

# **1 Chapter One**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), has prepared this proposed resource management plan (RMP) and final environmental impact statement (EIS). This RMP provides direction for managing public lands under the administrative jurisdiction of the BLM's Bakersfield Field Office (Bakersfield FO) in an eight-county region of central California; the EIS analyzes the environmental effects that could result from implementing the alternatives defined in this RMP. The regional area is referred to as the Planning Area.

Public lands within the Planning Area are currently being managed under the Caliente RMP (BLM, 1997a), the Hollister RMP (BLM, 1984a), and two RMPs covering public lands within the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM), (BLM 2005a) and the Carrizo Plain National Monument (CPNM), (BLM 2010b). The Caliente RMP, completed in 1997, covers public lands in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Kings, Tulare, and western Kern Counties. The Hollister RMP, completed in 1985 by the Hollister Field Office, covers lands in Madera and eastern Fresno Counties, which were administratively transferred to the Bakersfield FO in October 2000. This document does not address public land management within the CCNM or the CPNM, except for livestock grazing management in a small portion of the CPNM. Within the Planning Area, public lands managed by BLM are referred to as the Decision Area.

The RMP is being prepared using BLM planning regulations and guidance issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 US Code [USC], 1701 et seq.) and the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1 (BLM 2005b). An EIS is incorporated into this document to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], 1500-1508) (CEQ 1978), and requirements of the BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1 (BLM 2008a).

## **1.2 Purpose and Need for the Plan**

The purpose of this RMP is to review existing management and establish goals, objectives, and management actions for BLM public lands that address current issues, knowledge, and conditions.

The need for revision of the 1997 Caliente Resource Management Plan (RMP) and outstanding portion of the 1984 Hollister RMP stems from several factors including: a) the recent completion of RMPs for two areas (now known as the CCNM, and the CPNM) previously covered in the 1997 Caliente RMP, b) the transfer of some public lands from the Hollister Field Office to the Bakersfield Field Office that remained under management guidance provided by the 1984 Hollister RMP, c) the acquisition of new lands, and d) guidance provided in 43 CFR 1610.5-5 that recommends amending or revising an RMP to: (i) implement new and revised policies that change land use planning level decisions; (ii) respond to new, intensified or changed uses of public land; and (iii) consider significant new information from resource assessments, monitoring or scientific studies that change land use decisions. This revision effort is specifically needed to address the following major changes:

- In January 2000, President Clinton established and included the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM) in the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). The monument consists of more than 20,000 rocks and islands that are spread along the 1,100-mile California coastline; of which approximately 230 miles fall within the Bakersfield FO. In September 2005, a separate RMP was approved providing guidance and direction for the CCNM. As such, the CCNM RMP (as opposed to the Caliente RMP) now controls land use within the monument.
- In October 2000, the Bakersfield FO acquired management responsibility for the public lands in Madera and eastern Fresno Counties, which are managed under the 1985 Hollister RMP. The San Joaquin River Gorge was among the lands transferred.
- In January 2001, President Clinton designated the Carrizo Plain National Monument (CPNM) and included it in the BLM's NLCS. In April 2010, a separate RMP was approved, covering the approximately 206,000 acres of public lands within the CPNM. As such, the CPNM RMP (as opposed to the Caliente RMP) now controls land use within the monument.
- In March 2001, the BLM began to acquire several thousand acres of land in southwestern Tulare County and eastern Kings County, at Atwell Island. Acquired under the auspices of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, there was no specific direction for these lands within the 1997 Caliente RMP.
- In May 2002, the US Coast Guard transferred the Piedras Blancas Light Station to the BLM. This action created an opportunity for public benefits that were unanticipated by the Caliente RMP. In May 2008, President George W. Bush signed a law designating Piedras Blancas Light Station as an Outstanding Natural Area and including it in the BLM's NLCS.
- In 2005, Congress transferred to the BLM most of the Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 2, consisting of 10,451 acres in southwestern Kern County. The Caliente RMP was immediately amended to provide for leasing oil and gas, but other management decisions were postponed until a future planning effort could be completed.

Like California as a whole, the Planning Area has undergone many changes since the completion of the Hollister and Caliente RMPs, resulting in a tremendous increase in the demand for, and the use of, public lands. The driving forces have been the rapid increase in California's population and the critical need for domestic energy production. While California's overall population increased by 9 percent, the last ten years of population growth in the Planning Area ranged from 2 percent in Santa Barbara County to 22 percent in Kern County (U.S. Census 2010). Increased population means increased demands for public lands for recreation and increased impacts to public lands from both authorized and unauthorized activities. People living in rural communities next to public lands have a desire to use public lands as fuel breaks and to preserve open space around their communities to help maintain the rural atmosphere. The national focus on increased domestic oil and gas production and the development of renewable energy has placed additional requests for use of public lands. These increased demands and uses of public lands present some complex management issues that can best be addressed by an updated land use plan.

