

# **SOUTHEAST OREGON RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

**APRIL 4 – 5, 2016**

**Clarion Inn, Ontario Oregon**

**11:59 – The Southeast Oregon RAC Meeting is called to order.**

- Agenda Review, Introductions, Rules of Order are discussed.

## **Greater Sage-grouse Habitat in Oregon**

- Lakeview has very productive, healthy grouse leks and habitat.
- The biggest concern is fire.
- Conversations on fire and documentation related to fire as well as the GIS overlays for the affected areas are in place.
- Vale District We procured a new bulldozer, in order to help us maintain grouse habitat.
- We've acquired funding for Single Engine Air Tankers as well.
- Habitat improvement has been made on the 2015 fires including the Bendire Complex, Jaca Reservoir. Saddle Draw is still being worked on as well as seedling planting at Longdraw and Holloway fire areas.
- We're removing Juniper at Mormon Basin
- Population drops have tripped "hard triggers" within the Sage-grouse plan and causal analyses are being conducted.
- Areas with hard triggers re at Bully Creek and Cow Lake areas where loss of habitat has taken place.
- Restoration activities have included sage and bitter brush planting as well as others.
- State-wide initiatives on the Sage-grouse have similar objectives to BLM. These objectives put a 3% cap on human development within Sage-grouse habitat, excluding farm and ranch development such as hay barns corrals.
- Counties have options for permitting development in sage grouse habitat using an avoidance and mitigation test. (ex: mines that can't be moved elsewhere).
- Sage-grouse 2.0 is kicking off
- Sage-grouse 1.0 was focused on Juniper. Feedback now has triggered a more focused effort on annual invasives.
- Land withdraw associated with Sage-grouse is going into an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Plan is being developed by a contractor looking at mineral withdraw options in Sage-grouse focal areas.
- Final EIS is expected in September 2017.
- Draft is expected to be released on January 2017.
- Currently, there's a two-year sequestration, meaning that no new mining claims in grouse focal areas can be made.
- Focus area accounts for about 10% of core habitat.
- Existing mineral claims are unaffected.

## **Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Update:**

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- A national review of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWCs) took place comparing the Vale and Lakeview Districts.
- Lakeview is re-examining prior LWC reviews.
- More areas with LWC status will likely emerge as a result.
- Vale also examined LWCs, including 72 units.
- These units were analyzed. As of right now the result is not anticipated as new guidelines applying.
- The Supplemental Resource Management Plan (RMP) will be affected.
- Currently, Vale is awaiting the Final Sage-grouse Plan in order to save time and resources.
- Contractors have been hired to compare the Lakeview and Vale analysis results.
- The last handbook came from the Washington Office two years ago.
- Latest definitions address “naturalness,” roads and solitude.
- Maps are available online.
- Forecast on when this review of LWCs will be complete is sometime in 2017.
- The same areas that were reviewed for LWC status before are being re-analyzed.
- Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are different from LWCs in terms of management.
- SEORAC wrote a letter to the Oregon/Washington State BLM Director on providing input to the BLM on LWCs.
- The Vale District can provide data on the LWC inventory to the RAC LWC subcommittee for review and comment.

Volunteers for LWC subcommittee:

- Mia Sheppard
  - Dan Morse
  - Philip Milburn
  - Don Hodge
  - Jim Bishop
- 
- Can a BLM LWC expert speak to the subcommittee on LWC historic functions?

### **Wild Horse Report:**

Dr. Julie Weikel:

- Only 6 HMAs are still below AML in Oregon.
- In Lakeview, Beaty Butte gather went well, it was very well managed.
- 170 horses were removed
- 100 will return to the HMA.
- 240 Foals were gathered which amounts to a 55% reproduction rate.
- The gathered horses were thin, but they look better now after some time in holding.
- Most of them went to Palomino valley due to lack of space in Burns.

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Dr. Weikel references a BLM Wild Horse & Burro Graphic at:

[http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wo/Planning\\_and\\_Renewable\\_Resources/wild\\_horses\\_and\\_burros/national\\_page/whb\\_infographic\\_fact.Par.76316.File.dat/WHB\\_FactSheet\\_final%2012\\_4\\_15.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wo/Planning_and_Renewable_Resources/wild_horses_and_burros/national_page/whb_infographic_fact.Par.76316.File.dat/WHB_FactSheet_final%2012_4_15.pdf)

- The HMAs are far over AML.
- Adoptions have dropped dramatically.
- Unadopted animals come with a high cost.
- The horses in indefinite holding individually cost \$46,000 in their lifetime.
- Each year BLM only removes as many as can be adopted.

Priority Gathers:

- Sage-grouse focal areas.
- Court ordered gathers.
- Humane gathers.

Recommendation made it to Washington D.C. which asked the BLM to return gathered horses to the range with permanent sterilization.

- This proposal can't move ahead.
- There are 7 research proposals moving forward, along with ongoing trials.
- BLM is committed to a non-intrusive solution, but limited to a certain number of horses per year.
- 3 proposals regard permanent sterilization
- 2 are taking place at the Burns Wild Horse Corrals and
- 1 is taking place in the Eastern U.S.
- There is a misinterpretation that sterilization or PZP are the only options. This is untrue.
- Efforts into longer lasting PZP are ongoing
- BLM administered 5,000 doses of PZP and thus far haven't been very effective.
- Accessing horses in such vast country is problematic.

### **Impromptu Public Comment Period approved by SEORAC Chair Philip Milburn:**

Brian Wolfe, Malheur County Sheriff:

- Wild Horses are running cattle off the range
- Do not reduce grazing in order to accommodate wild horses.
- If we must litigate, we will.
- We are opposed to the Owyhee Monument due to its effect on economics and limits on access.

Joe McKay, Rancher:

- Made aware of letter criticizing him as attempting to make Wild Horses and burros extinct.
- Concerned over not being able to re-graze the Cold Springs area.

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- Expressed concerns over wild horses damaging the range.
- Says BLM helped the situation until numbers got too high.

Carla Bowers, Wild Horse Activist:

- Expressed concerns over low populations in HMAs and associated issues with inbreeding and genetic diversity.
- Believes that Wild Horses and Burros are not allotted enough land for adequate forage and that wild horses have lost a great deal of forage land.

### **Tri-State Subcommittee Notes:**

- Need to renew Tri-State Fuel Break Project subcommittee members.
- New subcommittee members proposed are:
  - Philip Milburn
  - Sean Cunningham
  - Brent Beverly
  - Richard Watts
- Philip Milburn makes motion to accept proposed subcommittee members. Motion carries—vote is unanimous.

### **Public Input Discussion**

- BLM has attempted to communicate land use planning and has been ignored.
- Publicity involving land use planning needs to be more tailored for the average reader/viewer.
- Planning 2.0, which the BLM has rolled out is intended to create more involvement and transparency in regards to land planning.
- Eplanning is also attempting to streamline comment gathering in NEPA planning as well as the sorting process.
- Timing of planning document release is a concern.
- Citizens are concerned, though only when it affects them, generally.
- The federal officials have their “hands tied” in terms of abiding by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs).
- Learning curves in understanding land use planning are large.

**Meeting Adjourns**

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APRIL 5

8:01 – Meeting Called to Order

**Review and Approve Notes from Previous RACs:**

July 2015 SEORAC Minutes:

- Page 4 referring to the “genetics act” is an error. No such act exists. Only the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971 covers Wild Horses and Burros.
- 1.9 million acres of Sage-grouse habitat is referred to as 3% of Oregon. This number is incorrect.
- Wild Horse cost listed as \$46,000 is for the lifetime of the horse in holding. This should be corrected.
- Attendance for the second day of the meeting is the only one shown.

**Philip Milburn motions to approve the minutes as amended. The motion carries and is unanimous.**

**Designated Federal Officials Briefings**

**Vale:**

- Following the Soda Fire, Idaho has proposed grazing be postponed until October or later.
- Grazing removal is generally two years, but range and botany staff have the final word based on range conditions.
- Bio assessments are being performed in Oregon Canyon and Trout Creek.
- State has restocked in areas; BLM has done grazing modifications as per agreements. These assessments have been performed so grazing can resume with the most current info.
- McDermitt Creek is closed due to illegal introduction of fish.
- Telephone fiber optic will go through on existing rights of way. Evaluation pertaining to Sage-grouse will be performed in order to determine disturbance.

