

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Alpine County Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment

Carson City Field Office, Nevada

BLM

June 2007



It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM/CC/GI-06/021+1610

NV-CCFO-030-2007-02



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Carson City Field Office
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, Nevada 89701
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>



In Reply Refer To:
1610
NV-CCFO-030-2007-02

JUN 13 2007

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your consideration is the Proposed Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment/ Environmental Assessment for management of public lands within Alpine County, California. The Proposed ACRMP is open for a 30-day review and protest period beginning on June 18, 2007. This review and protest period will end on July 18, 2007.

The Proposed ACRMP Amendment and Environmental Analysis was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management-Carson City Field Office in consultation with Alpine County, South Tahoe Public Utility District, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, US Forest Service Carson Ranger District, and BLM state offices in Nevada and California, and interested private individuals. The Decision Record (DR) will be prepared following the 30-day review and protest period. The DR will document the Responsible Official's decisions regarding the land use changes proposed in this amendment.

You are invited to attend a public presentation of the Proposed ACRMP Amendment that will coincide with the July 3, 2007, Alpine County Board of Supervisors meeting. The Board meeting begins at 9:00 a.m. at the Alpine County Administration Building, 99 Water Street, Markleeville, California.

Upon resolution of any protests, a Final RMPA/DR will be issued. The approved Final Plan will be mailed to all who participated in the planning process. It will also be available to all parties through the Carson City Field Office website http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson_city_field.html or by mail upon request.

Sincerely,

Donald T. Hicks
Field Manager
Carson City Field Office

Protest Procedures

Any person who participated in the planning process for this Proposed RMP Amendment, and who has an interest that is or may be adversely affected, may protest approval of this plan and the land use planning decisions contained within it during this 30-day period (refer to Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1610.5-2). Only those persons or organizations who participated in the planning process leading to the Proposed RMP Amendment may protest. The protesting party may raise only those issues submitted for the record during the planning process leading up to the publication of this current document. These issues may have been raised by the protesting party or others. New issues may not be brought into the record at the protest stage. Protests must be filed with the BLM Director in writing at either of the following addresses:

Regular mail:

Director (210)
Attention—Brenda Williams
P.O. Box 66538
Washington, DC 20035

Overnight mail:

Director (210)
Attention—Brenda Williams
1620 L Street, NW, Suite 1075
Washington, DC 20036

E-mailed and telefaxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail, postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the E-mail or faxed protest as an advance copy and it will receive full consideration. If you wish to provide BLM with such advance notification, please direct these advance copies as follows:

E-mail:

Brenda_Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov

Faxes:

(202) 452-5112 (Attn: BLM Protest Coordinator)

IMPORTANT: In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5-2, the protest must contain the information described in the following checklist.

- **The name, mailing address, and telephone number of the person filing the protest.**
- **The “interest” of the person filing the protest (how will you be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of the resource management plan?).**
- **A statement of the part(s) of the Proposed RMP and the issue(s) being protested. (To the extent possible, this should reference specific pages, paragraphs, sections, tables, or maps that are believed to be incorrect or incomplete.)**
- **A copy of all documents addressing the issue(s) that the protesting party submitted during the planning process OR a statement of the date they were discussed for the record.**
- **A concise statement explaining why the protestor believes the BLM State Director’s proposed decision is incorrect.**

All of these elements are critical parts of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents or available planning records (e.g., meeting minutes or summaries, correspondence). The BLM Director will make every attempt to promptly render a decision on the protest. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the BLM Director will be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

The BLM's practice is to make protests, including the names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment Environmental Analysis EA-NV-CCFO-030-07-02

The Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment (NV-CCFO-030-2007-02) consider two alternatives. These alternatives include Alternative 1, No Action-Continuation of Current Management and Alternative 2, Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA).