The Bakersfield RMP provides an updated assessment of resources; a review of land uses, conditions, and trends; a forum for enhanced public collaboration and involvement; and a comprehensive impact analysis of reasonable management alternatives and resulting land use decisions.

## 1.3 Description of the Planning Area

### 1.3.1 Planning Area

The Bakersfield FO administrative boundary defines the Planning Area assessed in this RMP revision. The Bakersfield FO Planning Area encompasses about 17 million acres throughout Kings, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare, Ventura, Madera, eastern Fresno, and western Kern Counties and includes all lands within the administrative boundary regardless of jurisdiction or ownership (Map 1.1.). With a variety of settings and landforms, this is a region of diverse topography and landscapes, and extraordinary biodiversity. Elevations range from sea level to more than 14,500 feet at Mount Whitney. Table 1.1, presents land status within the Planning Area.

**Table 1.1**  
**Land Status (*surface only*) within the Planning Area**

<b>Land Status</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage of Planning Area</b>
BLM	612,137	3.5
US Bureau of Reclamation	12,084	0.1
US Forest Service	4,084,317	23.6
US Fish and Wildlife Service	33,296	0.2
National Park Service	1,030,378	5.9
Bureau of Indian Affairs	59,830	0.3
Other Federal	2,052	0.01
State of California	108,989	0.6
Local Government	11,794	0.07
Military	181,993	1.1
Private	11,182,537	64.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,319,347</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: BLM 2010b



### 1.3.2 Decision Area

While the Planning Area encompasses the entire area within the boundaries of the Bakersfield FO regardless of jurisdiction or ownership, the Bakersfield FO Decision Area encompasses about 400,000 acres of public lands surface and minerals, and 750,000 acres of mineral estate only. Stretching from the coastal islands in the Pacific Ocean across the Central Valley to the crest of the Sierra Nevada, these public lands are scattered across the Planning Area in numerous parcels of various size. The larger blocks of public land lie adjacent to the CPNM, in the Three Rivers-Kaweah River region of Tulare County, and in the Lake Isabella-Chimney Peak-Walker Pass region of Kern and Tulare counties. The Bakersfield FO Decision Area does not include the CPNM<sup>1</sup> or the CCNM, which are managed by the Bakersfield FO under different, site-specific RMPs. The Decision Area also includes subsurface minerals on approximately 550,000 acres of “split estate” (areas where the BLM manages federal subsurface minerals but the surface is owned by a non-federal entity) as well as subsurface minerals on approximately 200,000 acres where the surface is managed by other Federal agencies. These combined areas (about 1.2 million acres) constitute the area for which the BLM has authority and makes decisions (i.e. the Decision Area) under this plan revision (Map 1.2). Table 1.2, summarizes the Decision Area.

**Table 1.2**  
**Land Status within the Decision Area**

<b>Land Status</b>	<b>Acres<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of Decision Area</b>
BLM <i>Managed</i> <sup>3</sup> Surface Only	<u>8,194</u> <u>11,405</u>	<u>0.7</u> <u>0.9</u>
BLM Surface and Mineral Estate	<u>395,745</u> <u>393,179</u>	<u>33.8</u> <u>33.5</u>
BLM Mineral Estate with Other Federal Surface	<u>195,303</u> <u>219,778<sup>4</sup></u>	<u>16.7</u> <u>18.7</u>
Split Estate (BLM Mineral Estate with Non-Federal Surface)	<u>571,162</u> <u>548,117</u>	<u>48.8</u> <u>46.7</u>
Total BLM Surface	<u>403,939</u> <u>404,319</u>	-
Total BLM-Administered Mineral Estate	<u>1,162,210</u> <u>1,161,075</u>	-
Total Decision Area	<u>1,170,404</u> <u>1,172,480</u>	100