**Lakeview:**

- Candidate Conservation Agreements allow permittees to voluntarily support Sage-grouse through certain actions.
- In regards to wild horses, a very closely watched pilot project is up for bid. The idea being that locals will provide maintenance for HMAs, in some kind of revenue generating process. It may become a national model. BLM can't keep gathering horses. This idea is being nurtured very carefully. Media coverage on this project has been garnered. Local organizations are stepping in and seeing what they can do in a more humane and long-term solution. They are also adapted for local conditions. If these processes grow nation-wide, they won't look the same elsewhere.
- We're trying to get away from helicopter gathers as part of the driver for this process. It's expensive.

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- Military jet biofuel project is underway in Lakeview with Juniper as the primary resource. This is done in conjunction with thinning projects.
- SEORAC would like to review this project in June 2016 when they meet in Lakeview.

### Burns:

- Imazipic treatments on burned areas of the district have been successful so far.
- Annual grasses being treated shouldn't create additional erosion risk.

### Public Comment Period:

#### **Mona Drake:**

SEORAC website needs updated.

I have a lot of friends and 100% care about public lands. They don't know what to do/how to get involved. They're looking at how to respond and how to work with the RAC to do so. They're looking to the RAC for leadership. We're seeing what our ancestors did to build Oregon being torn down.

I spoke to the Lakeview District about a BLM site to get comments in one area—Eplanning looks that might meet that need.

Burns District should talk about a public info committee. Would that be able to be put on a website? I grew up in Harney County and I know Wild Horses are not native, and the program takes a lot of acreage and you can't keep putting horses on it.

I wish people can see Mare dying drops her foal and they both sit there and die. I wish the BLM could produce those films to educate advocates that want to keep horses perpetually going. All that money could be used better elsewhere.

#### **Deniz Bolbol, Wild Horse Preservation Campaign**

The SEORAC has previously supported and approved the BLM spay proposal. This is not in line with National Academy of Science. The vet surgeons association advises against the kind of spaying the BLM engages in. This is an archaic and substandard practice on domestic horses—it is so substandard. Wild/domestic horses are same. There is no genetic difference, only behavior.

Look at science, journals; overwhelmingly spaying takes place to alter natural behavior—generally for performance horses. You will not have wild horses on public land, you will have livestock.

Preserve the wild horses, the only thing that makes them a wild horse is behavior. Spaying is out of line with science. This is a very dangerous procedure, with a high chance of aborting fetuses.

#### **Bonnie Kohlreiter**

You have 18 HMAs and an additional herd of Burros. A BLM geneticist has spoken of an n factor where you need a minimum of 150-200 horses in order to achieve genetic diversity. You only have 3 HMAs out

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of 18 that have low AML of 150 horses. In terms of numbers, you are at risk to keep these horses healthy on healthy rangelands. Follow Sheldon horses for last 6 years before they were kicked out of the refuge, I made a FOIA request as I watched what was happening. They put the horses back on the range after experiments with gelding, etc. They saw lots of fighting after they were reintroduced. I commented on horrible shape the horses were in— ears missing, eyes bulging, hurt legs due to fighting caused by spaying and vasectomy.

Horses are different from pets and livestock. I recommend you have people come in that understand social structure of wild horses come on the RAC.

### **Craig C. Downer – Wildlife ecologist**

I am interested in Wild Horses. I wrote a book, the Wild Horse Conspiracy. I detest the spaying, and think the PZP is wrong. I advocate a better approach. It needs more work, but would be more adherent to the act. I propose to design a reserve to value WHB population, and incorporate a variety of techniques to contain the herd through natural barriers and buffer zones, and positive reinforcements to stay in an area. I also propose adverse conditioning to discourage them from going out of the area. I want to go on record that I abhor the cavalier treatment of the horses. I did a tour and saw painted ones on southern end. I think it's deplorable about low AML, and largely catering to wild horse enemies. You are supposed to represent the people of America.

### **Marybeth Devlin**

I have doubts about validity and integrity of data BLM the posts. The Beaty Butte, 55% reproduction rate is untrue. I estimate with 1,255 horses and 240 foals there is a 19% birth rate. Historical numbers during the last roundup, the estimated population of Beaty Butte was 117. A population of 416 was posted the following year. This would account for a 266% increase—this is biologically impossible. Successive years compound numbers. Independent studies looking at HMAs support a growth rate of 20%. These studies found a 50% foal mortality rate and an adult mortality of 5%, possibly higher. Oregon has a problem in this regard. BLM numbers showed 212% and 643% growth in various herds. BLM is looked to for valid info. What's provided is fraudulent. Encourage BLM to be honest, post scientifically valid data. Stop trying to fool the public.

### **Carla Bowers**

There are 3-5 million livestock, millions of deer, hundreds of thousands of big horn sheep. 81% polled that they don't trust the government to do what's right. Why is RAC willing to accept low AML? These numbers are not based on equine/horse science. This is the result of influence by "big money" interest. Horses deserve better. Instead of pushing sterilization, I propose to recommend BLM raising AML below 150, and recommend BLM manage horses in family bands. Reproduction on range 10 to 15% is normal. This will help address shortfall that livestock program places on the taxpayer. Permittees are not paying their way. Secretary may have relocated wild horses and burros to areas where they did not exist in 1971. Livestock grazing should give way to more areas for wild horses and burros at the DOI secretary's discretion. Recommend BLM add condition that permittees share water with wild horses and burros or

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permits not be renewed. Return wild horses to HMAs once the area is recovered. The BLM should not use fire as an excuse to “zero-out” horse herds.

### **Burns-Paiute Report:**

- Staff are currently trapping grouse and performing a study with the Fish and Wildlife Service on burned areas in order to get a pre-burn analysis before fire season.
- In May-August the tribe will be stocking areas with fish. They will be using fish that won't reproduce and attempting to get all males. The goal to get the tribe out for historic practices.

### **Oregon State Report:**

- Leslie Gulch Bighorn Sheep population was at 350 and is now down to 100. Analysis shows the cause is respiratory disease. Big horn hunting season for 2016 is closed with 2017 also likely.
- BLM Owyhee Field Office permit renewals showed potential interaction between domestic and big horn in this area.
- BLM has been a partner in recent years in grouse lek counts. Goal is to count 50% or more of leks. Last year counts were at 60%.

### **Permitting: Rights and Responsibilities:**

- Grazing is not recognized as a right. BLM allow transfer of permits to other entities. But it is a contract. There is talk of expanding to 15 years from 10 year increments.
- The role of BLM range management specialists is to ensure ranchers are in compliance.
- We have more than 400 permits and range staff numbering 12. This is a large workload.
- There have been complaints that range management specialists are not seen all year. If you don't see them, it generally means that there isn't a problem.
- Vale BLM is looking at a redistribution of range workload. We don't want several staff talking to one rancher. We also eliminated a field office in order to cut confusion. We hired a supervisory range spec to ensure consistency. We want a two-way process—communication, collaboration, etc.
- Much of this is addressed in the CFR. There are standards the BLM has to follow. Repeated violation—that's the trigger. Some acts are so heinous immediate action is warranted.
- It is a bureaucratic process, but it is a lawful process. BLM tries to solve things at the lowest level, as we lose control and latitude if it escalates to justice system organization.
- Enforcement depends on the issue. If there is an issue threatening life, immediate action can be taken—BLM has enforcement personnel. If BLM can be flexible, we should—but there's a limit.

### **Attendance Policy:**

- Bylaws should stipulate members missing two meetings would speak with the Designated Federal Officer about a path forward.

### **Wrap-up, discussions for next meeting:**



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- Suggest bylaws allow approval/editing of minutes by email.
- Give the chair the ability to appoint membership to subcommittees and public comments at the chair's discretion.
- Existing materials summarizing Code of Federal Regulations pertaining to RACs should be researched and submitted to a SEORAC Bylaws Subcommittee.
- Why can't local federal officials select and vet potential RAC members.
- One reason it goes to Washington is to perform background check, etc.
- The CFR says that BLM District Managers within RAC areas of responsibility will bring projects to the RAC for work/review; in the beginning of each year that the RAC will receive at least 3 tangible projects for meaningful action.
- Suggest a tour of LWCs in Lakeview District for June 2016 SEORAC Meeting.

