

Ukiah Field Office

Resource Management Plan
and
Environmental Impact Statement



Scoping Report

October 2004

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is updating its management plans for the public lands administered by the Ukiah Field Office (UFO). Once completed, the Ukiah Filed Office will manage lands under the direction and allocation of one Resource Management Plan (RMP) as compared to the multiple management framework plans the Office has been utilizing for the past 25 years. With regard to decision making and full environmental disclosure, public involvement is a vital component of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and is a critical element of the RMP process. This first phase of public involvement is called "scoping". Scoping is designed to determine the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the plan through the identification of topics of public interest and importance. This report documents the results from the public scoping phase of this project, conducted in July, August, and September of 2004.

Public Scoping Activities

A variety of methods were used to publicize the scoping process and to solicit public comment. Our process began with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on June 21, 2004 (Volume 69, Number 118) which notified the public of the BLM's intent to prepare a Resource Management Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Ukiah Field Office. (Appendix B)).

A news release was issued on July 16, 2004, to local and major Northern California newspapers, radio stations, and television stations to inform interested parties of the Ukiah RMP/EIS planning effort, the location of public scoping meetings, and the opportunity for the public to comment.

Additionally, the news release was published on the BLM-California homepage and published in News.bytes, BLM-California's electronic newsletter with a circulation of more than 50,000 internal and external subscribers. A website was launched at the same time to serve as a clearinghouse for project information while the RMP/EIS is being developed. In addition, a planning update mailing was sent via direct mail to public agencies, County Supervisors and interested individuals (appendix C).

Nine public scoping meetings were held in August and September 2004, eight in local communities within the planning area, and one in Arcata, California associated with a BLM Resource Advisory Council Meeting (appendix D). Two of the public meetings were specific for Native American tribes.

The meetings were held to gather information from the public on future management of the public lands under the direction of the Ukiah Field Office. Those who participated in the public meetings were given an opportunity to ask questions about the RMP process, the Ukiah Field Office, specific programs managed by the BLM, partnerships, and future opportunities for involvement. Over 100 people attended these meetings.

To gather written comments, an official scoping comment period was open from July 16, 2004 until September 15, 2004 (appendix E). Over 640 comments were received during the comment window.

Public Scoping Results

All comments received either in writing by fax, regular mail, e-mail, or taken at the public meeting are included in this analysis. Many of the submissions contained multiple comments on different topics. A total of 647 written comments were compiled as of September 16, 2004. These comments were recorded and categorized according to either specific location of interest and/or

resource program of interest. The database containing these comments is on file with the BLM and is available upon request.

Most comments received during the scoping process were about wilderness/special area designation, public access, recreation management, and partnerships. These issues will be addressed in developing the alternatives and management priorities throughout the RMP/EIS process.

Planning Considerations

Some issues raised in the scoping process will not be addressed by the RMP because they fall outside of the management authority of the BLM. For example, three comments discussed abalone harvesting along the Stornetta Public Lands. Abalone harvesting is a California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G) issue and protections to abalone can only be implemented by the CDF&G. The BLM will seek cooperation with those agencies with management authority to help address the issues.

Finally this scoping report includes draft "planning criteria" intended to help guide the evaluation of alternatives and decisions in the RMP/EIS. It also identifies the next steps in the planning process and an expected timetable for completion.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Description of Area

The Ukiah Field Office area of jurisdiction covers approximately 300,000 of BLM-managed surface acres and 214,000 additional subsurface acres (mineral estate). The geographic area includes all BLM managed public lands within the counties of Marin, Solano, Sonoma, Mendocino (south of Willits), Lake, Napa, Yolo, Colusa, and Glenn. There are approximately 1.5 million people living within this region. Most of the population is concentrated in the southern reaches of the Ukiah field Office area, where there is the least amount of public lands. Public lands administered by the field office are influenced by the large metropolitan centers of the San Francisco Bay Region and the Sacramento Region. Many of Ukiah's public land visitors are from these metropolitan centers.

The majority of public lands managed by the Ukiah Field Office are located in Lake County, which is also one of the smallest counties in terms of population. As the San Francisco Bay Area expands north and the Sacramento region expands west, the northern rural counties of the north Bay-Delta region will experience a population increase and associated impact. Services for growing populations continue to put a strain on limited county budgets. The public lands provide open space, needed and demanded recreational space, and crucial wildlife habitat needs.

The Ukiah field Office area of responsibility is not a continuous geographic area of public land. It is spread across nine counties, generally extending from the Pacific Ocean on the west, north of San Francisco Bay, west of the Sacramento River, and south of Humboldt County. There are 11 major geographic areas within this region:

- **The Cow Mountain. Recreation Area** is about 55,000 acres in the hills east of Ukiah, south of Highway 20, north of Hopland, and west of Scotts Valley. While there are a few small private in-holdings, the public land of Cow Mountain. Area is generally in T.14 & 15N. R.11W., MDB&M.

- **The Geysers geothermal area** straddles the Lake County/Sonoma County line. The Geysers area is comprised of both private and public land, and federal mineral estate. It covers an area of approximately 20,000 acres, and is within T.10 & 11N. R.8W.

- **The Cache Creek area** is approximately 77,000 acres. It trends NW/SE, and is generally bounded on the north by Highway 20, on the west by Highway 53, on the south by Morgan Valley and the Berryessa Knoxville Road, and on the east by Blue Ridge. The area is mostly in T.12N R.4&5W., and T.13N. R.5, 6&7W.

- **The Cedar Roughs Wilderness Study Area (WSA)** is about 7,700 acres. It is on the southwest side of Lake Berryessa south of Pope Creek. Hardin Creek and Baldy Mt. Are to the southwest of the WSA, and the WSA extends to Iron Mt. on the southeast. It is in T.8 & 9N. R.4W.

- **Berryessa Peak (Rocky Ridge)** is an area of about 10,000 acres and east of Lake Berryessa. The area is on a mountain ridge and is generally inaccessible to the public except at the south end at Monticello Dam. It is in T.9N. R.3W.

- **Sheldon Creek** is an area of about 700 acres and is a primitive camping area. It is about five miles east of Hopland, and about eight miles south of Highway 175 along Younce Road (Old Toll Road). It is in T.13N., R.10W., Section 29.