Source: BLM 2012a

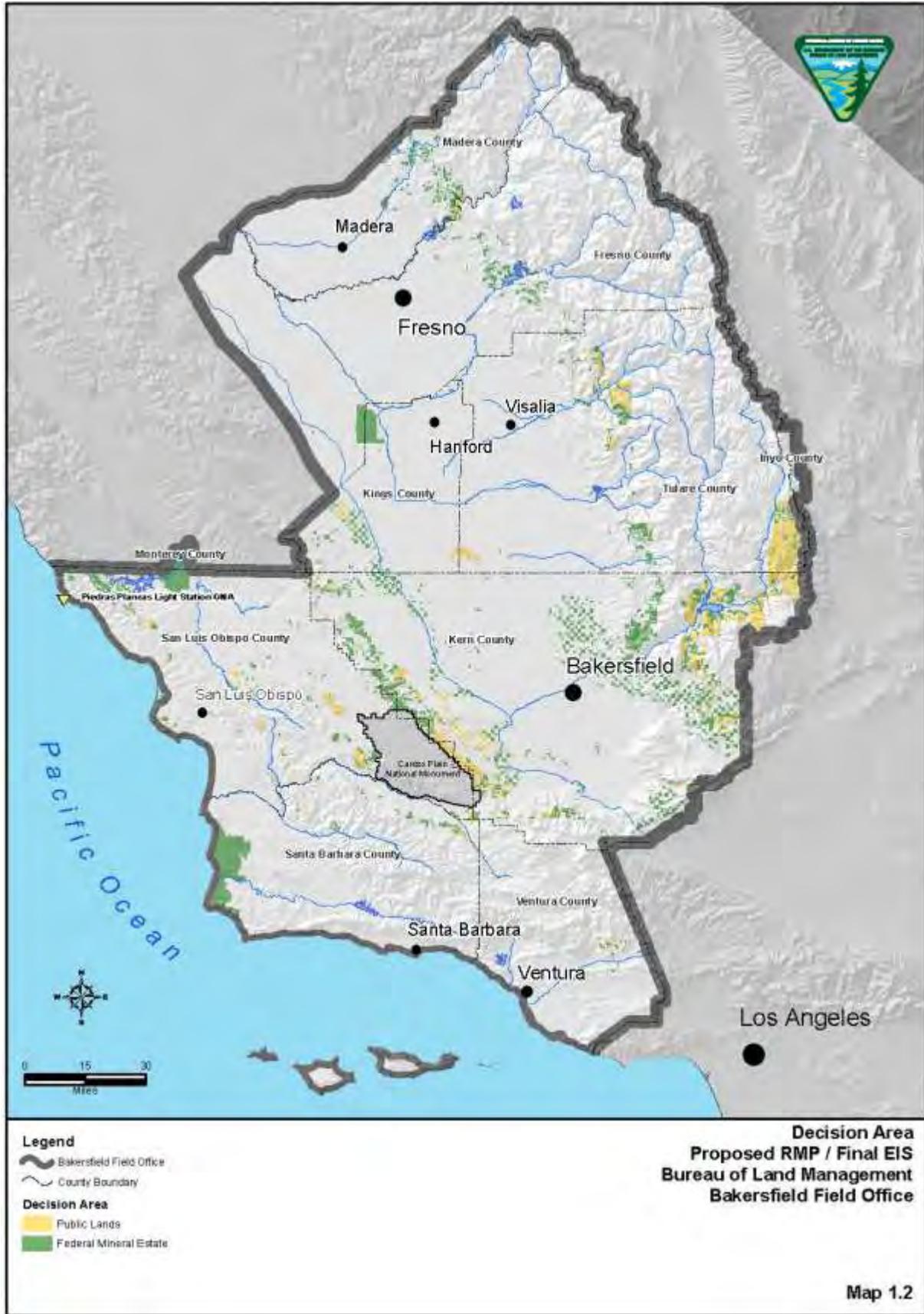
The Decision Area does not include other private lands, state lands, tribal lands, federal lands not administered by the BLM, and public lands within the CCNM and CPNM, except for livestock grazing management in a small portion of the CPNM.

<sup>1</sup> Except a small portion of the CPNM for which this RMP provides direction for livestock grazing management.

<sup>2</sup> Acreages reflect 2012 data and include the correction of mapping errors and new acquisitions occurring since publication of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS.

<sup>3</sup> Includes 254 acres owned by BOR, but managed by BLM through an MOU.

<sup>4</sup> This acreage includes the mineral estate under DOD at San Nicholas Island which was not included in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS.



The decisions generated by the RMP would only apply to BLM-administered surface and mineral estate. No decisions generated by the RMP would change existing rights or authority of private land owners or other surface management agencies. While the RMP decisions do not apply to lands not administered by the BLM, lands that are interspersed with BLM-managed public lands could be indirectly affected by BLM management actions. The planning effort recognizes that nearby lands, communities, resource values, and uses could all be affected by management of the Bakersfield FO Decision Area; in turn, their use and values affect BLM management of public lands. The plan includes recommendations for the BLM to work with entities that manage areas or programs that are not under its jurisdiction, but that directly affect BLM's management (such as county governments, tourism information groups, and hunting organizations). Final decisions however, regarding actions outside the Decision Area rest with the appropriate agency or community government, and are typically not decisions made by the BLM.

## **1.4 Scoping and Planning Issues**

### **1.4.1 Scoping Process**

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to develop the Bakersfield RMP and associated EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 4, 2008 (Volume 73, Number 43, pages 11661-11662). This initiated the public scoping period. A news release was also submitted to local and regional media and posted on BLM's Web site.

The Bakersfield FO hosted several public scoping meetings. Agencies and the public were encouraged to submit oral and/or written comments regarding management of public lands in the Planning Area. The formal scoping period ended on May 3, 2008 (approximately 60 days). Although the BLM accepts comments at any time during the planning process, comments received during the scoping period are particularly helpful in guiding the development of alternatives. All of the comments received by November 22, 2010<sup>5</sup> were compiled, reviewed, and analyzed. Issues were derived from these comments.

