

# Record of Decision



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# Record of Decision

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## INTRODUCTION

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This Record of Decision (ROD) approves the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) proposal to manage the public lands within the Jarbidge Field Office as presented in the attached Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Approved RMP was described as Alternative VI (Proposed Plan) in the 2014 Jarbidge Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (BLM, 2014). This ROD provides the background on development of the plan and rationale for approving the proposed decisions contained in Alternative VI (Proposed Plan), and describes the modifications and clarifications made to address protests received on the plan. The attached Jarbidge Approved RMP describes the decisions themselves.

The Jarbidge Approved RMP planning area boundary coincides with the boundary of the BLM Jarbidge Field Office. The boundary extends from the Bruneau River on the west to Salmon Falls Creek on the east, and from the Snake River on the north to the northern boundaries of the BLM Wells Field Office and the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest on the south. It includes parts of Elmore, Owyhee, and Twin Falls Counties in south-central Idaho and Elko County in northern Nevada. The BLM manages approximately 1,371,000 acres of public land surface (Map 1), 1,497,000 acres of Federal mineral estate, and 1,463,000 acres of livestock grazing. This plan supersedes the 1987 Jarbidge Resource Management Plan previously used to guide management of public lands in the Jarbidge Field Office.

## OVERVIEW OF THE ALTERNATIVES

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In the 2009 Jarbidge Draft RMP/EIS, six alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, were analyzed in detail. The alternatives were developed to address major planning issues and to provide direction for resource programs influencing land management.

In the 2014 Proposed RMP/Final EIS, an additional alternative was analyzed. This alternative, Alternative VI (Proposed Plan), was developed to provide a practical and workable alternative to actively restore sagebrush steppe ecosystem structure, function, and resiliency through restoration treatments and enhanced fire management. Although Alternative IV-B (Preferred Alternative) from the Draft RMP/EIS was used as the baseline, the BLM selected goals, objectives, and management actions from the other alternatives that integrated ecological, economic, and social principles in a manner that safeguards the long-term sustainability, diversity, and productivity of the land. Management actions were then refined based on analysis of the alternatives in the Draft RMP/EIS and feedback received through comments from the tribes; Federal, State, and county agencies; the public; and organizations. The BLM also incorporated into the Proposed Plan changes in laws, regulations, policy, and special status species that occurred between the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

All management under any of the alternatives would comply with federal laws, rules, regulations, and policies. Each alternative emphasized a different combination of resource uses, allocations, and restoration measures to address issues and resolve conflicts among uses, so program goals were met in varying degrees across the alternatives. The seven alternatives analyzed are summarized below.

### **No Action Alternative**

The No Action Alternative would continue to implement the objectives and management actions provided in the 1987 Jarbidge RMP and its amendments, but included measures to comply with new legislation and policies, where appropriate. Lands in poor ecological condition would be improved, while lands in good and excellent ecological condition would be maintained. Vegetation treatments could use native or non-native species. The majority of the planning area would remain available for resource uses, including livestock grazing, and land use authorizations. Cross-country motorized vehicle use would remain open in the majority of Elmore and Twin Falls Counties but would be limited to existing routes in Owyhee County.

The No Action alternative was not selected because it was limited in its consistency with Federal, State, and local plans; it does not address tribal issues; it does not include water quality standards; it does not identify priority plant species and habitats; protection for cultural and paleontological resources is limited;

Visual Resource Management (VRM) class boundaries are poorly defined; it does not identify current fire management and planning guidance; and guidance for fluid and locatable minerals is very general.

## **Alternative I**

Alternative I focused on enhancing and sustaining existing and historic uses of the planning area. This alternative would have the largest component of active recreation management, including Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) for motorized recreation, hunting and fishing, hiking, and water-based recreation. Livestock grazing would be maintained near current forage allocation levels. This alternative would focus on implementing management to benefit mule deer more than the other alternatives. Restoration projects would focus on providing habitat for mule deer and special status species, including treatments in some non-native perennial communities. Annual communities would also be a focus for vegetation treatments. Vegetation treatments could use native or non-native species depending on vegetation objectives. Reducing the amount of wildland fire in the planning area would be addressed through treatments to move vegetation toward Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 1, treatments for noxious weeds and invasive plants, and construction of fuel breaks.

Alternative I was not selected. Compared to the Approved RMP, Alternative I has fewer protections for sage-grouse habitat and sagebrush obligate species, and fewer acres restored to native shrubland with more maintenance of non-native perennial vegetation. It has fewer protections for the Oregon National Historic Trail (NHT), would require more wild horse round-ups, would close more areas to motorized transportation, and would identify fewer areas for critical fire suppression. Also, it has more acres of land available for disposal, which could provide less protection for tribal rights and interests.

## **Alternative II**

Alternative II focused on increasing commercial uses throughout most of the planning area. Livestock grazing would be increased substantially. Non-native perennial communities would be actively maintained for livestock, and treatments in non-native annual communities would focus on converting these areas to a non-native, more fire tolerant, forage-producing perennial community. Native plant communities would be maintained. Other commercial uses, including energy development, would be allowed throughout most areas and have the fewest restrictions compared to the other alternatives. Vegetation treatments could use native or non-native species depending on vegetation and resource use objectives. Reducing the amount of wildland fire in the planning area would be addressed through treatments to move native vegetation toward FRCC 1, treatments for noxious weeds and invasive plants, construction of fuel breaks, and fuels reduction through increased permitted livestock grazing.

Alternative II was not selected. Compared to the Approved RMP, Alternative II has the fewest protections for sage-grouse and sagebrush obligate species, no protection of relevant and important values through Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designations, and the fewest protections for the Oregon NHT. It has minimal focus on restoration and recreation, would identify the fewest areas for critical fire suppression, would remove all wild horses from the herd area, and would not allow cross-county motorized travel. Also, it has more acres of land available for disposal, which could provide less protection for tribal rights and interests.

## **Alternative III**

Alternative III focused on restoring the resiliency of ecosystem structure and function through intensive management of fuels and enhanced fire suppression capabilities throughout the planning area. This alternative would provide for the highest amount of fuels treatments. Non-native perennial plant communities would be actively managed to contribute to wildland fire prevention and suppression efforts; this management would include increased levels of permitted livestock grazing. Treatments of annual communities would focus on converting these areas to non-native perennial fire-tolerant communities. Native plant communities would be restored to move toward their historic fire regime; extensive fuels reduction measures may be taken to manage native plant communities. Vegetation treatments may use both native and non-native species, with fire-tolerant and fire-resistant species having a high priority. Other uses would be allowed to the extent they do not contribute to an increase in wildland fire size and

intensity. The quality and quantity of infrastructure such as roads and water would be increased to support fire suppression activities more in this alternative than in other alternatives.

Alternative III was not selected. Compared to the Approved RMP, Alternative III has fewer protections for sage-grouse habitat and sagebrush obligate species and fewer acres restored to native shrubland with more maintenance of non-native perennial vegetation. It has less protection of relevant and important values through ACEC designations, fewer protections for the Oregon NHT, and would identify fewer areas for critical fire suppression. Also, it has more acres of land available for disposal, which could provide less protection for tribal rights and interests.

## **Alternative IV**

Alternative IV focused on actively restoring the resiliency of ecosystem structure and function through restoration projects and managing uses. Priorities would be to treat at-risk or fragmented habitats and non-native perennial and annual communities. This alternative would provide for active restoration using more tools and more intensive approaches in more areas than in Alternative V. Vegetation treatments could use native or non-native species depending on vegetation objectives. Reducing the amount of wildland fire in the planning area would be addressed through treatments to move vegetation toward FRCC 1, treatments for noxious weeds and invasive plants, and construction of fuel breaks.

Alternative IV has been split into two sub-alternatives. The only difference between the sub-alternatives is the size of the Inside Desert and Jarbidge Foothills ACECs; these ACECs would have larger boundaries in Alternative IV-A than in Alternative IV-B. Differences between Alternatives IV-A and IV-B also appear in sections in which ACEC management is a factor.

Alternative IV was not selected. Compared to the Approved RMP, Alternative IV has fewer protections for the Oregon NHT. It also has more acres of land available for disposal, which could provide less protection for sage-grouse and provide less protection for tribal rights and interests.

## **Alternative V**

Alternative V focused on the restoration of habitats toward historic vegetation communities. In native plant communities, passive restoration approaches would be preferred. Active restoration would take place in non-native perennial and annual communities; treatments in non-native perennial communities would minimize soil disturbance. Restoration projects would focus on habitat for sage-grouse and other special status species as well as special designations. Vegetation treatments would use only native species. Reducing the amount of wildland fire in the planning area would be addressed through treatments to move vegetation toward FRCC 1, treatments for noxious weeds and invasive plants, and construction of fuel breaks.

Alternative V was not selected. Compared to the Approved RMP, Alternative V has fewer acres of shrubland restoration, fewer protections for the Oregon NHT, minimal focus on recreation, and the most acres closed to motorized travel. It has more acres of land available for disposal, which could provide less protection for tribal rights and interests. Also, the critical suppression area is so large, it dilutes the effectiveness of prioritizing suppression efforts.

## **Alternative VI (Proposed Plan)**

Alternative VI (Proposed Plan) focused on actively restoring the resiliency of sagebrush steppe ecosystem structure and function through restoration projects and enhanced fire management while balancing resource protection and uses within the planning area. Vegetation treatments could use native or non-native species, depending on vegetation objectives. Upland vegetation treatments would focus on restoring non-native perennial and native grassland communities to native shrubland, focusing on restoring and connecting habitat for sage-grouse, slickspot peppergrass, other special status species, and big game. Alternative VI emphasizes reducing the extent and number of wildland fires through treatments to move vegetation toward FRCC 1, treatments for noxious weeds and invasive plants, and construction of fuel breaks. Commercial uses, including energy development, would be allowed, but would be subject to the greatest restrictions within sage-grouse habitat as compared to the other

alternatives. More public land would be retained in Alternative VI than the other alternatives. Transportation and travel in the majority of the planning area would be limited to designated routes except for designated play areas in the Deadman and Yahoo SRMAs. The Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness would be closed to motorized and mechanized uses.

Alternative IV-B was selected as the BLM's Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS. As a result of public comment, internal review, and cooperating agency coordination on the Draft RMP/EIS, Alternative IV-B was adjusted to become Alternative VI (Proposed Plan) and analyzed in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. This alternative represents the mix and variety of actions that, in the opinion of BLM, best resolve the issues and management concerns in consideration of all values and programs. With minor adjustments and clarifications, it is now the Approved RMP. (Minor adjustments and clarifications were made and have been explained in the *Notice of Modification* and *Clarification* section later in this ROD.)

## Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The BLM determined Alternative VI (Proposed Plan) to be the environmentally preferable alternative, taking into account both the human (social and economic) environment and the natural environment. The Council on Environmental Quality has defined the environmentally preferable alternative as the one that will promote the national environmental policy, as expressed in Section 101 of NEPA. This section lists the following goals for all federal plans, programs, and policies:

- Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
- Ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
- Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
- Preserve important historical, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
- Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
- Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

Based on these criteria, identifying the environmentally preferable alternative involves balancing current and potential resource uses, resource impacts, and mitigation to maintain a healthy environment, while meeting human needs. Alternative VI (Proposed Plan), provides this balance. Alternatives I and III also provide a balanced approach to resource use and protection, but offer less overall protection for sage-grouse and tribal rights and interests. Alternative II is the least environmentally preferable alternative because it offers the most intensive use of resources while providing the fewest restrictions for protecting natural and cultural resources. Although Alternative IV restores more shrubland, it could provide less protection for sage-grouse and tribal rights and interests due to acres available for disposal. Alternative V would be more protective of natural and biological resources than the other alternatives, but would be the most restrictive for economic use and development.

## RESULTS OF PROTEST REVIEW

The BLM received eight protest letters during the 30-day protest period provided for the proposed land use plan decisions contained in the Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS in accordance with 43 CFR Part 1610.5-2. Protesting parties included:

- Dana L. Hofstetter, Hofstetter Law Office, representing Jeff Harper, Flying H Land LLC/Flying H Farms Partnership
- Suzanne Roy, American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign, and Ginger Kathrens, the Cloud Foundation (the Cloud Foundation does not have protest standing)

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- Owyhee County Board of Commissioners
- Darcy A. Helmick, Simplot Livestock Company
- Katie Fite, Western Watersheds Projects (2 letters)
- Nada Culver, The Wilderness Society
- Mike and Ronda Macaw, Devil's Creek Ranch

The main points of the protests include:

Jeff Harper, Flying H Land LLC/Flying H Farms Partnership

- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) because the BLM did not engage and listen to stakeholder concerns during preparation of the plan.

Suzanne Roy, American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign and Ginger Kathrens, the Cloud Foundation

- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates NEPA because it fails to analyze an alternative that restores access to the Snake River as a water source for wild horses.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates NEPA because it fails to adequately analyze the impacts of managing a non-reproducing herd in the Saylor Creek Herd Management Area (HMA). The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS does not analyze the impacts to:
  - the "wild" and "free roaming" nature of wild horses and other behavioral dynamics;
  - the physical health of mares;
  - genetic diversity; and
  - rangeland health.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, its implementing regulations, and BLM Handbook H-4700-1 by proposing to manage a non-reproducing herd in the Saylor Creek HMA.

Owyhee County Board of Commissioners

- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates FLPMA by not fully identifying inconsistencies with existing county plans.

Darcy A. Helmick, Simplot Livestock Company

- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates NEPA because it fails to adequately analyze the impacts from making the canyons associated with the Bruneau River, Jarbidge River, and Salmon Falls Creek unavailable for grazing.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS cannot make allotment-level decisions regarding managing biological crusts in an RMP.

Katie Fite, Western Watersheds Projects (2 letters)

- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates NEPA because it fails to analyze an alternative that:
  - makes the entire Jarbidge planning area unavailable to grazing; and
  - relies on both active and passive restoration.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates NEPA because it fails to adequately analyze impacts to vegetation. The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS relies on inaccurate baseline information regarding cheatgrass and other exotic understory species.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates NEPA because it fails to adequately analyze the impacts of livestock grazing decisions. The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS:
  - does not conduct valid carrying capacity and suitability analyses for livestock grazing; and
  - does not use proper indicators to analyze livestock grazing impacts.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates NEPA because its purpose and need focuses on extractive resources rather than protecting the natural environment.

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- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates FLPMA by not adequately protecting lands with wilderness characteristics and not expanding ACECs.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates Secretarial Order 3289A1. The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS mentions that climate change can change adverse impacts to the planning area, but it does not adequately analyze, nor provide sufficient measures for mitigating, the impacts from climate change.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates FLPMA, BLM Manual Section 6840, and Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2012-044. With regard to greater sage-grouse, the Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS:
  - is inaccurate regarding the species' early nesting cover needs;
  - does not analyze existing structural range improvements;
  - does not provide necessary controls for livestock grazing;
  - does not provide an adequate monitoring plan;
  - does not establish disturbance thresholds; and
  - does not incorporate Preliminary Priority Habitat and Preliminary General Habitat.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates the Stipulated Settlement Agreement between Western Watersheds Project and the BLM. The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS:
  - does not adequately establish reference areas;
  - does not establish guidelines for drought;
  - does not analyze a range of protective measures, mitigation, and maps for the greater sage-grouse and its habitat;
  - does not analyze a “no grazing” alternative;
  - does not establish criteria for issuing new livestock grazing permits;
  - does not consider livestock disturbance and resource conflicts when establishing livestock grazing allocations;
  - does not establish protocols and develop necessary data with regard to sensitive species and their habitats;
  - does not consider science submitted by Western Watersheds Project;
  - does not adequately address desired outcomes, allowable uses, and management actions; and
  - does not consider utilization, trends, and other monitoring data.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates FLPMA by failing to give priority to ACECs. The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS does not consider additional ACECs and reduces protections for the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS does not sufficiently disclose or discuss the visual resource inventory (VRI).
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates FLPMA because it uses FRCC categories for wildland fire management.
- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates BLM's Special Status Species policy and the Migratory Bird Act. The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS does not adequately analyze the impacts to important species by only analyzing impacts to ‘guilds’ of species.

Nada Culver, The Wilderness Society

The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates FLPMA by not adequately protecting lands with wilderness characteristics and not expanding ACECs.

The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates FLPMA, BLM Manual Section 6840, and Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2012-044. With regard to greater sage-grouse, the Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS:

- does not formally designate (e.g. ACEC) a priority greater sage-grouse management area;
- contains inconsistencies regarding greater sage-grouse management;

- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS violates BLM Manual Section 6320. The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS does not adequately protect lands with wilderness characteristics, and does not adequately document its rationale for not protecting lands with wilderness characteristics.

#### Ronda and Mike Macaw, Devil's Creek Ranch

- The Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS depicts proposed reference areas in our allotment as unavailable for grazing which will affect access to water for all animals in this area.

The BLM Director denied all protests. Minor adjustments and clarifications were made and have been explained in the *Notice of Modification* and *Clarification* section later in this ROD. Detailed information on protests may be found on the BLM Washington Office Website at:

[http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/planning/protest\\_resolution.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/planning/protest_resolution.html).

## THE DECISION

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The decision is hereby made to approve the attached plan as the Approved Resource Management Plan (Approved RMP) for management of public lands that are administered by the BLM's Jarbidge Field Office. The Approved RMP replaces public land decisions in the 1987 Jarbidge RMP and amendments.

The Approved RMP was prepared under the authorities of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 in accordance with BLM planning regulations (43 CFR Part 1600). An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for this RMP in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

### What the Decision/ Approved RMP Provides

Land use plan decisions include:

- Goals
- Objectives (Desired Future Conditions)
- Land Use Allocations
- Management Actions

**Goals** are the broad statements of desired outcomes, and are usually not quantifiable.

**Objectives** are specific desired conditions, usually quantifiable and measurable, and may have timeframes for achievement.

**Land use allocations** specify locations within the planning area that are available or not for certain uses. These include decisions such as what lands are available for livestock grazing, mineral material use, oil and gas leasing, and locatable mineral development, what lands may be available for disposal via exchange and/ or sale, and what lands are open, closed, or limited to motorized travel (please note that all acreages presented in the Approved RMP are estimations even when presented to the nearest acre).

**Management actions** include those provisions that help in meeting the established goals and objectives and include measures that will be applied to guide day-to-day activities on public lands, including but not limited to stipulations, guidelines, best management practices (BMPs), and design features.

The primary RMP management decisions in the Approved RMP are to:

- Manage resources to protect and enhance vegetative communities, fish and wildlife resources, riparian areas and wetlands, wild horses, and visual, cultural, geological, and paleontological resources.
- Manage uses to protect and prevent damage to public land resources, and to enhance those resources where feasible.
- Designate critical and conditional fire suppression areas.

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- Manage a non-reproducing herd with an appropriate management level range of 50 to 200 wild horses in the Saylor Creek Wild Horse Management Area.
- Establish a 990,000 acre sage-grouse management area.
- Manage livestock grazing to ensure achievement or movement towards meeting *Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*.
  - Designate 1,411,000 acres available for livestock grazing.
  - Designate 52,000 acres unavailable for livestock grazing.
  - Allocate 216,000 to 326,000 animal unit months (AUMs) for livestock at initial implementation of the RMP, and 186,000 to 279,000 at full implementation.
- Designate six SRMAs, four Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs), and two special recreational management zones.
- Designate areas as Limited, Closed, or Open to motorized vehicle use:
  - Designate 1,304,000 acres as limited to existing routes,
  - Designate 60,000 acres as closed to motorized and mechanized vehicle use,
  - Designate 3,000 acres as closed to motorized vehicle use, and
  - Designate 4,000 acres in Deadman and Yahoo SRMAs as open to cross-country motorized vehicle use.
- Recommend withdrawal of approximately 20 acres from locatable mineral entry.
- Determine which lands are available or unavailable to mineral leasing:
  - Make an estimated 1,276,000 acres of federal mineral estate available for mineral leasing under standard lease terms and conditions,
    - Make an estimated 915,000 acres available for mineral leasing with moderate constraints; and an estimated 26,000 acres available mineral leasing with major constraints,
  - Make approximately 95,000 acres unavailable for mineral leasing.
- Designate four ACECs and manage according to the special management prescriptions identified for each area.
- Establish the Oregon NHT National Trail Management Corridor and protective zone.
- Tentatively classify seven river segments as eligible for consideration as part of the National Wild and Scenic system, and manage such segments to protect their free flowing nature and outstandingly remarkable values.
- Continue and manage the Lower Salmon Falls Creek Wilderness Study Area in accordance with the BLM Manual 6330 - Management of Wilderness Study Areas - unless released by Congress.

This ROD serves as the final decision establishing the land use plan decisions outlined in the Approved RMP and is effective on the date it is signed. No further administrative remedies are available for these land use plan decisions.