- **The Knoxville Recreation Area** is about 17,700 acres, and is just south of the Cache Creek area and north of Lake Berryessa. There are about 5,000 acres of interspersed private land. The Recreation Area is mostly in T.11N., R.5W., with smaller areas in T.12N., R.5W., T.11& 10N., R.4W.

- **The Indian Valley/Walker Ridge** area is about 38,000 acres. It is bounded by Indian Valley and Bear Valley on the east and north, Long Valley and the Mendocino National Forest to the west, and Highway 20 to the south. Indian Valley Reservoir is in the center of the area. There is interspersed private land especially at the south and southeast. The reservoir shoreline is mostly under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Game. It is in T.14,15,16N., R.6W.

- **Scattered Tracts** comprise the remaining acreage of public land in the region. These tracts are mostly small parcels of public land surrounded by private property that makes them inaccessible to the public. Rather than attempting to describe the boundaries of this dispersed acreage, please refer to the maps of this document (Appendix A).

- **The Stornetta Public Lands** are a new acquisition of the BLM's. Donated from the Nature Conservancy to the Bureau on July 1, 2004, the Stornetta Public Lands consist of 1,860 acres of coastline property located along the southern Mendocino Coast. The property is comprised of over two miles of Pacific coastline, two miles of the Garcia River, the Garcia River estuary, ¼ mile of beach adjacent to Manchester State Park, and a five-acre island called Sea Lion Rock. The property is recognized by several state and federal agencies as containing significant natural and cultural resources including important wildlife habitat, several riparian corridors, extensive wetlands, ponds and other water sources, cypress groves, meadows, and sand dunes. The Stornetta Public Lands are located in T.12, R17W, Sections 1, 2 and 3, and T.13N, R.17W. Sections 34, 35, and 36.

- **The California Coastal Nation Monument (CCNM)**, of which approximately 20% is located within the boundary of the Ukiah Field Office, is a part of the recently established National Landscape Conservation System and is among the nation's most unique national monuments. The CCNM under the jurisdiction of the Ukiah Field Office is approximately 200 acres of rocks and islands which stand above mean high tide and extend 12 nautical miles into the Pacific. Of the included rocks and islands, the most recognized and photographed portion of the CCNM is located along the Mendocino and Sonoma coastlines.

1.2 Planning Background

There have been three Management Framework Plans (MFP's) directing management of Ukiah Field Office public lands. (In past BLM organizational structures, these lands have been under the jurisdiction of the BLM Ukiah District, the Clear Lake Resource Area, and the Ukiah Resource Area. These management framework plans include:

- The 1976 Cow Mt. Planning Unit,
- The 1976 Mendocino Planning Unit, and
- The 1976 East Lake Planning Unit.

In addition, there is one 1984 Clear Lake Resource Area MFP Update that brought the East Lake Planning Unit MFP up to date.

The Ukiah District was dissolved in 1995. Six Field Offices remained, including the UFO, to manage BLM lands in Northern California. The former Mendocino Planning Unit was assumed by the Arcata Field Office, and is included in Arcata RMP (1985) and Arcata Plan Amendment (1995) that includes scattered tracts of public land west of Highway 101 in Marin, Sonoma, and

Mendocino counties. The Cow Mountain MFP and the MFP Update of 1984 remain as the umbrella planning documents of the UFO.

The Northwest Forest Plan (NFP, 1994) provided comprehensive management direction for all land use activities within the range of the northern spotted owl. Also completed was the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and BLM Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. This amended the Ukiah Management Framework Plans mentioned above. Also completed were Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-successional and Old Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (1994). The western portion of the Ukiah Field Office is within this range but the habitat is severely limited.

The Land Health Standards and Livestock Grazing Guidelines for California and Northwest Nevada, Final EIS, April 1998, have also been completed. By definition, it amended the all of the planning documents relevant to the UFO.

1.3 Purpose and Need

The RMP/EIS will fulfill requirements set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and BLM land-use plan policy. Due to the broad scope of the RMP, and the inclusion of issues of an important and sometimes controversial nature, an EIS (EIS) will accompany the development of the RMP.

The RMP/EIS is needed to establish and document the guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing the UFO area.

The purpose of the RMP will be to update the guidance, objectives, policies, and management actions for the UFO. The RMP/EIS will be comprehensive, yet concise, in nature, and will resolve

or address issues within the entire field office area that have arisen since the initial MFP of 1976, the MFP Update of 1984, and/or issues that were not included in current land use and activity plans. The RMP will also resolve or address public land issues not presently addressed by any planning document. The RMP will integrate all BLM management plans related to management of the lands in the UFO area, including, but not limited to, fire management plans, livestock grazing allotment management plans, wildlife habitat management plans, and recreation management plans.

The RMP will explain or identify the current management situation, desired future conditions to be maintained or achieved, management actions necessary to achieve objectives, and a schedule and a cost estimate for implementing the actions for achieving those goals.

2.0 Description of the Scoping/Public Involvement Process

To publicize the start of the Ukiah RMP/EIS planning effort and to encourage public input early in the process, a number of methods were used. Public scoping was used to identify a range of ideas, concerns, considerations and suggestions important to BLM's constituents. The scoping process is summarized below.

2.1 Notices (News Media, Website, direct Mail)

Notice of Intent – The “Notice of Intent to prepare a Resource Management Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the Ukiah field Office” was published in the Federal Register on June 21, 2004 (Volume 69, Number 118). A copy can be found in Appendix B.

Press Releases – Press releases were sent to local and major Northern California news media outlets. Local radio stations KWINE, KUKI, and KNTI ran stories about the RMP/EIS and the public scoping meetings. A copy can be found in Appendix C. Press releases were posted on the BLM's California homepage (news section) and published in News.bytes, BLM-California's electronic newsletter that circulates to more than 50,000 subscribers inside and external to the BLM.

Website – An informational website, <http://www.ca.blm.gov/ukiah> with an associated page link to the RMP/EIS was made available for the public on June 16, 2004. The website provided background information on the Ukiah Field Office, information about BLM's planning process, a schedule regarding the Ukiah RMP/EIS, plus an opportunity for people to email comments directly to the Ukiah BLM office. By September 23, 2004, the RMP/EIS page of the website received 5,086 hits.