### **Proposed Agenda Items for June 2016 SEORAC Meeting:**

- CFR LIST
- INTRO SESSION FOR NEW MEMBERS
- WSA BACKGROUND, LENGTH – Peter Runnels
- LWC FIELD TRIP – Mia Sheppard/Elynn Burkett
- ROADS EXPLANATION – Mia Sheppard/Elynn Burkett
- JUNIPER PROJECT FIELD TRIP – Elynn Burkett
- SECTION 106 PRESENTATION
- TARGETED GRAZING – Jeff Rose/Sean Cunningham
- BYLAWS/CHARTER – Philip Milburn
- LWC PRESENTATION – Brent Grasty
- WILD HORSE BURRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT – Dr. Julie Weikel
- SEARCH FOR EXISTING LITERATURE OUTLINING RAC BYLAWS, REGULATIONS – Larry Moore
- SAGE GROUSE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION – District Managers
- BRING PROJECTS FROM DISTRICTS – District Managers
- NATIONAL RECREATION STRATEGY – Elynn Burkett

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**SOUTHEAST OREGON RAC SIGN-IN**  
**APRIL 5, 2016**  
**ONTARIO, OREGON**

| NAME                                | INTEREST                           | SIGNATURE                                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Group 1 – Commodity</b>          |                                    |  |
| Brent Beverly                       | Commercial Recreation              |  |
| Sean Cunningham                     | Grazing Permit Holder              | <del>Sean Cunningham</del> Sean Cunningham |
| Don Hodge                           | Transportation/Right-of-Way        | DWH  |
| Ralph Stout                         | Commercial Timber                  | Ralph Stout                                |
| Robert Hogan                        | Energy/Minerals                    |  |
| <b>Group 2 – Conservation</b>       |                                    |  |
| Anne Hiller-Clark                   | Archaeological/Historical          | Anne Hiller-Clark                          |
| Richard Watts                       | Dispersed Recreation               | Richard Watts                              |
| Mia Sheppard                        | Environmental Organizations        | Mia Sheppard                               |
| Dan Morse                           | Environmental                      | Dan Morse                                  |
| Dr. Julie Weikel                    | Wild Horse and Burro               | Dr. Julie Weikel                           |
| <b>Group 3 – Community Interest</b> |                                    |  |
| Jim Bishop                          | Public-at-Large                    | Jim Bishop                                 |
| Gary Johnson                        | Public-at-Large                    | Gary L. Johnson                            |
| Phil Milburn                        | State Employee                     | Phil Milburn                               |
| Peter Runnels                       | Elected Official                   | Peter Runnels                              |
| Jason Kesling                       | Public-at-Large/Burns Paiute Tribe | Jason Kesling                              |

KEN DAVIS GUEST

Ken Davis

**SOUTHEAST OREGON RAC SIGN-IN  
APRIL 4, 2016  
ONTARIO, OREGON**

*Greg Shick  
BLM Office of Communications*

*Brian Waffle  
Michael Sheriffe*

*Observer  
Argus  
Larroykleyer  
Public  
Steve Christensen*

| NAME                                | INTEREST                           | SIGNATURE                |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Group 1 – Commodity</b>          |                                    |                          |
| Brent Beverly                       | Commercial Recreation              | <i>Brent Beverly</i>     |
| Sean Cunningham                     | Grazing Permit Holder              | <i>Sean Cunningham</i>   |
| Don Hodge                           | Transportation/Right-of-Way        | <i>Don Hodge</i>         |
| Ralph Stout                         | Commercial Timber                  | <i>Ralph Stout</i>       |
| Robert Hogan                        | Energy/Minerals                    |                          |
| <b>Group 2 – Conservation</b>       |                                    |                          |
| Anne Hiller-Clark                   | Archaeological/Historical          | <i>Anne Hiller-Clark</i> |
| Richard Watts                       | Dispersed Recreation               | <i>Richard Watts</i>     |
| Mia Sheppard                        | Environmental Organizations        | <i>Mia Sheppard</i>      |
| Dan Morse                           | Environmental                      | <i>Dan Morse</i>         |
| Dr. Julie Weikel                    | Wild Horse and Burro               | <i>Dr. Julie Weikel</i>  |
| <b>Group 3 – Community Interest</b> |                                    |                          |
| Jim Bishop                          | Public-at-Large                    | <i>Jim Bishop</i>        |
| Gary Johnson                        | Public-at-Large                    |                          |
| Phil Milburn                        | State Employee                     | <i>Phil Milburn</i>      |
| Peter Runnels                       | Elected Official                   | <i>Peter Runnels</i>     |
| Jason Kesling                       | Public-at-Large/Burns Paiute Tribe | <i>Jason Kesling</i>     |

*Monica Drake  
Aunt*

*David Stiefritz Guest  
Ken Davis Guest  
Bob ALWARD PUBLIC  
Walt Van Dike Public*

*David Stiefritz  
Ken Davis  
Bob Alward  
Walt Van Dike*

## Fact Sheet: BLM's Proposed Planning Rule

### Overview

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a proposed rule to improve the resource management planning process. The proposed rule would revise existing regulations which describe how the BLM conducts its planning activity. The proposed regulations are part of the BLM's ongoing Planning 2.0 initiative, an effort that strives to rethink the resource management plans that provide the framework for the management of public lands. The proposal will make changes to regulations that are guided by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. The original regulations were first completed in 1979 and later revised in 1983 and 2005.

The primary goals of the proposed planning rule are to improve the bureau's ability to respond to environmental, economic and social changes in a timely manner; to strengthen opportunities for other Federal agencies, State and local governments, Indian Tribes, and the public to be involved in the initial decisions leading to the development of BLM land use plans; and to improve the BLM's ability to address landscape-scale resource issues and use landscape-level management approaches to more efficiently and effectively manage the public lands.

### Highlights of the Proposed Rule

**Early Public Involvement.** The proposed rule would establish several new opportunities for early public involvement during the planning process. The public would be provided opportunities to submit data and information and to review preliminary versions of key planning documents including a preliminary statement of purpose and need, preliminary alternatives and their rationale, and preliminary procedures, assumptions, and indicators to be used in the effects analysis.

**Planning Assessment.** The proposed rule would require the development of an upfront planning assessment prior to developing a land use plan. The planning assessment would provide a description of baseline resource environmental, ecological, social, and economic conditions in the planning area. This step would provide for additional public involvement, including an opportunity to submit data and information.

**High Quality Information and Best Available Science.** The proposed rule would improve the BLM's ability to utilize the high quality information, including the best available science and geo-spatial data, when it develops plans and implements future actions. The proposed changes affirm the importance of using high quality data as a foundation for BLM planning and management.

**Landscape-Level Planning.** The proposed rule would provide the agency flexibility to plan across traditional administrative boundaries. The BLM Director would also be provided discretion to determine future RMP boundaries.

**Planning Framework.** The proposed rule would distinguish between the plan components that are mandatory elements of a plan and with which all future decisions must be consistent, and

optional implementation strategies that are not components of the plan but may help guide plan implementation.

**Protest.** The proposed rule would revise the protest procedures to provide more detailed information on what constitutes a valid protest issue and for consistency with new terminology. The proposed rule would also provide electronic methods for protest submission.

**Reaffirmation of FLPMA Policy.** The proposed rule would reaffirm the policy guidance in FLPMA requiring management of the public lands for multiple use and sustained yield and includes a definition of the concept of sustained yield emphasizing this tenant of public land management.

### Outreach and Public Comment

The proposed rule is open for public comment for 60 days after its publication in the *Federal Register*.

You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- **Mail:** Director (630), Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., Room 2134LM, Washington, DC 20240, Attention: 1004-AE39.
- **Personal or messenger delivery:** U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 20 M Street, S.E., Room 2134LM, Attention: Regulatory Affairs, Washington, DC 20003.
- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions at this Web site.

The BLM has scheduled an informational webinar and a public meeting to provide the public with opportunities to learn more about the proposed rule before the close of the comment period. The webinar is scheduled for March 21, 2016 at 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. PDT; the public meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. PDT. More information on “Planning 2.0” can be found at: [www.blm.gov/plan2](http://www.blm.gov/plan2). The BLM will accept comments on the proposed regulatory changes through April 25, 2016. We will also be conducting tribal consultation on this issue.



## INFORMATION UPDATE

New Information Only

NEPA for stream crossing repair work for the Little Whitehorse Creek on the north side of the Oregon Canyon Mountains was finalized last year. Repair work is scheduled to begin in October, pending on discussions with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Annual sage-grouse lek surveys are progressing with BLM, ODFW, and personnel from ODFW's Adopt-A-Lek Program.

Plans and budget are finalized for efforts to restore sage-grouse and big game habitat lost on the Saddle Draw, Bedire, and Jaca fires. Additional areas will be evaluated for sagebrush and bitterbrush seedling plantings for the Soda fire.

### **Soil/Water/Air Program**

Riparian data has been entered and summarized in preparation for end of year reports to USFWS on 4 biological opinions: N Fork Malheur, Whitehorse, 15-Mile, Zimmerman, and McCormick.

Staff has summarized 15 years of riparian monitoring for Bully Creek geographic management area (GMA).

