

Upper Deschutes Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan

Prineville District Office

BLM

October 2005



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Prineville District Office
3050 N.E. 3rd Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1610 (OR056)

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to announce that, after several years of collaborative effort, the Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan (RMP) is complete. This document will provide guidance for the management of over 400,000 acres of lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Central Oregon. This plan covers the western portion of the area previously managed under the Brothers/La Pine RMP published in July 1989. Since that time the population in the region has grown dramatically and demands on public lands have grown along with the population. This new plan will guide management of lands facing a level of demands not anticipated by the earlier plan.

The staff of the Deschutes Resource Area of the Prineville District of the BLM has prepared the attached Record of Decision (ROD) and RMP in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The ROD links final land use plan decisions to the analysis presented in the Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Minor changes or points of clarification, incorporated into the RMP in response to staff review and issues raised in the protest process, are also briefly described in the ROD. Note: A land exchange was completed in the La Pine Area after the ROD/RMP went to the printer. All necessary changes in the text have been implemented. RMP Maps 6 and 15 have been modified. All other maps that display land ownership in the La Pine Area do not reflect this change. Consequently Maps 6 and 15 are the authoritative maps concerning land ownership and travel management in the La Pine area.

The ROD serves as the final decision for **Land Use Planning Decisions** described in the attached RMP. Land Use Planning Decisions provide management direction and guide future actions. Land Use Planning Decisions were protestable after the publication of the Proposed Upper Deschutes RMP/FEIS. Sixteen protest letters were received. After careful consideration of all points raised in these protests, the BLM Director concluded the responsible planning team and decision makers followed all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and pertinent resource considerations in developing the proposed plan. The ROD provides more detail about Land Use Planning Decisions, protests and, protest resolution.

The ROD also describes a single **Implementation Level Decision**. This decision will authorize the issuance of a long term (non-exclusive) lease to the Oregon Military Department that will make available almost 44,000 acres of land for Oregon National Guard training. In the past this training has been authorized through a series of short term permits.

An appeal opportunity for this decision is being provided at this time. The process is described in the ROD and the appeal period will close **30 days** from the date the Notice of Availability of the ROD/RMP appears in the *Federal Register*. This date will also be announced via local news releases, Prineville District website (if operational), and/or individual newsletter mailings. Please review the ROD carefully for a more detailed discussion of the appeal process.

Additional hard copies and CD-ROM versions of the RMP/ROD may be obtained at the address above. The document will be available on the internet at http://www.or.blm.gov/Prineville/Deschutes_RMP/Home.htm in the future.

We appreciate your help in this planning effort and look forward to your continued participation as the plan is implemented. For additional information or clarification regarding the attached document or the planning process, please contact Teal Purrington at 541/416-6700 or by e-mail at tpurring@or.blm.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Towne
Field Manager, Deschutes Resource Area

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Prineville District Office
3050 N.E. 3rd Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754

Upper Deschutes 1 Record of Decision 1 and 1 Resource Management Plan 1

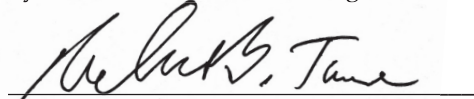


Record of Decision – Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan

September 2005

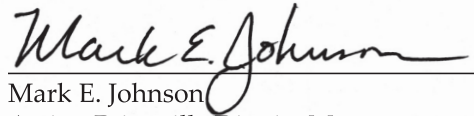
Managers' Recommendations

Having considered a full range of alternatives, associated effects, and public input, I recommend adoption and implementation of the attached Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan, as described in this Record of Decision. This plan will replace the 1989 Brothers/La Pine Resource Management Plan for the western half of that plan's area. This plan also revises a portion of the Two Rivers Resource Management Plan by changing the boundaries of the planning areas in order to address issues common to the two planning areas. The approved plan addresses all issues raised that are relevant for resolution by the Bureau of Land Management.