Mailing – The Ukiah Field office produced a planning mailing update which was sent to county governments, other state and federal agencies, identified special interest groups, and individuals who requested to be notified about any planning public scoping meetings. In all, 35 letters were sent.

The BLM has developed a mailing list of potential interests for this project. The list now totals more than 300 records.

2.2 Public Meetings

Nine public scoping meetings were held in August and September of 2004, with all but one located in communities close to lands managed by the Ukiah Field Office. Of the nine meetings, two were specific scoping meetings with Native American tribes. Attendance for all of the meetings totaled 108 individuals. Public scoping for the Ukiah RMP/EIS is broken down in the following table:

Ukiah RMP/EIS Public Scoping Meetings

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	ATTENDANCE
August 11, 2004	7:00pm to 9:00pm	Colusa, CA	2
August 12, 2004	7:00pm to 9:00pm	Lakeport, CA	18
August 13, 2004	10:00am to 12:00pm	Arcata, CA	16 (RAC meeting)
August 17, 2004	10:00am to 12:00pm	Ukiah, CA	11 (Interagency)
August 17, 2004	7:00pm to 9:00pm	Ukiah, CA	18
August 18, 2004	7:00pm to 9:00pm	Napa, CA	7
August 19, 2004	10:00am to 3:00pm	Ukiah, CA	12 (Tribal)
August 20, 2004	7:00 pm to 9:00 pm	Point Arena, CA	20
September 14, 2004	10:am to 4:00pm	Colusa, CA, Williams, CA, Brooks, CA, Clear Lake Oaks, CA	4* (Tribal) Nobody came to the original meeting so we visited the tribal offices.

The meetings were held to gather information and answer questions regarding the current and future management of the public lands administered by the Ukiah Field Office. Participants were encouraged to provide their ideas, thoughts, and perceptions. Most participants asked questions with regard to the RMP, planning process, and/or activities currently happening on the public lands. A copy of the Ukiah BLM Public Scoping Meeting Sign-In Sheet is Appendix D.

All of the meetings followed the same format with an informal gathering period of 15 to 20 minutes. Members of the public were greeted at the entrance and asked to sign in. Visitors were encouraged to look over maps and planning material and to ask questions. After a brief introduction by either the field manager or associate field manager, the associate field manager gave a PowerPoint presentation on the planning process, outlining what the plan hoped to achieve, and the public's role in contributing to the plan direction and substance. After the presentation, BLM staff facilitated a question and answer period of roughly 30 minutes. All those in attendance were encouraged to provide written comments either at the meeting or to mail them to the Ukiah BLM office by September 16, 2004.

The following organizations and agencies were represented among the people who signed in at the public meeting:

- ❖ California Wilderness Coalition
- ❖ California Native Plant Society
- ❖ UC Davis Reserve System
- ❖ Barrack Mining Corporation
- ❖ Lake County Land Trust
- ❖ Mendocino National Forest
- ❖ Lake County Planning Department
- ❖ Lake County Department of Air Quality
- ❖ Lake County Division of Public Works

- ❖ National Marine Fisheries Service
- ❖ California Department of Fish and Game
- ❖ California Division of Oil and Gas and Geothermal Resources
- ❖ California Regional Water Quality Department
- ❖ International Mountain Bike Association
- ❖ Backcountry Horseman
- ❖ Clear Lake Horseman
- ❖ City of 10,000 Buddahs
- ❖ Tuleyome Group
- ❖ Berryessa Trails
- ❖ Bay Ridge Trails
- ❖ Robinson Rancheria
- ❖ Upper Lake Rancheria
- ❖ Pinoleville Rancheria
- ❖ Sherwood Rancheria
- ❖ Dry Creek Rancheria
- ❖ Yokayo Tribe (Not Federally Recognized)
- ❖ Wappo Tribe (Not Federally Recognized)
- ❖ Guidiville Rancheria
- ❖ Potter Valley Rancheria
- ❖ Big Valley Rancheria
- ❖ El-em Rancheria
- ❖ Manchester/Point Arena Rancheria
- ❖ Cloverdale Rancheria
- ❖ Stewarts Point Rancheria
- ❖ Colusa Rancheria
- ❖ Rumsey Rancheria
- ❖ Cortina Rancheria

- ❖ Redbud and Mendocino Coast Chapters of the Audubon Society
- ❖ Point Arena City Council
- ❖ Friends of the Garcia

There were no federal, state, or county elected officials or their representatives present at any of the meetings though all were contacted through direct mailings.

2.3 Collaboration With Tribes

Of the 17 tribes represented at the public scoping meetings, written comments were received from the Yokayo Tribe of Indians, Potter Valley Tribe, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, and the Manchester Band of Pomo Indians.

2.4 Written Comments

In all, 647 written comments were received during the comment period. The comment period started June 16, 2004 when the Federal Register Notice was officially printed, and ended on September 16, 2004. One comment (a “form” letter with the same comments) was received 600 times. This “form” letter comment came from locations across the country, was signed by different people, and then either faxed, mailed, or e-mailed to the Ukiah Field Office.

Of the remaining 47 comments, 37 came from individuals, communities, agencies, and organizations within a two-hour driving time distance of public lands managed by Ukiah Field Office. Six written comments came from locations whose driving time distance from Ukiah public lands exceeded two hours. One comment came from out-of-state (Nevada), and three written comments had no identified point of origin.

Commenting agencies included the US Forest Service Mendocino National Forest, County of Lake, US Environmental Protection Agency, and the Lake County Air quality Management District.

Commenting organizations included: the Redbud and Mendocino Coast Chapters of the Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, California Wilderness Coalition, Defenders of Wildlife, Natural Resources Defense Council, Wilderness Society; Berryessa Trails, Lake County Land Trust; Sacramento Horsemen's Association, Clear Lake Horsemen's Association, and the Backcountry Horsemen's Association.

Written public comments were taken at the public scoping meetings. A copy of the Ukiah RMP Response Form provided to everyone at the public meetings is included at Appendix E.

3.0 Summary of Public Comments

3.1 Methodology

This report summarizes the written comments received during the comment period. In the following pages, “comments” or “points” refer to a discrete statement or portion of a written comment pertaining to a specific issue. Generally each written response contained multiple points. All written responses have been preserved in full and have been filed in our “Comment Folders”. Contents of written responses have been broken out and categorized into individual issues and are recorded in the following **Results** Section.