### **Botany Program**

Vale District continues to partner with Institute for Applied Ecology and Snake River Correctional Institution to grow sagebrush for restoration. The District is developing a sagebrush seed orchard on private land near Willow Creek that will provide a reliable source of genetically appropriate Wyoming sagebrush seed for restoration activities.

This summer we will continue collecting forb seed that will be used for sage-grouse habitat restoration.

MFO is collecting seed from BLM sensitive plants to be stored in the Rae Selling Berry Botanical Garden Conservation Seed Bank.

### **Weeds Program**

Imazapic treatments are planned for the Bendire and Soda fires. Evaluations of the 2015 imazapic treatments will be completed this spring and summer.

### **Wild Horse Program**

An EA is out for public comment for the Cold Springs Herd Management Area (HMA) Population Management Plan. This EA analyzes a ten year period to potentially gather horses from the HMA. Vale has requested to gather from the Cold Springs and Three Fingers HMAs for sage-grouse habitat protection but has not received approval.

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City will host on June 15 a Wild Horse and Burro Day as part of the "Celebrate America's Mustang" program and will include wild horses, a gentling demonstration, and viewing of the "Unbranded" documentary.





**INFORMATION UPDATE**  
New Information Only

Vale District Office

BLM

**Update of Topics**

(Please Note: Updated information reflects changes from last briefing)

**Malheur Field Office (MFO)**

**Pat Ryan, Field Manager: 541-473-6277**

**Range Program**

The Malheur range program has assisted in completing several Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) plans, specifically for the Soda, Leslie Gulch, Bendire and Jaca fires. Temporary closures with AUM reductions and objectives for reintroduction of livestock are being discussed with permittees. We will coordinate and communicate with permittees prior to implementation of any temporary closures. Temporary closures will be for a minimum of two growing seasons and is consistent with the 2002 Southeastern Oregon RMP and 2015 Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (ARMPA).

Permit renewals for the Louse Canyon Community, Star Valley Community, Anderson, and Campbell Allotments will begin with monitoring starting in late spring 2016. Interdisciplinary teams will complete upland monitoring through the Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) strategy and Indicators for Rangeland Health protocols in addition to Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) for riparian areas. Monitoring for the permit renewal is expected to be completed by winter 2016.

**Recreation**

River season has begun. The water flows are good on the Owyhee. Mean flows have been in the 2,000 cubic feet per second (CFS) range compared to 250 CFS at this time last year.

**Geology**

Grassy Mountain gold mine is still a priority for the district. MFO is working with Calico and the BLM solicitors to develop a memorandum of understanding and begin reviewing baseline data for completion of an EIS.

**Lands/Realty**

The MFO completed necessary state historical preservation office (SHPO) consultation for installation of a fiber optic line (Oregon Telephone); however the proposed location is within a Priority Area of Conservation that has hit a trigger for sage-grouse. Biologist and Realty Specialist are working with the Oregon State Office to determine what this means to the project since it will be wholly within an existing right-of-way (ROW).

**Wildlife Program**

The MRA has prepared 4 biological assessments (BA) for the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The BAs assess the effects of livestock grazing in several allotments in the Oregon Canyon and Trout Creek Mountains of southeastern Oregon. BLM has received final USFWS biological opinions (BO) for all of the BAs. Grazing management reports for each BO will be sent to USFWS.

April 2016





## Prioritizing Management for Areas with Wilderness Characteristics

**Goal Statement:** Promote ecosystem integrity and wilderness values in a manner that maintains management options for current and future generations.

### Objectives:

- 1) Maintain ecological integrity of largely intact ecosystems by maintaining the natural character and preventing expansion of existing problems.
- 2) Take action to repair ecosystem processes in moderately disrupted ecosystems.
- 3) Restore severely disrupted ecosystems.

Assign category ratings (and associated management direction) to wilderness characteristics units as follows:

**Category I:** Largely intact (prevention/monitoring, spot treatments)

**Category II:** Moderately disrupted (prevention/monitoring, moderate scale restoration)

**Category III:** Severely disrupted (monitoring, large scale restoration)

Category designation does not necessarily imply relative value but instead serves as an index to ecological status and suggests the nature and degree of management inputs needed to change or maintain current conditions (i.e., other priorities not associated with these category ratings may affect management priority).

**1) Vegetation** - Each unit will be subdivided into mapped areas scoring 1, 2, or 3, as well as assigned a category designation<sup>1</sup> based on the following attributes:

I = Predominance of large perennial native bunchgrasses, low abundance of non-native annual grasses. An area treated by crested wheatgrass to prevent the expansion of invasives may be considered category 1 in the short-term. A WC unit will score a 1 if more than 66.6% of the acreage of that unit scores a 1.  
II = Large perennial bunchgrasses reduced in abundance and/or more spatially extensive patches of non-native annual grasses, and a sagebrush system that is

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<sup>1</sup> Note – Areas recently burned by fire will be rated based on potential for recovery, given the presence of non-native species in the area and the ecosystem's resistance to them.

unlikely to fully recover after disruption. A WC unit will score a 2 if the unit does not otherwise score a 1 or 3.

III = Predominance of non-native annual grasses or juniper. A WC unit will score a 3 if more than 66.6% of the acreage of that unit scores a 3.

**2) Hydrology** – For each unit, total miles of perennial and total miles of intermittent drainages will be displayed, along with the percentage of perennial plus intermittent miles each category represents. In units with sufficient Proper Functioning Condition data, those units will be scored a 1,2, or 3 based on the following criteria:

I = Predominance (over 66.6%) of the total miles of perennial and intermittent drainages in properly functional condition with upward or static trend.

II = Perennial and intermittent drainages largely functional but with downward trend.

III = Predominance (over 66.6%) of the total miles of perennial and intermittent drainages non-functional.

**3) Connectivity:** “Connectivity” refers to the spatial environment of a specific WC unit and rates that environment based on its proximity to other WC units. A high degree of connectivity (i.e., Category 1) indicates that a larger portion of the WC landscape may be positively impacted by management action relative to a lower scoring WC unit. Additionally, a high connectivity score suggests that a given unit could be important to increasing or maintaining wildlife travel between WC units. Special land use designations may be taken into account when determining connectivity because such designations can impact the degree of connectivity of a WC unit. However, this is not meant to imply that a WC unit will be subject to the same management guidance or policies as the adjoining special designation area.

I = Shares a border with 2 or more other WC units or if the unit is over 50,000 acres in size.

II = Shares a border with no more than 1 WC unit.

III= Does not border any other WC unit.

### ***Purpose/Role of Tri-State RAC Joint Subcommittee***

The Subcommittee will develop two recommendations to inform decisions made by the Boise and Vale Districts. First, the group will develop criteria for evaluating the ecological effects of potential fuel breaks, including the issue of sagebrush-steppe habitat fragmentation within the proposed project boundary. Second, the group will provide the Boise District and Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) with a recommendation on the location and extent of fuel breaks to be analyzed in the proposed Tri-State Fuel Break Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The subcommittee should utilize the most current data available (see below) when evaluating the location and extent of fuel breaks and the potential impacts to sagebrush-steppe habitat. The end product(s) will provide a basis for further analysis during development of the EIS by a separate interdisciplinary team.

### ***Data/Information for Criteria Development***

Below is a list of current and available data/information that will help provide a starting point in developing criteria for fuel break placement. Over the next 3-4 meetings, the subcommittee will be able to use this and other available data to make informed recommendations on the extent and location of fuel breaks within the proposed project boundary. Subcommittee members are encouraged to provide or recommend additional data/information during this process that can be used to make more informed recommendations.

