



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Pocatello Field Office
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In Reply Refer To:
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Dear Interested Party:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Pocatello Field Office (PFO) is seeking input for developing an activity plan for the Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Beginning this spring the PFO is conducting inventories on all motorized travel routes, existing developed and dispersed recreation areas, climbing areas, and non-motorized boating opportunities on the Blackfoot River below the reservoir.

The PFO is seeking your help with comments, concerns, or issues you might have related to recreation within the boundaries of the Blackfoot River SRMA that will assist us in developing the SRMA plan. The plan will include specific decisions for on-the-ground implementation of the Pocatello Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved July 2012. The SRMA plan will provide management direction for recreational activities located on public lands administered by the PFO in the vicinity of the Blackfoot River, around the Blackfoot Reservoir, within Wolverine Canyon, and at the Blackfoot Reservoir Campground. For informational purposes only, the plan will include general recreation information on lands withdrawn to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Fort Hall Irrigation Project, however, no decisions will be made for these lands managed by BIA. All other lands outside the SRMA are excluded from the plan.

The Blackfoot River SRMA was identified in the Pocatello RMP to be managed to maintain and/or enhance targeted recreation opportunities. The Blackfoot River SRMA encompasses approximately 21,800 acres of public/Federal lands. The Blackfoot River SRMA is segmented into five distinct Recreation Management Zones (RMZs) as follows: (1) Wolverine Canyon, (2) Campground, (3) Reservoir (primarily Federal lands withdrawn for the BIA Fort Hall Irrigation Project), (4) Mid River, and (5) Lower River. Each RMZ would be managed for various activities, experiences, and benefits.

SRMAs are administrative units where the existing or proposed recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are recognized for their unique value, importance, and/or distinctiveness, especially compared to other areas used for recreation. SRMAs are managed to protect and enhance a targeted set of activities, experiences and benefits, and desired recreation setting characteristics. Within SRMAs, recreation and visitor services management is recognized as the predominant land use, where specific recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are managed and protected on a long-term basis.

Targeted outcomes from the RMP are based on primary activities, experiences, and benefits. Examples of primary activities found within the five RMZs include but are not limited to: fishing, hunting, motorized and non-motorized boating, picnicking, camping, Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) riding (including tracked over-snow vehicles) rock climbing, horseback riding, and hiking. Examples of experiences include but are not limited to: developing skills and abilities, experiencing a greater sense

of independence, enjoying risk-taking adventure, spending time with family/friends, enjoying nature, exercise/physical fitness, escape personal/social pressure, learning/teaching about the outdoors, enjoy peace and quiet. Examples of benefits include but are not limited to: (1) Personal - personal development and growth, improve physical and mental health, greater self-reliance, improve outdoor recreation skills, and improve relationship with family/friends, personal appreciation and satisfaction. (2) Community/Social - lifestyle improvement, heightened sense of appreciation for public lands in the local area. (3) Environmental - Increased awareness and protection of natural landscapes. Economic - Increase local tourism revenue, maintenance of area's recreation-tourism market niche or character, increased desirability as a place to live, provide food.

What a SRMA activity plan does:

A SRMA activity plan identifies issues and concerns brought forth by the public and also internally within the PFO regarding recreational aspects. The plan will focus on the following criteria: (1) Existing and potential developments for recreation (e.g., campgrounds, boat ramps, and signs/kiosks). (2) Resource impacts from recreational use (e.g., wildlife, noxious weeds, and riparian habitat). (3) Existing and potential recreational opportunities the public is seeking (e.g., developed campgrounds, non-motorized boater put-in/take-out areas, dispersed camping, and motorized travel routes). (4) User groups and interested parties (e.g., boaters, campers, motorized recreation users).