In this report the Ukiah Field Office intends to provide a review of the range of comments received. We have also listed the number of comments received on each topic to give the reader an idea of the amount of public interest by topic. These numbers were not used to constitute a “vote”. The BLM considers all comments in the planning process, even if a comment came from one individual, provided the comment is relevant by being within the scope of the plan.

4.0 Results

4.1 Issue Categories

4.1.1 Protection of Areas with Wilderness Characteristics (614 comments)

Most of these comments came via the “form” letter (600 signed form letters received). These comments urge the BLM Ukiah Field office to protect key areas that meet the “congressional definition of wilderness as well as outstanding biological values”. Areas highlighted include Cedar Roughs, Blue Ridge, and Cache Creek. Management suggestions included enlarging the Cache Creek Wilderness Study Area by 10,415 acres; managing the Westside of Walker Ridge and the Blue Ridge areas roadless areas; restoring and managing the Payne Ranch to be as a roadless area; and establishing the Black Forest, parts of the Knoxville Recreation Area, and the Stornetta Ranch as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. The letters emphasized that the BLM should protect identified public lands “from harmful human activities including the creation of new unplanned vehicle routes which have contributed to soil erosion, water quality degradation, wildlife habitat destruction, and the loss of wilderness”.

4.1.2 Public Land Access (14 comments)

Better access to the public lands managed by the Ukiah Field office is a local issue of importance. The lack of access to the approximately 6000 land-locked public acres at Berryessa Peak was the major complaint identified through public comment. Those who commented said access to Berryessa Peak is being requested for hiking use only. Access is also being requested by Lake County Community Development to the top of Mount Konocti and Buckingham Peak.

The Yokayo Tribe and the Manchester Band of Pomo Indians requested better access to areas with cultural significance and areas important for food and materials gathering.

One comment from a land owner adjacent to the Knoxville Public Lands requested on behalf of the other landowners that BLM continue to restrict vehicular access along Adams Ridge. Their rationale is to allow the vegetation to re-grow after the "16 Fire" which burned in 1999.

Though no written comments were received, the Ukiah Field office has been informed over the years by the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District, Bay Ridge Trails Inc, California State Parks, and the public at large that BLM needs to pursue public land access to the almost 1600 acre BLM parcel referred to as "The Cedars" in Sonoma County. Special interest groups have been working to connect the Austin Creek State Recreation Area to "The Cedars" via a public easement trail.

Four written comments expressed disappointment in BLM for allowing public access onto the Stornetta Public Lands too soon. They recommended that BLM close the Stornetta Public Lands until biological, geological, and cultural studies are completed. The California Native Plant Society also suggested that public access to the Stornetta Public Lands be limited to Lighthouse Road with a secondary access point coming from Miner Hole Road.

4.1.3 Wind Energy Development at Walker Ridge (4 comments)

Those who commented on wind energy development referred specifically to Walker Ridge and were for the most part not supportive. The general feeling in the comments is that the Walker Ridge Wind Energy Project if allowed to go forward as proposed, would impact public lands with wilderness characteristics. The comments also suggested that the Walker Ridge area requires further evaluation before any decisions are made regarding wind energy development. The other considered wind energy development area's Knoxville and the Geysers received no comments.

4.1.4 Equestrian Recreational Use (15 comments)

Of all of the written public comments received regarding recreational activities, the greatest number supported further opportunities for equestrian use and access. Those who commented supported an increase in opportunities for horseback use such as access to more unpaved single-track trails and fire roads, development of additional and adequate unpaved parking, watering facilities, and development of established areas for horse camping. Some comments addressed specific locations such as Cowboy Camp, High Bridge, and the Stornetta Public lands as areas to be developed for equestrian uses.

Two of the written comments questioned if equestrian use should be either limited or prohibited on the Stornetta Public lands. Their position is that horses can damage the environment.

The Mendocino National Forest commented on the possibility of having equestrian trails connect between the BLM and Forest Service lands, and jointly planning trail projects.

4.1.5 Additional Recreational Trails (7 comments)

All of the written comments from individuals and organizations supported more non-motorized trails for hiking and mountain biking. The additional trails are suggested for Cow Mountain, Mount Konocti, Cache Creek, and along Blue Ridge to Berryessa Peak.

A comment regarding trails was received from the Lake County Air Quality and Management District who would like BLM to limit the construction and development of new trails and/or facilities in areas with known asbestos deposits.

4.1.6 Mountain bike Use (1 comment)

A commenter suggested that the BLM should allow mountain bike use on the Stornetta Public Lands.

4.1.7 Land Tenure (8 Comments)

One written comment specifically asked the BLM to sell land locked parcels at fair market value to adjacent land owners and use the proceeds to acquire other lands of importance to the public.

Three written comments asked for BLM to acquire lands to connect (“link”) areas together in support of improved biodiversity, wildlife habitat (including migration corridors), and to improve hiking opportunities.

Four written comments, all from Native American Tribes, asked the BLM to look further into transfer in trust of public lands to the tribes (re-establishment of Indian land tenure). Their basis for the re-establishment of Indian land tenure is cultural heritage, socio-economic stability, and the tribe’s access to financial resources which would enable them to better manage those lands now administered by the BLM.

4.1.8 Fire Management (4 comments)

Of the three comments received, one was from a private individual who feels campers can reduce the fuel load by using fuels for campfires. The other comments were from the Lake County Air Quality Management District, and the California Wilderness Coalition who would like to see BLM consider other methods for hazardous fuels reduction where feasible (in addition to prescribed fire). The California Wilderness Coalition emphasized the use of non-mechanical treatments for

hazardous fuel reduction. They also emphasized implementation of an “ecologically-based” fire restoration program.

The Mendocino National Forest commented on the need to implement National Fire Plan projects in adjoining areas, and to integrate pre-suppression planning and preparation.

4.1.9 Education and Public Outreach (3 Comments)

The Yokayo Tribe said public land managers should provide more educational opportunities on the public lands.

Two comments requested better maps for the Knoxville Public Lands. In addition to better maps, a comment said that BLM needs to do a better job providing visitor information, law enforcement and maintenance at the Knoxville Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Area.

