John Day Basin Plan Revision and Consolidation

Background

What is the BLM proposing to do?

The Central Oregon Resource Area of the Prineville District of the Bureau of Land Management is proposing to review, modify as needed, and consolidate the existing John Day (1985), the Two Rivers (1986), and the Baker (1989) Resource Management Plans.

Background:

The planning area includes portions of the Central Oregon Resource Area of the Prineville District within the counties of Sherman, Wasco, Jefferson, Wheeler and Grant counties; and small portions of the Baker Resource Area of the Vale District located in the extreme southern portions of Morrow and Umatilla counties.

The John Day Basin is a sparsely populated but diverse landscape ranging from the peaks of the Blue Mountains to the confluence with the Columbia River and contains rugged mountains, spectacular canyons, rolling prairies, dryland wheat fields, limited areas of irrigated farmland, and small communities inhabited by proudly independent people.

The John Day Basin contains about 456,000 acres of BLM administered lands, including about 44,000 acres of lands acquired as part of the Oregon Land Exchange Act of 2000. Management of these newly acquired lands will be determined in this John Day Basin RMP. The acquisition of these lands has resulted in a nearly contiguous block of public land along the North Fork of the John Day River between Monument and Dale, Oregon.

Why is the BLM requesting public input?

Public lands managed by the BLM in the John Day Basin provide important wildlife habitat, timber, extensive grassland, and free flowing rivers. These lands provide a means for direct or indirect sources of income, they also provide a backdrop for living or vacationing and are important to many people for outdoor recreation. It is important to the BLM to learn:

- How people use public lands?
- What values do people associate with public lands?
- What vision of the future do people hold for public lands?
- What suggestions do people have for managing public lands?

Please submit your comments no later than March 31, 2006 to Brent Ralston, Project Manager, Prineville BLM, 3050 NE Third Street, Prineville OR 97754 or via e-mail to: John_Day_Basin_RMP@blm.gov.

Why is the BLM considering revising and consolidating these plans?

These plans are from 16 to 20 years old. Condition of the land, use patterns, and the amount of use on these lands may have markedly changed during that interval.

Land ownership status has changed as a result of Oregon Land Exchange Act of 2000 (114 STAT. 650 PUBLIC LAW 106–257—AUG. 8, 2000)—through this law Congress provided interim management guidance:

> (2) Lands acquired by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to section 4 which are within the North Fork of the John Day Public subwatershed shall be administered in accordance with section 205(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1715(c)), but shall be managed primarily for the protection of native fish and wildlife habitat, and for public recreation. The Secretary may permit other authorized uses within the subwatershed if the Secretary determines, through the appropriate land use planning process, that such uses are consistent with, and do not diminish these management purposes.

What Land is affected?

BLM managed lands (public lands) mostly located within the John Day River Basin.

What exceptions are there to the above description?

There is a small amount of public land in the John Day Basin in Umatilla County that is not within the planning area. There are parcels of public land located outside of the basin that are included within the planning area because they are within the Central Oregon Resource area which is charged with their management.

Why are lands within the Baker Resource Area included within the Planning Area?

Most of these lands were acquired through the Oregon Land Exchange Act of 2000 or are contiguous with or near these newly acquired lands. Including these lands within the planning area will simplify planning and ensure consistent management. Baker Resource Area Staff will be consulted and included in the planning process as needed.

Public Meetings

In March the BLM will host a series of meetings in an open house format in larger communities. These meetings will include most of the BLM staff involved in this plan. They will be stationed around a large room and be available for one on one conversation or to interact with a small group of individuals. The schedule for these meetings is included in this packet of information. Additional meetings may be scheduled to serve the needs of smaller, more isolated communities.