakeview, Oregon 97630.

Documents pertinent to these proposals may be examined at the Vale and Lakeview District Offices.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing lists, contact Jill Silvey, Southeastern Oregon and Lakeview RMP Project Manager, telephone (541) 473-3144; address 100 Oregon Street, Vale, Oregon 97918; e-mail SEORMP@blm.gov, or Paul Whitman, Lakeview District Planner, telephone (541) 947-6110; address, 1301 South G Street, Lakeview, Oregon 97630; e-mail paul_whitman@blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document provides notice that the BLM Vale and Lakeview District Offices intend to prepare RMP Amendments with associated EISs for the Southeastern Oregon and Lakeview planning areas. The two planning areas are located in Malheur, Lake, Harney, and Grant Counties in Oregon and encompass approximately 4.6 million acres of public land in the Southeastern Oregon planning area and approximately 3.2 million acres of public land in the Lakeview planning area. After the BLM completed the Southeastern Oregon RMP and the Lakeview RMP in 2002 and 2003, respectively, separate lawsuits were filed challenging each RMP. On July 14, 2008, the Ninth Circuit ruled on the Southeastern Oregon RMP in *Oregon Natural Desert Association v. Bureau of Land Management*, 531 F.3d 1114 (9th Cir. 2008). Soon thereafter, the BLM filed a petition for panel rehearing of the Court's remedy (vacatur of the Record of

Decision). The matter has been stayed during settlement negotiations. The Ninth Circuit stayed litigation regarding similar challenges to the Lakeview RMP in *Oregon Natural Desert Association v. Gammon*, No. 07–35728 (9th Cir.), pending resolution of the Southeastern Oregon RMP case, and to allow for settlement negotiations between the parties. The BLM is preparing RMP Amendments/EISs consistent with the 2008 holding of the Ninth Circuit.

The two RMP Amendments/EISs plan to address the following issues:

- Consideration of information from updates of resource information related to wilderness characteristics;
- Development of a range of allocation alternatives with respect to ORV use, travel, and transportation; and
- Development of grazing management alternative(s).

The purpose of the public scoping processes is to determine other relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analyses, including alternatives, and guide the planning processes.

The BLM has also identified some preliminary planning criteria to guide development of the RMP Amendments, to avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis, and to ensure the RMP Amendments are tailored to the issues. These criteria may be modified and/or other criteria may be identified during the public scoping process. Preliminary planning criteria include compliance with all legal mandates of the FLPMA, the NEPA, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Administrative Procedures Act, the BLM planning regulations in 43 CFR part 1600, and other relevant laws. The following planning criteria will also guide the planning processes:

- The principles of multiple-use and sustained yield will be observed;
- A systematic interdisciplinary approach to integrate, physical, biological, economic, and other sciences will be used;
- Priority will be given to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern;
- The best available data regarding natural resources will be used, to the extent possible;
- Present and potential uses of public lands will be considered;
- The relative scarcity of values and availability of alternative means and sites for recognizing those values will be considered;
- Long term benefits to the public against short term benefits will be weighed;
- Tribal, Federal, and state pollution laws, standards and implementation

plans will be complied with, to the extent possible; and

- Consistency and coordination with other programs, plans and policies will be sought.

You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria in writing to the BLM at any public scoping meeting, or you may submit them to the BLM using one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above. To be most helpful, you should submit comments either prior to the close of the 90-day scoping period or within 30 days after the last public meeting. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. The minutes and list of attendees for each scoping meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days after the meeting to any participant who wishes to clarify the views he or she expressed. The BLM will evaluate identified issues to be addressed in the RMP Amendments, and will place them into one of three categories:

1. Issues to be resolved in the plan amendment;
2. Issues to be resolved through policy or administrative action; or
3. Issues beyond the scope of the plan amendments.

The BLM will provide an explanation in the Draft RMP Amendments/EISs as to why an issue was placed in category two or three. The public is also encouraged to help identify any management questions and concerns that should be addressed in the RMP Amendments. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns.

The BLM will use an interdisciplinary approach to develop the RMP Amendments in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. At a minimum, specialists with expertise in the following disciplines will be involved in the planning processes: Rangeland management, wilderness, travel management, recreation, and wildlife.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7; 43 CFR 1610.2.