- Idaho and Southwestern Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan, September 2015
- Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment, September 2015
- NLCD Shrub/Grass Data (USGS, BLM) – Most recent, comprehensive remote sensing-based quantification of western U.S. shrublands. Used to help quantify potential disturbance to sagebrush and/or shrub cover from fuel breaks
- Landscape Importance Model (BLM Idaho State Office) – used to help quantify the "best of the best" sage-grouse habitat. Model displays areas that represent the highest relative importance to sage-grouse using GRSG lek density and male attendance per the latest 2014 data and a GRSG "population persistence" model based on the extent of sagebrush on the landscape.
- Current lek Locations of Importance – used to help identify potential avoidance areas
- Resistance/Resilience Data (Chambers, 2014) - used to help identify areas that are susceptible to invasives post-fire
- Potential water sources fire suppression resources - may provide some value when locating fuel breaks



- Locations of established fuel breaks on Nevada side - used to ensure we have continuous fuel breaks across state lines
- Polygon size - may be used to help quantify the concentration of fuel breaks within a given area to address fragmentation
- Current transportation layer and BLM scouted routes
- TNC fuel break model - used to help validate areas we propose for fuel break placement and to identify "pinch points"
- Other Additional Data/Information Provided or Recommended by Joint RAC Subcommittee

***Meeting Schedule/Timeline***

| <b>Date</b>           | <b>Time (MDT)</b>     | <b>Location</b>   | <b>Outcome</b>  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| <b>April 20, 2016</b> | 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Vale District Office - 100 Oregon Street, Vale, OR 97918            | Criteria Development/data Analysis                            |
| <b>May 4, 2016</b>    | 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Boise District Office - 3948 S. Development Avenue, Boise, ID 83705 | Criteria Development/data Analysis/draft product development  |
| <b>May 18, 2016</b>   | 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Vale District Office - 100 Oregon Street, Vale, OR 97918            | Draft product development/data analysis as necessary          |
| <b>June 1, 2016</b>   | 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Boise District Office - 3948 S. Development Avenue, Boise, ID 83705 | Draft Product Review and Prep for Final Recommendation to RAC |

## Tri-state RAC Subcommittee Meeting Notes

1. Opening Comments: Gene Grey
2. BLM perspective, direction, and purpose of subcommittee: Lara Douglas Boise District Manager
3. Overview and Justification of Proposed Tri-state Fuel Breaks Project: Lance Okeson
  - a. Tri State area – contains significant Sage Grouse Habitat
    - i. Reviewed ignition causes (primarily lightning) over the tri-state area
      1. Resources are stretched thin during large lightning storms as all the districts within the Tri-State area generally experience the same storms
      2. 97% of fires are caught during Initial Attack, it's the 3% that go big
    - ii. Fuel Loading has increased and because of the heavy fuel loading areas we are seeing more frequent and larger fires
4. Fuel Breaks in the Tri-State Project:
  - a. Must be strategically located within the project area
  - b. Must be accessible to suppression crews
  - c. Fuel breaks must be economical and logistically feasible to maintain
  - d. Fuel breaks must provide a safe anchor point to fire crews to begin suppression
  - e. Fuel breaks need to be designed to catch the 3% of fires that suppression crews are not able to catch
  - f. Vegetative Fuel breaks will be analyzed starting at 200ft on both sides of the road, but may be designed around topography and modified as necessary
  - g. Fuel breaks change fire behavior by changing the fuel model
    - i. Fuel breaks and vegetation manipulation will occur along existing roads
5. Analysis / Criteria Development (Presentation by Bob Unnasch, TNC)
  - a. Utilize experience from suppression personnel to determine “what would work and what wouldn’t” on the landscape
  - b. Utilize experience and knowledge from committee members to examine the biological component of fuel break placement
  - c. Circuitscape Analysis
    - i. The analysis from this program can help identify areas for strategic placement of fuel breaks using resistance and vegetation inputs to model fire flow
      1. Program can identify “pinch points” in order to determine areas that would best be served with a fuel break
      2. The system may not always identify the best area but can provide good starting point
      3. IDL noted that we should incorporate model into the criteria development for extent and location of fuel breaks
  - d. Use existing data for analysis
    - i. Utilize existing habitat and vegetation data
      1. Current Sage-grouse Habitat Management Areas and Landscape Importance Model (LIM)
      2. Lightning Maps to pin point heavy lightning areas

- 3. Topographic maps to identify natural barriers
      - 4. Utilize existing road inventory and scouted routes by BLM fire staff
    - ii. Identify best routes for fire suppression resources to access fuel breaks
  - e. Collaborate with Nevada BLM on techniques and data they use for fuel break development
6. Public Comments
  - a. 45 Ranch Co-Owner – concerned about fragmentation of the landscape
    - i. Need to use scientific evidence/research
    - ii. Concerned about the spread of invasive species
    - iii. Concerned that increased access may also increase human fire ignitions
    - iv. Would like to know what the BLM’s budget is on the cost associated with fuel break implementation and maintenance
    - v. Would like to see program and plans for maintenance on these fuel breaks
    - vi. Requests that fires be put out quickly at a small size
    - vii. Utilize air resources for less invasive suppression and quick response
  - b. Jordan Valley RFPA
    - i. Requests to utilize more grazing
    - ii. Looking for strategic and assertive fuels reduction thinning programs
7. Questions / Suggestions from the committee
  - a. Invasive Species
    - i. How can we prevent invasive species from encroaching into these breaks
    - ii. Do we plant native species within these fuel breaks to prevent invasive species
  - b. Timelines from project
    - i. What is the timeline for this to be implemented?
    - ii. Gene Gray / Philip will acknowledge timelines
  - c. Suggest and identify suppression opportunities
    - i. Identify water sources
    - ii. Rehabilitate and improve existing water sources
    - iii. Identify location opportunities for fire crews to stage for incoming storms
  - d. What are the elements that define our success?
  - e. Committee / Biologists requested what elements they need to measure in order to provide the needed analysis.
  - f. When committee meets – send out data in advance so the data can be discussed and decided upon when the committee meets
  - g. Gene Gray and Philip Milburn will schedule next 3-4 meetings to be included in the next Federal Register Notice (FRN)
    - i. Next meeting will be at least 40 days out to meet FRN requirements