The Proposed RMPA includes the following:

Lands

- Pursue revocation and restoration to the operation of the public land laws and general mining laws Bureau of Reclamation and BLM withdrawals located along the Snowshoe Thompson Ditch encumbering 80 acres located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, T. 11 N, R. 19 E. of Section 25, T. 11 N., R. 19 E.
- Designate 17,725 acres for retention in public ownership under the administration of the BLM.
- Designate 955 acres for disposal to Alpine County for public and recreational purposes under the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act of 1926, (as amended).

Trails and Travel Management

- Designate 5,521 of public lands as Motorized Use Limited to Designated Roads and Trails.
 - Designate 894 acres in the Fay-Luther Canyon area as Closed to Motorized Vehicle Travel. Administrative access would be authorized when necessary.
 - Designate 268 acres within the Indian Creek Recreation Withdrawal area as Closed to Motorized Vehicle Travel and public access. This proposed closure specifically pertains to South Tahoe Public Utility District existing right-of-way, CA-13255.
 - Designate 5,143 acres in Bagley Valley as Limited to Designated Roads and Trails.
 - Designate 378 acres within Bagley Valley as Closed to Motorized Vehicle Travel.
 - Designate 2,375 acres in the Slinkard Wilderness Study Area Closed to Motorized Vehicles regardless of Wilderness status.
 - Designate 550 acres in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Study Area Closed to Motorized Vehicle Travel regardless of Wilderness status.
 - Roads, primitive roads, and/or trails designated within the network may be altered through adaptive management with segments closed, realigned, or added when conditions warrant.
 - Designate a preliminary network of roads, primitive roads, and trail network(s) on approximately 4 miles of nonmotorized and 6.8 miles of motorized linear miles. Motorized vehicles under administrative authorization could access the portion of the nonmotorized road beginning at Curtz Lake and ending at Summit Lake.
-

- An inventory and assessment of roads, primitive roads, and trails not identified in the preliminary network would be completed by 2009.
- A completed roads, primitive roads, and trails network would be established through travel management planning by 2010. Should any new roads or trails need to be constructed, further NEPA would be required.
- Factors to consider in further documenting and designating the roads, primitive roads, and trails network may include, but are not limited to:
 - Road, primitive road, or trail densities;
 - Soil erosion;
 - Water quality;
 - Utility rights-of-way;
 - Cultural resources;
 - Threatened & endangered plants and animals;
 - Invasive non-native plants and noxious weeds;
 - Priority species and habitats;
- Roads needed through special authorizations or for administrative purposes such as, but not limited to, fuel wood sales, traditional cultural uses, search and rescue, fire suppression, livestock grazing, would be allowable.
- Areas not yet inventoried would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails for all motorized travel until designations and signing are completed.

Livestock Grazing

- Harvey Flat, Indian Creek (CA portion only) and Millberry Canyon Grazing Allotments - BLM managed lands in these allotments would not be available for livestock grazing use.
- Sheep grazing would continue to be permitted on the Bagley Valley Allotment.

Based on the analysis of the Proposed RMPA and Environmental Analysis, EA-CCFO-030-2007-02, I have determined that the actions will not have a significant impact on the human environment and an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Donald T. Hicks

Donald T. Hicks
 Manager,
 Carson City Field Office

JUNE 12, 2007

Date

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LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AUM	Animal Unit Month
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CRMP	Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan, 2001
FLPMA	Federal Lands Policy Management Act
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IBA	Important Bird Areas
ICRL	Indian Creek Recreation Lands
LCT	Lahontan Cutthroat Trout
LRWQCB	Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
NAGPRA	Native American Graves and Repatriation Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
ORV	Off-road vehicle
OHV	Off-highway vehicle
PIF	Partners in Flight
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purposes Act
RMPA	Resource Management Plan Amendment
ROW	Right-of-way
STPUD	South Tahoe Public Utility District
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
USFS/FS	Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Carson Ranger District
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WSA	Wilderness Study Area

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Prior to 1968, public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Alpine County, California, were under the management of the California Folsom District Office, BLM. A Memorandum of Understanding, between California and Nevada BLM State Directors signed November 8, 1968, (amended in 1972 and supplemented in 1984), further defined program management and procedural changes. Initially, the Carson City Field Office (CCFO) was delegated the authority to process land and mineral actions, and ultimately all management responsibilities were transferred to the CCFO.