Larry Frazier,

Acting Vale District Manager.

Carol Benkosky,

Lakeview District Manager.

[FR Doc. 2010–7986 Filed 4–7–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–33–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLCAC09000 L16100000.DP0000]

Notice Re-opening the Comment Period for the Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Clear Creek Management Area, California

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces a re-opening of the comment period on the Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA). The original notice was published in the **Federal Register** on December 4, 2009 [74 FR 0232] and provided for a comment period to end on March 5, 2010. The BLM is re-opening the comment period to end April 19, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sky Murphy, BLM Hollister Field Office, 20 Hamilton Court, Hollister, California 95023, (831) 630–5039.

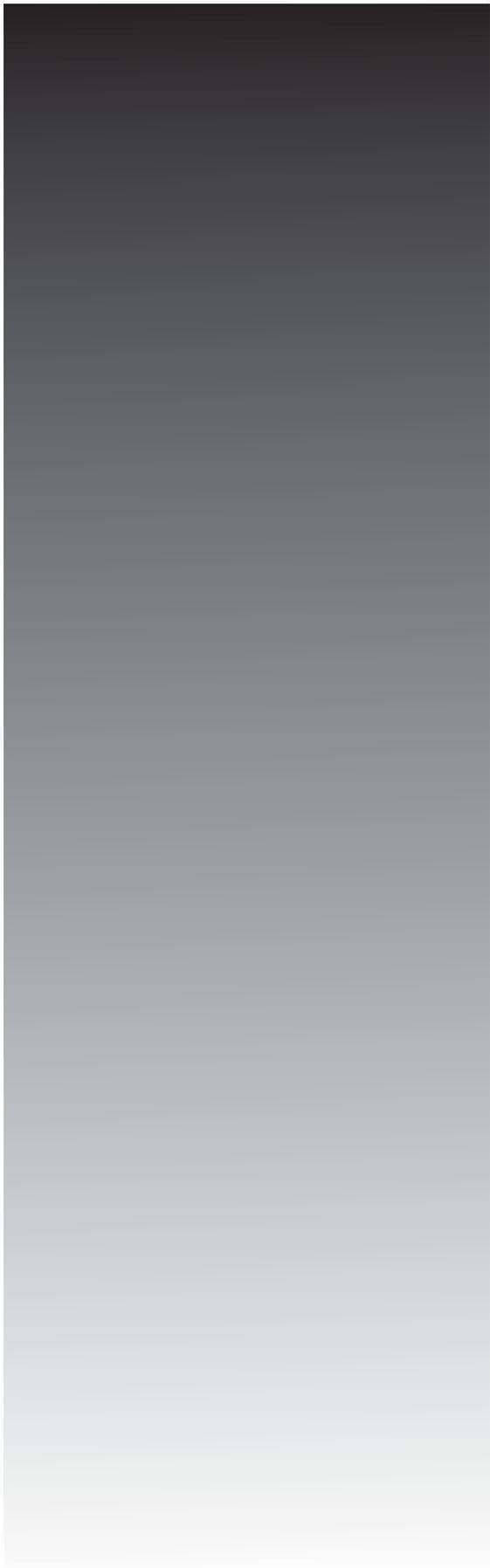
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The original Notice of Availability provided for comments on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS to be received through March 5, 2010. The BLM is re-opening the comment period in response to and in light of the land use restrictions considered in the plan. Comments on the Draft RMP and EIS will now be accepted through April 19, 2010.

Karen Montgomery,

Acting Deputy State Director for Natural Resources.

[FR Doc. 2010–7999 Filed 4–7–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–40–P



Appendix B: Notice of Intent

Oregon Sub-Regional Greater Sage-Grouse EIS

accessioned into the applicant's collection for scientific research. This notification covers activities to be conducted by the applicant over a 5-year period.

Applicant: Duke Lemur Center, Durham, NC; PRT-56737A

The applicant requests a permit to import biological specimens collected from silky sifakas (*Propithecus diadema candidus*) in the wild in Madagascar for the purpose of scientific research.

Multiple Applicants

The following applicants each request a permit to import the sport-hunted trophy of one male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*) culled from a captive herd maintained under the management program of the Republic of South Africa, for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

Applicant: Ronald Bain, New Haven, MO; PRT-59367A.