### **What the Decision/RMP Does Not Provide**

This Approved Plan does not authorize any project, approve any application, or provide approval for any specific future action within the planning area. All applications, regardless of the proposal, will be subject to a NEPA process, including additional public review, the identification of potential impacts resulting from the proposed action, the development and application of mitigating measures, and the assignment of Required Operating Procedures, Stipulations, and Standard Lease Terms as appropriate.

- The Approved RMP does not include a Travel Management Plan (TMP). Within five years of signing this Record of Decision, the BLM will complete a TMP. The TMP will determine the routes and trails to be designated, modified, closed, or rehabilitated as well as the maintenance level, modes of travel, and seasonal and access restrictions for designated routes. The TMP will be developed through a public process to determine the transportation and travel system for the planning area.

- The Approved RMP does not contain allotment-level forage allocations for livestock grazing. This will be determined as part of the permit renewal process.
- RMP decisions for surface estate only apply to BLM managed lands, even where these private or state lands are shown on a map included in the RMP.
- The RMP does not affect valid existing rights.
- Many decisions are not appropriate at this level of planning and are not included in the ROD. Examples of these types of decisions include:
  - *Statutory requirements.* The decision will not change the BLM's responsibility to comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
  - *National policy.* The decision will not change BLM's obligation to conform with current or future National policy.
  - *Funding levels and budget allocations.* These are determined annually at the National level and are beyond the control of the field office.

## NOTICE OF MODIFICATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Modifications and clarifications were made to the Approved RMP based on the review and resolution of the protest letters, as well as from internal review by the BLM. None of the modifications or clarifications alter the Chapter 4 analyses in the Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The modifications or clarifications to the decisions are provided below.

### Modifications

The following modifications made to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS are reflected in the Approved RMP:

- In the *Lands with Wilderness Characteristics* section, the goal and objective was modified and a management action was added to be consistent with BLM Manual 6320- Considering Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the BLM Land Use Planning Process.
  - WC-G-1 previously stated “Lands with Wilderness Characteristics will not be managed to maintain wilderness characteristics. Lands with Wilderness Characteristics will be managed for multiple use consistent with resource objectives and designations.” It has been modified to state “Lands inventoried to contain wilderness characteristics will be managed to emphasize other multiple uses while applying management restrictions to reduce impacts to wilderness characteristics.”
  - WC-MA-1 was added, which states “Projects within lands inventoried as containing wilderness characteristics will consider measures to minimize impacts on naturalness, opportunities for solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.”
- In the *Wild Horses* section, two management actions from Alternative VI (Proposed Plan) in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS were not carried forward into the Approved RMP because they pertained to restrictions during foaling. Since the wild horse herd in the Approved RMP will be non-reproducing, there will be no foaling period. Those management actions stated:
  - If a conflict between motorized travel and wild horses is identified, seasonal restrictions may be placed on motorized travel within the HMA during foaling (from March through July).
  - Seasonal restrictions may be placed on authorized uses within the HMA to avoid disturbing wild horses during foaling (March through July).
- In the *Livestock Grazing* section, allocation LG-A-1 was modified to say “The majority of the planning area will be available for livestock grazing (1,411,000 acres). The following areas will not be available for livestock grazing (52,000 acres):
  - Unallocated portions of the canyons associated with the Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers and Salmon Falls Creek (below the dam).”

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This modification better describes our intent of the allocation, and will continue to allow historic grazing in the Bruneau Canyon Allotment as administered by the Bruneau Field Office. Grazing of this allotment was analyzed in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS under the No Action Alternative, although mapped incorrectly. Map 17 in the Approved RMP has been corrected to display this modification.

See *Meeting the Purpose and Need, Addressing the Planning Issues, and Analyzing the Environmental Consequences* section, Rationale for Livestock Grazing Decision, for more details.

- In the *Transportation and Travel* section, one management action from Alternative VI (Proposed Plan) in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS was not carried forward into the Approved RMP because it pertained to travel restrictions during wild horse foaling. Since the wild horse herd in the Approved RMP will be non-reproducing, there will be no foaling period. The management actions stated:
  - If a conflict between motorized travel and wild horses is identified, seasonal restrictions may be placed on motorized travel within the Herd Management Area during foaling (from March through July).
- In the *Land Use Authorization* section, the Section 368 energy corridor widths in allocation LA-A-4 were modified from one mile wide to 3,500 feet wide. This includes the Pilgrim Gulch, Shoestring, Saylor Creek, and Balanced Rock corridors. These widths were analyzed in the No Action Alternative and will be more protective of natural and cultural resources. The narrower widths will also be consistent with adjacent BLM field offices and the 2009 Approved Resource Management Plan Amendments/Record of Decision for Designation of Energy Corridor on BLM-Administered Lands in the 11 Western States.
- In the *Locatable Minerals* section, allocation LO-A-2 was added to include a small parcel of land formerly known as the White Rind Jasper Mine, whose claim will be relinquished back to the BLM. The parcel is surrounded by the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, but was not designated as wilderness by Congress. This parcel was analyzed in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS as withdrawn by statute in all alternatives, and recommended for withdrawal in Alternatives I, III, and IV since it is located within the Bruneau-Jarbidge ACEC. Map 30 in the Approved RMP has been corrected to display this modification.

## Clarifications

The following clarifications and minor corrections made to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS are reflected in the Approved RMP:

- In the *Air and Atmospheric Values* section, management actions AAV-MA-5 and AAV-MA-7 removed the phrase “of Idaho” in order to provide consistency with other management actions. It also removes specificity to State of Idaho requirements or standards which will not apply if an activity or authorized use takes place in Nevada.
  - AAV-MA-5 previously stated “Develop dust abatement stipulations for BLM-authorized construction and maintenance activities that have the potential to exceed State of Idaho air quality standards.” It has been changed to state “Develop dust abatement stipulations for BLM-authorized construction and maintenance activities that have the potential to exceed State air quality standards.”
  - AAV-MA-7 previously stated “Design BLM activities and authorized uses to comply with State of Idaho requirements for noise management.” It has been changed to “Design BLM activities and authorized uses to comply with State requirements for noise management.”
- In the *Water Resources* section, minor corrections were made to management actions WR-MA-2, WR-MA-6, and WR-MA-9.
  - WR-MA-2 previously stated “Prevent or mitigate the impacts of BLM management activities and authorized and allowed uses on water quality to comply with Federal, State, and local water quality regulations.” It has been changed to state “Prevent or mitigate the impacts of BLM

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- management activities and authorized and allowed uses on water quality to comply with Federal and State water quality regulations.”
- WR-MA-6 added the word “new” in front of water development projects to state “Consult or coordinate with the tribes and with Federal, State, and local agencies when determining location and designs for new water development projects.”
  - WR-MA-9 removed the phrase “of Idaho and Nevada” to be consistent with other management actions. It previously stated “Water bodies that are supporting beneficial uses (e.g., cold water biota, salmonid spawning, recreation, and agriculture) will be managed to meet or exceed State of Idaho and Nevada regulations.” It now states “Water bodies that are supporting beneficial uses (e.g., cold water biota, salmonid spawning, recreation, and agriculture) will be managed to meet or exceed State regulations.”
  - In the *Riparian Areas and Wetlands* section, minor corrections were made to management actions RI-MA-1 and RI-MA-3.
    - RI-MA-1 previously stated “Identify Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs) around riparian areas and wetlands that contain or are tributaries to streams that contain special status species or their habitat to protect riparian vegetation, fisheries, and water quality. RCA widths will be as follows.” The terms “as described in Appendix B (Aquatic and Riparian Management Strategy [ARMS])” and “default” were added to make it consistent with Appendix B. It now states “Identify Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs) around riparian areas and wetlands that contain or are tributaries to streams that contain special status species or their habitat to protect riparian vegetation, fisheries, and water quality as described in Appendix B (Aquatic and Riparian Management Strategy [ARMS]). Default RCA widths will be as follows.”
    - RI-MA-3 previously stated “Specific streams are prioritized in the ARMS (Appendix B, Tables B-3 and B-5). To add clarity, it was changed to state “Priority streams are listed in the ARMS (Appendix B, Tables B-3 and B-5).”
  - In the *Special Status Species* section, management actions SS-MA-2, SS-MA-23, SS-MA-25, and SS-MA-32 were corrected.
    - SS-MA-2 previously stated “Special status species management will apply to Endangered, Threatened, Candidate, and Proposed species (Type 1 BLM Sensitive); other BLM Sensitive species (Types 2 through 4); and proposed or designated critical habitat; this includes plants, fish and other aquatic species, and wildlife.” The phrases “Type 1 BLM Sensitive” and “Types 2 through 4” were removed because the BLM eliminated these terms for wildlife. It now states “Special status species management will apply to Endangered, Threatened, Candidate, and Proposed species; other BLM Sensitive species; and proposed or designated critical habitat; this includes plants, fish and other aquatic species, and wildlife.”
    - SS-MA-23 previously stated “Avoid locating new transmission lines, phone lines, or communication towers/facilities in native shrubland and native grassland communities to minimize impacts to sage-grouse. The words “in native shrubland and native grassland communities” were removed and the phrase “in the sage-grouse management area” was inserted to add clarity. It now states “Avoid locating new transmission lines, phone lines, or communication towers/facilities in the sage-grouse management area to minimize impacts to sage-grouse.”
    - SS-MA-25 removed “prairie falcon” from the list as it is no longer a special status species. It previously stated “BLM management activities and authorized uses within one mile of known ferruginous hawk and peregrine falcon nests and 0.5 mile from prairie falcon and northern goshawk nests will be designed to minimize impacts to their prey base and availability of nesting material from February through July.” It now states “BLM management activities and authorized uses within one mile of known ferruginous hawk and peregrine falcon nests and 0.5 mile from northern goshawk nests will be designed to minimize impacts to their prey base and availability of nesting material from February through July.”
    - SS-MA-32 updated the title of the bull trout recovery plan from the “2004 Recovery Plan for the Jarbidge River Distinct Population Segment of Bull Trout” to the “2014 Revised Draft Recovery Plan for the Coterminous United States Population of Bull Trout (Salvelinus confluentus).”