Current land use decisions for approximately 18,680 acres of public land (BLM managed land) in Alpine County derive from resource management plans and amendments from the 1960's, 70's, and 80's. Collectively, these decisions emphasized and made commitments to identify recreation as the "highest priority use of this area".

The terms BLM managed lands, public lands, and Plan Area, are synonymous in this document.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment is to amend the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) specific to 1) land tenure designations for approximately 18,680 acres of BLM managed lands; 2) identify and designate trails and travel management for approximately 18,680 acres of BLM managed lands; 3) close three allotments to all grazing and one allotment to cattle grazing totaling 11,906 acres.

The need for the plan is to: 1) respond to a 1999 request from Alpine County for additional lands available for community expansion; 2) address recent Bureau policy and guidance on designation of travel and transportation networks in all planning efforts; and 3) to amend previous decisions specific to livestock management for public lands in Alpine County.

1.3 PLANNING AREA

The planning area is located in California, adjacent to and west of the towns of Minden and Gardnerville, Nevada, and approximately 90 minutes south from the Carson City-Reno-Sparks metropolitan area. The unincorporated communities of Woodfords and Markleeville in Alpine County are within 30 to 40 minutes of Minden and Gardnerville. Alpine County consists of approximately 93% federally or state managed lands (Map 1.1).

Situated in the eastern foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the region is widely recognized for popular recreation areas such as Kirkwood Mountain Resort near Caples Lake, California State Park-Grover Hot Springs, Sorensen's Resort in Hope Valley, and cross-country skiing areas and snowmobile trails on lands administered by the US Forest Service Carson Ranger District, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (FS). Other recreation opportunities include catch and release trophy trout fishing on the East Fork of the Carson River, numerous hiking areas that include locations along the Pacific Crest Trail and Tahoe Rim Trail, camping in developed and undeveloped areas, as well as access to miles of equestrian trails and wilderness solitude.

1.4 ISSUES AND PUBLIC SCOPING

ISSUES ADDRESSED AND PUBLIC SCOPING

Publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a plan amendment/environmental assessment was published in the *Federal Register*, January 10, 2006. Internal scoping with CCFO management and staff occurred January-February, 2006.

Carson City Field Office personnel and cooperating agencies attended a planning kick-off meeting February 28, 2006. Three main issues identified by internal staff and cooperating agencies to be brought forward for scoping were:

- Land tenure – identify lands for retention, disposal, recreation and public purposes (R&PP) leases and conveyances;
- Trail and Travel management – designate travel routes;
- Livestock Grazing – Update previous land use decisions concerning lands available for grazing under a permit in Millberry Canyon, Indian Creek, Bagley Valley and Harvey Flat Allotments.

Notices of public open meetings/workshops were published in local newspapers and sent to known interested parties. Following this notification, two public meetings/workshops were held concurrent with the Alpine County Board of Supervisors meeting on March 21, 2006, and the Alpine County Planning Commission March 30, 2006. Carson City Field Office sought scoping comments from the Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California at their monthly meeting May 12, 2006.

Five comment letters/emails were received from the public during this scoping period. The following is a synopsis of those letters.

- Ten comments in favor of off road vehicle restrictions to protect resources;
- Three comments in favor of keeping existing recreation and visual qualities in and around the Indian Creek Recreation Lands (ICRL) area;
- One comment in favor of identifying Turtle Rock Park for community expansion;
- One comment in support for grazing to continue north and east of ICRL;
- Two comments regarding concern of disposal of public lands;
- Two comments regarding lack of law enforcement of shooting regulations, illegal camping and fire restrictions.
- One comment from the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California requesting BLM identify lands for disposal to the Washoe Woodfords Community.