Applicant: James Moses, Houston, TX; PRT-59496A.

Applicant: Glen Hudson, Weston, FL; PRT-59085A.

Applicant: Paxton Motheral, Fort Worth, TX; PRT-58509A.

Applicant: Lloyd Douglas, Aledo, TX; PRT-59287A.

Applicant: Jill Holstead, Houston, TX; PRT-59495A.

Correction

On October 28, 2011, we published a **Federal Register** notice inviting the public to comment on several applications for permits to conduct certain activities with endangered species (76 FR 66954). We made an error by omitting one animal in Leonard Voyle's application (PRT-57362A), which starts in the first column on page 66955. The omission is for an additional male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*), for a total of two animals, not one. All the other information we printed was correct. With this notice, we correct that error and reopen the comment period for PRT-57362A. The corrected entry for this application is as follows:

Applicant: Leonard Voyles, Richmond, TX; PRT-57362A

The applicant requests a permit to import the sport-hunted trophy of two male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*), culled from a captive herd maintained under the management program of the Republic of South Africa,

for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

Brenda Tapia,

Program Analyst/Data Administrator, Branch of Permits, Division of Management Authority.

[FR Doc. 2011-31590 Filed 12-8-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLMT930000-12-L18200000-XX0000]

Notice of Administrative Boundary Change for Bureau of Land Management Offices in Montana To Eliminate the County Split of Lewis and Clark County

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The administrative boundaries between the Central Montana District Office, Lewistown Field Office, and the Western Montana District Office, Butte Field Office, are being changed. The administrative boundary change will realign Lewis and Clark County, currently a split county between the two offices, to the Western Montana District Office, Butte Field Office.

DATES: The boundary change is effective October 1, 2011.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary Benes by telephone at (406) 538-1945 or by email at gbenes@blm.gov; or Richard Hotaling by telephone at (406) 533-7629 or by email at rhotalin@blm.gov; or Scott Haight by telephone at (406) 533-7630 or by email at shaight@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-(800) 877-8339 to contact the above individuals during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individuals. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The primary purpose of the administrative boundary change is to improve service to the public and coordination efforts with local, Federal, State, and county agencies. The benefits of this change will result in the following improvements:

- Consolidation of resource receipts, workloads (*i.e.*, range, forestry, recreation) into one office location;

- Consolidation of law enforcement coordination between the county sheriff and one BLM office;
- Consolidation of fire response and coordination between the county interagency dispatch and one BLM office; and
- Improved coordination with local and county officials on a number of land resource issues such as lands and realty, rights-of-way, and land use planning.

The boundaries for the Butte Field Office are described as follows:

Butte Field Office

The Bureau of Land Management, Butte Field Office administrative boundary now encompasses all of Broadwater, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Park, Silver Bow and the northern portion of Beaverhead Counties, in the state of Montana.

Authority: BLM Manual 1203 Delegation of Authority Sec 1202 and Sec 1201 relates to functions of BLM. The delegation manual shows the various delegations of functions to BLM officials, *et al.*, which includes "Approve changes in District and Field Office boundaries." (See the table of delegations in the manual, specifically subject code 1202). This authority is retained by the Director, with concurrence by the "Office of the Assistant Secretary" (see footnote 3 in the 1203 Manual).

Jamie E. Connell,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 2011-31651 Filed 12-8-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLWO230.11100000.PH0000]

Notice of Intent To Prepare Environmental Impact Statements and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statements To Incorporate Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures Into Land Use Plans and Land Management Plans

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), and the Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended by the National Forest Management Act 1976 (NFMA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service (FS) intend to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)

and Supplemental EISs, and by this notice are announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues. The BLM is the lead agency on these EISs and Supplemental EISs and the FS is participating as a cooperating agency.