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- In the *Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants* section, management action NW-MA-12 added the term “equipment decontamination” to the toolbox for preventing the introduction and spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants. The toolbox now states:
  - Public outreach (e.g., kiosks, media, mailings, publications, social media, brochures);
  - Equipment decontamination;
  - Wash stations; and
  - Modifying uses to minimize new introductions and spread.
- In the *Wildland Fire Ecology and Management* section, both allocation WFM-A-2 and management action WFM-MA-17 changed the term designated critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass to proposed critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass due to the change in listing status.
- In the *Wildland Fire Ecology and Management* section, management actions FE-MA-3 and FE-MA-15 were changed to be more inclusive and clarify current practices.
  - FE-MA-3 added the phrase “affected permittees”. Previously, it stated “Coordinate fuels treatments with adjacent landowners, and agencies through County Wildfire Protection Plans or other methods.” It now states “Coordinate fuels treatments with adjacent landowners, affected permittees, and agencies through County Wildfire Protection Plans or other methods.”
  - FE-MA-15 added the sentence “Coordinate with affected permittees when developing ES&BAR plans, as appropriate.” It now states “Implement the Programmatic ES&BAR Plan and update as needed. Individual ES&BAR plans will be completed through the interdisciplinary process to reduce impacts of wildland fire and suppression and to achieve resource objectives. Coordinate with affected permittees when developing ES&BAR plans, as appropriate.”
- In the *Visual Resources* section, allocation VR-A-3 added the term “existing” in front of overhead right-of-way corridors to add clarification. It now states “Areas to be managed as VRM Class III (248,000 acres) include:
  - The Snake River corridor (from the planning area boundary to 0.25 mile above the breaks);
  - Areas in the Deadman and Yahoo SRMAs open to cross-country motorized vehicle use that are in the Oregon NHT visual corridor;
  - Existing overhead right-of-way corridors through areas otherwise managed as VRM Class I or II, excluding Lower Salmon Falls Creek WSA;
  - Portions of the Jarbidge Foothills and Diamond A Desert not otherwise managed as VRM Class I or II;
  - Lower Bruneau Canyon ACEC; and
  - The Kelton and Toana Freight Road protective corridors.”
- In the *Livestock Grazing* section, minor corrections were made to goal LG-G-1 to make it consistent with wording from the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management and 43 CFR 4180.2. Minor corrections were made to Management Actions LG-MA-22, LG-MA-31, and LG-MA-32 to add clarity.
  - LG-G-1 previously stated “Manage livestock grazing to ensure achievement of or movement towards meeting Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.” It now states “Manage livestock grazing to meet, or make significant progress toward meeting, Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.”
  - LG-MA-22 was changed from “Management actions for range infrastructure apply to watering sites, fences, and corrals within wilderness, consistent with the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan.” It was clarified to state “Range infrastructure within wilderness must be consistent with the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan.”

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- LG-MA-31 was changed to add clarity. It previously stated “When grazing management changes (such as season of use, duration of grazing, etc.) wouldn’t be sufficient to improve riparian conditions, modify or remove spring developments associated with wetlands rated as non-functioning, functioning-at-risk with a downward trend, or functioning-at-risk to improve wetland areas.” It now states “If grazing management changes (such as season of use, duration of grazing, etc.) do not improve wetland conditions, modify or remove spring developments associated with wetlands rated as non-functioning, functioning-at-risk with a downward trend, or functioning-at-risk.”
- In LG-MA-32, the word “other” was removed to add clarity. It previously stated “Ensure salting, minerals, supplements, new troughs, new reservoirs, and new holding facilities in other areas are located to avoid conflicts with other cultural resources. It now states “Ensure salting, minerals, supplements, new troughs, new reservoirs, and new holding facilities in other areas are located to avoid conflicts with cultural resources.”
- In the *Recreation* section, a minor clarification was made to management action REC-MA-2. It previously stated “Where appropriate, implement management methods to protect riparian resources, special status species, and wildlife habitat while enhancing recreation opportunities.” It now states “Where appropriate, implement management methods to protect riparian resources, special status species, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources while enhancing recreation opportunities.”
- In the *Transportation and Travel* section, minor corrections were made to TR-A-1, TR-MA-1, TR-MA-7, and TR-MA-19.
  - In allocation TR-A-1, the phrase “according to the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan” was added to ensure consistent management with the wilderness plan. It now states “The Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness will be closed to motorized and mechanized vehicle use (60,000 acres), according to the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan. The Lower Salmon Falls Creek Wilderness Study Area will be closed to motorized vehicle use (2,000 acres).”
  - In management action TR-MA-1, “Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Nevada Department of Wildlife” were added as examples to provide clarity. This management action now states, “Area designations apply to all off-highway vehicles, which include any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding:
    - Any non-amphibious registered motorboat;
    - Any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes;
    - Any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the BLM authorized officer or otherwise officially approved;
    - Vehicles in official use (e.g., Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Nevada Department of Wildlife); and
    - Any combat or combat support vehicle when used in times of national defense emergencies (43 CFR 8340.0-5[a]).”
  - Management action TR-MA-7 was changed from “Route designation will also adhere to the following:” to “Route designation will also consider the following, consistent with other resource objectives.” to clarify the intent of the management action.
  - In management action TR-MA-19, the phrase “with motorized vehicles” was added to clarify the intent of the management action. Also, “existing roads and motorized routes” were changed to “designated routes” to be consistent with other management actions. TR-MA-7 previously stated “Dispersed camping will be allowed in any of the existing dispersed campsites adjacent to, or at the end of existing roads and motorized routes. Dispersed camping up to 100 feet from center line of existing roads and motorized routes will be allowed if site is accessed by the most direct route possible. It now states “Dispersed camping with motorized vehicles will be allowed in any of the existing dispersed campsites adjacent to, or at the end of designated routes. Dispersed camping up to 100 feet from center line of designated routes will be allowed if site is accessed by the most direct route possible.”

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- In the *Land Use Authorization* section, minor corrections were made to LA-A-3, LA-MA-10, and LA-MA-11.
  - In allocation LA-A-3, the phrase “as practicable” was added to the avoidance area stipulation for the Oregon National Historic Trail protective zone and Kelton and Toana Freight Road protective corridors to clarify the intent of the stipulation. It now states “New surface or overhead ROWs will follow existing ROW or disturbance corridors, as practicable. Underground ROWs will be allowed with mitigation for disturbance within the protective zone and corridors. Where the alignment of a new large-scale linear ROW with multi-jurisdictional impacts is constrained or determined by external factors which make avoidance impractical or infeasible, the ROW grant will require mitigation commensurate with impacts.”

Management action LA-MA-10 was changed to remove contradiction and add clarity. Previously, the management action stated “Trespass resolution will be limited to removal of facilities and/or restoration of the area as determined by the BLM authorized officer. Trespass resolution, as determined by the BLM authorized officer, may include:

Removal (depending on the nature of the trespass),  
Restoration,  
Authorization of a ROW grant or land use permit, or  
Disposal of the affected land through sale or exchange.”

The management action now states “Trespass resolution, as determined by the BLM authorized officer, may include (*in order of resolution priority*):

Removal and restoration (depending on the nature of the trespass),  
Authorization of a ROW grant or land use permit with mitigation commensurate with impacts,  
or  
Disposal of the affected land through sale or exchange (see Appendix G for lands identified for disposal).”

LA-MA-11 was changed to clarify the intent of the management action. Previously, it stated “Land use permits for irrigation pivot crossings may be allowed, in accordance with policy and regulations. In cases where a pivot crosses public land, the lands are to remain unfarmed and unirrigated.” It now states “Existing land use permits for irrigation pivot crossings may be renewed, in accordance with policy and regulations, but are to remain unfarmed. New permits for irrigation pivot crossings will not be allowed.”

In the *Land Tenure* section, minor corrections were made to LT-MA-3, LT-MA-4, and LT-MA-10.

In management action LT-MA-3, Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) were added to the list of lands that will, in general, be retained in Federal ownership. The exclusion of SRMAs was an oversight. Since the change was to a management action and not an allocation, none of the analyses in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS were affected. Also, the term designated critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass was changed to proposed critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass due to the change in listing status.

In management action LT-MA-4, the phrase “Type 2” was removed from “BLM Type 2 Sensitive species habitat” because the BLM eliminated this term for wildlife.

In management action LT-MA-10, “can be made upon consideration” was replaced with “(as identified in Appendix G) meet one or more” to add clarity and the word “cultural” was added to maintain consistency with other management actions. It now states “Sales of public lands (as identified in Appendix G) meet one or more of the following criteria:

The parcel, because of its location or other characteristics, is difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of the public lands, and is not suitable for management by another Federal department or agency;  
The parcel was acquired for a specific purpose and is no longer required for that or any other Federal purpose; or  
Disposal of the parcel will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development which cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land and which outweigh other public objectives and

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values. These include, but are not limited to, wildlife, grazing, recreation, cultural, and scenic values which will be served by maintaining such parcel in Federal ownership.”

- In the *Leasable Minerals* section, management action LE-MA-13, the length of the Seasonal Restriction Stipulation for the Sage-Grouse Management Area (No Surface Use) was changed between the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS from mid-February through June to March through June due to BLM direction in Instructional Memorandum 2010-039. This change carries through to the Approved RMP.
- In the *Salable Minerals* section, management action SA-MA-2 added the words “and rehabilitation” to correct an oversight. It previously stated “Exploration will be allowed where appropriate under a letter of authorization from the BLM authorized officer. Exploration for new sites will be the responsibility of the applicant.” It now states “Exploration will be allowed where appropriate under a letter of authorization from the BLM authorized officer. Exploration for new sites and rehabilitation will be the responsibility of the applicant.”
- In the *Locatable Minerals* section, allocation LO-A-1 was clarified to ensure the Approved RMP is in full compliance with the Wild and Scenic River Act of 1968 (WSRA) and BLM Manual 6400 – Wild and Scenic Rivers – Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, Planning, and Management. These policies state “subject to valid existing rights, the minerals in Federal lands within the bed or banks or situated within 0.25 mile of the bank of any designated wild river are withdrawn from appropriation under the mining and mineral leasing laws in Sections 9(a) and 15(2) of the WSRA.” BLM Manual 6400 further states “Federal lands within the boundaries of designated river areas classified as scenic or recreational are not withdrawn under the WSRA from the mining and mineral leasing laws.”