Robert B. Towne

Area Field Manager



Mark E. Johnson

Acting Prineville District Manager

State Director Approval

I approve the attached Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan and approve the change in the boundary between the Upper Deschutes and Two Rivers planning areas, as described in this Record of Decision. This document meets the requirement for a Record of Decision, as provided in 40 CFR Part 1505.2 and for a Resource Management Plan, as described in 43 CFR Part 1610.0-5(k).



for Elaine M. Brong
Oregon State Director

Record of Decision – Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan

Introduction

The planning area contains about 400,000 acres of BLM-administered lands in Klamath, Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson Counties, Oregon (see Map 1A). The planning area is within the Upper Deschutes portion of the Deschutes Resource Area and land management is currently directed by the 1989 *Brothers/La Pine Resource Management Plan*.

This Record of Decision (ROD) approves the attached *Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan (RMP)*, and the modification of the boundary between the area covered by the RMP and the area covered by the *Two Rivers RMP* (USDI-BLM, 1986). The RMP will provide management direction for all resources on BLM-administered land in the planning area.

An environmental impact statement was prepared for this RMP in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The RMP is the same as the preferred Alternative 7 described in the *Proposed Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS)* published in January 2005 except for one substantive change and several non-substantive changes involving formatting and the consolidation of continued and new direction (see below). Specific management decisions for public lands under the jurisdiction of the Deschutes Resource Area are described in the attached “Resource Management Plan.”

The RMP includes two levels of decisions in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and BLM regulations. These are land use planning and implementation decisions. Land use planning decisions were protestable during the January 14 2005 – February 14, 2005 protest period in accordance with BLM regulations 43 CFR 1610.5-2. Sixteen protest letters were received. There is a single implementation decision made in the RMP (see below). This decision may be appealed in accordance with the Department of Interior regulations at 43 CFR 4 and 43 CFR 2450.

Changes between the Proposed and Final Management Plans

There have been some changes between the Proposed and Final Resource Management Plans in response to protests and comments received on the Proposed RMP. In addition to one substantive change, format and text were edited to improve the usability of the RMP.

The substantive change involves the proposed closure of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) to geocaching. After consideration of relevant protests, it was determined that geocaching could be managed under the Interim Management Policy for WSAs without adversely impacting the wilderness suitability of each WSA. This decision was based in part on the consideration that current levels of geocaching use have not been determined to affect wilderness suitability. This decision is fully described in the RMP. It contains a set of mitigation measures for geocaching that would protect wilderness values within the two WSAs (Badlands and Steelhead Falls). This decision does not restrict the ability of the BLM to institute closures in the future if use levels and impacts increase or if Congress designates either WSA as Wilderness.

Land Use Plan Decisions

Land use plan decisions are identified in the attached RMP and include:

1) Goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines that define desired outcomes or future conditions.

2) Land use Allocations/Allowable Uses and restrictions including:

- Right-of-way avoidance/exclusion areas;
- Land tenure zoning classifications;
- Designations of Special Recreation Management Areas;
- Visual Resource Management classifications;
- Travel Management Designations of Open, Closed, or Limited;
- Designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern;
- Criteria for establishing future areas available for livestock grazing;
- Primary transportation system classifications and road management objectives;
- Wildland fire management; and
- Lands available for military training.

Protest Opportunity

A 30-day protest period was provided on the land use plan decisions contained in the "PRMP/FEIS" in accordance with 43 CFR Part 1610.5-2. Sixteen protests letters were received. This ROD serves as the final decision for the land use plan decisions described above and becomes effective on the date this ROD is signed. No further administrative remedies are available at this time for these land use plan decisions.

Implementation Decisions

It is the BLM's intent to implement, over time, a number of specific project level decisions described in the attached RMP, as funding and staff are available. These are called "implementation decisions" (as opposed to the land use planning decisions described above).

Some decisions in the RMP will require the preparation of detailed, project-level NEPA analyses prior to implementation. Public involvement opportunities, including further protest or appeal opportunities, may be provided at that time. Other decisions have been addressed to a sufficient level of detail in the RMP/EIS process to be implemented over time without further NEPA analysis. An appeal opportunity for these decisions is being provided at this time as described in the following section.

The following Implementation Decision may be appealed by affected parties:

- Decision to provide a long-term non-exclusive lease to the Oregon Military Department for use of 43,985 acres of BLM administered lands for training.