### **1.4.2 Issues Addressed**

Public scoping analysis in combination with bureau policy, directives and guidance resulted in the identification of six planning issues that were addressed during development of alternatives. Planning issues are disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices. Usually, the causal relationship between the activity or use and undesirable results are well defined or can be documented, and the level of controversy is high enough to merit further analysis. Statement of the planning issues orients the planning process so that interdisciplinary thought, analysis, and documentation is directed toward resolving the planning issues during preparation of the RMP.

**Issue 1:** *Adequately address the need for access to and continued availability of, public lands for multiple recreational uses and open spaces.*

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<sup>5</sup> Date last Travel Management comment was received that could be incorporated prior to beginning internal review process.

The enormous increase in population in the Planning Area has intensified the demand for open space and recreation opportunities on public land. Not only has demand increased, but the kinds of recreation taking place on public lands have also increased, and conflicts are developing including impacts from unauthorized activities. Coupled with this is the scattered nature of much of the public land parcels, many of which lack legal access.

**Issue 2:** *Establish a balance between the extent of the travel network and the protection of natural and cultural resources, including an appropriate allocation of routes to the various modes of transport.*

The BLM travel network is used by a wide range of users including commercial, domestic, and recreation users. There is some demand for new trail systems, especially from the OHV interest groups within the community (to increase opportunities for different skill levels and modes of travel); however, the ongoing proliferation of illegal routes has resulted in the damage to natural and cultural resources, and conflicts between the various user groups. BLM needs to coordinate with other managers of travel networks, such as private interests, the State, and other federal agencies and contribute toward a regional solution to the issue.

**Issue 3:** *Ensure appropriate protection for Threatened and Endangered species, critical habitat, other biological resources, and cultural and paleontological resources in a multiple-use environment.*

The diverse landscapes and the extraordinary biodiversity present within the Planning Area present a unique challenge in managing public lands and resources in a rapidly growing region with a diversity of public demands. Since the 1997 Caliente RMP was completed, the USFWS has listed as threatened or endangered at least an additional 11 plants and animals potentially found on public lands within the Bakersfield FO for a total of 86 federally listed species. Loss and degradation of natural habitat continues as California's population grows, increasing the importance of BLM lands for conservation goals. The balance between the conservation of biological, cultural, and paleontological resources with the demand for other land uses is an ongoing issue.

**Issue 4:** *Continue to appropriately manage livestock grazing to provide for economic benefit, rural lifestyles and vegetation management while protecting other resources.*

Livestock grazing plays an important role on the landscape in terms of rural lifestyles, local economies, and maintaining the legacy of the "West." Management of livestock grazing into the future needs to incorporate the best science and adaptive management methods to ensure protection of other resources. In addition, explore the utilization of livestock grazing as a vegetation management tool to meet resource objectives (such as wildlife habitat and fire management).

**Issue 5:** *Balance the demand for energy development (including oil and gas, wind, and solar energy) and other land use authorizations (such as road and transmission corridor rights-of-way) with other resource values.*

Implementing the multiple-use mandate from FLPMA includes balancing the economic use of public resources, while providing for appropriate stewardship of public lands and the protection of natural and cultural resources. The economic uses involve both renewable and nonrenewable resources and include energy development (primarily oil and gas, wind, and solar), other mineral extraction, and land use authorizations such as road and transmission corridor rights-of-way. With the increasing demand for sources of domestic energy from public lands, the ability to balance these immediate goals with the protection of public lands for the use and enjoyment of future generations becomes more challenging.

**Issue 6:** *Address the impacts of climate change on the management of public lands, including strategies that will reduce impacts and incorporate appropriate monitoring.*

The temperature of the planet's atmosphere is regulated by a balance of radiation received from the sun and the amount of that radiation absorbed by the earth and atmosphere. Greenhouse gases (e.g. carbon dioxide and methane), as well as water vapor and particulate matter in the atmosphere keep the planet's temperature warmer than it would be otherwise, allowing the planet to sustain life. While these gasses and particles have occurred naturally for millennia, there has been a marked increase in their atmospheric concentration since the start of the industrial age, contributing to the observed climatic variability beyond the historic norm. As appropriate, this plan describes (1) the effects that a changing climate may have on the resources in the Planning Area, and (2) how the reasonably foreseeable activities under each alternative would affect climate change (discussed as part of *Air and Atmospheric Values* in Chapters 3 and 4).

### ***1.4.3 Issues Considered but Not Further Analyzed***

During the public scoping process, several concerns/issues were raised by the public and identified by the IDT as outside the scope of the planning effort. Other comments represented questions on how the BLM would go about conducting the planning process and implementation of land use plan decisions. Comments on these items are valuable and appreciated, even though they are outside the scope of an RMP. These comments will be considered when decisions are made on implementation plans, proposed projects, or day-to-day management.

