



Cottonwood Field Office Resource Management Plan Update

October 2011

Tentative Timeline

Conduct Analysis for Draft SEIS	Fall 2011
Draft SEIS Expected	Winter 2012
Review and Comment Period (90 days)	Winter/Spring
Prepare Final SEIS & Proposed RMP	Summer 2012
Proposed RMP Protest Period (30 days)	Early Fall 2012
Resolve Protests	Fall 2012
Record of Decision (ROD) & Approved RMP	Late Fall 2012

Four Allotments will be Analyzed:

- Big Creek Allotment
- Hard Creek Allotment
- Marshall Mountain Allotment
- Partridge Creek Allotment

Status of the Supplemental EIS for Domestic Sheep Grazing (SEIS)

BLM's Cottonwood Field Office is currently preparing a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to the Resource Management Plan (RMP) to address domestic sheep grazing in four specific grazing allotments on BLM lands.

In December 2009, BLM's Idaho State Director issued a Record of Decision (ROD) and approved the Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (RMP) exclusive of four domestic sheep grazing allotments.

Because of the concern regarding transmission of disease to native bighorn sheep from domestic sheep, the Field Office is

conducting analysis to address the four allotment areas that overlap with bighorn sheep habitat. The Salmon River bighorn sheep herd is an indigenous population that ranges in the Salmon River drainage in north central Idaho.

The US Forest Service and the Nez Perce Tribe are cooperating in preparation of the SEIS. In 2010, the Payette National Forest completed bighorn sheep habitat and disease transmission studies on the Salmon River bighorn sheep herd. Analysis will incorporate information from the Payette NF study.

The effort will also use recent data collected

regarding habitat use of bighorn sheep in the Salmon River area from ongoing monitoring conducted by the Nez Perce Tribe, in partnership with the Forest Service, Idaho Department of Fish & Game and BLM.

Since the RMP was issued in 2009 and pending completion of the analysis, the lessee of two of the allotments has voluntarily agreed to take non-use, and the other two allotments have been temporarily closed to grazing by domestic sheep.

The Draft SEIS to the Cottonwood RMP should be available for a 90-day public comment period in winter 2012.

Help us keep you updated!

We'd like to keep you updated on our efforts. **Please let us know if you would like to continue to receive information regarding this project.**

Please send the following information to: **BLM_ID_SheepSEIS@blm.gov**

Name, Mailing Address, City, State & Zip Code & whether you would like a copy of the Final SEIS hardcopy or electronically.

Issues to be Addressed by the SEIS:

- Develop a reasonable range of alternatives for authorizing grazing of domestic sheep in the four allotments that are in the vicinity of the Salmon River bighorn sheep herd habitat.
- For each alternative, determine the risk of contact and disease transmission from domestic sheep that could threaten the health and persistence of the Salmon River bighorn sheep herd.
- Analyze the alternatives for impacts to treaty-reserved resources, consistent with meeting BLM's treaty and trust obligations to the Nez Perce Tribe.
- Analyze the regional economic and social impacts that may result from any proposed reduction or elimination of domestic sheep grazing in the four allotments.

Thank you for your interest in the development of the supplemental EIS (SEIS) for domestic sheep grazing, also referred to as the "Sheep SEIS". We look forward to holding public information meetings at communities near the allotment areas as we prepare to release the draft SEIS.

Please visit the Cottonwood Field Office website at <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/cottonwood.html> for updates on the project.

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Penalty for Private Use, \$300

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