Appeal Procedures for Implementation Decisions

Any party adversely affected by the decision to grant the lease to the Oregon Military Department may appeal within 30 days of receipt of this decision in accordance with the provisions of 43 CFR Parts 4.4. The appeal must include a statement of reasons or file a separate statement of reasons within 30 days of filing the appeal. The appeal must state if

a stay of the decision is being requested in accordance with 43 CFR 4.21 and must be filed with the Field Manager, at the following address:

Deschutes Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
3050 NE 3rd Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754

A copy of the appeal, statement of reasons, and all other supporting documents should be sent to the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, Lloyd 500 Building, Suite 607, 500 N.E. Multnomah Street, Portland, OR 97232. If the statement of reasons is filed separately it must be sent to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 4015 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22203. It is suggested that any appeal be sent certified mail, return receipt requested.

Request for Stay

Should you wish to file a motion for stay pending the outcome of an appeal of these implementation decisions, you must show sufficient justification based on the following standards under 43 CFR 4.21:

- 1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- 2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- 3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted.
- 4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

As noted above, the motion for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer.

Continuity of Previous Decisions

Within the attached RMP are a number of valid, existing decisions that were previously made in other land use plans, plan amendments, and project or activity level plans which will remain in effect and continue to be implemented (see Appendix A). They do not represent new decisions that are subject to protest or appeal. Administrative relief opportunities were provided when those decisions were made.

Overview of the Alternatives

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

During the early stages of the planning process a number of alternatives were considered, but dropped from detailed analysis for a variety of reasons. These alternatives included:

- 1) Alternatives that would eliminate from the entire planning area certain activities such as livestock grazing, mineral sales, military use, and off highway vehicle use;
- 2) Certain proposed restrictions on rockhounding;
- 3) An area wide restriction on shooting within ¼ mile of private land;
- 4) Developing BLM managed shooting ranges on BLM administered lands.
- 5) Restricting types of weapons that may be fired on certain areas of BLM administered lands.

A brief description of each alternative and the reason for dropping it from further analysis is contained in Chapter 3 of the "Proposed RMP/Final EIS" (USDI-BLM 2005).

Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

Seven alternatives were analyzed in detail in the Proposed RMP/FEIS (USDI-BLM 2005). The overall theme determined the types of management actions that would be applied. Most of the alternatives, with the exception of Alternative 1, were designed to meet the RMP management goals. Public input received throughout the planning process was considered in the development of alternatives. The alternatives varied in their ability to meet the management goals over the life of the plan (up to 20 years). Funding and staffing levels would affect rates of implementation, and projected implementation rates could vary by alternative, depending on the costs.

All alternatives included maintenance of existing facilities; however, the level of maintenance could vary by alternative and the amount of annual funding. All alternatives incorporated or complied with the management direction provided by the "Standards for Land Health for Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington" (USDI-BLM 1998); and the "Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review" (Wilderness IMP, USDI-BLM 1995). Most alternatives incorporated the "Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystems Management Guidelines" (USDI-BLM, USDI-FWS, USDA Forest Service, ODFW, and ODSL, 2000).

General Management Themes of the Alternatives

This section provides a brief overview of each of the alternatives considered in detail. Alternatives considered in detail include one "No Action/No Change" Alternative (Alternative 1), and six "action" alternatives (Alternatives 2-7) that would reflect various levels of change from the existing Brothers/La Pine Resource Management Plan direction. All alternatives contain Continuing Management Direction that is not being revised (see PRMP/FEIS Chapter 1 and Appendix C, USDI-BLM, 2005).

Some of the issues identified early in this planning process were resolved using one approach for all of the "action alternatives". These are identified under the category "Management Direction Common to Alternatives 2 - 7" in the Alternatives Considered in Detail section. This management guidance represents areas where there was little controversy over the best way to resolve the issue. One example of this approach is the common management direction for the "action" alternatives for Archeological resources considered "at risk." The common approach categorizes "at risk" resources, prioritizes those resources for future actions, and limits uses that have a high likelihood of significantly impacting the integrity of those resources. These components are not included in this overview.

All of the "action" alternatives strive to develop a balance of uses, and so it is difficult to briefly characterize them. Generally, none of the alternatives eliminates any one type of use entirely. In many cases, if a use is more limited in one geographic area in a particular alternative, there may be an increase in that use elsewhere in the planning area in the same alternative. Each "action" alternative, then, is designed to achieve a different mix of uses within the planning area.