What the plan will accomplish:

The plan will identify desires of the public and the type of recreational activities that would occur within each RMZ. This would include motorized and non-motorized travel (designated routes) within each of the zones. The plan will also help address public participation and how to coordinate the planning effort with stake holders. The following components of the plan are as follows:

- (1) Travel Management Planning
 - Complete a route inventory of all motorized travel routes
 - Identify routes open to motorize travel (Designated Routes)
 - Identify opportunities for tracked over-snow vehicles (snowmobiles)
 - Identify non-motorized activities such as hiking, horseback riding, boating/kayaking and mechanized (mountain biking) opportunities
 - Identify existing and potential non-motorized boating opportunities (e.g., developed put-in/take-out areas)
 - Develop a plan for signing/education/enforcement/monitoring/maintenance
- (2) Existing and Potential Developed Recreation Opportunities
 - Identify opportunities to expand existing developed recreation sites within the Mid-River RMZ (Sagehen Flats, Cutthroat Trout, Graves Creek, Morgan's Bridge, and Trail Creek Bridge)
 - Identify opportunities to delineate individual sites within developed campgrounds.
 - Establish group size limits within campgrounds
 - Improve river access and boater put-in/take-out areas at developed recreation sites.
 - Identify season of use to maintain recreation facilities
 - Preserve visual and scenic resources
 - Identify and manage conflicts with various recreational uses, grazing, riparian management, water quality, noxious weeds, fish and wildlife, cultural resources, etc.

- (3) Existing Dispersed Recreation Opportunities
- Improve river access and boater put-in/take-out areas
 - Identify areas to remain undeveloped
 - Preserve of visual and scenic resources
 - Identify and manage conflicts that existing recreation activities have with other resources, such as grazing, riparian health, water quality, noxious weeds, fish and wildlife, cultural resources, visual resources, etc.
 - Identify opportunities for interpretive displays (historic trails, natural features, etc.)
- (4) Public Participation/Coordination
- Coordinate with Tribes, local governments, and landowners
 - Identify points of contacts for user groups and interested parties
 - Identify access needs, existing road maintenance, and seasonal restrictions
 - Coordinate law enforcement efforts
 - Scoping/public meetings/opportunities to participate

How can you help in the planning effort?

Your valued input will help us determine the types of recreational activities (e.g., fishing, boating, camping, OHV riding, rock climbing) currently enjoyed, and the other types of activities not currently available but desired.

Please provide us written feedback on recreation related issues such as, but not limited to:

- Identify areas where additional recreational facilities are needed.
- Identify desired recreational activities the BLM should manage for in the SRMA
- Identify areas that need additional protection to help preserve the natural resources
- Identify routes where BLM should pursue easements to gain access to BLM land
- Identify routes that should be available for motorized travel on BLM
- Identify routes that should be available for mountain biking, equestrian use, hiking, and other non-motorized activities
- Identify areas that should remain undeveloped
- Identify non-motorized boat access needs (put-in/take-out locations)
- Identify known conflicts that existing recreation activities have with other resources, such as grazing, riparian health, water quality, noxious weeds, fish and wildlife, cultural resources, visual resources, etc.

Under the planning process, the BLM must comply with numerous Federal laws, regulations, statutes and policies such as the: Endangered Species Act, Wilderness Act, General Mining Laws, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, BLM's National OHV Strategy, National Scenic/Historic Trails Strategy, and BLM's Priority for Recreation Services.

End Result:

In the end, the plan will:

- Describe the current environment in the vicinity of the SRMA for recreational related activities.
- Analyze appropriate existing and potential recreational activities on the public lands, with the end goal aimed at reducing conflicts between recreational activities and natural resources and other valid resource uses.
- Establish guidelines for management, monitoring, and plan adjustments for future recreational trends.
- Designate a system of roads and trails open for motorized and mechanized travel.

You can submit written comments until August 31, 2015, by writing a letter titled Blackfoot River SRMA or using provided maps and/or Input Comment Form to the, Bureau of Land Management, Attention Chuck Patterson, 4350 Cliffs Drive, Pocatello, ID 83204.

Information provided by the public during the 90 day data gathering period, ending August 31, 2015, will be reviewed and used in the development of a proposed plan. The PFO will present the proposed activity plan at official public scoping meetings beginning in the fall of 2015. The public meetings will be held in various locations around southeastern Idaho. Locations and times for the public scoping meetings are yet to be determined. If you are interested in participating in future scoping meetings and would like to be added on a mailing list, please indicate in your written comments. Please include your name and a complete address.

For questions regarding the plan development of the Blackfoot River SRMA, please contact Chuck Patterson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, at 208-478-6362.

Sincerely,

David A. Pacioretty
Field Manager

Enclosures:
Scoping Comment Form
Map(s)