Three concerns were commonly expressed:

- The need for adequate law enforcement personnel and patrols throughout the Bakersfield Field Office – Some members of the public expressed the desire for a resident law enforcement ranger or park ranger in their local area. Staffing issues are not typically addressed in land use plans; they are more appropriately addressed administratively.
- Increasing the use of volunteers and partnerships to assist in managing public lands and resources – Recruitment and opportunities for volunteers and partnerships are ongoing BLM activities that are a means of implementing an RMP. The RMP, however, is not the appropriate mechanism to establish these opportunities.
- The adequacy of budget and staffing to ensure implementation of the RMP – The RMP alternatives will be based on an optimal but reasonable assessment of the level of management needed. However, the RMP is not a budget document and alternative development is not based on specific funding projections.

## ***1.5 Planning Criteria and Legislative Constraints***

### ***1.5.1 Planning Criteria***

Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and guidelines that help to guide the development of the RMP, to ensure it is tailored to the identified issues, and to deter unnecessary data collection and analysis. They also help guide the development of alternatives and the selection of the preferred alternative.

Planning criteria are based on applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, and the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other federal, state, and local agencies, and Native American tribes.

Preliminary planning criteria were developed before public scoping meetings to set the focus for the Bakersfield RMP and to guide decision making by topic. These preliminary planning criteria were included in Notice of Intent, published in the *Federal Register*, and were posted on the project web site for public comment during the 60-day scoping period. The planning criteria presented during the scoping process are as follows;

- The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance for the BLM in managing public lands within the Bakersfield FO;
- The plan will be completed in compliance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws;
- The planning process will include an environmental impact statement that will comply with NEPA;
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference the Central California Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management;
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference all prior Wilderness designations and Wilderness Study Area findings that affect public lands in the Planning Area;
- The plan will provide determinations as required by special program and resource-specific guidance detailed in Appendix C of the BLM's Planning Handbook;
- Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, as long as the decisions are in conformance with BLM policies on management of public lands;
- The scope of analysis will be consistent with the level of analysis in approved plans and in accordance with BLM-wide standards and program guidance;
- Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints;
- The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan;
- All lands within the CCNM and the CPNM—both of which are addressed under separate RMPs, will not be included in the Bakersfield RMP, except for livestock grazing management in a small portion of the CPNM;
- The plan will include Piedras Blancas Historic Light Station Outstanding Natural Area and identify goals, standards, and objectives for this area.
- Decisions and management actions within the existing plans will be evaluated; those that are determined to still be valid will be carried forward into this revised RMP; and
- Geospatial data within a geographic information system (GIS) will be used to facilitate discussions of the affected environment, alternative formulation, analysis of environmental consequences, and display of the results.

The public was encouraged to comment on and to suggest additions to these criteria at the meetings and through correspondence with the BLM. Although no specific criteria differing from those above were suggested by the public during scoping, many commenters supported the method provided by

these principles to evaluate the issues. The public encouraged the BLM to use criteria and standards for as many decisions as possible, making it easier to manage predict potential decisions and outcomes resulting from site-specific activities during implementation-level management phases project planning.

### **1.5.2 Legislative Constraints**

The BLM administers public lands within a framework of numerous laws. The most comprehensive of these is the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). All BLM policies, procedures, and management actions must be consistent with FLPMA and the other laws that govern use of the public lands. In FLPMA, Congress established the principle of “multiple-use” management; defined, in part, as “management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.”

In addition to the legislative and procedural agency guidance for the preparation of the RMP, many legislation constraints have contributed to the scope and management direction for this document and the planning criteria described previously. A few of the most relevant examples of such are provided below:

- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended;
- Mineral Leasing Act of 1920;
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended;
- Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, as amended;
- Wilderness Act of 1964;

The list provided above is in no way exhaustive and many other legislative acts, laws and regulations are cited throughout the document as appropriate.

## **1.6 Planning Process**

As provided by FLPMA, the BLM is responsible for planning for and managing public lands. The process for the development, approval, maintenance, and amendment or revision of RMPs was initiated under the authority of Section 202(f) of FLPMA and Section 202(c) of NEPA. BLM planning regulations in 43 CFR 1600, and the CEQ regulations in 40 CFR 1500, guide the planning and NEPA processes. Preparation of an RMP/EIS involves the following ten interrelated steps:

**Step 1 – Planning Issues Identified:** Issues and concerns are identified through a scoping process that includes the public, Native American tribes, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments.

**Step 2 – Planning Criteria Development:** Planning criteria are created to ensure that decisions are made to address the issues pertinent to the planning effort. Planning criteria are derived from a variety of sources, including applicable laws and regulations, existing management plans, coordination with other agencies’ programs, and the results of public and agency scoping. As planning proceeds, planning criteria may be updated or changed.

**Step 3 – Data and Information Collection:** Based on planning criteria, data and information for the resources in the Bakersfield FO are collected.

**Step 4 – Analyze the Management Situation:** The collected data and information are assembled into the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) and described in Chapter 3 – Affected Environment of this document.

**Step 5 – Alternatives Formulation:** A range of reasonable management alternatives that address issues identified during scoping is developed.