The Carson City Field Office released the Draft Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment March 14, 2007, for a 30-day public review and comment period. The CCFO published a news release with local media and also posted the document on the CCFO web site. A public meeting was held jointly with the Alpine County Board of Supervisors on April 17, 2007. The CCFO received four written comments on the draft (Appendix C). This document addresses those comments and incorporates changes where appropriate.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BUT NOT FURTHER ANALYZED

During preliminary scoping for this amendment the Carson City Field Office received a request from South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD) to identify these lands for disposal and ultimately for a direct sale at fair market value. South Tahoe Public Utility District is currently authorized under BLM right-of-way CA-13255 to operate a treated effluent storage facility within the Indian Creek Recreation Area. This right-of-way is located within the Indian Creek Recreation Area Withdrawal, north and adjacent of Indian Creek Reservoir. South Tahoe Public Utility District has withdrawn this request for BLM to identify these lands for disposal.

The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California has expressed interest in acquiring approximately 2200 acres of public lands adjacent and south of the Woodfords Colony for community expansion and cultural resource values. The CCFO acknowledges this request for additional lands. Procedures for this designation are currently defined in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), *Title 25 Code of Federal Regulations*, Subchapter H—Land and Water, Part 150—Land Records and Title Documents, Sec. 151.3, Land Acquisition Policy. These regulations state that, “Land not held in trust or restricted status may only be acquired for an individual Indian or a tribe in trust status when such acquisition is authorized by an act of Congress”. Acquisition through Congressional Act could occur in the future. However, this request is specifically for designating public lands to the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and is wholly within the authority of Congress not the BLM. This request is not brought forward for analysis in this document.

The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California has also sought lands under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. *Title 43, Vol. 2, Code of Federal Regulations*, Recreation and Public Purposes Act, 2741 Requirements, Sec 2741.2, defines qualified applicants under this Act: “Applications for any recreational or public purpose may be filed by States, Federal and State instrumentalities, and nonprofit associations and nonprofit corporations that, by their articles of incorporation or other authority, are authorized to acquire land”. Tribal governments and individual members of the public are not qualified applicants as defined by this Act.

11x17 map here

1.5 PLANNING CRITERIA

The BLM regulations guiding the development of resource management plans and plan amendments require the preparation of planning criteria (43 CFR 1610.4-2). These criteria guide the development of the plan and ensure that it is tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection is avoided. These planning criteria are intended to streamline and simplify the process:

- The Carson City Field Office will work cooperatively with the State of California, tribal governments, county and municipal governments, other federal agencies, and all other interested groups, agencies, and individuals. Public participation will be encouraged throughout the process.
- The plan amendment will emphasize the protection and enhancement of the planning area's biodiversity while at the same time providing the public with opportunities for compatible recreation activities.
- Decisions in the plan will strive to be consistent with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, Tribal and Federal agencies, to the extent consistent with Federal law.
- Use the best existing data to the extent possible (GIS and metadata information will meet Federal Geographic Data Committee standards as directed by Executive Order 12906, dated April 11, 1994).
- Document the analysis of alternatives in plain language and discuss minor issues briefly.
- Select the proposed alternative based on the combination that best meets demands for public lands while minimizing disruption of the human environment.

1.6 PLANNING PROCESS

RELATIONSHIP TO EXECUTIVE ORDER, LEGISLATIVE, BLM POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

Bureau of Land Management planning regulations require that all BLM Resource Management Plans be consistent, to the extent possible, with officially approved resource-related plans of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Native American tribes. Other agencies' plans relevant to the Proposed Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment include the *Alpine County General Plan*, 1999 (as amended, 2004), and *The Constitution and Bylaws of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California*, 1990, and the *Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest-Northern Sierra*

Area Amendment, 2001. The CCFO Consolidated Resource Management Plan is consistent with the above mentioned plans.