## Tri-State Fuel Break Project Issue Identification

1 – Identified by RAC Subcommittee

2 – Identified by working group November 2014

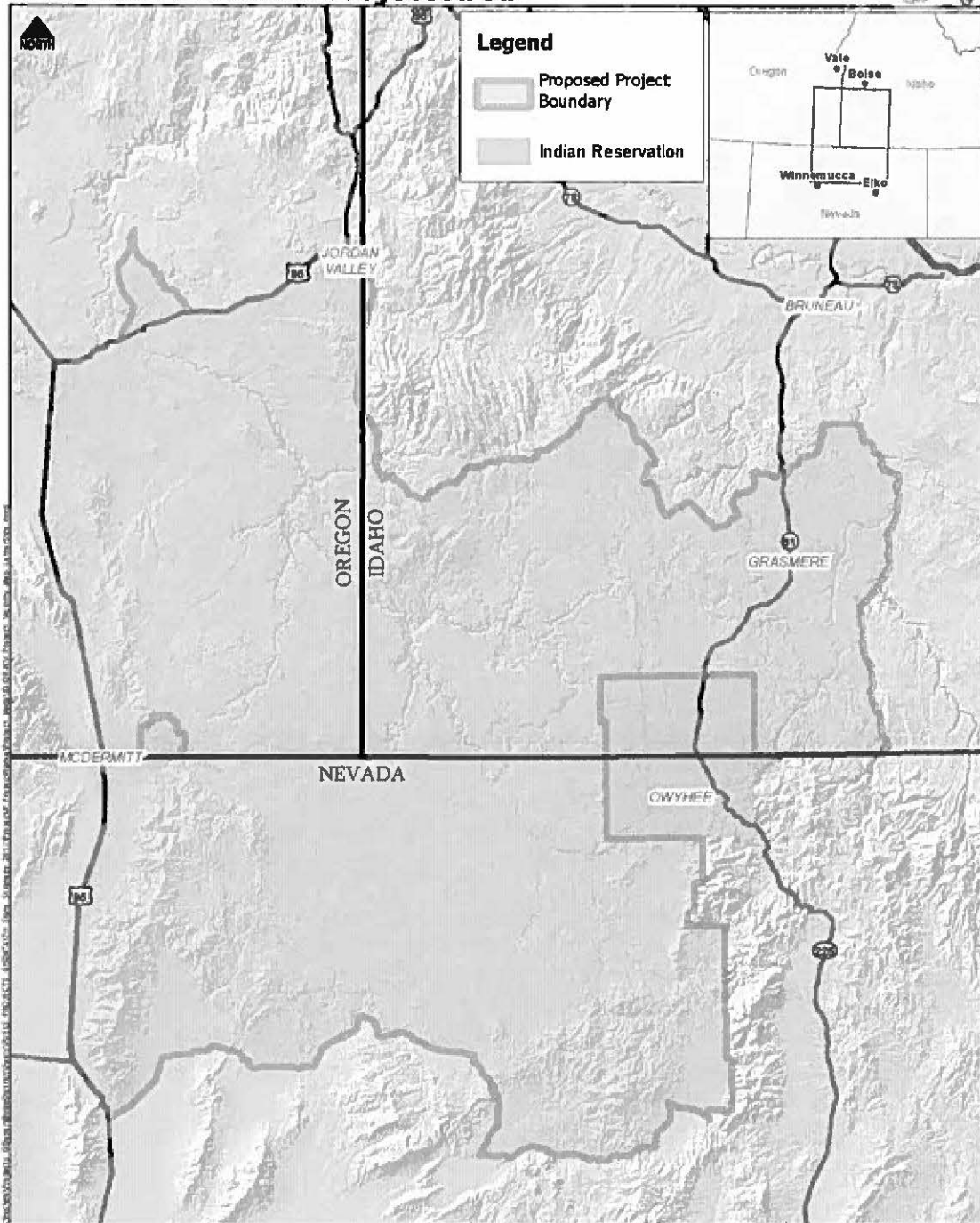
| Topic <sup>1,2</sup>                             | Issues/Comments/ Concerns <sup>1,2</sup>  | Potential Solutions <sup>1,2</sup>  |
|--|---|---|
| Invasive Species <sup>1,2</sup>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fuel breaks vs invasives<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Introduction<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>- Spread<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>- Annual grass Fires increase<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- Wild Horses<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Chemical Treatment</li> <li>✓ Seeding Treatment</li> <li>✓ Avoidance cooperative gathers</li> <li>✓ Plan treatments away from water sources livestock use</li> <li>✓ Ability to use natives and non-native plants in seedings</li> </ul> |
| Wildlife Continuity/ Connectivity <sup>1,2</sup> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would habitat loss from fuel breaks be mitigated? <sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Quantify fragmentation/ determine which fragmented segments get first response. <sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Polygons – identify polygons in fragmented areas/sizes of polygons in fragmented areas. <sup>1</sup></li> <li>- “Fragmentation” may be an issue<sup>1,2</sup></li> </ul>                                 |   |
| Increased Access <sup>1,2</sup>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unwanted access to private ground<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>- Increase fire roadside starts<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>- Good for fire resources<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- Pressure game / poaching<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- Bring in more weeds<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- Looting of arch/cultural sites<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- More road maintenance<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- More LEO<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Travel Management Planning (TMP)</li> <li>✓ More seasonal closures</li> <li>✓ LEO Patrols</li> </ul>   |
| Size of Mow Strip <sup>1,2</sup>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fuel breaks need to be adjusted to terrain and habitat type<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Too small then not effective<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>- Too big can bring in unnecessary problems<sup>1,2</sup></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Wide enough to slow a fire</li> </ul>  |
| Grazing <sup>1,2</sup>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use cattle for fuel load reduction<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Livestock “hit” mowed areas hard<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>- Trespass wild horses<sup>1,2</sup></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop a program in the appropriate places Rest</li> <li>✓ Accepted impact</li> <li>✓ Mitigate</li> </ul>   |
| Wildlife and Plant Issues <sup>1,2</sup>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What will be the degree of loss per mile? <sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Identify wildlife corridors<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Distance from Leks<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>- Disturbance during critical</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Survey for sensitive species</li> <li>✓ Limit disturbances in some habitats</li> <li>✓ Mow outside of nesting/active/flowering periods</li> <li>✓ Conduct rare plant surveys and</li> </ul>  |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <p>periods<sup>2</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Habitat removal<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- Effects on Sage Obligate species<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>   | <p>mitigate (through timing or avoidance) occurrence distribution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Evaluate fire behavior/effectiveness in low sage etc.</li> </ul>  |
| Limited Water <sup>1,2</sup>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Little water for suppression and road maintenance<sup>1,2</sup></li> <li>- Need to do clearances and NEPA for water development<sup>2</sup></li> <li>- Different state laws<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Well site on SW corner of Owyhee County</li> <li>✓ Drill additional wells specifically for fire or repair existing windmills etc</li> <li>✓ Cooperate with private landowners for water access</li> <li>✓ Look at piping water up from the river</li> </ul>  |
| Cooperators/Field Offices/ Other Govt entity <sup>1,2</sup> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How has Elko and Winnemucca Nevada BLM implemented fuel breaks? What are their costs? Miles of Fuel breaks? Methods used? The "whys" .....<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Good communications</li> <li>✓ Work and develop plan together</li> <li>✓ Utilize Universities – U of Idaho, Boise State, College of Idaho, Idaho State.</li> </ul>   |
| Other Ongoing Planning Efforts/Litigation <sup>1,2</sup>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Potential Conflicts<sup>1,2</sup></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordinate with TMP efforts from beginning.</li> <li>✓ Check progress with RMP's.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Topic<sup>1</sup></b>                                    | <b>Issues/Comments/ Concerns<sup>1</sup></b>   | <b>Potential Solutions<sup>1</sup></b>  |
| Suppression <sup>1</sup>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contain fires at small size<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Conflicts with suppression priorities and flow of attack - Life, property and resources<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- How are big events handled – evolve? Preplanning for the "big" one?<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Safety of fire suppression personnel<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Coordinate and utilize neighboring fire suppression entities and cooperators (federal, state, and local departments/RFPAs)</li> <li>✓ Utilize or develop water sources</li> <li>✓ Utilize early detection systems – use drones/other aircraft</li> <li>✓ Deploy resources quickly – use aerial resources and "special forces concept"</li> <li>✓ Locate fire support units in SW Idaho SE Oregon areas.</li> <li>✓ Safety Zones for firefighters - where and in what habitat types.</li> <li>✓ Initially identify roads of ingress and egress into known "hot" zones.</li> </ul> |
| Sustainability/Success <sup>1</sup>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economics of fire breaks (costs) – invasive control, cost per mile of road, etc.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- What is going to be done after fuel breaks area established (herbicides, invasives, maintenance, etc.)?<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- How will we measure success?<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Each altering action has an</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Research what is already known about fire breaks – uses, methods, implementation costs, etc.</li> <li>✓ Research known measures of success in other areas</li> </ul>   |



**Boundary of Tri-state Strategy Area:**

**Tri-State Fuel Break Project Area**



The sources of the data are from Idaho and Oregon BLM Corporate Data, and the USGS.

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed. The following map cannot be made Section 508 compliant. For help with its data or information, please contact the BLM Idaho State Office Webmaster at 208-373-4000

|   | ancillary impact <sup>1</sup>   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Topic <sup>2</sup>  | Issues/Comments/ Concerns <sup>2</sup>  | Potential Solutions <sup>2</sup>   |
| Continuous Fuel Breaks <sup>2</sup>                                     | - Must be strategic to work <sup>2</sup>  | ✓ Don't limit to Roads<br>✓ Tie into natural features other fuel breaks                                      |
| High Utilization (Wildlife/Grazing) <sup>2</sup>                        | - Impact Perennials <sup>2</sup><br>- Spread Annuals/weeds <sup>2</sup>   | ✓ Change Season of Use<br>✓ Use salt/water for livestock movement  |
| Visual Resource Management (VRM) <sup>2</sup>                           | - Doesn't look natural near wilderness etc. <sup>2</sup>  | ✓ Mosaic patterns<br>✓ Feather Edges   |
| Adaptive Management <sup>2</sup>  | - What steps are being taken and why <sup>2</sup><br>- scheduling and parameters <sup>2</sup><br>- long term monitoring <sup>2</sup>  | ✓ Trigger points<br>✓ Monitoring   |
| Is the Project Area Size appropriate? <sup>2</sup>                      | - Will we need to do extra work later or do it all now? <sup>2</sup><br>- new issues <sup>2</sup>   | ✓ Possibly Expand North into other SG areas<br>✓ Do an early assessment of a larger area                     |
| Don't limit to roads <sup>2</sup>                                       | - Some areas could slow a fire but no roads exist <sup>2</sup>  | ✓ Mow accessible areas with no roads but link into current fuel breaks                                       |
| Resource Restrictions <sup>2</sup>                                      |   | ✓ Timing<br>✓ Buffers  |
| Communication Plan for EIS <sup>2</sup>                                 |   | ✓ Stress that we are not doing this to enhance forage. Clearly identify what it is and is not.               |
| Wilderness / WSA / LWC <sup>2</sup>                                     | - effects to wilderness characteristics <sup>2</sup><br>- Limitations to mechanical tools and treatments <sup>2</sup><br>- Visual issues <sup>2</sup>   | ✓ Use flexibility written into legislative policies<br>✓ Treat within cherry stems or on non-wilderness edge |
| Cultural Resources <sup>2</sup>   | - Looting <sup>2</sup><br>- tribal concerns <sup>2</sup><br>- damage <sup>2</sup><br>- funding for surveys <sup>2</sup><br>- Paleo sites may be acted (roads, direct disturbance, chemicals) <sup>2</sup> | ✓ need programmatic agreements with SHPO<br>✓ modeling site probability                                      |
| Riparian/Aquatic <sup>2</sup>   |   | ✓ design water crossings   |
| Seedings <sup>2</sup>   | - good over a long time <sup>2</sup>  | ✓ natives and non natives  |
| Force Account / Operations/ Procurement <sup>2</sup>                    | - cooperation, availability <sup>2</sup><br>- work with CO on contracts <sup>2</sup><br>- enough CORs to do work? <sup>2</sup>  | ✓ bring them in early during the development stage<br>✓ coordinate availability                              |
| Use of disturbance corridors (fences/pipeline/ power, etc) <sup>2</sup> | - could be good to use <sup>2</sup><br>- could conflict with perching species <sup>2</sup>  |  |

**Bureau of Land Management  
Lakeview Resource Area  
Information for the Southeast Oregon RAC  
March 2016**

**Major Project Updates - (new information is in Blue text)**

- **Tucker Hill Perlite Mine Proposed Expansion:** The LRA received a proposal from Cornerstone Mining to expand its existing mine located at Tucker Hill. The Tucker Hill formation is located adjacent to the Chewuacan Marsh between Valley Falls and Paisley, Oregon. The mining company has retained the services of an archaeological consultant to conduct a new survey of the proposed mining area and to evaluate the significance of sites located within the area.