The phrase “administered as a wild river” was added to this allocation to state “The planning area, excluding the following areas withdrawn by statute (60,000 acres), will be available for location of mining claims:

- Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness and
- Designated Wild and Scenic River corridors administered as a wild river.”
- In the *ACEC* section, minor corrections were made to ACEC-O-3 ACEC-MA-18, and ACEC-MA-38.
  - Objective ACEC-O-3 to the Salmon Falls Creek ACEC removed the words “including prairie falcons and spotted bats” because prairie falcons are no longer a special status species and no example of special status wildlife was needed. It previously stated “Protect scenic values, redband trout habitat, golden eagle nests, special status wildlife including prairie falcons and spotted bats, and native vegetation communities.” It now states “Protect scenic values, redband trout habitat, golden eagle nests, special status wildlife, and native vegetation communities.”
  - Management action ACEC-MA-18 to the Lower Bruneau Canyon ACEC was added, which states “Minimum impact suppression tactics will be used to suppress wildland fires within the ACEC.” Exclusion of this management action was an oversight. It is consistent with management actions for the other ACECs and with WFM-MA-17.
  - Management action ACEC-MA-38 to the Sand Point ACEC was changed to be consistent with the Paleontological Resources Protection Act. The term “for scientific research” was removed and “or by written approval by a BLM authorized officer” was added. It previously stated “The ACEC will be closed to fossil collecting except under permit for scientific research.” It now states “The ACEC will be closed to fossil collecting except under permit or by written approval by a BLM authorized officer.”
- In the *Maps* section, minor corrections were made to Map 8 (Slickspot Peppergrass Habitat) and Map 28 (Leasable Mineral Allocations).
  - Map 8 was updated to display current occupied habitat, as well as the areas with high, medium, and low potential for occurrence. This map was created for the Jarbidge RMP Biological Assessment.

- Map 28 was updated to better display the areas “open with controlled use restrictions” and “open with seasonal and controlled use restrictions”.

## MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

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The decision about the Approved RMP is based on consideration and evaluation of the following:

- How well the purpose and need is met;
- How well the planning issues are addressed; and
- How it relates to associated environmental consequences.

The analyses in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS provide the basis for determining the following: how well the purpose and need is met; how well the planning issues are addressed; and for considering the environmental consequences of implementing the plan. The decision to select Alternative VI (Proposed Plan) as the Approved RMP is based on the conclusion that management direction in the Proposed Plan best meets the identified purpose and need and addresses the planning issues, as summarized below. The decision is also based on the conclusion that the Proposed Plan has relatively few adverse environmental impacts and relatively favorable outcomes for various resources and programs, compared to the other alternatives.

### Purpose and Need

As stated in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the purpose of this RMP is to provide a comprehensive framework for the BLM’s management of public lands within the planning area and its allocation of resources pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate of FLPMA. Specifically, the purpose of the Jarbidge RMP is to provide overall management and long-term direction for lands and resources administered by the Twin Falls District, Jarbidge Field Office that will:

- Maintain consistency with FLPMA, which includes:
  - Recognizing the nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands;
  - Preserving, where appropriate, lands in their natural condition;
  - Providing food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals; and
  - Providing for outdoor recreation, human occupancy, and use;
- Ensure public lands are managed according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield;
- Provide an overview of goals, objectives, and needs associated with public land management;
- Resolve multiple-use conflicts or issues between resource values and resource uses;
- Maintain or improve ecosystem functions;
- Promote diversity and resilience of biological resources including special status species;
- Preserve important cultural, historical, and physical resources;
- Provide opportunities for sustainable uses of public lands; and
- Address other issues and management concerns raised during the scoping process.

The need to revise the Jarbidge RMP arose from numerous changes in circumstances since the current land use plan decisions were adopted in 1987. In 2001, an evaluation of the existing RMP concluded that there was a need for an updated plan (BLM, 2001). The following list of specific factors illustrates the need for preparation of an updated RMP:

- Changes in ecological, social, and economic conditions;
- Changes in user demands and impacts that require new management direction;
- New laws, regulations, and policies that created additional public land management considerations; and

- Requirements identified in the September 30, 2005, Stipulated Settlement Agreement in the case of Western Watersheds Project v. Ellis et al. (Case No. CV-04-181-S-BLW) (D. Idaho).

All other aspects of the Approved Plan are identical to those set forth in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Management decisions and guidance for public lands within the planning area and under the jurisdiction of the BLM's Jarbidge Field Office are presented in the Approved Plan and summarized above in the *Decision* section.

## **Meeting the Purpose and Need, Addressing the Planning Issues, and Analyzing the Environmental Consequences**

The analysis and conclusions in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS support the conclusions that Alternative VI (Proposed Plan) meets the purpose and need and best addresses the planning issues. The BLM believes that the Approved RMP provides management direction that balances resource uses and protections. This balance is expressed in how the Approved RMP addresses the five planning issue topics, which are detailed below.

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### **Issue Topic 1: Vegetation (Upland and Riparian)**

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#### **Issue Subtopic 1a: Fuels Treatment, Fire Rehabilitation, and Fire Suppression**

*What types of fuels treatments will be implemented and where will they be focused?* The RMP establishes goals for fuel treatments to “reduce fire hazard within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)” and to manage vegetation communities outside the WUI to maintain or restore their fire regimes and mosaic of successional classes to within their historic range. Management Actions FE-MA-7 through FE-MA-12 define the types of fuels treatments allowed.

*What role will temporary facilities play in fire rehabilitation?* During burned area rehabilitation, temporary fences will be considered to protect burned plant communities, bearing in mind resource concerns, the size of the pasture, the amount burned, the amount of pasture unaffected by rehabilitation, location of water, grazing management efficiency, and expense. Temporary fences may become permanent if they enhance the management of the burned area; these will be considered on a case-by-case basis through site-specific analysis.

*Which areas will have the highest priority for fire suppression?* Critical suppression areas within the planning area will be WUI, ACECs, Saylor Creek Herd Management Area, occupied habitat and designated critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass, designated critical habitat for bull trout, and key sage-grouse habitat.

#### **Issue Subtopic 1b: Habitat for Fish, Wildlife, and Special Status Plants and Animals**

*What are the desired outcomes for upland vegetation and what tools will be used to achieve them?* Upland vegetation communities will be managed to promote soil stability, water infiltration, nutrient cycling, and energy flow; provide habitat for sage-grouse and other sagebrush steppe obligates; and provide for multiple use. Upland vegetation communities will be managed to restore the ability of the ecosystem to recover following a disturbance and reduce fragmentation of habitat for sage-grouse and other native species. Objectives UV-O-1 through UV-O-4 describe the desired outcomes for upland vegetation. The tools used to achieve the desired outcomes are chemical, mechanical, and biological treatments; seeding and planting; targeted grazing; and prescribed fire.

*What are the desired outcomes for riparian vegetation and what tools will be used to achieve them?* Riparian areas will be managed to maintain or improve naturally functioning vegetation communities that include natural timing and variability of surface and groundwater in riparian areas and wetlands, and diversity and productivity of native and desired non-native plant communities. The tools used to achieve the desired outcomes are modification, realignment, and closure of roads and trails; culvert replacements; active herding; enclosure fencing; riparian pastures; closing pastures; modification or removal of water developments; planting of riparian areas; reintroduction of beaver; erosion control measures; instream

fish habitat improvements; and modification or elimination of land uses that prevent attainment of the goals and objectives for riparian areas and wetlands.

*What strategies will be used to address noxious weeds and invasive plants?* The RMP established the goal of managing public lands to prevent, eliminate, or control noxious weeds and invasive plants. Strategies used include incorporating BMPs into authorizations and uses; use of certified weed-free forage, seed, and straw for management activities, authorizations, and uses; prioritizing areas of treatment; and developing and implementing activities to prevent the introduction and spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants on public lands such as wash stations, equipment decontamination, and public outreach. The tools for treating noxious weeds and invasive plants are chemical, mechanical, and biological treatments; seeding and planting; targeted grazing; and prescribed fire.

*What types of restoration treatments will be implemented and which areas have a high priority for restoration?* The tools for restoring or treating upland vegetation communities are chemical, mechanical, and biological treatments; seeding and planting; targeted grazing; and prescribed fire. The focus for restoration treatments include habitat for sage-grouse, slickspot peppergrass, other special status species, mule deer, and pronghorn.

*What restrictions on uses will be used to minimize impacts to fish and wildlife?* The RMP establishes numerous restrictions to minimize impacts to fish and wildlife. Some of those include locating water drafting sites in upland areas; modifying existing and constructing new fences to comply with BLM standards for wildlife; scheduling construction, maintenance, and energy-related activities to avoid or minimize disturbance to priority species and their habitat during their important seasonal periods; avoiding special status species habitat for leasable and salable mineral development activities; locating new troughs, reservoirs, permanent fences, and corrals at least one mile from bighorn sheep habitat; maintaining a nine-mile separation between domestic sheep/goats and bighorn sheep; locating incident bases, camps, helibases, staging areas, helispots, and other centers for incident activities outside of RCAs. Locating new tall structures (e.g., overhead power and phone lines, meteorological towers, communication towers) more than four miles from occupied and unknown-status sage-grouse leks; and not permitting commercial wind and solar energy developments inside the sage-grouse management area or within utility ROW corridors.

*How will BLM management activities and authorized uses be managed to protect special status species and their habitats?* Management actions SS-MA-12 through SS-MA-16 require certain uses (leasable and salable mineral development activities; new communication sites; ROW construction and maintenance) to avoid special status species habitat. Also, construction, maintenance, modification, or removal of range infrastructure and other facilities will maintain or enhance special status species and their habitat. There are further management actions in the *Water Resources, Riparian Areas and Wetlands, Fish and Wildlife, Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants, Wildland Fire Ecology and Management, Recreation, Land Use Allocations, Land Tenure, and ACEC* sections that protect special status species and their habitats.

### **Issue Subtopic 1c: Livestock Forage**

*How much vegetation will be allocated to watershed, wildlife, wild horses, and livestock?* The RMP establishes forage allocation on the 1,411,000 acres available for livestock grazing in LG-A-2, based on vegetation production. The majority of vegetation production will be allocated to watershed and wildlife. Over the entire planning area, wild horses will be allocated less than 1% native perennial grass and less than 1% non-native perennial grass (2,400 AUMs). Livestock will be allocated 0% to 40% of native perennial grass, 30% to 45% non-native perennial grass, 40% to 50% of annual grass, and 11% to 14% of shrubs and forbs of vegetation production.

*How will non-native perennial communities be managed?* The Non-Native Perennial grass community includes crested wheatgrass and intermediate wheatgrass, where 55% to 70% will be allocated to watershed and wildlife, less than 1% to wild horses, and 30% to 45% to livestock grazing. For example, the non-native perennial grass allocation could be 60% to watershed and wildlife, 0.5% to wild horses, and 39.5% to livestock.