These EISs/Supplemental EISs will be coordinated under two regions: An Eastern Region and a Western Region. The Eastern Region includes BLM land use plans in the States of Colorado, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and portions of Utah and Montana. The Western Region includes BLM land use plans in California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and portions of Utah and Montana. For each of these regions, the FS will include those areas that were identified by the FWS as high priority areas for greater sage-grouse within the NFS units listed below.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the EISs/Supplemental EISs. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until February 7, 2012. The date(s) and location(s) of all scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newspapers and the BLM Web site for the Eastern Region at <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/eastern.html>, and for the Western Region at <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/western.html>. In order to be included in the Draft EISs/Supplemental EISs, all scoping comments must be received prior to the close of the scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. Comments that are specific to a particular area or land use plan should be identified as such. We will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft EISs/Supplemental EISs.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments related to the greater sage-grouse planning effort by any of the following methods:

- Eastern Region
 - Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/eastern.html>
 - Email: sageeast@blm.gov
 - Fax: (307) 775-6042
 - Mail: Eastern Region Project Manager, BLM Wyoming State Office, 5353 Yellowstone, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009
- Western Region
 - Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/sagegrouse/western.html>
 - Email: sagewest@blm.gov
 - Fax: (775) 861-6747

- Mail: Western Region Project Manager, BLM Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Blvd., Reno, Nevada 89502

Documents pertinent to the Eastern Region will be coordinated through the BLM Wyoming State Office. Documents pertinent to the Western Region will be coordinated through the BLM Nevada State Office.

Though BLM and NFS lands in Utah are distributed between the Western and Eastern Regions, all such lands will be addressed in one EIS, or through ongoing plan revision processes. All comments applicable to the Utah EIS should be sent to the Western Region.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Chuck Otto, Eastern Region Project Manager, telephone (307) 775-6062; address 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009; email cotto@blm.gov, or: Brian Amme, Western Region Project Manager, telephone (775) 861-6645; address 1340 Financial Boulevard, Reno, Nevada 89520; email bamme@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-(800) 877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In April 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published its listing decision for the greater sage-grouse indicating that listing was “Warranted but Precluded” due to higher listing priorities under the Endangered Species Act. The inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms to conserve the greater sage-grouse and its habitat was identified as a significant threat in the FWS finding on the petition to list the greater sage-grouse as a threatened or endangered species. The FWS has identified conservation measures to be included in the respective agencies’ land use plans as the principal regulatory mechanisms to assure adequate conservation of the greater sage-grouse and its habitat on public lands. For the BLM, these land use plans are Resource Management Plans (RMP). For the FS, these are Land and Resource Management Plans (LMP). In view of the identified threats to the greater sage-grouse, and the FWS timeline for making a listing decision on this species, the BLM and FS propose to incorporate consistent objectives and conservation measures for the

protection of greater sage-grouse and its habitat into relevant RMPs and LMPs by September 2014 in order to avoid a potential listing under the Endangered Species Act. These conservation measures would be incorporated into RMPs and LMPs through the plan amendment and revision processes of the respective agencies. The BLM and FS expect to prepare EISs to analyze proposed amendments to some land use plans that are not currently undergoing amendment or revision. For plans already undergoing amendment or revision, the BLM and FS will consider incorporating conservation measures either through the ongoing amendment or revision processes, or through supplemental environmental analyses as appropriate.

The BLM and FS intend to evaluate the adequacy of sage-grouse conservation measures in RMPs and selected LMPs, and consider conservation measures, as appropriate, in proposed RMP and selected LMP amendments and/or revisions throughout the range of the greater sage-grouse (with the exception of the bi-state population in California and Nevada and the Washington State distinct population segment, which will be addressed through other planning efforts).

The BLM currently expects to evaluate sage-grouse conservation measures in 68 planning areas, and the FS expects to evaluate sage-grouse conservation measures in 9 LMPs. The plans applicable to these planning areas are listed below.

BLM Wyoming has already begun undertaking a programmatic EIS specific to the greater sage-grouse. This programmatic EIS will analyze amendments to all of the State’s RMPs not currently being amended or revised to address needed changes to the management and conservation of greater sage-grouse habitats. The ongoing RMP revisions in Wyoming will evaluate conservation measures through existing planning processes.

Below is a list of RMPs and LMPs that the BLM and FS intend to evaluate. Some RMPs/LMPs are already undergoing either revision or amendment. In cases in which an ongoing plan revision or amendment may not be completed by September 2014, the underlying completed RMP is also listed, as it may be amended. FS LMPs are denoted below in parentheses.