This amendment was prepared pursuant to Section 202(c)(9) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which directs the Secretary of the Interior to develop land use plans that "...shall be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent he finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of the Act".

BLM policy requires "Planning decisions...be developed in concert with sustainable development concept. These concepts include a vision of economic prosperity, a healthy environment, and a just and equitable society." Therefore, it is necessary and appropriate that BLM plans, (e.g. Resource Management Plans), programs, and projects be evaluated for their contributions to local social, environmental, and economic goals.

BLM decision options for this amendment may include approving the amendment, approving alternatives to the amendment to mitigate environmental impacts, approving the amendment with stipulations to mitigate environmental impacts, or denying the amendment. If BLM approves the amendment, designated parcels of public land would be identified for disposal under the R&PP Act, travel routes would be designated and public land available for livestock grazing would be closed. Decisions made at the plan level are made by the State Director and are protestable to the BLM director under 43 CFR 1610.5-2(a).

COLLABORATION

This plan amendment process was conducted jointly with Alpine County, South Tahoe Public Utility District, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Bureau of Reclamation, US Forest Service Carson Ranger District, California State Office-BLM, Nevada State Office-BLM, and interested private individuals.

CHAPTER 2

ALTERNATIVES

2.1 ALTERNATIVES -- INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes alternatives for the Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment: Alternative A, No Action-Continuation of Current Management and Alternative B, Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) for the management of public lands in Alpine County, California. The Proposed RMPA was developed to update plan-level decisions that specifically address land tenure, trails and travel management and livestock grazing for public lands in Alpine County, California.

Development of the Proposed Plan Amendment was guided by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) planning regulations, input from cooperating agencies, BLM resource specialists, and the public through the scoping process. The BLM has the discretion to select an alternative in its entirety or to combine aspects of the two alternatives presented in this Proposed RMPA/Environmental Analysis.

2.2 ALTERNATIVE A NO ACTION – CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

The No Action-Continuation of Current Management is a continuation of current management and is based on Bureau policies, available inventory data, specific program direction and existing planning decisions found in the CRMP.

LAND TENURE (Alternative A, Map 2.1)

- Continue to manage 18,680 acres of public land in Alpine County for retention in federal ownership.

TRAILS and TRAVEL MANAGEMENT (Alternative A, Map 2.1, Table 3.2)

- Continue to manage approximately 5,521 acres as *open* to motorized vehicles.
- Fay-Luther Canyon Area – continue to manage approximately 894 acres as *open* to motorized vehicles.
- Indian Creek Recreation Area – continue to *limit* motorized travel to designated roads and trails on approximately 6,065 acres east of and adjacent to the campground.
- Bagley Valley – continue to manage motorized travel as *limited* to designated roads and trails on approximately 6,200 acres.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING (Map 2.5)

- Harvey Flat, Indian Creek and Millberry Canyon Grazing Allotments – BLM managed lands in these allotments would continue to be available for livestock grazing use under a permit.
- Bagley Valley Allotment would continue to be available for livestock grazing for both sheep and cattle.

2.3 ALTERNATIVE B – PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

LAND TENURE (Alternative B, Map 2.2)**Revocation and Restoration of Land Withdrawals Administered by the Bureau of Reclamation**

- Pursue revocation and restoration to the operation of the public land laws and general mining laws, Bureau of Reclamation and BLM land withdrawals located along the Snowshoe Thompson Ditch encumbering 80 acres located in the SE¹/₄NE¹/₄, NE¹/₄SE¹/₄, T. 11 N., R. 19 E. of Section 25, T. 11 N., R. 19 E. Land withdrawals are actions that generally preclude mining claim location and disposal of public lands. Upon completion of the revocation and restoration process, the land would be managed by BLM in a manner consistent with adjacent lands located within the Indian Creek Recreation Lands boundary.

Retention (Alternative B, Map 2.2)

- Designate 17,725 acres for retention in public ownership under the administration of the BLM.