**Step 6 – Alternatives Assessment:** The environmental effects of each alternative are estimated and analyzed.

**Step 7 – Preferred Alternative Selection:** The alternative that best resolves planning issues is identified as the Preferred Alternative.

**Step 8 – Resource Management Plan Proposed:** A Draft RMP/Draft EIS is issued and made available to the public for a review period of 90 calendar days. During the public review period, the BLM holds additional public meetings to further explain the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, address public questions, and accept comments in writing.

After comments to the draft document have been received and analyzed, the Draft RMP/Draft EIS is revised and modified, as necessary, and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is published and made available for a 30 calendar day public protest period.

**Step 9 – Decision:** A ROD will be signed for the Approved Resource Management Plan after all protests have been resolved.

**Step 10 – Implementation and Monitoring:** Upon approval of the ROD, land use decisions outlined in the Approved Resource Management Plan would be effective immediately and would require no additional planning or NEPA analysis.

Consistent with BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1, the BLM will monitor plan implementation and effectiveness, and will report periodically on:

- the management actions undertaken;
- the management actions remaining to be undertaken; and
- the effectiveness of those actions toward meeting goals and objectives.

Monitoring strategies would be developed that identify indicators of change, acceptable thresholds, methodologies, protocols, and timeframes that would be used to evaluate and determine whether desired outcomes are being achieved.

### ***1.6.1 Public Comment Period***

The Bakersfield Draft RMP/Draft EIS was released for public review on September 9<sup>th</sup> 2011. A *Federal Register* Notice initiated the formal 90 day public comment period which closed on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2011.

During the public comment period the BLM conducted seven public meetings to describe the plan and alternatives, and gave the public an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the plan or planning process. In addition to these meetings the BLM was invited to attend a number of stakeholder meetings to present the RMP and answer specific questions posed by the stakeholder groups.

As a result of the public comment period the BLM received 274 written comment letters. These letters were analyzed for substantive content. The individual substantive comments were studied by the Interdisciplinary Team and appropriate changes were made to the document. Responses to these substantive comments are included in Chapter 5, Section 5.5 – Response to Comments.

Substantive changes between the draft documents and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS are identified throughout the document through the use of “Styles”. Substantive removals from the draft document are marked through the use of: ~~*Italicized, Underlined and Strike-Through*~~ text, whereas addition to the document are identified by: *Italicized and Underlined* text.

### 1.6.2 Relationship to BLM Policy, Plans and Programs

The BLM has three principal levels of land use planning decisions: 1) the RMP level; 2) the activity level; and 3) the site-specific level. This Proposed RMP/Final EIS focuses on establishing broad resource objectives and direction while, at the same time, providing some activity-level guidance and site-specific decisions. Site-specific decisions are usually tied to a specific location, resource, or activity and generally require their own NEPA. Where this RMP makes these site-specific decisions (e.g., route designations) this EIS fulfills the NEPA requirement.

Once approved, the Bakersfield RMP will replace ~~the applicable~~ portions of the 1985 Hollister RMP *and all of* the 1997 Caliente RMP, ~~and their amendments~~. However, there are other associated BLM plans that have been considered in this plan revision as identified in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3  
Associated BLM Management Plans**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Year</b>
Bakersfield Field Office Fire Management Plan	2008
Carrizo Plain National Monument ROD/ARMP	2010
California Coastal National Monument ROD/ARMP	2005
Piedras Blancas Light Station ONA Interpretive Plan	2008
Piedras Blancas Light Station ONA Management Plan	2007
Southern Sierra (Westside) Management Plan [Wilderness]	1999

In addition to existing plans, a number of policies, national programmatic EISs, and program guidance documents (BLM Handbooks and Manual sections) were reviewed for consistency during the development of the RMP. These policies and guidance are referenced throughout the document.

***Air Quality MOU: Through the recent Memorandum of Understanding Among the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of the Interior, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Regarding Air Quality Analyses and Mitigation For Federal Oil and Gas Decisions Through the National Environmental Policy Act Process (effective June 23, 2011), signatories commit to a clearly defined approach to compliance with NEPA regarding air quality in connection with oil and gas development on Federal lands. This MOU applies to all NEPA analyses commencing after the effective date, and all NEPA analyses begun after September 23, 2011. Since the Bakersfield Draft RMP/Draft EIS was made available for public comment on September 9, 2011, during the “grace period”, provisions of the MOU are not directly applicable to this NEPA analysis. The BLM however, believes the Proposed RMP/Final EIS air quality analysis meets the intent of the MOU; air resource program management goals and objectives illustrate***

the Bakersfield FO's commitment to protect air quality, particularly as it relates to oil and gas development on Federal lands. In lieu of implementing the MOU at this stage, the BLM developed an Air Resources Management Plan (included as Appendix A-1) that identifies mitigation measures to address adverse impacts to air quality and outlines modeling requirements for proponents in the future. At the time of writing, the BLM and other participating agencies have developed a Joint Agency Implementation Team and are in the process of developing agency specific implementation plans and administering training to implement the MOU for future analyses that pertain to federal oil and gas development.

**Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP):** The DRECP, a joint planning process between the BLM, USFWS, California Energy Commission and CDFG, will address natural resources conservation and renewable energy development on both public and private lands within the California Desert, including a small portion (197,000 acres) of the Planning Area including approximately 22,000 acres of public lands. The plan, still in development, will identify appropriate locations for renewable energy development taking into account impacts to species and natural communities and provide for long-term conservation and management, other equivalent protection measures, for these species and natural communities, giving consideration to other resources and resources uses. The Bakersfield FO has, and will continue to, coordinate with the DRECP planning team to ensure resources within the Decision Area are adequately addressed in the DRECP. Although the Proposed RMP provides guidance for utility scale renewable energy development in a portion of the area being considered by the DRECP, this allocation is interim management direction pending the completion of the DRECP.

## **1.7 Collaboration**

The Bakersfield FO conducts many activities that require coordination with tribes, the State, other agencies, and interested public. Coordination has been ongoing throughout this planning effort. Coordination is accomplished as a matter of course when implementing land use plan decisions through project development and site-specific activities. Key coordination efforts include those described below. Additional details about the public and agency involvement process are presented in Chapter 5 – Consultation and Coordination.

### **1.7.1 Intergovernmental, Interagency and Tribal Relationships**

The formal process by which the BLM engages other governmental entities (other federal agencies, state agencies and local governments) in the planning process is through Cooperating Agency status. Cooperating agency status provides a formal framework for governmental agencies to engage in active collaboration with a Federal agency to implement the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.). Federal and state agencies and local and tribal governments may qualify as cooperating agencies because of “jurisdiction by law or special expertise” (40 CFR 1501.6 and 1508.5).

The agencies in the following list were approached by the Bakersfield FO to participate in the RMP process. The California Department of Fish and Game accepted the invitation and designated a lead specialist to work directly with BLM. The remainder of the invitees wished to remain abreast of the planning process, but declined formal cooperating agency status:

- California Department of Fish and Game
- Fresno County
- Kern County
- Kings County
- Lemoore Naval Air Station
- Madera County

- National Park Service
- Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu
- San Luis Obispo County
- Santa Barbara County
- Tulare County
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service
- Ventura County
- Vandenberg Air Force Base

Native American tribes are formally engaged in the planning process, as with many other federal actions, through a process of consultation. Legislation, policy and guidance require the BLM to consult with federally recognized Native American tribes regarding any actions conducted by the agency which have the potential to affect places of traditional or religious importance to them. As such, the Bakersfield FO initiated contact on April 4, 2008 in conjunction with the public scoping process; with both federally and non-federally recognized tribes whose traditional territories are known to lie within the Planning Area.

The federally recognized Native American tribes listed below were contacted again via certified letter in April 2011 and invited to participate in government-to-government consultation prior to the release of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. Upon the release of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS copies were sent to each federally recognized Native American tribes and several non-recognized Native American tribes, groups, and individuals along with a package of supplemental information and maps. Follow up letters, phone calls, and emails offered to schedule one-on-one presentations, and again, extended the invitation to initiate formal government-to-government consultation to the federally recognized tribes and informal coordination and consultation with the non-recognized tribes. Informational meetings and presentations were conducted with four of the federally recognized Native American tribes and six non-recognized Native American tribes and groups. Subsequent to the end of the public review and comment period on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, one of these groups, the Tejon Indian Tribe, became federally recognized (January 1, 2012). Prior to their formal recognition, BLM coordinated with the Tejon Indian Tribe by providing them with information, maps and guidance regarding review of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. In addition, a formal presentation was provided for the attending members at a Tribal Council meeting. None of the federally or non-federally recognized Native American tribes chose to conduct formal government-to-government or informal consultation.

- Big Sandy Rancheria
- Cold Springs Rancheria
- North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians
- Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
- Table Mountain Rancheria
- Tachi Yokut Tribe of the Santa Rosa Rancheria
- Tejon Indian Tribe
- Tule River Reservation

Beyond formal cooperating agency status and tribal consultation, the BLM is required to maintain relationships with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California State Historic Officer (SHPO). This consultation is required for compliance with Section 7 of the *Endangered Species Act (ESA)*, and Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)*.

In compliance with Section 7 of the ESA the BLM is currently operating under Biological Opinions (BOs) the USFWS has issued for management activities: the *March 31, 1997 Caliente RMP Biological Opinion 1-1-97-F-64*, which serves as a comprehensive BO for activities conducted under that RMP and the *2001*

*Oil and Gas Programmatic Biological Opinion 1-1-01-F-0063*, which outlines certain criteria oil and gas related projects within a specific geographic area must meet to be authorized without a separate consultation. These BOs were based on management in existing Land Use Planning documents and would be carried forward as the No Action Alternative. Regardless of which alternative is selected Under any of the action alternatives, new BOs will be sought from USFWS to adequately address new information regarding listed species.