**3/2016:** The archaeological inventory and site testing is complete, however, mitigation has not been completed. Several new sites were located. The BLM is in process of determining if these sites are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. All of the tribes have been contacted regarding this project and the Burns Paiute and Klamath Tribes are actively engaged in project discussions.

The notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) was published in the Federal Register on January 26, 2016, which started a 30-day public comment period. The comment period has closed. Three comments letters were received. One was generally supportive of the proposal. The other two contained questions or concerns to be addressed in the analysis. Cornerstone has enlisted the services of an outside contractor to prepare the EIS. The Oregon State Division of Lands and Lake County Commissioners are cooperating agencies participating in the preparation of the EIS.

- **BLM Internal Review of Lands with Wilderness Character (LWC) Evaluations:** Oregon BLM has completed a consistency review of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Evaluations from both Vale and Lakeview BLM Districts.

Based on these findings of this review, the Lakeview Resource Area (LRA) is reviewing its completed LWC evaluations to determine which ones may have deficiencies and require a more extensive review. This process will likely take the remainder of the fiscal year. Once this review is complete the BLM plans on making its findings available to the public and the RAC, as well as, ask the RAC for advice on how to best manage these areas. Management of these areas will be guided by the direction contained in a future RMP amendment.

- **Lakeview Invasive Species Management EA:** the LRA completed a step-down invasive species management EA in July 2015. A Decision Record (DR) was issued on July 10, 2015, that covered treatments across the majority of the LRA (excluding the Warner Basin).

**3/16/2016 Update:** the USFWS issued its Biological Opinion for treatments in the Warner Basin on December 18, 2015. BLM then issued second DR covering treatments in the Warner Basin on January 13, 2016. No appeals were received on either decision; therefore implementation is on-going throughout the resource area. The 2016 annual treatment plan has been reviewed by staff and will be shared with the tribes.



- **Resilient Landscapes Project** – The Greater Sheldon Hart Mountain Resilient Landscapes Collaborative received approximately 4 million dollars in funding in May for 2015. This collaborative is a partnership between the USFWS, BLM, ODFW, Lake County SWCD, Local Watershed Councils and several private landowners. Funding was received by a variety of different projects including 1.6 million for the Warner Mountain Juniper removal project and 1.6 million for juniper management on Hart Mountain refuge.

**3/2016 Update:** The funds have been obligated. Sheldon-Hart projects have been initiated and work will progress as soon as weather and access allow. BLM is finalizing the South Warner portion and initiating planning in North Warner.

- **Lakeview Wilderness Character RMP Amendment** – Work on this RMP Amendment has resumed. This work has been limited to updating relevant datasets and completing the LWC review discussed above. A draft RMP Amendment is scheduled for completion/release sometime after these LWC reviews have been completed (estimated FY17).
- **Sage-grouse Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA)** - The LRA is currently working on three CCA's and will continue working on these and additional CCA's. Technically the sage-grouse is no longer a candidate species; however both the BLM and the USFWS see value in continuing to conserve this species by taking the proactive approach and entering into these agreements. The names of these agreements may change, but we plan to continue to work cooperatively toward conservation.
- **Beaty Butte Wild Horse Gather** –
- **3/2016 Update:** The LRA gathered 1,100 wild horses in the Beaty Butte Heard Management Area (HMA) beginning in November 2015. The Appropriate Management Level (AML) for this HMA is set at 100-250 horses. This gather was planned to maintain heard health and reduce resource damage. The helicopter gather is complete and ground trapping continues.
- **Extended Drought:** The heavy drought in 2015 led to greatly reduced authorized livestock numbers throughout much of the Resource Area.
- **3/2016 Update:** According to climate indicators, the drought will continue but conditions will improve. Livestock numbers in 2016 are close to normal.

## **Administrative Appeals/Litigation**

3/16/Update: no appeals or active litigation is on-going in the LRA at the present time.

**BYLAWS AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES  
COASTAL OREGON RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL  
COOS BAY DISTRICT AND COASTAL AREAS  
OF THE SALEM AND EUGENE DISTRICTS**

**Section I: Membership Selection and Appointment**

**A. General Requirements:** Northwest Oregon Resource Advisory Council (Council) members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary). To be eligible for appointment to the Council, a person must be qualified through education, training, knowledge, or experience to give informed and objective advice regarding an industry, discipline, or interest specified in the Council's charter; have demonstrated experience or knowledge of the geographical area under the purview of the advisory Council; have demonstrated a commitment to collaborate in seeking solutions to a wide spectrum of resource management issues; and have the ability to represent his/her designated constituency. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will consider nominations for Council membership from local government, organizations, and individuals. Council members must be residents of Oregon. Nominees must be supported by letters of recommendation from the groups or interests they intend to represent.

**B. Term Length:** Council members will be appointed to serve three-year terms, concurrent with the Council's charter.

**C. Termination of Service:** The Secretary or the Designated Federal Official (DFO) may, after written notice, terminate the service of a member if, in the judgment of the Secretary or DFO, removal is in the public interest. Members may also be terminated if they no longer meet the requirements under which they were appointed, fail to or are unable to participate regularly in Council work, or have violated Federal law or the regulations of the Secretary. When a member fails to regularly attend meetings, the DFO will inform the member, in writing, that his or her service on the Council could be terminated. When any member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without good cause, the DFO or his/her designee may deem that member's position on the Council to have been vacated. Upon such determination, the DFO will inform the member, in writing, that his or her service on the Council is terminated.

**D. Vacancies:** Any vacancy on the Council will be filled by the Secretary for the balance of the vacating Council member's term in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Such vacancies will be promptly reported to the DFO.

**Section II: Meeting Procedures**

**A. Open Meetings:** The Council will meet as required. Meetings will be called by the DFO in consultation with the Chairperson. Unless otherwise determined in advance, in accordance with the Government in the Sunshine Act of 1976, all meetings are open.

**B. Agenda:** The Council agendas must be formally approved in advance by the DFO or his or her designee. The agenda will be distributed to the Council prior to each meeting and will be published with the notice of the meeting in the *Federal Register*.

**C. Minutes and Records:** Detailed minutes of each Council meeting will be kept and will contain a record of the persons present; a complete and accurate description of matters discussed and conclusions reached; and copies of all documents received, issued, or approved by the Council. The accuracy of all minutes will be certified by the Council Chairperson. Copies of the minutes will be maintained in the office of the DFO and will be available for public inspection and copying during regular business hours. Minutes are available online at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/rac>.

**D. Meetings:** The DFO will attend all meetings of the Council. Any organization, association, or individual may file a statement with or appear before the Council regarding topics on the meeting agenda, except that the DFO may require that presentations be reduced to writing and copies be filed with the Council. Regular Council business activities will be conducted using standard rules of order.

A notice of each meeting of the Council will normally be published in the *Federal Register* and distributed to the news media serving the jurisdictional area of the Council 30 days in advance of such meeting. However, if urgent circumstances prevent a 30-day notice, not less than a 15-day notice will suffice. The notice sets forth the purpose, time, and place of the meeting. If it becomes necessary to postpone or cancel a meeting, a notice will be published in the *Federal Register* and distributed to the local news media serving the geographic area as early as possible.

### **Section III: Role of Council Officials**

**A. Chairperson:** The Council will elect its own officers from among its members annually, usually at the first meeting of each calendar year.

**B. Designated Federal Officer:** The DFO serves as the Government's agent for all matters related to the Council's activities. By law, the DFO must: (1) approve or call the meeting of the Council, (2) approve agendas, (3) attend all meetings, (4) adjourn the meetings when such adjournment is in the public interest, and (5) chair meetings of the Council when so directed by the Secretary or his or her designee.