Disposal under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act

- Designate 955 acres for disposal to Alpine County for purposes under the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act of 1926 (as amended),

to meet the public needs in the local community. Alpine County would be required to obtain legal access to these parcels across adjacent private lands.

TRAILS and TRAVEL MANAGEMENT (Alternative B, Map 2.3)

- Designate 5,521 of public lands as *limited* to designated roads and trails.
- Designate 894 acres in the Fay-Luther Canyon area as *closed* to motorized vehicle travel. Administrative access would be authorized when necessary.
- Designate 268 acres within the Indian Creek Recreation Withdrawal area as *closed* to motorized vehicle travel and public access. This proposed closure specifically pertains to South Tahoe Public Utility District existing right-of-way, CA-13255. This proposed closure would prevent unauthorized access or contact with the discharged filtered-secondary treated wastewater (California Title 22, Sec. 603010(g) prohibits human contact with recycled wastewater).
- Designate 5,143 acres in Bagley Valley as *limited* to designated roads and trails.
- Designate 378 acres within Bagley Valley as *closed* to motorized vehicle travel.
- Designate 2,375 acres in the Slinkard Wilderness Study Area *closed* to motorized vehicles regardless of Wilderness status.
- Designate 550 acres in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Study Area *closed* to motorized vehicle travel regardless of Wilderness status.

Roads, Primitive Roads and Trails Network (Alternative B, Map 2.4)

- Roads, primitive roads, and/or trails designated within the network may be altered through adaptive management with segments closed, realigned, or added when conditions warrant.
- Designate a preliminary network of roads, primitive roads, and trail network(s) on approximately 4 miles of nonmotorized and 6.8 miles of motorized linear miles.
- Roads needed for administrative purposes such as, but not limited to, fuel wood sales, traditional cultural uses, search and rescue, fire suppression, and livestock grazing would be allowable.
- An inventory and assessment of roads, primitive roads, and trails not identified in the preliminary network would be completed by 2009. Should any new roads or trails need to be constructed, further NEPA would be required.
- A completed roads, primitive roads, and trails network would be established through travel management planning by 2010.

- Factors to consider in further documenting and designating the roads, primitive roads, and trails network may include, but are not limited to:
 - Road, primitive road, or trail densities;
 - Soil erosion;
 - Water quality;
 - Existing and proposed utility and access rights-of-way;
 - Cultural resources;
 - Threatened & endangered plants and animals;
 - Invasive non-native plants and noxious weeds;
 - Priority species and habitats.
- Areas not yet inventoried would be managed as *limited* to existing roads and trails for all motorized travel until designations and signing are completed.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING (Alternative B, Map 2.5)

- Harvey Flat, Indian Creek (CA portion only) and Millberry Canyon Grazing Allotments – BLM managed lands in these allotments would be closed to livestock grazing.
- Sheep grazing would continue to be permitted on the Bagley Valley Allotment.

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the general characteristics of the Plan Area. The affected environment defines the baseline of existing conditions from which possible impacts of the plan alternatives may be analyzed. Data sources include existing information from published and unpublished reports, maps, and geographic information system, (GIS).

3.2 GENERAL SETTING

The Plan Area includes approximately 18,680 acres located in Alpine County, California, thirty minutes southwest of the cities of Minden and Gardnerville, Nevada; ninety minutes south of Carson City and the Reno/Sparks metro area. The majority of the Alpine County population resides in or near the communities of Woodfords and Markleeville, California. The Woodfords Colony of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California is located five miles northeast of Woodfords. The Carson River dissects the county flowing southwest to northeast. There are three California State Highways (88, 89, and 4) that provide ingress and egress to Alpine County.