*What vegetation treatments will be allowed for maintaining, improving, or increasing forage for livestock?* A Livestock Grazing goal of the RMP is to “allocate a stable level of available forage for livestock grazing through proper grazing and adaptive management to support maintenance and restoration of resilient ecosystem structure and function.” The toolbox to treat upland vegetation communities includes chemical, mechanical, and biological treatments; seeding and planting; targeted grazing, and prescribed fire.

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## **Issue Topic 2: Livestock Grazing**

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*What areas are available for livestock grazing?* The majority of the planning area will be available for livestock grazing, except for unallocated portions of the canyons associated with the Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers and Salmon Falls Creek (below the dam), reference areas, Salmon Falls Creek ACEC, wildlife tracts, and areas not contained within grazing allotments.

*How will livestock grazing be managed to meet the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management?* A goal of livestock grazing is to “Manage livestock grazing to meet, or make significant progress toward meeting, Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management” (LG-G-1). This will be achieved through adaptive management and proper grazing management.

*What constraints will be placed on livestock grazing?* Constraints on livestock grazing include implementation of drought guidelines during periods of drought; modification, discontinuation, or relocation of grazing management activities, facilities, or infrastructure if they are not maintaining aquatic and riparian conditions; placement of salt, minerals, supplements, new troughs, new reservoirs, and new holding facilities more than 300 feet from canyon rims and playas; avoiding placement of new water developments in sagebrush steppe habitat unless they will contribute to meeting resource objectives; trailing must be supervised by the permittee to ensure active movement of livestock; and BLM guidelines for livestock grazing management in sage-grouse habitat must be followed.

*What range infrastructure will be allowed and how will range infrastructure be managed to improve livestock management and benefit resources?* The goal for livestock infrastructure management is to “maintain, improve, build, realign, remove range infrastructure at levels appropriate to the amount of livestock use to provide for efficient management of livestock grazing allotments and support fire suppression and resource objectives.” The RMP does not establish what range infrastructure will be allowed. Management actions LG-MA-22 through LG-MA-35 define how range infrastructure will be managed.

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## **Issue Topic 3: Recreation**

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*Where will motorized recreation be allowed?* The Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness will be closed to motorized and mechanized vehicle use. The Lower Salmon Falls Creek Wilderness Study Area will be closed to motorized vehicle use. Salmon Falls Creek ACEC north and south of Lilly Grade crossing will be closed to motorized vehicle use. Designated areas of the Deadman and Yahoo SRMAs will be open to cross-country motorized vehicle use. The Rosevear ERMA will provide a series of designated motorized routes that link the Deadman and Yahoo SRMAs. In the remainder of the planning area, travel will be limited to designated routes.

*What constraints will be placed on recreational activities?* Constraints on recreational activities include management methods to protect riparian resources, special status species, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources while enhancing recreation opportunities. These include limiting visitor numbers, adopting camping and travel controls, implementing fees, and imposing scheduling restrictions to minimize impacts to fish and wildlife during important seasonal periods; dispersed camping with motorized vehicles up to 100 feet from center line of designated routes will be allowed if site is accessed by the most direct route possible; dispersed camping may be closed or limited seasonally or as impacts or environmental conditions warrant; commercial special recreation permits (SRPs) that are not compatible with management of the Herd Management Area will not be allowed; and game retrieval using motorized vehicles will not be allowed off designated routes.

*How will SRPs be managed?* The RMP establishes multiple management actions for SRPs. These include authorizing SRPs for commercial use or competitive events; considering SRPs within ACECs with mitigation for impacts to relevant and important values; issuing and managing SRPs for a wide variety of uses to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities, managing user-group interaction, and limiting the impacts of such uses upon natural and cultural resources, with emphasis on realizing positive economic and community benefits through SRP management; and not allowing commercial SRPs that are not compatible with management of the HMA.

*Where will SRMAs be designated?* The RMP designates six SRMAs: Yahoo SRMA, Deadman SRMA, Jarbidge Forks SRMA, Balanced Rock SRMA, Little Pilgrim SRMA, and Salmon Falls Reservoir SRMA. It also designates four ERMAs: Jarbidge Foothills ERMA, Canyonlands ERMA, Rosevear ERMA, and Luds Point ERMA (see Map 18).

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## **Issue Topic 4: Energy Development**

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*How much energy development will be allowed?* The Land Use Authorizations objective provides for the development of renewable energy resources with consideration for resource objectives.

*Where will energy development be allowed?* Energy development will be allowed in the planning area, except in the following ROW exclusion areas: the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Lower Salmon Falls Creek WSA, and Sand Point ACEC. In the following avoidance areas, ROWs will be allowed in accordance with stipulations found in LA-A-3: areas within US Air Force Military Operating Areas; the Oregon NHT protective zone; the Kelton and Toana Freight Road protective corridors; eligible, suitable, and designated Wild and Scenic River corridors; the Upper Bruneau Canyon and Salmon Falls Creek ACECs; and the sage-grouse management area.

*What constraints will be placed upon energy development?* Constraints on energy development include scheduling energy-related activities (e.g., exploration, development, and maintenance) to avoid or minimize disturbance to special status species and their habitat during important seasonal periods; not permitting commercial wind and solar energy developments inside the sage-grouse management area or within utility ROW corridors; and avoiding special status species habitat when conducting renewable energy site testing, monitoring, and development.

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## **Issue Topic 5: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern**

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*Which existing and nominated ACECs will be designated?* The RMP will designate four ACECs: Upper Bruneau Canyon ACEC, Lower Bruneau Canyon ACEC, Salmon Falls Creek ACEC, and Sand Point ACEC (see Map 31).

## **Rationale for Wild Horse Decisions**

The Range of Alternatives considered and analyzed in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS include managing the Saylor Creek Wild Horse herd as a reproducing herd, managing it as a non-reproducing herd, and managing the Saylor Creek Wild Horse Herd Area as an unpopulated herd area for a population of zero wild horses. BLM selected to manage the Saylor Creek Wild Horse herd as a non-reproducing herd due to no natural water on public land and no unique herd characteristics.

BLM Handbook H-4700-1 provides examples of criteria that could be used to select HMAs for management of non-reproducing herds, which include “no special or unique herd characteristics, low ecologic condition, limited public land water, and reliance on private water” (BLM Handbook H-4700-1, p. 8).

These criteria apply to the Saylor Creek HMA, as detailed below:

- The herd does not possess special or unique characteristics: “A DNA test of the Saylor Creek wild horse herd was performed following the 2010 emergency gather. The test found the genetic makeup is average for feral wild horse herds with no trace back to Spanish decent. Managing the Saylor

Creek wild horses as a non-reproducing herd would result in a negligible loss of genetic diversity” (Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS, p. 4-550).

- There is limited public land water in the Saylor Creek HMA and the Saylor Creek herd relies solely on pipeline systems installed to facilitate livestock management and support the horse herd: “Constant human presence associated with the development of private agricultural lands and some conversion of public lands to private land beginning in the 1960s slowly eliminated access to natural water at the Snake River, resulting in the herd’s total dependence on developed livestock water systems” (Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS, p. 3-76).
- Managing a non-reproducing herd would allow the BLM to maintain “dispersal of bands of wild horses throughout allotments in the HMA [which] would help prevent the bands from reforming into large herds and would decrease localized effects of wild horse grazing relative to alternatives managing for reproducing herds” (Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS, p. 4-550).

## **Rationale for Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Decisions**

As afforded by BLM Manual 6320, the Approved RMP will manage lands inventoried as containing wilderness characteristics (104,000 acres) to emphasize other multiple uses while applying management restrictions to reduce impacts to wilderness characteristics. In reaching this decision, and in accordance with BLM Manual 6320, BLM considered the Congressional action set forth in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, when it designated approximately 60,000 acres as Wilderness and released about 32,000 acres of Wilderness Study Areas, within the Jarbidge Field Office. Of those released acres, 25,000 acres were inventoried as meeting the criteria for lands with wilderness characteristics.

The BLM determined that the wilderness characteristics of these areas are adequately protected through management prescriptions including Lands Tenure retention areas, right-of-way avoidance areas, and areas where motorized travel is limited to designated routes. Further, 100,000 acres of lands with wilderness characteristics are within the sage-grouse management area and will be precluded from wind and solar energy development (Approved RMP allocation LA-A-5). Some of the areas have additional overlapping protections under one or more of the following: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (17,000 acres), Wild and Scenic River corridors (6,000 acres), and Visual Resource Management Classes I and II (33,000 acres).

Lands inventoried as containing wilderness characteristics will be evaluated through subsequent decision making, including appropriate NEPA analysis.

## **Rationale for Livestock Grazing Decisions**

### ***Bruneau River Canyons***

As described in the *Notice of Modifications and Clarifications* section, allocation LG-A-1 was modified to state that unallocated portions of the canyons associated with the Bruneau River and Jarbidge Rivers, and the Salmon Falls Creek will be not be available for livestock grazing. The Bruneau River canyon is the only one of these canyons that has a livestock grazing allotment in it, the Bruneau Canyon Allotment. This allotment is administered by the Bruneau Field Office, Boise District BLM. The Bruneau Field Office will continue to administer livestock grazing in the Bruneau Canyon Allotment under a Memorandum of Understanding.

## **CONSISTENCY AND CONSULTATION REVIEW**

Consistency of the Approved RMP with other Federal, State, and local plans and policies was also considered as a factor in selection of the Approved RMP. The Approved RMP is consistent with plans and policies of the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management, other federal and state agencies, and local governments to the extent that the guidance and local plans are also consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of federal law and regulation applicable to public lands.

## **Consistency with The National Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy**

The Idaho/SW Montana RMP Amendment for Managing Greater Sage-Grouse (Idaho/SW Montana RMPA) EIS and the Nevada/NE California RMP Amendment for Managing Greater Sage-Grouse (Nevada/SE California RMPA) EIS are components of the National Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy and RMP Amendment Process. The ROD for the Idaho/SW Montana RMPA will amend up to 29 BLM and Forest Service land use plans and the ROD for the Nevada/SE California RMPA will amend up to 21 BLM and Forest Service land use plans.

The Clarification Letter of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS stated “The BLM expects that the Jarbidge RMP revision ROD will post-date the sage-grouse RMPA RODs, in order to provide consistent management direction throughout the life of the Jarbidge RMP revision.” Due to delays in completing the sage-grouse RMPA RODs, the BLM has moved forward in completing the Jarbidge ROD/Approved RMP; therefore the Jarbidge Approved RMP will be amended by the RODs for the Idaho/SW Montana RMPA EIS and the Nevada/SE California RMPA EIS.