Within the Eastern Region, the potentially affected BLM RMPs and FS LMPs include:

- Colorado
 - Colorado River Valley RMP

- revision
- Grand Junction RMP revision (and existing 1987 Grand Junction RMP)
 - Kremmling RMP revision
 - Little Snake RMP (2011)
 - White River RMP Oil and Gas amendment
 - Montana/Dakotas
 - Billings RMP revision (and existing 1984 Billings RMP)
 - Headwaters RMP (1984)
 - HiLine RMP revision (and existing 1988 West HiLine RMP)
 - Judith, Valley, and Phillips RMP (1992)
 - Miles City RMP revision (and existing 1985 Powder River and 1995 Big Dry RMPs)
 - North Dakota RMP (1988)
 - South Dakota RMP revision (and existing 1986 South Dakota RMP)
 - Upper Missouri River Breaks NM RMP (2008)
 - Utah
 - Park City Management Framework Plan (MFP) (1975)
 - Price RMP (2008)
 - Randolph MFP (1980)
 - Salt Lake District Isolated Tracts Planning Analysis (1985)
 - Vernal RMP (2008)
 - Uinta National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003) (FS)
 - Wyoming (please note that BLM Wyoming has already issued a Notice of Intent to begin an EIS that will amend all completed plans to address needed changes in the management and conservation of greater sage-grouse habitat)
 - Bighorn Basin RMP revision
 - Buffalo RMP revision (and existing 1985 Buffalo RMP)
 - Casper RMP (2007)
 - Kemmerer RMP (2010)
 - Lander RMP revision
 - Newcastle RMP (2000)
 - Pinedale RMP (2008)
 - Rawlins RMP (2008)
 - Rock Springs RMP revision (and existing 1997 Green River RMP)
 - Thunder Basin National Grassland LMP (not included in BLM Wyoming Notice of Intent above) (FS)

Within the Western Region, the potentially affected RMPs and LMPs include:

 - California
 - Alturas RMP (2008)
 - Eagle Lake RMP (2008)
 - Surprise RMP (2008)
 - Idaho
 - Birds of Prey NCA RMP (2008)
 - Bruneau RMP revision (and existing 1983 Bruneau RMP)
 - Challis RMP (1999)
 - Craters of the Moon NM RMP (2006)
 - Four Rivers RMP revision (and existing 1988 Cascade and 1983 Kuna RMPs)
 - Jarbidge RMP revision
 - Lemhi RMP (1987)
 - Owyhee RMP (1999)
 - Pocatello RMP revision
 - Shoshone-Burley RMP revision (and existing 1980 Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills, 1985 Cassia, 1975 Magic, 1985 Monument, 1981 Sun Valley, and 1982 Twin Falls MFPs/RMPs)
 - Upper Snake RMP revision (and existing 1983 Big Lost, 1985 Medicine Lodge, 1981 Big Desert, and 1981 Little Lost-Birch Creek MFPs/RMPs)
 - Curlew National Grassland Management Plan (2002) (FS)
 - Caribou National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003) (FS)
 - Sawtooth National Forest Revised Forest Plan (2003) (FS)
 - Montana
 - Butte RMP (2009)
 - Dillon RMP (2006)
 - Nevada
 - Battle Mountain RMP revision (and existing 1997 Tonopah and 1986 Shoshone-Eureka RMPs)
 - Black Rock Desert NCA RMP (2004)
 - Carson City RMP revision (and existing 2001 Carson City RMP)
 - Elko RMP (1987)
 - Ely RMP (2008)
 - Wells RMP (1985)
 - Winnemucca RMP revision
 - Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) (FS)
 - Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) (FS)
 - Oregon
 - Andrews RMP (2005)
 - Baker RMP revision (and existing 1989 Baker RMP)
 - Brothers-Lapine RMP (1989)
 - John Day RMP revision
 - Lakeview RMP amendment (and existing 2003 Lakeview RMP)
 - Southeastern Oregon RMP amendment (and existing 2003 Southeastern Oregon RMP)
 - Steens RMP (2005)
 - Three Rivers RMP (1992)
 - Two Rivers RMP (1989)
 - Upper Deschutes RMP (2005)
 - Utah
 - Box Elder RMP (1986)
 - Cedar City RMP revision (and existing 1983 Pinyon and 1986 Cedar-Beaver-Garfield-Antimony RMPs)
 - Grand Staircase-Escalante NM RMP (1999)
 - House Range RMP (1987)
 - Kanab RMP (2008)
 - Pony Express RMP (1990)
 - Richfield RMP (2008)
 - Warm Springs RMP (1986)
 - Dixie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) (FS)
 - Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) (FS)

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues relating to the conservation of the greater sage-grouse and its habitat that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the process for developing the EISs/Supplemental EISs.