The BLM notified the California SHPO at the initiation of the planning process. The SHPO was invited to review and formally consult regarding the Bakersfield Draft RMP/Draft EIS. The SHPO declined to review, comment, or consult on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. An additional opportunity for review and consultation will occur during the Governor's Consistency review of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

### **1.7.2 Other Stakeholder Relationships**

Throughout the planning process the Bakersfield FO continues to be engaged with numerous user groups, public land stakeholders, and interested individuals. These efforts include travel management oriented public meetings, recreation-focused listening sessions, Social and economic workshops, and various briefings, presentations, and personal communications. These stakeholder groups include representatives for environmental advocacy groups, commercial enterprises, community groups, and groups representing recreational users. In addition, regular briefings have been presented to the Central California Resource Advisory Council and updates provided to its various subcommittees.

## **1.8 Related Plans**

Title II, Section 202 of the FLPMA provides, consistent with the public lands laws, that the BLM coordinate planning efforts with land use planning and management programs of Native American Indian tribes, other federal departments, and agencies of state and local governments. To accomplish this directive, the BLM, to the extent practicable, is instructed to keep informed of state, local, and tribal plans; assure that consideration is given to such plans; and to assist in resolving inconsistencies between such plans and federal planning. While the State is authorized to furnish advice regarding revision of land use plans for the public lands, the Secretary of the Interior is directed to develop land use plans consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent found consistent with Federal law and the purposes of FLPMA. 43 U.S.C. 1712 (c)(9). The provisions of this section of the FLPMA are implemented through application of Section 1610.3 of BLM Resource Management Planning regulations.

### **1.8.1 Other Federal Agency Plans**

Other federal agencies manage lands and resources in and next to the Bakersfield FO Planning Area. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS strives for consistency with plans pertaining to these lands, including the following:

- Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for Oil and Gas Leasing, Los Padres National Forest, July 2005;
- Sequoia National Forest Motorized Travel Management Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, December 2009;
- USFWS recovery plans for endangered species—Recovery Plan for the California condor (USFWS 1996), Recovery Plan for Upland Species for the San Joaquin Valley (USFWS 1998), Recovery Plan

for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon (USFWS 2005); and the Recovery Plan for the Kern Primrose Sphinx Moth (USFWS 1984).

- National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (40 CFR, 300) (1994, revised 2007);
- Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Los Padres, Sequoia, Sierra National Forests).

### ***1.8.2 State Agency Plans***

A complex land ownership pattern within the Planning Area influences BLM coordination with agencies administering California State lands and resources. While several agreements exist between state agencies and the BLM, the RMP revision offers a unique opportunity to promote interagency cooperation to enhance natural resource management. For example, two large areas have been managed cooperatively with the CDFG as National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Areas (Temblor and Monache-Walker Pass) to benefit wildlife resources and recreation opportunities. The BLM and CDFG also coordinate in managing State ecological reserves within the Planning Area. The BLM and California State Parks coordinate management of their lands to ensure consistency for adjoining parcels.

### ***1.8.3 County Plans***

The BLM routinely coordinates management activities across its scattered land pattern within the eight counties in which there is BLM surface or mineral ownership. County supervisors, planners, fire personnel, and local law enforcement are the primary points of coordination. While specific planning efforts for the RMP and the county general plan provide an opportunity to evaluate consistency, the process of coordination and consistency review is ongoing. The general plan implementation dates for each of the eight counties with federal surface ownership are listed below:

- Fresno County General Plan (2000);
- Kern County General Plan (2007);
- Kings County General Plan (1998);
- Madera County General Plan (2004);
- San Luis Obispo County General Plan (2004);
- Santa Barbara County General Plan (2009);
- Tulare County General Plan (2005, revised 2010);
- Ventura County General Plan (2005);

## ***1.9 Policy***

This plan is consistent with and incorporates requirements identified in various laws, regulations and policies. These include Executive Orders, legislative designations, proclamations and court settlements/rulings. The policies and decisions that existed prior to this plan being written are outside the scope of the plan but have influenced the decisions, constrained the alternatives, and are needed to understand management of the area. The list of policies that have been reviewed, incorporated and otherwise contributed to the development of the alternatives is extensive. Examples of such policies include:

- Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 – for the management protection of floodplains and wetlands
- Executive Orders 13186 and 11514 – for the protection of biological resources and the environment
- Executive Orders 13175, 11593, 13007, 13287 and Secretarial Order 3206 - for the consultation and coordination with Tribal Governments and protection of cultural resources
- Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 – for the use of off-road vehicles on public lands
- Executive Order 12898 - to address Environmental Justice in minority and low-income populations
- Secretarial Orders 3283, 3285 and 3294 – addressing energy (renewable and traditional) development and management
- Secretarial Order 3289 – to address current and future impacts of climate change on America’s land, water, wildlife, cultural-heritage and tribal resources