While the Approved RMP contains some conservation management measures for greater sage-grouse (GRSG) habitat, final decisions on how to manage habitat within the Jarbidge Field Office will be made in the RODs for the Idaho/SW Montana RMPA EIS and the Nevada/SE California RMPA EIS. These EIS’ fully analyzed applicable GRSG conservation measures, consistent with BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-044. The BLM expects to make a comprehensive set of decisions for managing GRSG on lands administered by the Jarbidge Field Office in the RODs for the Idaho/SW Montana RMPA EIS and the Nevada/SE California RMPA EIS.

As noted above, the Approved RMP provides resource management actions for maintaining, protecting, improving, and restoring GRSG habitat. In addition, until the GRSG Amendment RODs are signed, management of activities in GRSG habitat will continue to protect GRSG habitat under the interim management policy, Instruction Memorandum (IM) (WO-IM-2012-043). This IM provides guidance on the protection of un-fragmented habitats, minimization of habitat loss and fragmentation, and management of habitats in order to maintain, enhance or restore conditions that meet GRSG life history needs. Specifically, this policy provides interim conservation policies and procedures to be applied to ongoing and proposed authorizations and activities that affect the GRSG and its habitat.

## **Governor’s Office Consistency Review**

The BLM submitted the Proposed RMP/Final EIS to both the Idaho Governor's Office and the Nevada Governor's Office on August 6, 2014, prior to the Notice of Availability. BLM State Director sent a letter to each Governor on August 27, 2014 informing them of the initiation of the 60-day Governor's Consistency Review (in accordance with planning regulations at 43 CFR Part 1610.3- 2(e)). Neither Governor's Office responded within or after the review period.

In early January 2015, BLM contacted both Governors’ offices and requested a consistency review of the Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS and response by January 30, 2015. The Nevada Governor's Office did not respond. The Idaho Governor's Office responded by January 30 and the BLM provided the Governor with additional time to complete their consistency review by March 31, 2015.

On March 30, 2015, Idaho Governor Otter submitted a letter which identified inconsistencies between Alternative VI (Proposed RMP) and laws, plans, policies and programs of the State. The majority of inconsistencies were between sage-grouse direction and conservation actions in the Proposed RMP and the Federal Alternative of Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter for Greater Sage-grouse Management in Idaho (Governor's Alternative), and the Idaho Department of Lands draft Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan for State Endowment Lands (State Plan).

Both the Governor's Alternative and the State Plan have a three-tiered approach within the sage-grouse management area: “Core”, “Important”, and “General” Habitat Zones, with the Core having the most restrictions and the General having the most flexibility. The Jarbidge Proposed RMP does not include a three-tiered approach, but rather employs a sage-grouse management area from the Jarbidge Local Sage-grouse Working Group's Conservation Plan, where the majority of key sage-grouse habitat in the

planning areas is located. While the Jarbidge Proposed RMP contains conservation measures to protect, preserve, and restore sage-grouse habitat, as discussed above, the BLM expects the Jarbidge RMP to be amended by the Idaho/SW Montana RMPA ROD and the Nevada/SE California RMPA ROD, Both plans include a three-tiered management structure for sage-grouse.

The remaining issues raised by the State of Idaho were responded to by letter from the Idaho BLM State Director. The Governor's Office did not appeal the State Director's decision to the BLM Director.

## **Consistency with Counties**

Elko County, Elmore County, and Twin Falls County did not identify any inconsistencies between the Draft RMP/EIS or the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and county planning documents.

Owyhee County Commissioners protested the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The protest asserted that the County expected BLM to identify specific inconsistencies with existing county plans. The Owyhee County Commissioners also submitted a letter, dated October 20, 2014, to the Idaho Governor's Office to be included in the Governor's Consistency Review. This letter, received by the BLM on March 31, 2015, identified what the County perceived to be specific inconsistencies between Alternative VI (Proposed RMP) in the Jarbidge Proposed RMP/Final EIS and the Owyhee County Natural Resource Plan of 2009 (OCNRP). These inconsistencies were responded to in the Governor's Consistency Review response letter from the Idaho BLM State Director.

BLM met with the Owyhee County Commissioners on May 11, 2015 and June 22, 2015 to further discuss remaining county concerns regarding the Proposed RMP vis-a-vis county planning documents. All remaining inconsistencies that cannot be resolved pertain to matters of BLM policy. That is, it is the County's position that BLM policies that inform BLM's management are not binding on the BLM and, therefore, the BLM should amend the RMP to be consistent with the County's plans. It is the BLM's position that the BLM must abide by written policies issued by the agency and Department of Interior.

## **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Consultation**

In accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA and the State Protocol Agreement between Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the BLM (2014), the BLM completed the consultation process by inviting both the Idaho SHPO and Nevada SHPO to participate in scoping for the purpose of identifying issues, inviting the SHPOs to comment on any historic properties use allocations, sending all draft and final land use plans to the SHPOs for review and comment, and responding to the SHPO's comments on the draft land use (Proposed RMP/Final EIS, Appendix P, p. A-505). The BLM will continue to consult with the both Idaho SHPO and Nevada SHPO and comply with the NHPA as it implements the Jarbidge ROD.

## **Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation**

In accordance with Section 7 of the ESA, the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) met between January 2006 and June 2015 to discuss potential impacts to listed species from activities potentially authorized during implementation of the Jarbidge RMP. The BLM requested formal Section 7 consultation and conference on May 28, 2015. The FWS submitted a programmatic Biological Opinion on July 28, 2015 concurring with BLM's effects determinations.

## **Coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

The EPA (Region 10) reviewed the Draft RMP/EIS and submitted comments in accordance with their responsibilities under NEPA and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and provided a rating of EC-1 where

- EC = Environmental Concerns - EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce these impacts.
- Category 1 = Adequate - EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis of data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

The EPA also reviewed the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and recommended:

- The Record of Decision's (ROD) Selected Alternative consider additional protections for geologic features, soil resources, wildlife residual cover, lands with wilderness characteristics, and Class II Visual Resource Inventory areas.
- The ROD include clarifying information including a description, discussion, or map supporting the assertion that Alternative VI's ACEC locations focus on priority relevant and important values.

## MITIGATION MEASURES

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Measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm were built into the Approved RMP where practicable. Many of the standard management provisions will minimize impacts when applied to activities proposed in the planning area. The Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM, 1997) will be used as the base standards to assess the health of BLM lands in the planning area. Best management practices, design features, and operating procedures will be used (when applicable) for a number of uses including livestock grazing, land use authorizations, and other surface disturbing activities (see Appendix A). Additional mitigation may also be developed during site-specific activity and project level NEPA analysis.

## PLAN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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Monitoring is the repeated measurement of activities and conditions over time. Evaluation is a process in which the plan and monitoring data are reviewed to see if management goals and objectives are being met and if management direction is sound. Monitoring data gathered over time is examined and used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are meeting stated objectives, and if not, why. Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or what changes need to be made in management practices to meet objectives.

The two types of monitoring that are tied to the planning process include implementation and effectiveness monitoring. Land use plan monitoring is the process of (1) tracking the implementation of land use planning decisions and (2) collecting and assessing data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use planning decisions. The two types of monitoring are described below.

**Implementation Monitoring:** Implementation monitoring is the most basic type of monitoring and simply determines whether planned activities have been implemented in the manner prescribed by the plan. Some agencies call this compliance monitoring. This monitoring documents BLM's progress toward full implementation of the land use plan decision. There are no specific thresholds or indicators required for this type of monitoring.

**Effectiveness Monitoring:** Effectiveness monitoring is aimed at determining if the implementation of activities has achieved the desired goals and objectives. Effectiveness monitoring asks the question: Was the specified activity successful in achieving the objective? This requires knowledge of the objectives established in the RMP as well as indicators that can be measured. Indicators are established by technical specialists in order to address specific questions, and thus avoid collection of unnecessary data. Success is measured against the benchmark of achieving desired future conditions established by the plan.

Regulations at 43 CFR 1610.4-9 require that the proposed plan establish intervals and standards, as appropriate, for monitoring and evaluation of the plan, based on the sensitivity of the resource decisions involved. Progress in meeting the plan objectives and adherence to the management framework established by the plan is reviewed periodically. CEQ regulations implementing NEPA state that agencies may provide for monitoring to assure that their decisions are carried out and should do so in important cases (40 CFR 1505.2(c)). To meet these requirements, the BLM will review the plan on a regular schedule in order to provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and provide information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation.

Land use plan evaluations will be used by BLM to determine if the decisions in the RMP, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, are still valid. Evaluation of the RMP will generally be conducted every five years per BLM policy, unless unexpected actions, new information, or significant changes in other plans, legislation, or litigation triggers an evaluation. Land use plan evaluations determine if decisions are being implemented, whether mitigation measures are satisfactory, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, whether there is new data of significance to the plan, and if decisions should be changed through amendment or revision. Evaluations will follow the protocols established by the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1 in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated. Specific monitoring and evaluation needs are identified by resource/uses throughout the Approved RMP (see page RMP-69).

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

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The planning process for this RMP began with the publication of the Notice of Intent to prepare the Jarbidge RMP in the Federal Register on January 10, 2006. One of BLM's primary objectives during development of the Jarbidge RMP was to understand the views of various publics by providing opportunities for meaningful participation in the RMP planning process.

### **Tribal Participation**

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#### **Shoshone-Bannock Tribes**

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Formal government-to-government consultation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes is conducted through the Fort Hall Business Council and is coordinated with the Shoshone-Bannock environmental staff. A brief introduction to the Jarbidge RMP was given to the Fort Hall Business Council on April 27, 2006. Meetings with the tribal environmental staff occurred on January 11, 2007, June 26, 2008, and October 14, 2010. A presentation on the Jarbidge Draft RMP/EIS was given to tribal business council on August 22, 2011.

#### **Shoshone-Paiute Tribes**

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Consultation on the Jarbidge RMP with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes is conducted through the Twin Falls District's established government-to-government consultation process, the Wings and Roots Native American Campfire. The Jarbidge RMP was briefly discussed at Wings and Roots meetings between December 2005 and September 2006. The Shoshone-Paiute Tribal Staff toured the southern portion of the planning area with Jarbidge Field Office staff on August 10, 2006. Monthly consultation with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes for the Jarbidge RMP began in October 2006 and is on-going.