4.1.10 Recreational Shooting (1 Comment)

The individual who commented asked BLM to do a better job in managing shooting on public lands. Their comments were specific to areas at North Cow Mountain and Knoxville. At both shooting areas the individual requested better maintenance of the shooting areas. At Knoxville, a suggestion was made to move the pistol range to a new location, and acquire the private lands belonging to the Barrack Mining Corporation for shooting range use.

4.1.11 Vegetation Management (2 Comments)

The California Native Plant Society and the Lake County Air Quality Management District commented on BLM's need to implement an effective vegetation (weed) management program.

4.1.12 Wildlife (4 Comments)

Two of the individual written comments were specific to enforcing a dog leash law on the Stornetta Public Lands as a means to better protect wildlife.

The Mendocino Coast Audubon Society provided a listing to BLM of the known birds of concern on the Stornetta Public Lands. They also identified inadequacies with the wildlife species list provided to the BLM from Manchester Beach State Park.

The California Wilderness Coalition said BLM's RMP should consider adapting a policy relative to habitat "edge".

4.1.13 Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation (OHV) (3 Comments)

The California Wilderness Coalition and the Lake County Community Development Department said actions are long overdue to improve on the management of OHV use on the public Lands. Both parties recommended a well designed, mapped and maintained transportation system. They also said the Ukiah Field office must eliminate all vehicle "open areas" and require the public to use only existing authorized routes of travel.

The Mendocino National Forest recommended connectivity for OHVs using BLM and Forest Service lands, and identified opportunities to share resources for law enforcement, and/or OHV management.

4.1.14 Water Quality (2 Comments)

The California Wilderness Coalition and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board stressed the use of “Best Management Practices” when it comes to implementing on-the-ground projects that potentially effect water resources.

4.1.15 Livestock Grazing (1 Comment)

The California Wilderness Coalition urged the Ukiah field Office to continue to follow BLM’s Standards and Guides for Rangeland Health and Livestock Grazing, and to perform adequate monitoring.

4.1.16 Wild and Scenic Rivers (1 Comment)

The California Wilderness Coalition asked the BLM to include a comprehensive Wild and Scenic Rivers inventory, and a schedule for designation in the RMP.

4.1.17 Community Involvement and Collaboration (17 Comments)

All of those who commented mentioned the importance of maintaining their good working relationships with the BLM Ukiah Field Office. Specific suggestions included collaborative trail development; cooperative equestrian use development; outside assistance with recreational use/habitat management inventories; collaborative fire and fuel hazard reduction projects; outside assistance with vandalism repair, clean up, and litter removal; and collaborative methods of educational outreach.

4.2 Key Themes and Priorities

Through this scoping process, several themes and priorities emerged, and they are summarized below:

4.2.1 Designation and Protection

The public is in favor of the BLM Ukiah field Office designating areas of special status. All types of designations are acceptable whether it's an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for the Black Forest, National Landscape Conservation System designation (NLCS) for Cache Creek, or even a National Recreation Area designation for the Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area.

Those who commented came out strongly in support of protection of areas from OHV trespass activities and for management of OHV use into designated places such as Cow Mountain and Knoxville.

4.2.2 Better Access to Public Lands

Those who commented felt that public access to lands managed by the Ukiah field office is limited, and there is a need to improve access for all public land users. Of special concern is access to areas where no legal public land access exists (Berryessa Peak and "the Cedars").

4.2.3 More Recreational Trails

From the comments, there appears to be a need to increase the number of non-motorized recreational trails throughout the Ukiah field Office area of jurisdiction. Commenters said additional trails are needed for hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking.

4.2.4 More opportunities for Equestrian use

In addition to trails, equestrian groups would like to see facilities developed that can accommodate over-night camping with horse trailers, parking areas which can accommodate large vehicles pulling horse trailers, horse--holding facilities, and watering facilities.

4.2.5 Land Tenure

From the comments, it appears that the public would like to see an effective land tenure program. Those who commented are requesting BLM to identify for exchange small (less than 300 acres in size) landlocked tracts of land which are impossible to manage, and through the land exchange process, acquire other lands for the benefit of the greater public.

4.2.6 Fire Management

The public would like the BLM to do more with regard to hazardous fuel reduction and weed abatement.

4.2.7 Wind Energy

The public would like the plan for wind energy development and associated environmental documentation to be a part of the RMP process and not handled as a separate plan amendment.

4.2.8 OHV Use

The public would like to see better management of OHV activities including trespass abatement, route inventory, route designation, mapping, and trail and facilities maintenance.

4.2.9 Collaboration

Our constituents want to maintain the great working relationship they feel they have with the Ukiah Field Office.

5.0 Planning Considerations

5.1 Issues Not Addressed

The following issues were raised during the scoping process but will not be addressed in the plan.

Below is a list of these issues and a rationale for why they will not or cannot be addressed.

5.1.1 Abalone Harvesting (3 Comments)

Jurisdiction over abalone harvesting belongs to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G). It is up to CDF&G to set harvest limits, establish protected areas, and designate sanctuaries for living resources such as abalone. BLM has suggested to CDF&G that areas off the newly acquired Stornetta Public Lands receive limited abalone harvesting if any. CDF&G is determining what action if any, is needed to do to protect the abalone resource.

5.1.2 Building of Dams Along Cache Creek (1 Comment)

The decision to build dams and store water is up to the State. Agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers and/or Bureau of Reclamation are responsible for construction and operation of the dams. BLM has no control over the decision making, analysis, construction, and operation of dams. BLM's involvement regarding dams would be limited to environmental review and any site mitigation.

5.1.3 Navigational Use Along the Garcia River (1 Comment)

The Garcia River, along with its associated upper and lower estuaries, is managed under the State Lands Commission. BLM can make recommendations to the State Lands Commission but in no way has direct authority regarding management actions concerning the river.

5.1.4 Congressional Wilderness Designation (600 Comments)

Wilderness designation can only occur through an act of Congress. The BLM was directed under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 to study all lands under its jurisdiction and make recommendations to Congress regarding their suitability for wilderness designation. The BLM completed this effort for Cache Creek and Cedar Roughs in 1988. Both areas were recommended unsuitable for wilderness.

5.2 Existing Management Decisions to be Carried Forward

The Ukiah RMP is taking forward decisions made over the past 30 years since the latest Management Framework Plan was completed. The summary below highlights the major decisions that will be incorporated into the new plan.