At present, the BLM has identified the following preliminary issues:

 - Greater Sage-grouse Habitat Management
 - Fluid Minerals
 - Coal Mining
 - Hard Rock Mining
 - Mineral Materials
 - Rights-of-Way (including transmission)
 - Renewable Energy Development
 - Fire
 - Invasive Species
 - Grazing
 - Off Highway Vehicle Management and Recreation

Preliminary planning criteria include:

 - The BLM and FS will utilize the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) *Conservation Assessment of Greater Sage-grouse and Sagebrush Habitats* (Connelly, *et al.* 2004), and any other appropriate resources, to identify greater sage-grouse habitat requirements and best management practices.
 - The approved RMP amendments/revisions will be consistent with the BLM's National Sage-grouse Conservation Strategy.
 - The approved RMP amendments/revisions will comply with FLPMA, NEPA, and Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508 and Department of the Interior regulations at 43 CFR part 46 and 43 CFR part 1600; the BLM *H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook*, “Appendix C: Program-Specific and Resource-Specific Decision Guidance Requirements” for affected resource programs; the 2008 BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1), and all other applicable BLM policies and guidance.
 - The approved LMP amendments/revisions will comply with NFMA, NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, Regulations of the Secretary

of Agriculture at 36 CFR part 219 and FSM 1920 and FSH 1909.12.

- The RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will be limited to making land use planning decisions specific to the conservation of greater sage-grouse habitats.

- The BLM and FS will consider allocative and/or prescriptive standards to conserve greater sage-grouse habitat, as well as objectives and management actions to restore, enhance, and improve greater sage-grouse habitat.

- The RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will recognize valid existing rights.

- Lands addressed in the RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will be public lands (including surface-estate split estate lands) managed by the BLM, and National Forest System lands, respectively, in greater sage-grouse habitats. Any decisions in the RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will apply only to Federal lands administered by either the BLM or the FS.

- The BLM and FS will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where appropriate, to determine the desired future condition of public lands and National Forest System lands for the conservation of greater sage-grouse and their habitats.

- As described by law and policy, the BLM and FS will strive to ensure that conservation measures are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions within the planning area boundaries.

- The BLM and FS will consider a range of reasonable alternatives, including appropriate management prescriptions that focus on the relative values of resources while contributing to the conservation of the greater sage-grouse and sage-grouse habitat.

- The BLM and FS will address socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives. Socio-economic analysis will use an accepted input-output quantitative model such as IMPLAN or RIMSII, and/or JEDI for renewable energy analysis.

- The BLM and FS will endeavor to use current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore greater sage-grouse habitats.

- Management of greater sage-grouse habitat that intersects with Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) on Public lands administered by the BLM will be guided by the *Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP)*. Land use allocations made for WSAs must be consistent with the IMP and

with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management.

- For BLM-administered lands, all activities and uses within greater sage-grouse habitats will follow existing land health standards. Standards and guidelines (S&G) for livestock grazing and other programs that have developed S&Gs will be applicable to all alternatives for BLM lands.

- The BLM and FS will consult with Indian tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage within greater sage-grouse habitats.

- The BLM and FS will coordinate and communicate with State, local, and tribal governments to ensure that the BLM and FS consider provisions of pertinent plans, seek to resolve inconsistencies between State, local, and tribal plans, and provide ample opportunities for state, local, and tribal governments to comment on the development of amendments or revisions.

- The BLM and FS will develop vegetation management objectives, including objectives for managing noxious weeds and invasive species (including identification of desired future condition for specific areas), within greater sage-grouse habitat.

- The RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will be based on the principles of Adaptive Management.

- Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenarios and planning for Fluid Minerals will follow the BLM Handbook H-1624-1 and current fluid mineral (oil and gas, coal-bed methane, oil shale) and geothermal resources. For NFS lands, the FS will use applicable and relevant policy and procedures.