### **Coordination with Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies**

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A number of federal, state, and local government agencies were invited to participate in the RMP planning process as cooperating agencies. The National Park Service-Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, the Elko County Board of Commissioners, and the Twin Falls County Commissioners accepted the invitation and finalized Memorandums of Understanding to formally establish the relationship. Representatives from National Park Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, and Idaho State Department of Agriculture participated as members of the Jarbidge RMP Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team). The Owyhee County Commissioners participated in the Jarbidge RMP through their existing coordination agreement with the Twin Falls District.

Members of the ID Team and the Twin Falls District managers conducted numerous briefings and presentations on the Jarbidge RMP to cooperating agencies, as well as other government agencies, including Mountain Home Air Force Base; US Fish and Wildlife Service; Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Jarbidge Ranger District; Elko District BLM; and Nevada Division of Wildlife.

## Newsletters and Website

At the beginning of the Jarbidge RMP process, a mailing list was generated of individuals likely to be interested in the Jarbidge RMP. Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) members compiled a mailing list for the RMP, including individuals and organizations on other BLM mailing lists; Jarbidge Field Office permit and lease holders; Tribes; Federal, State, and local government agencies; mailing list requests; and other individuals or organizations thought to be interested in the Jarbidge planning effort.

A newsletter was mailed in May 2006 with a reply card individuals could use to remain on the mailing list. Additional newsletters were mailed in September 2006, January 2007, and March 2007.

An e-mail address and website for the RMP were created when the Notice of Intent to prepare the Jarbidge RMP was published. The website was developed to communicate information about the Jarbidge RMP. This website, located at [http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa\\_register/jarbidge-rmp-revision.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa_register/jarbidge-rmp-revision.html), contained the informational pages including why this plan is being prepared, the planning process, how to get involved and comment, public meetings, news and newsletters, Federal Register Notices, planning documents, and photos.

## Scoping

A Notice of Intent to prepare the Jarbidge RMP was published in the Federal Register on January 10, 2006. This notice served as the beginning of BLM's formal scoping process for the RMP.

Open house scoping meetings were held in Twin Falls, Buhl, Glens Ferry, and Three Creek, Idaho (ID), in May 2006. A total of 56 individuals participated in these meetings. The open house format was used to encourage two-way dialogue and discussions about issues to be addressed in the plan, concerns about the process, the planning criteria, and the development of the range of alternatives to be analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS. At each open house, at least five members of the ID Team plus at least one manager from the Twin Falls District were available to answer questions from the public. Maps and posters were displayed around the room to facilitate discussion between the BLM staff and the public. Some attendees submitted written comments at the open houses. In addition, following each open house, ID Team members documented the issues and concerns they discussed with various publics.

Several methods were used to advertise the open house meetings and the scoping period for the Jarbidge RMP. The RMP website provided information regarding the open houses and instructions for submitting scoping comments. A one-page mailing was sent to the RMP mailing list on April 28, 2006, that informed recipients of the open house schedule and how to submit comments. These same parties were sent the Jarbidge RMP Newsletter on May 12, 2006. This newsletter provided more information about the planning process, public participation in the RMP, and the open house schedule; it also contained a postage-paid reply card that could be returned as a request to remain on the mailing list and be used to provide scoping comments. Copies of the newsletter were distributed to attendees at meetings and briefings and were also available to the public at the Jarbidge, Shoshone, and Burley Field Offices.

A press release on the open houses and scoping process was sent to contacts from the Twin Falls District Media Distribution List the week of May 8, 2006; two newspapers printed stories and one radio station aired a story based on the press release. The local CBS affiliate, KMVT, produced a short segment on the Jarbidge RMP that aired during the evening newscasts on May 15, 2006. Print ads were also placed in six newspapers prior to the open houses.

## Public Meetings, Briefings, and Presentations

In addition to the public meetings held for scoping, a Community Economic Profile workshop was held in Glens Ferry, ID, in September 2006 to present and get feedback on the findings of an economic analysis of the area by Dr. Richard Gardner; 14 people from a variety of agencies and organizations attended this workshop. A Data Fair was held in Twin Falls, ID, in January 2007 to give the public an opportunity to review the data used to develop the Jarbidge RMP. More than 75 people representing a wide array of Federal, State, and local government agencies, as well as the general public, attended to view the data and information used in developing the Jarbidge Draft RMP/EIS and talk with resource specialists.

## Record of Decision

The Twin Falls District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) hosted workshops about the Jarbidge RMP in April 2007. Workshops were planned to discuss alternative development, vegetation and livestock grazing, transportation, and areas for special designation or management. The workshop on vegetation and livestock grazing had 27 attendees, and 17 people attended the workshop on transportation. Due to a lack of interest, workshops on alternative development and areas for special designation or management were cancelled.

Members of the ID Team and the Twin Falls District managers conducted briefings and presentations on the Jarbidge RMP for a variety of groups. Many of these presentations were provided at regularly scheduled coordination meetings, and others were given at the group's request. These presentations and meetings included:

- Twin Falls District Resource Advisory Council (quarterly);
- Idaho Congressional Briefing (quarterly);
- "71" Livestock Association (bi-annually);
- Jarbidge Sage-Grouse Local Working Group (various);
- Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee (May 2006);
- The Wilderness Society (June 2006);
- Idaho ATV Association Inc., Southern Idaho Desert Racing Association, Treasure Valley Trail Machine Association (July 2006);
- Buhl Kiwanis (July 2006);
- Twin Falls Monarch Lions Club (July 2006);
- Mid-Snake Resource Conservation and Development Council (July 2006);
- Mayors, Administrators, and City Councils Organization (July 2006);
- Twin Falls County Fair (August 30 through September 4, 2006);
- Twin Falls Rotary Club (February 2007);
- Three Creek Good Road District (March 2007);
- Twin Falls Optimist Club (April 2007);
- Idaho Conservation League, The Wilderness Society, Idaho Rivers United (June 2007);
- Castleford Men's Club (July 2007);
- Magic Valley ATV Riders (February 2008);
- Twin Falls Monarch Lions Club (September 2010); and
- The Wilderness Society and Idaho Conservation League (February 2011).

In addition, BLM staff engaged in regular coordination with representatives of the Plaintiffs and Intervenor of *Western Watersheds Project v. Ellis et al.* (Case No. CV-04-181-S-BLW) (D. Idaho). BLM managers and staff have also been in regular contact with program leads from the Idaho BLM State Office as well as Idaho BLM State Leadership.

### **Draft RMP/EIS**

On September 3, 2010, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the BLM published a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*, which notified the public of the availability of the Draft RMP/EIS and solicited written public comments during the 90-calendar-day review period that ended on December 2, 2010.

The BLM issued a press release on September 3, 2010, which announced the availability of the Draft RMP/EIS and that five open houses would be held. On that same day, the Draft RMP/EIS was available for downloading from the Idaho BLM Web site at [http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/planning/jarbidge\\_resource.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/planning/jarbidge_resource.html). The BLM distributed paper and CD-ROM copies of the Draft RMP/EIS to approximately 620 parties, including elected officials, regulatory

agencies, and members of the public. The BLM accommodated additional requests for paper or electronic copies of the Draft RMP/EIS after the initial distribution.

In September and October 2010, five open houses were held in Glenns Ferry, ID, Twin Falls, ID, Three Creek, ID, Boise, ID, and Elko, NV during the 90-day public review period. Each open house featured displays, maps, handouts, and interdisciplinary team resource specialists who provided information and answered questions. A total of 91 people attended the open houses.

On October 22, 2010, the BLM issued a press release announcing that the public comment period on the Draft RMP/EIS would be extended an additional 60 days. On December 1, 2010, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the BLM published a Notice of Extension of Public Comment Period in the *Federal Register*, which notified the public that the comment period for the Draft RMP/EIS was extended until January 31, 2011.

The BLM received more than 28,000 letters, faxes, and emails from individuals, organizations, industry associations, and state and local agencies. Most of the letters (27,715 of them) were form letters. The Jarbidge RMP Interdisciplinary team reviewed every letter, fax, and email and identified both substantive and non-substantive comments during the content analysis process. Every comment was read and considered. Some comments were combined with similar comments, while other comments were modified slightly for clarity. A total of 1,100 comments were responded to by the BLM in Appendix P of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

## Proposed RMP/Final EIS

On August 22, 2014, the US Environmental Protection Agency published a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*, which began a 30-day protest period, ending on September 22, 2014, and a 60-day governors consistency review, which ended on November 4, 2014 in accordance with planning regulations at 43 CFR, Part 1610.3-2(e). The Governor's Consistency Review was extended through January 30, 2015.

On August 22, 2014, the Proposed RMP/Final EIS was available for downloading from the Idaho BLM Web site at [http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa\\_register/jarbidge-rmp-revision.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa_register/jarbidge-rmp-revision.html). The BLM issued a press release on August 27, 2014 which announced the availability of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The BLM distributed paper and CD-ROM copies of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS to approximately 680 parties, including elected officials, regulatory agencies, and members of the public.

BLM will continue to actively seek the views of the public, using techniques such as news releases and web-site information to ask for participation and inform the public of new and ongoing project proposals, site-specific planning, and opportunities and timeframes for comment. BLM will also continue to coordinate, both formally and informally, with the numerous Tribal, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials interested and involved in the management of public lands in Elko, Elmore, Owyhee, and Twin Falls counties within the planning area.

## AVAILABILITY OF THE PLAN

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Copies of the Jarbidge Record of Decision and Approved RMP are available for public inspection at the Jarbidge Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 2536 Kimberly Road, Twin Falls ID 83301, phone 208-736-2350. Interested persons may also review the Proposed RMP/Final EIS online at [http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa\\_register/jarbidge-rmp-revision.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa_register/jarbidge-rmp-revision.html).

## Field Manager Recommendation

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Having considered a full range of reasonable alternatives, associated effects, and public input, I recommend adoption and implementation of the attached Jarbidge Resource Management Plan.



Elliot Traher  
Field Manager  
Jarbidge Field Office

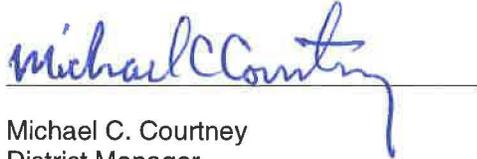
9-2-15

Date

## District Manager Concurrence

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I concur with the adoption and implementation of the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan.



Michael C. Courtney  
District Manager  
Twin Falls District Office

9/2/2015

Date

## State Director Approval

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In consideration of the foregoing, I approve the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan.



Timothy M. Murphy  
Idaho State Director

September 2, 2015

Date

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