5.2.1 South Cow Mountain Off-Highway Vehicle Area

Decisions regarding the establishment and management of the South Cow Mountain OHV Recreation area will be carried forward in the plan. Through past public participation, South Cow Mountain has been designated for more intensive “motorized” recreational trail use. BLM will patrol and monitor activities at South Cow Mountain to keep damage from OHV use to the area’s resource values at a minimum. Vehicle designations are consistent with BLM manual section 8342 in that they minimize OHV use in areas with extreme natural or man-made hazards and they minimize damage to cultural and natural resources.

5.2.2 North Cow Mountain Management

Decisions over the establishment and management of the North Cow Mountain Recreation Area will be carried forward in the plan. Through past public participation, North Cow Mountain has been designated for passive recreational trail use (hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking). BLM will patrol and monitor activities at North Cow Mountain to keep resource damage from public use to a minimum.

5.2.3 Knoxville Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area

Decisions made over the establishment and management of the Knoxville OHV Recreation area will be carried forward in the plan. Through past public participation, the eastside of Knoxville has been designated for more intensive “motorized” recreational trail use. OHV activities will be kept to existing and designated routes of travel. Any new trail construction will be consistent with management of OHVs away from areas of environmental concern and trespass onto private property. To support resource and private land protection efforts, BLM will patrol and monitor activities at Knoxville. The RMP will consider designation of sensitive serpentine habitats in and around the Knoxville OHV Area as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). ACEC designation will provide for management oversight and protection in those identified locations where critical serpentine habitat exists. In no way will an ACEC designation be designed to eliminate or encumber OHV activities at Knoxville. Vehicle route designations at Knoxville are consistent with BLM Manual Section 8342 in that they minimize OHV use in areas with extreme natural or man-made hazards and they minimize damage to cultural and natural resources.

5.2.4 Wilderness

Wilderness studies were completed for all BLM lands as a requirement under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and recommendations have been formally

submitted to the President, and subsequently to Congress. Therefore, these decisions cannot be changed except by congressional action. For the Ukiah Field Office, those areas being considered by Congress and currently managed as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) include Cache Creek (40,000 acres) and Cedar Roughs (6,000 acres). The BLM will consider areas with wilderness characteristics during the planning process.

5.2.5 Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP)

BLM will carry forward the land allocations identified in the Northwest Forest Plan (late successional reserves, riparian reserves, matrix and administratively withdrawn lands) but will evaluate boundaries for potential adjustment. The standards and guidelines outlined in the NWFP will serve as forest land health standards for this plan.

5.2.6 Cache Creek Plan

The Cache Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan (Cache Creek CRMP) was completed in draft in September of 2002. This plan was developed in a public process and describes management opportunities and alternatives for the public lands at Cache Creek. There was public agreement in these determinations. The proposed action of the Cache Creek CRMP is to protect resource values while providing for compatible recreational uses. Because the Cache Creek CRMP is new and was created in a public process, BLM proposes bringing forward the decisions from the new planning document and begin implementing those land management actions which will enhance resource values.

5.2.7 The Geysers

BLM will carry forward the geothermal leases associated with the Geysers geothermal area. The Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 established BLM as the lead agency over geothermal resources.

The act led to the establishment of the Geysers Known Geothermal Resource Area (Geysers KGRA) in 1973. By 1975, geothermal leases were issued to utility companies involved with geothermal energy production. These leases are in essence valid and existing property rights which allow the utility companies to enhance energy production through development and extraction of geothermal resources. .

6.0 Draft Planning Criteria

6.1 Preliminary Planning Criteria

BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all RMPs. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the development of the plan and determine how the planning team approaches the development of alternatives and ultimately, selection of a Preferred Alternative. They ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other federal, state and local agencies and governmental entities, analysis of information pertinent to the planning area, and professional judgment.

The RMP will be completed in compliance with Federal Land Policy Management Act, the EIS will comply with National Environmental Policy Act, and all other applicable laws will be complied with.

The planning process includes interested Native American groups and tribal governments, and will provide strategies for the protection of archaeological and cultural resource values. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will also be invited to participate as per guidelines set forth in BLM California's Programmatic Agreement with the Office of Historic Preservation.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications to protect visual resource values will be considered in the plan. Federal laws and BLM policy require protection of these values.

The Ukiah Field Office RMP Planning Team will work cooperatively with the State of California, tribal governments, county and municipal governments, other federal agencies, and all other

interested groups, agencies, and individuals. Public participation will be encouraged throughout the process.

The plan will recognize the responsibility for the BLM to consult with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding management of Federally-listed threatened and endangered species. Early coordination with FWS and NMFS will be incorporated into the planning process prior to public scoping and well before initiation of consultation, to identify potential impacts to species and critical habitat. This will allow the planning process to make appropriate adjustments to proposed activities and to incorporate species habitat needs and recovery actions into the plan. Early coordination will lead to completed biological opinions concurrent with the signing of the final ROD. Consultation will be conducted consistent with the National Memorandum of Agreement (August 30, 2000). The Ukiah Field Office contact for all Section 7 consultations with FWS is the Arcata Field Office. For consultations on anadromous fish, the contact is the NMFS office in Santa Rosa.

The plan will emphasize the protection and enhancement of the region's biodiversity while at the same time providing the public with opportunities for compatible recreation activities.

The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan.

The plan will recognize the state's responsibility to manage wildlife. The BLM will consult with the California Division of Fish & Game regarding all wildlife/habitat concerns.

The plan will address transportation and access, and will identify where better access is warranted, where access should remain as is, and where decreased access is appropriate to protect sensitive resources and manage visitation.

The management of grazing is regulated by law and BLM implements the regulations. The plan will incorporate the BLM California Land Health Standards and Livestock Grazing Guidelines. It will lay out a strategy for ensuring proper grazing practices are followed.

Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state and federal agencies.