Alternative 1 (No Action/No Change)

Alternative 1 continued present management and was considered the "no action" alternative. This alternative continued management under the existing Brothers/La

Pine RMP and various existing activity plans. It included the management direction and protections provided by all currently approved activity plans such as allotment management plans or habitat management plans. Resource values or sensitive habitats received management emphasis at present levels. This alternative included existing direction for the Millican OHV area from the Millican OHV Environmental Assessment and Millican litigation settlement agreement (Findings and Recommendations of November 5, 1998, as modified by the Order of February 26, 1999).

Alternative 2

This alternative involved the least amount of overall change from current management. In general, this alternative continued a mix of uses throughout the planning area, resolved conflicts on a case-by-case basis rather than by separating uses, or applied specific conflict and demand thresholds. Alternative 2 emphasized shared trail use (motorized and non-motorized) throughout most of the planning area.

Alternative 3

This alternative increased emphasis on reducing conflicts between human uses and wildlife habitat management objectives while separating recreational uses. It relied on the use of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) as a management strategy to meet wildlife and other management objectives. This alternative placed a greater focus on managing for primary or secondary wildlife habitats with a primary or secondary emphasis across the planning area than does Alternative 2.

Alternative 4

Alternative 4 combined the approaches used in Alternatives 2 and 3, and included more emphasis on providing for recreation opportunities (more than Alternative 3, but less than 2) in areas and during seasons when the demand is greatest. This alternative also placed a greater emphasis than Alternative 2 on reducing conflict between land uses and other users or adjacent residents. Recreation uses were more separated than Alternative 2, but less than Alternative 3, and there was an emphasis on certain types of recreation over others within geographic subdivisions. ACECs were provided special management objectives that emphasized ecosystem and wildlife habitat management, but there were fewer and smaller areas than in Alternative 3.

Alternative 5

The emphasis in Alternative 5 was to focus lower conflict activities and higher quality wildlife habitat within the “urban” areas (generally includes most of Deschutes and Jefferson counties). There would be limited use of ACEC direction to protect resources, and more reliance on broad-scale conservation approaches across the planning area.

Alternative 6

In contrast to Alternative 5, Alternative 6 emphasized the future of effective wildlife habitats outside of the areas most likely to be affected by residential and urban development. This alternative put less emphasis on reducing conflicts between land uses, recreational users, and residents in the “urban” areas adjacent to residential areas than did Alternative 5. More emphasis was placed on reducing conflicts between wildlife management objectives and human activities away from residential development areas in the “rural” areas (generally includes most of Crook County).

Alternative 7 (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative 7 is based in part on areas of consensus developed with our Issue Team and includes changes made in response to comments made on Alternative 7 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Although specific direction changed in response to those comments, the overall emphasis of the Alternative 7 remains as described in the PRMP/FEIS. Alternative 7 takes an approach that combines various features of the previous alternatives. It places more emphasis on primary and secondary wildlife habitat emphasis areas in the southeast or “rural” portion of the planning area, the portion with the greatest potential concentrations of species needs, but also allows for increased amounts of year-round motorized use in much of that area. However, for the North Millican area, Alternative 7 modifies habitat effectiveness goals and place limitations on winter motorized use in order to balance wildlife habitat and recreation use needs. It emphasizes more separation of recreational uses than shared uses. Alternative 7 would modify the “conflict and demand” threshold criteria used in “Common to Alternatives 2 - 7” to determine areas available for continued livestock grazing use during the life of the plan.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that the Record of Decision identify the Environmentally Preferred Alternative analyzed in the Environmental Impact Statement. This is judged using the criteria in the NEPA and subsequent guidance by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ, 1981). The CEQ has defined the environmentally preferable alternative as the alternative that will best promote the national environmental policy as expressed in Section 101 of the NEPA. This section lists six broad policy goals for all Federal plans, programs, and policies:

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

Each alternative analyzed in the PRMP/FEIS contains a different mix of elements that provide for a range of uses and other elements that protect natural and cultural resources. All alternatives would meet the BLM legal mandates and directions to provide for public health and safety, to preserve important heritage components, to balance - in different ways - between population and resource uses, and to enhance the quality of our renewable resources. Many of these requirements are baseline requirements that do not change by alternative. The primary differences between the alternatives involve how that balance between population and resource use is addressed. Consequently there is no alternative that stands out clearly as the “Environmentally Preferred Alternative.” Alternatives 3, 5, and 7 all include significant resource protection measures as well as a mix and balance of uses across the planning area.