- The RMP and LMP amendments/revisions will be developed using an interdisciplinary approach to prepare reasonable foreseeable development scenarios, identify alternatives, and analyze resource impacts, including cumulative impacts to natural and cultural resources and the social and economic environment.

- The most current approved BLM and FS corporate spatial data will be supported by current metadata and will be used to ascertain greater sage-grouse habitat extent and quality. Data will be consistent with the principles of the Information Quality Act of 2000.

- State Game and Fish agencies' greater sage-grouse data and expertise will be utilized to the fullest extent practicable in making management determinations on Federal lands.

The BLM and FS will utilize and coordinate the NEPA commenting process to help fulfill the public

involvement process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), if applicable, as provided for in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3).

Native American tribal consultations will be conducted in accordance with policy, and tribal concerns will be given due consideration, including impacts on Indian trust assets. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with other stakeholders that may be interested or affected by the BLM's or FS's decision on this proposal are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate as a cooperating agency. The public is also invited to nominate or recommend areas on public lands for greater sage-grouse and their habitat to be considered as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern as a part of this planning process (BLM Manual 1613.3.31). Parties interested in leasing and development of Federal coal in the planning area should provide coal resource data for their area(s) of interest. Specifically, information is requested on the location, quality, and quantity of Federal coal with development potential, and on surface resource values related to the 20 coal unsuitability criteria described in 43 CFR part 3461. This information will be used for any necessary updating of coal screening determinations (43 CFR 3420.1-4) in the Decision Area and in the environmental analysis.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7, 43 CFR 1610.2.

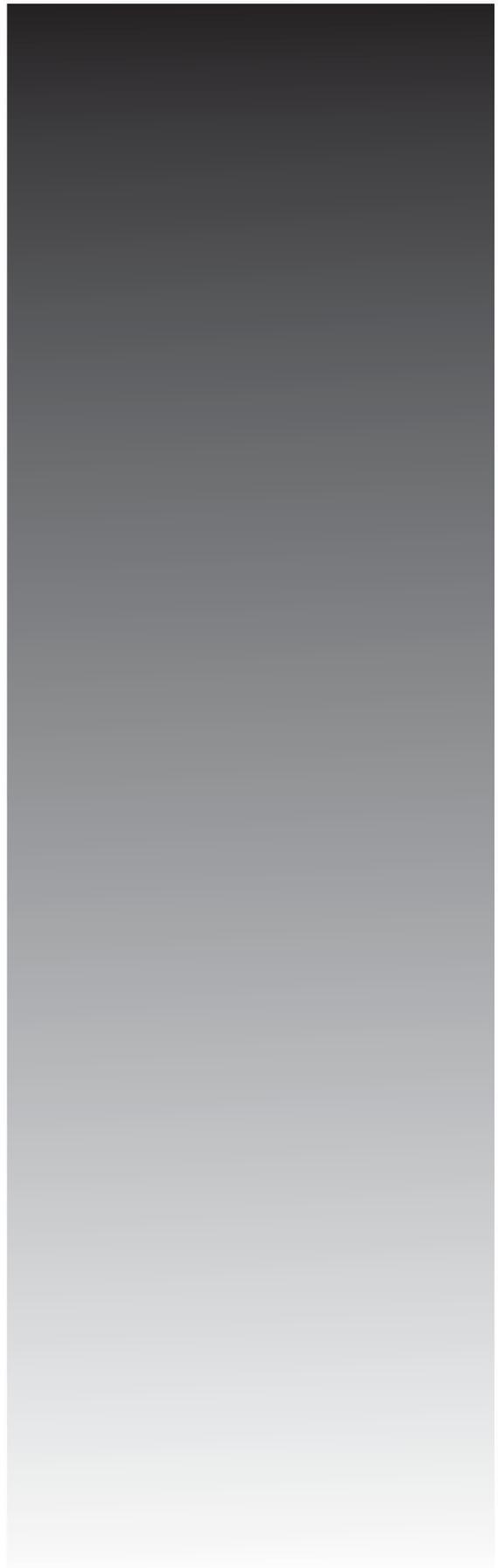
Edwin Roberson,

Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning.

[FR Doc. 2011-31652 Filed 12-8-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-84-P





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