In addition, the DFO is responsible for providing adequate staff support to the Council, including performance of the following functions: (1) notifying members of the time and place for each meeting; (2) maintaining a record of all meetings, including task group activities, as required by law; (3) maintaining the roll; (4) preparing the minutes of all meeting of the Council deliberations; (5) attending to official correspondence; (6) maintaining official Council records and filing all paper and submissions prepared for or by the Council; and (7) preparing and handling all reports, including the annual report as required by the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

## OREGON BLM WILD HORSE AND BURRO POPULATION DATA

Report Date: March 1, 2016 (2016 Adult Horse Estimate)

| Herd Management Area (HMA) Name  | HMA No. | BLM Acres in HMA | Last Gather Date | Last Census Date | Actual No. on Census | Est. Pop. Horses | Appropriate Management Level [Range] |              | Comments  |
|--|---------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
|  |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  | LOW                                  | HIGH         |           |
| <b>BURNS DISTRICT</b>  |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| 1. Warm Springs  | OR0007  | 474,501          | 11/2/10          | 9/8/14           | 253                  | 453              | 111                                  | 202          | 56 Burros |
| 2. Palomino Buttes   | OR0006  | 71,668           | 10/14/14         | 6/1/15           | 109                  | 131              | 32                                   | 64           |           |
| 3. Stinkingwater   | OR0008  | 78,305           | 8/18/10          | 9/9/14           | 124                  | 237              | 40                                   | 80           |           |
| 4. South Steens  | OR0003  | 126,720          | 11/13/09         | 6/1/15           | 527                  | 632              | 159                                  | 304          |           |
| 5. Riddle Mountain   | OR0009  | 28,346           | 7/10/11          | 5/6/14           | 56                   | 33               | 33                                   | 56           |           |
| 6. Kiger   | OR0010  | 26,874           | 7/7/11           | 5/6/14           | 108                  | 51               | 51                                   | 82           |           |
| <b>Subtotal</b>  |         | <b>806,414</b>   |                  |                  | <b>1,177</b>         | <b>1,537</b>     | <b>426</b>                           | <b>788</b>   |           |
| <b>PRINEVILLE DISTRICT</b>   |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| 1. Ligget Table  | OR0037  | 28,101           | 2/1/10           | 4/14/10          | 17                   | 42               | 10                                   | 25           |           |
| <b>Subtotal</b>  |         | <b>28,101</b>    |                  |                  | <b>17</b>            | <b>42</b>        | <b>10</b>                            | <b>25</b>    |           |
| <b>VALE DISTRICT</b>   |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| 1. Hog Creek   | OR0011  | 21,814           | 11/10/09         | 7/2/14           | 57                   | 74               | 30                                   | 50           |           |
| 2. Cold Springs  | OR0013  | 29,883           | 7/11/10          | 7/2/14           | 197                  | 236              | 75                                   | 150          |           |
| 3. Three Fingers   | OR0012  | 62,509           | 8/9/11           | 7/22/11          | 235                  | 156              | 75                                   | 150          |           |
| 4. Jackies Butte   | OR0015  | 65,211           | 8/1/12           | 6/25/15          | 75                   | 90               | 75                                   | 150          |           |
| 5. Sand Springs  | OR0017  | 192,524          | 9/15/11          | 6/24/15          | 153                  | 170              | 100                                  | 200          |           |
| 6. Coyote Lake/Alvord Tule   | OR0014  | 553,603          | 9/23/11          | 6/23/15          | 296                  | 330              | 198                                  | 390          |           |
| 7. Sheephead-Heath Creek   | OR0016  | 198,845          | 9/26/11          | 6/24/15          | 372                  | 402              | 161                                  | 302          |           |
| <b>Subtotal</b>  |         | <b>1,124,389</b> |                  |                  | <b>1,385</b>         | <b>1,458</b>     | <b>714</b>                           | <b>1,392</b> |           |
| <b>LAKEVIEW DISTRICT</b>   |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| 1. Paisley   | OR0001  | 297,802          | 8/29/12          | 8/1/15           | 358                  | 430              | 60                                   | 150          |           |
| 2. Beatys Butte  | OR0002  | 399,714          | 11/1/15          | 11/1/15          | 100                  | 100              | 100                                  | 250          |           |
| 3. Pokegama  | OR0018  | 16,894           | 1/1/04           | 8/1/15           | 71                   | 85               | 30                                   | 50           |           |
| <b>Subtotal</b>  |         | <b>714,410</b>   |                  |                  | <b>529</b>           | <b>615</b>       | <b>190</b>                           | <b>450</b>   |           |
| <b>BLM TOTALS</b>  |         | <b>2,673,314</b> |                  |                  | <b>3,108</b>         | <b>3,652</b>     | <b>1,340</b>                         | <b>2,655</b> |           |
| * 1. Murderer's Creek **   | OR0019  | 107,859          | 7/1/14           | 2/1/16           | 194                  | 276              | 50                                   | 140          |           |
| 2. Big Summit - USFS   | OR0020  | 26,096           | 8/15/09          | 6/1/05           | 152                  | 152              | 50                                   | 60           |           |
| <b>USFS TOTAL</b>  |         | <b>133,955</b>   |                  |                  | <b>346</b>           | <b>428</b>       | <b>100</b>                           | <b>200</b>   |           |
| * Murderer's Creek HMA - Blue Mountain Ranger District, USFS (68%), Prineville District BLM (32%) BLM estimate of total population @ 98      |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| ** AML and Acres listed are for both agencies lands.   |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| % HMA OR0016 and OR0004 were combined in the SEORMP, Sept. 2002. Total census count is listed under OR0016 managed by Vale District.         |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| % Paisley AML max level increased by Lakeview RMP/EIS, Nov. 2003.  |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| % HMA OR0014 and OR0005 were combined in the Andrews Management Unit RMP, August 2005. to be managed by Vale District as OR0014.             |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| % Combined census count for both HMAs  |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |
| Simultaneous Double-Count Survey Method Used. Statistically corrected estimates have not yet been calculated and are not shown in this data. |         |                  |                  |                  |                      |                  |                                      |              |           |

## Fire Prevention – Utilizing grazing to help reduce mega fires

By: Sean Cunningham

"Targeted grazing management by domestic livestock offers one of the best and most efficient tools for managing very large public landscapes, private lands and the habitat of sensitive species that traditionally have lived in these areas." –University Nevada Reno

### Goal:

- Reduce risk of large fires
  - protect sage grouse habitat
  - prevent spread of fire-tolerant invasive
  - assist fire fighters to put out fires

### Proposed Method:

- Allow Fire specialists, range cons and permittees to identify strategic area with heavy fine fuel overloads.
- Prioritize protection of Sage Grouse habitat and leks.
- Determine whether to address the fuel on a landscape scale or target strategic corridors for fuel breaks

### Landscape

- Whole pasture fuel load reduction
- Permittee would gladly pay for the grass
- Don't exceed 60% utilization
- Revenue positive option
- Fall and winter Grazing is an option

### Strategic Corridors

- Use herding or electric fence to make corridors which will be heavily grazed (60%-80% utilization) in an effort to break up the continuity of fuel.
- Flash grazing: Identify area -> bring in cattle for 3-7 days -> move to next area
- Areas need to be identified by June 1 and grazed by June 31.
- Considerable amount of work for permittee
- May need to haul water
- Build temporary fence (<10days)

### Benefits:

- Low cost – let the cows do the work
- Little or no visual impacts
- Only effective way to preserve sagebrush habitat on landscape scale

Grazing Science by UNR: <http://greatbasinenvironmentalprogram.org/about/documents/>



Fire numbers have been level for past 20 years, but total acres are going up

Long Draw fire July 2012. 2011 very wet. Rain stops in May 2012, very hot, lots of fuel.

Large fires are destroying the sage grouse habitat

- It can take 40+ years for sagebrush to return
- Reseeding is not effective
- We must preserve the sagebrush that we have

Monument designation will hamper our ability to effectively manage for fires

- RFPA and BLM fire access
- Invasive weed control
- If the monument impacts grazing, we will have even larger fires because of the fuel and the fact that the RFPA will not fight fire in non-grazed areas.

Tristate Fuel break Project:

- Good idea
- But is expensive
- visual impacts

Soda Fire:

- Rockville Allotment, two fields that had been grazed.
- Utilization?
- Fire slowed down and burned in a mosaic pattern,
- Easy to put out

"Targeted grazing management by domestic livestock offers one of the best and most efficient tools for managing very large public landscapes, private lands and the habitat of sensitive species that traditionally have lived in these areas." –UNR

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