Of all alternatives, Alternative 3 would have the least potential to disrupt hydrologic function, particularly within the Bear Creek drainage and in the Cline Buttes area adjacent to the Deschutes River. In addition, Alternative 3 would have more closed areas to motorized use in the south-central portion of the planning area, in the vicinity

of Horse Ridge, Smith Canyon, the Badlands, and in the Tumalo area. Motorized use on designated roads only in the area south of Prineville Reservoir and Bear Creek Buttes would be least with Alternative 3 and would reduce the effects of sedimentation to intermittent and perennial stream channels such as Bear Creek, Sanford Creek, and Deer Creek. Infiltration and compaction effects from livestock grazing would likely be less with Alternative 5 compared to other alternatives as more area would be closed to livestock grazing. Consequently Alternative 5 would have the least potential for transport of sediment and water to the ephemeral channels in the Horse Ridge area.

In terms of wildlife habitat Alternative 3 allocates the greatest amount of the planning area for primary wildlife emphasis while allocating the least area to general wildlife emphasis. However, Alternative 7 provides more favorable conditions than all other alternatives by limiting motorized travel to a greater extent.

Alternative 7 provides the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment and balance of population and resource use, because it provides for a mix of uses across the planning area in a manner that will mitigate adverse impacts of those uses.

Alternative 3 provides the greatest amount of area managed with an emphasis on non-motorized uses and Primary wildlife habitat, thus significantly reducing the potential for unintended resource impacts because of the types of uses allowed. After reviewing the entire management mix of all alternatives Alternative 3 is deemed to be the Environmentally Preferred Alternative because it has the strongest emphasis on resource protection over resource uses of all alternatives considered.

Rationale for the Decision

The RMP builds on areas of consensus identified during the planning effort and reflects a balance of uses that meet the needs of local communities as well as national mandates for management of public lands. It provides direction to maintain and restore healthy and diverse ecosystems. It provides a mix of management emphases that recognizes the individual identities and social and economic values of the local communities. It will meet long term military training needs and provide a flexible framework for managing livestock grazing that responds to changing conflicts and demands.

Resolution of Issues

The RMP provides guidance to maintain and restore a healthy and diverse ecosystem within the planning area by preventing future impairments and restoring existing impairments to hydrologic function in high priority watersheds, and by limiting OHV travel to designated roads and/or trails within the planning area. The RMP emphasizes restoration of shrub-steppe habitats – recognizing the limitations and challenges that restoration of these and other “historic conditions” present throughout the fast growing and developing planning area. Restoration of high quality source habitats for a variety of species – including sage grouse - is a keystone to long-term conservation strategies.

Lands within the planning area provide serious challenges for integrating winter range protection and motorized recreation use. The RMP emphasizes winter range over motorized recreation use more than some of the alternatives, but allows an increase in the amount of winter riding opportunities over what is available currently.

The RMP establishes a Special Recreation Management Area in recognition of the importance of recreational activity on BLM administered lands. It addresses some recreational conflicts by providing a better balance of separated and mixed motorized and non-motorized uses than other alternatives. Over 60 percent of the planning area is

available for designated motorized use opportunities, and this includes some increase in the amount of trails available during the winter. Trail systems for OHVs that can provide longer riding opportunities, like the Millican Valley OHV area, are located farther away from urban centers, while mixed use emphasis was maintained in the some of the most popular “close in” areas such as Cline Buttes. The RMP reduces the total area available for motorized users compared to the current situation. However it increases the area available to motorized users during the winter.