6.2 Management Plans to Be Incorporated

This RMP will recognize and include all decisions found in the original MFPs and the MFP Update as valid, and much of the associated management/activity plans produced through MFP direction as valid. With the exception of identified issues, the following existing management plans will be incorporated into the RMP as being valid, current, and approved for continued use in guiding BLM management in their respective geographic areas, and they will not be reopened for public review and input:

- Cache Creek Natural Area Coordinated RMP
- North Cow Mountain Recreation Management Plan
- South Cow Mountain Off-Highway Vehicle Management Plan
- Knoxville Recreation Area Management Plan
- Arcata RMP
- Geysers Leasing (NEPA Documents)
- Cache Creek/Rocky Creek ACEC Plan
- Cedar Roughs ACEC Plan

Management of the scattered tracts of public lands in Mendocino and Sonoma counties is addressed in the Arcata Field Office RMP to better manage the timber issues on those parcels.

The decisions made in the Arcata Field Office RMP will not be reopened for public review or input; and it will continue to direct BLM management of those scattered parcels.

On January 11, 2000, President Clinton issued a proclamation establishing the California Coastal National Monument. The President directed the Secretary of the Interior to manage this new monument through the Bureau of Land Management. A limited number of islands and coastal parcels located within the Ukiah Field Office area are included within the new monument boundary. The California Coastal National Monument Plan, now being developed, will provide the sole direction for BLM management of these coastal rocks and islands.

7.0 Summary of Future Steps in Planning Process

Task	Begin Date	End Date
Identify data needs/develop Preparation Plan	December, 2003	June, 2004
Issue Notice of Intent	May, 2004	June, 2004
Prepare and issue Data Collection Contracts	May, 2004	December, 2004
Collect of Field Data	June, 2004	December, 2004
Initiate Community Involvement (most intensive during scoping & alternative development), identify cooperating agencies, develop consultation agreement with FWS	July, 2004	February, 2006
Issue Planning RFP, Contract Proposals	August, 2004	September, 2004
Award Planning Contract	September, 2004	October, 2004
Scoping Meetings	July, 2004	September, 2004
Analysis of the Management Situation	May, 2004	September, 2004
Develop Alternatives with partners	September, 2004	December, 2004
Write Draft Plan		
Purpose and Need, Affected Environment, Alternatives	November, 2004	December, 2004
Impact Analysis	December, 2004	February, 2005

Task	Begin Date	End Date
Internal Review	March, 2005	May, 2005
Publish Draft EIS/Draft RMP	May, 2005	June 2005
Public Meetings on Draft, and Review Period	June, 2005	August, 2005
Comment Analysis	August, 2005	October, 2005
Preparation of Final	October, 2005	January, 2006
Internal Review; FWS consultation	January, 2006	April, 2006
Publish Final EIS/Proposed RMP		May, 2006
Protest Period	May, 2006	June, 2006
Issue Record of Decision	July, 2006	September, 2006

8.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Ukiah field Office Map

Appendix B: NOI Federal Register

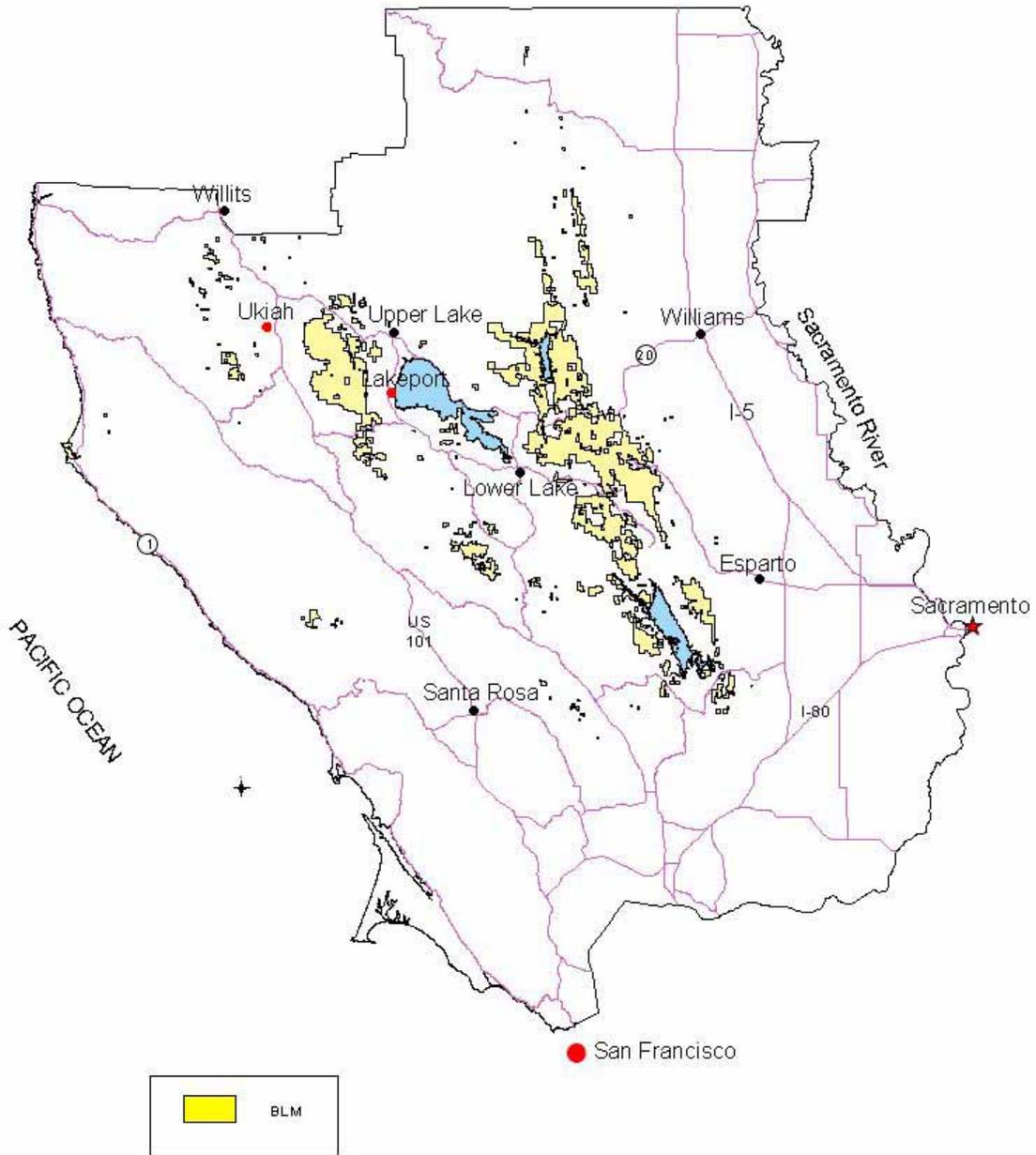
Appendix C: BLM Public Input Newspaper Ad

