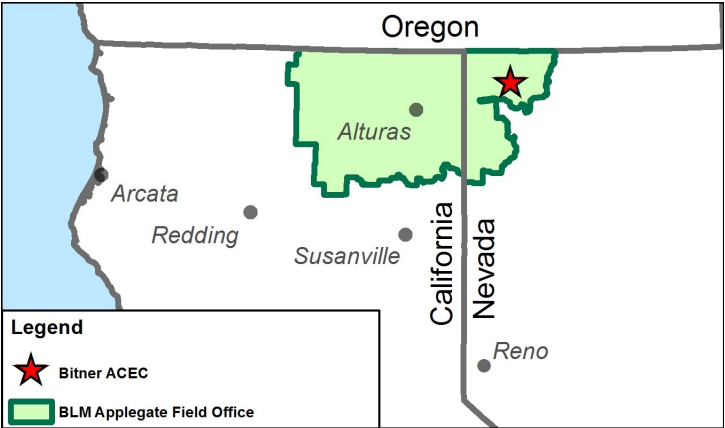




**Bitner Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC)
Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA)
Scoping Period Begins**

The Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Applegate Field Office is in the early stages of the planning process that will establish a Management Plan for the Bitner Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), BLM is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify significant environmental impacts from the proposed actions.

As part of the scoping process, the BLM is providing opportunities to provide input regarding the Management Plan.



Background

ACECs are BLM-administered lands where a higher level of protection is provided in order to prevent, exclude, or modify land uses and activities that would otherwise cause irreparable damage to important ecosystems, wildlife or fisheries. ACECs are also created to protect areas of high scenic value, preserve important cultural resources, or guard human life and property from natural hazards.

The Bitner ACEC covers approximately 1,921 acres in northern Washoe County, Nevada. It is located along the eastern boundary of the Massacre Rim Wilderness Study Area and southwest of the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. This area was designated as an ACEC for its wildlife and cultural resource values. Badger Meadows is important wildlife habitat for many species, including the greater sage grouse and the Sheldon tui chub. The ACEC also contains the historic Bitner Ranch that dates to the late 1800s. The BLM is currently in the process of stabilizing the historic structures.

Planning Process

The BLM Applegate Field Office is in the early stages of the planning process for the Bitner ACEC Management Plan. The field office is currently exploring ideas to turn the historic ranch into an interpretive site with a day-use area and creating a campground near the ACEC.

We are looking for input regarding potential actions that could be addressed in the Management Plan, significant issues that should be addressed in the EA, and concerns BLM should be aware of pertaining to the Bitner ACEC.



Public Involvement Opportunities

NEPA requires that federal agencies engage the public during the preparation of an EA. Scoping is the process that continues throughout the planning and early stages of the EA process. Agencies use scoping to engage various stakeholders including state, local, and Tribal governments and the public in the early identification of affected resources, issues to be considered, and potential alternatives.

How to Comment

The scoping period provides an opportunity for people who could be affected by the proposed action to express their views and concerns, and to offer suggestions. At this stage of the process, the most effective comments include specific details regarding issues or concerns and provide rationale for the concern or suggestion. Ideas for effective comments include:

- ◆ What are your specific concerns about a resource— and why?
- ◆ Do you know of any geographic areas of concern for a specific resource— and why?
- ◆ Give us ideas for management measures or new technologies to consider.
- ◆ Let us know about important data or other information to inform the development of the Bitner ACEC Management Plan.

Please provide comments by September 30, 2022.



BLM Values Your Input!

We thank you for your participation. The public has the opportunity to provide input via the following methods:



Mail:
BLM—Surprise Field Station
Attn: Jen Rovanpera
PO Box 460
Cedarville, CA 96104



By visiting the BLM project website at:
<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2021112/510>

Public Disclosure. Before including your address, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you may request that we withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