The demand for non-motorized recreational opportunities is increasing rapidly and the mixture of motorized and non-motorized recreational activities becomes less and less compatible as the number of each type of user increases within the planning area. Consequently, the RMP provides larger blocks of land farther from the urban centers that are designated non-motorized exclusive, such as the Badlands, or non-motorized emphasis for future trail development such as Horse Ridge. In the long-term, separation of motorized and non-motorized use will support a quality experience for a wider variety of users. The size and configuration of the separate use areas in the RMP provides a reasonable balance that capitalizes on existing infrastructure and considers other factors such as wildlife and residential growth activity, but will not completely mitigate all conflicts between wildlife and recreationists, between different types of recreationists, or between recreationists and adjacent landowners.

The RMP resolves the issues associated with land uses such as livestock grazing, mineral materials extraction, and military training. A grazing decision matrix allows the most flexibility of any of the alternatives to integrate economic and administrative considerations of ranchers with the social and ecological components of the fast growing urban interface. The identification of a mineral materials site within the Cline Buttes area, a highly desirable source because of its quality, quantity and proximity to future anticipated road projects, will also provide the opportunity for substantial taxpayer benefit. Guidelines for development of mineral materials sites protect important resources and private property interests, while making it possible to meet the needs for high quality aggregate in Central Oregon. The RMP allocates more land than has been available in the past for military training and under terms and conditions of a long term lease that will provide training opportunities requested by the Oregon Military Department while protecting resources and interests of adjacent landowners.

The need to update land tenure classifications was also identified as an issue. It was the consensus of the planning partners that most of the BLM administered lands be classified Z-1 because of the value of the lands for the ecosystem. Exceptions include isolated parcels of BLM administered lands scattered throughout the planning area that would be classified Z-3 (suitable for disposal) and other parcels located near areas where the planning team determined there would be benefits in acquiring lands in order to create a contiguous block of public lands. These lands are identified as Z-2, suitable for retention but may be exchanged for land of higher value (See RMP Map 6).

The designation of the expanded Peck’s Milkvetch ACEC, the Tumalo Canals ACEC, and the decision to manage old growth juniper with a broad-scale conservation approach also represents a key integration of ecological, social, and economic concerns that are uniquely present in the RMP. A broad scale conservation approach for managing old growth juniper provides more flexibility to consider the important facets of this unique ecosystem throughout its limited range rather than focusing on discrete pieces of that ecosystem as represented in alternatives that encompass portions of the old growth juniper in ACECs. Designation of the Peck’s Milkvetch ACEC in the heart of the range of juniper old growth will also indirectly provide protection for the juniper ecosystem as well as the rare plant and limit uses likely to conflict with adjacent residents.

The RMP supports scientific approaches to ecosystem management and management of hazardous fuels in the urban interface, provides for multiple uses while protecting

resources and the interests of adjacent landowners, establishes and expands special management areas, manages motorized and non-motorized recreation, integrates recreation and wildlife management objectives throughout the planning area, manages firearm use to protect public health and safety, establishes an interim road system and guidelines for rights-of-way designed to provide necessary access and protect resources, establishes visual resource management classifications appropriate to the location and conditions of the land, establishes land tenure classifications, and establishes a proactive framework for managing at-risk significant archeological resources.

Mitigation Measures

In order to minimize impacts from implementation of the decisions contained in the RMP, the best management practices (BMPs) identified in Appendix F and stipulations and guidelines for mineral operations identified in the RMP and Appendix B would be utilized where appropriate.

Plan Monitoring

The BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-9) call for the monitoring of resource management plans on a continual basis with a formal evaluation done at periodic intervals. Implementation of the Upper Deschutes RMP will be monitored over time. Plan evaluations will occur on about 5-year intervals. Management actions arising from activity plan decisions will be evaluated to ensure consistency with RMP objectives. This is described in more detail in the monitoring section of the attached RMP.

Public Involvement in the Planning Process

Scoping

The planning process has followed the direction of The National Environmental Policy Act, The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), as amended, 43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*, and the more detailed BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (Handbook 1601-1). The emphasis of the process has been to provide an open, inclusive forum for the discovery and discussion of the important issues within the planning area. Scoping for this plan revision covered a period of 10 years and culminated in the publication of the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) in October 2001. The AMS, coupled with subsequent public meetings, served as another scoping period as over 100 new comment letters were received by the BLM in response to these events. Over this period, new information that is relevant to the planning process was generated both locally and throughout the northwest.