Appendix D: Ukiah BLM Public Scoping Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Appendix E: Ukiah RMP Response Form

Appendix A: Ukiah Field Office Map

Bureau of Land Management
Ukiah Field Office



Appendix A

Billing Code: 4310-40(P)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-340-04-1610-DO]

Notice of Intent to prepare a Resource Management Plan for the Ukiah Field Office and associated Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior

ACTION: Notice of Intent

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Field Office in Ukiah, California, intends to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) with an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the public lands and resources under the jurisdiction of the BLM Ukiah Field Office. This notice initiates the public scoping process. Public scoping meetings to identify relevant issues will be announced in advance through BLM's web site and in local news media.

DATES: Public meetings will be held throughout the plan scoping and preparation period. In order to ensure local community participation and input, open houses will be held in locations most closely affiliated with the public lands in the planning area. All public meetings will be announced through local news media, newsletters, and the BLM web site www.ca.blm.gov/ukiah at least 15 days prior to the event.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by [insert date 45 days after the date of publication of this notice in the Federal Register] by any of the following methods:

- Web Site: <http://www.ca.blm.gov/ukiah>
- Email: ca340@ca.blm.gov

Appendix B: NOI Federal Register

- Fax: 707-468-4027
- Mail: 2550 N. State Street, Ukiah, CA 95482-3023

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the Ukiah Field Office, which is located at the mailing address listed above. Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents will be available for public review at the Ukiah Field Office in Ukiah, California during regular business hours, 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays, and may be published as part of the EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. Individuals who wish to withhold their name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act must state this prominently at the beginning of their written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact David Fatch, 2550 N. State St., Ukiah, CA 95482, (707) 468-4053; email dfatch@ca.blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The geographic area includes the public land in the State of California within the counties of Marin, Solano, Sonoma, Mendocino (south of the city of Willits), Lake, Napa, Yolo, Colusa, Contra Costa, Sacramento, and Glenn. This planning activity encompasses approximately 300,000 surface acres and an additional 214,000 sub-surface (mineral estate) of public land. The plan will fulfill the needs and obligations set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and BLM management policies.

Appendix B: NOI Federal Register

The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis and EIS alternatives. These issues also guide the planning process. Comments on issues and planning criteria can be submitted in writing to the BLM at any of the public scoping meetings, or they may be submitted to the BLM at the addresses listed above. To be most helpful, formal scoping comments should be submitted within 15 days after the last public meeting, although comments will be accepted throughout the creation of the Draft RMP/EIS. The minutes and list of attendees for each scoping meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days after the meeting to any participant who wishes to clarify the views expressed. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and/or address from public review or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. We will not, however, consider anonymous comments. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, are available for public inspection in their entirety.

The changing needs and interests of the public necessitate a revision to the land use plans covering the Ukiah Field Office area. Preliminary issues and management concerns have been identified by BLM personnel, other agencies, and in meetings with individuals and user groups. They are:



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
News Release

For Immediate Release: July 27, 2004
04-78

CA-N-

Contact: Jeff Fontana (530) 252-5332; Larry Ames (707) 468-4000

PUBLIC “SCOPING” INITIATED ON PLAN FOR NORTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA

The U. S. Bureau of Land Management will hold a series of public meetings in August to get public ideas on land use and natural resources issues that should be addressed in a new land use plan for northwest California public lands.

Participants in the meetings will hear a presentation about development of the new Resource Management Plan and opportunities for public involvement. There will be opportunities to provide written comments. Meetings will be held as follows:

Colusa: Wednesday, Aug. 11, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Conference Room at the Department of Agriculture, 100 Sunrise Blvd., near the Colusa Airport.

Lakeport: Tuesday, Aug. 12, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Lake County Board of Supervisors Chambers,
255 North Forbes St.

Ukiah: Tuesday, Aug. 17, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Bureau of Land Management Ukiah Field Office,
2550 North State St.

Napa: Wednesday, Aug. 18, from 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. in the Library Conference Room, 500 Coombs St.

Point Arena: Friday, Aug. 20, from 7 to 9 p.m., Point Arena City Hall, 451 School St.

The new land use plan will apply to about 300,000 acres of BLM-managed public land in Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Marin, Mendocino (south of Willits), Napa, Solano, Sonoma, and Yolo counties. BLM Ukiah Field Manager Rich Burns said the new plan will update several existing plans to reflect significant changes in the region, including urban growth, increasing recreation demands, wind and geothermal energy development proposals, additions to federal and state threatened and endangered species lists, and changes in land use requirements by state, county, and local agencies.

Appendix C: BLM Public Input Newspaper Ad

Those who do not submit comments at a public meeting can provide them directly to BLM's website at www.ca.blm.gov/ukiah/rmp, or by email to ukiahrmp@ca.blm.gov, by fax to (707) 468-4027, or by mail to BLM Ukiah Field Office, 2550 N. State St., Ukiah, Calif., 95482. To be most helpful, BLM would like to receive comments by Aug. 31, 2004.

Burns said the BLM will use public comments in developing a draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, expected to be available for public review and comment in 2005.

-BLM-

Ukiah Field Office – 2250 North State Street, Ukiah, California – (707) 468-4000

Ukiah RMP Response Form

For public input on the Draft Ukiah Resource Management Plan
and Environmental Impact Statement

Note: All items must be completed for form to be accepted

Today's Date: _____

Your name (please print): _____

Representing (put an **X** in one box only):

Self only

Business, organization or agency (specify): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email (optional): _____

Important Privacy Notice: All written comments, including names and street addresses, will be available for public review upon request, and may be published by the BLM during the planning process. However, as an individual you can ask us to withhold your name and address. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety. If you checked "self only" above, and would like us to withhold your name, put an **X** in this box:

Issues that need to be addressed in the Ukiah RMP:

Send form to:
BLM Ukiah Field Office
Attn: RMP Project Lead
2550 North State Street
Ukiah, CA 95482

Continue your comments on the back of this page, or on additional pages