Collaboration

The final formulation of the issues and alternatives benefited from the advice of a group that was chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act through the Deschutes Provincial Advisory Committee. This group, called the "Issue Team," consisted of tribal, local, state, and federal governmental representatives as well as private stakeholders, including representatives of a diverse range of interest groups.

Chapter 5 of the PRMP/FEIS (USDI-BLM 2005) details the membership of the Issue Team, as well as describing how our collaboration with tribal, local, state and federal representatives implements the direction of the legal mandates for collaboration and consultation as described under Planning Criteria/Legislative Constraints.

Analysis of the Management Situation

In October 2001, the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) was published. The document identified preliminary issues based on internal meetings of BLM specialists and managers, meetings with tribal and local government representatives, calls and letters from the general public received over the previous ten years, and public scoping meetings conducted during earlier attempts to amend the existing RMP. Comments on the AMS served as a resource for members of the Issue Team during the collaborative process. The AMS also included an Issue Team Application and an invitation to participate in the collaborative planning process.

Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

The Draft Upper Deschutes RMP/EIS was published in October 2003. The comment period extended from October 17, 2003 to January 15, 2004. The BLM received 1,360 responses in the form of letters, emails, faxes, telephone conversation transcripts and organized letter campaigns. These responses were analyzed and responded to in Vol. 2 of the PRMP/FEIS (USDI-BLM, 2005).

Public Meetings & Field Tours

During the scoping/comment period for the AMS, public meetings were held in Redmond on October 16, 2001, in Prineville on October 17, 2001, and in La Pine on October 18, 2001. These meetings were advertised in local newspapers, and in the cover letter on the AMS (mailed to about 1,200 people in October 2001). The BLM also held public field tours to various sites of interest within the planning area as part of the scoping process. These field trips took place on October 20, 2001 in the area west of the Powell Butte Highway; on October 21, 2001 in the La Pine area; and on October 27, 2001 in the area east of the Powell Butte Highway.

Another round of meetings was held in November 2003 after publication of the Draft RMP/EIS to provide information to the public, answer questions, and facilitate public comments. These meetings were held November 12 in La Pine, November 18 in Prineville, November 19 in Redmond, and November 20 in Bend. There were also two meetings specifically to answer questions for the grazing permittees, in the morning and in the evening on November 13.

There were numerous other meetings open to the public, including Provincial Advisory Committee and Issue Team meetings (see further discussion of these meetings in the PRMP/FEIS (USDI-BLM, 2005) under Collaborative Planning, BLM Process).

Proposed RMP/Final EIS

A 30-day protest period, beginning January 14, 2005, was provided for the "Proposed RMP/Final EIS" in accordance with 43 CFR Part 1610.5-2. A total of 16 letters were received by the Washington Office of the BLM. These protests were resolved by the BLM Director. All those who provided protests or comment letters to the Washington Office received a response from the BLM Washington Office.

Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In August 2004, the BLM requested informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding potential impacts of actions proposed in the Upper Deschutes RMP to federally listed species or species proposed for listing. Accompanying this request was a Biological Assessment evaluating the effects to federally listed species from

the Proposed Resource Management Plan. This is in conformance with the memorandum of agreement between the BLM and the USFWS dated August 30, 2000. In May of 2003 the USFWS sent the BLM a list of species either federally-listed or proposed for listing that may occur in the planning area. Species that are known to occur in the planning area were addressed in the planning process. On September 9, 2004 the USFWS concurred with the Biological Assessment that the RMP “may affect but is not likely to adversely affect, and may beneficially affect bald eagles.”

Tribal Participation

Under Federal law and regulations, consultation with Native American Tribes who have an interest in the planning area is required. To accomplish this, district staff have met with or phoned Tribal groups regularly, BLM managers have made repeated updates at Tribal Council meetings, and Representatives of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation actively participated in the Issue Team Meetings and as a member of the Deschutes Provincial Advisory Committee that advised the BLM on its decision. Copies of the scoping packet, Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation” (USDI-BLM 2001), “Draft RMP/EIS” (USDI-BLM 2003), and “Proposed RMP/Final EIS” (USDI-BLM 2005) were sent to each of the Tribal groups for review and comment. Tribal consultation is documented further in Chapter 5 of the proposed plan.