3.4 CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER RESOURCES

Appendix 5 of BLM's NEPA Handbook (H-1740-1) identifies Critical Elements of the Human Environment that are subject to requirements specified by statute or executive order and must be considered in all BLM environmental documents. The Critical Elements are:

Critical Element	Not Present *	Present/Not Affected *	Present/May Be Affected**
Air Quality			X
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X		
Cultural Resources			X
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	X		
Floodplains	X		
Native American Religious Concerns			X
Threatened or Endangered Species	X (Plants)		X (Animals)
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	X		
Water Quality (Surface/Ground)	X (Ground)		X (Surface)
Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X	
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X (1)		
Wilderness	X (2)		
Invasive, Nonnative Species			X
Environmental Justice	X		

*Critical Elements determined to be Not Present or Present/Not Affected need not be carried forward or discussed further in the document.

**Critical Elements determined to be Present/May Be Affected must be carried forward in the document

1) WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

There is no federal designation of Wild and Scenic Rivers on the Carson River. The California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was passed in 1972 and initially protected all or parts of eight California rivers. In 1989 the Act was amended to include a 20- mile portion of the East Fork of the Carson River from the Hangman's Bridge crossing of State Highway 89 to the California-Nevada border; approximately 2.2 miles of this stretch of river flows through lands administered by the BLM. Proposals have been brought forward to include the entire 47 mile reach of the river in California in the federal system of National Wild and Scenic Rivers, but they are still under study.

2) WILDERNESS/WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

There is no designated Wilderness within the Plan Area, however, the Plan Area contains the Carson-Iceberg (550 acres) and Slinkard Wilderness Study Areas (6,268 acres). The Bishop Field Office, BLM, manages the eastern side of the Slinkard WSA. In 2000, BLM issued a memorandum that clarified policy for visual resource management (VRM) of Wilderness Study areas. All Wilderness Study Areas should be managed as Class I management objectives until such time as the Congress decides to designate the area as wilderness or release it for other uses. If a WSA is designated as wilderness, the area would continue to be managed as Class I. If these WSA's are released by Congress from further wilderness study the lands would be managed as Class II.

Critical Elements

3.4.1 AIR QUALITY

Air quality is generally good in the Plan Area. The California Air Resource Board (ARB) is responsible for air quality monitoring, regulation and enforcement in Alpine County. No monitoring data is available for pollutants in the County. Emission inventory data is estimated annually.

Alpine County does not exceed National standards for any criteria pollutants. The ARB makes State area designations for ten criteria pollutants: ozone, suspended particulate matter (PM10), fine suspended particulate matter (PM2.5), carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, sulfates, lead, hydrogen sulfide, and visibility reducing particles. The County exceeds the State standards for suspended particulate matter (PM10).

Federally designated Class I airsheds cover wilderness areas over 5,000 acres designated as wilderness prior to the enactment of the Clean Air Act in 1977. Class II airsheds cover all other forest lands, including wilderness areas designated after 1977, with the exception of new acres added to existing Class I areas. The 105,165 acre Mokelumne Wilderness was designated wilderness by Congress under the Wilderness Act in 1964 and the borders were expanded under the California Wilderness Act of 1984, making the Mokelumne Wilderness a Federally designated Class I airshed. The 161,181 acre Carson-Iceberg Wilderness was designated wilderness by Congress in 1984, making the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness a Class II airshed.

3.4.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The known cultural resources in and immediately adjacent to the Plan Area provide information on prehistoric use from over 8000 years ago through historic-period logging operations, trails, roads, and buildings associated with ranching or homesteads. Washoe tribal use appears to span this entire period, with the members of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California remaining both an active part of today's Alpine County communities and users of public lands in a traditional manner, with Washoe place names, cemeteries, and sacred sites located throughout the county.

Although some prehistoric sites are of considerable antiquity, archaeologists place most of Alpine County's known seasonal camps, resource use areas, and base residences into two general periods:

Martis Complex, dating from about 4000 to 1500 years ago, exhibited a preference for certain material items such as basalt for stone tools, use of milling gear for seed grinding, and larger stone-tipped darts and an atlatl (throwing stick) for hunting. People were generally dispersed and mobile, but with some settlement in winter base villages in areas of high population density on valley margins adjacent to a broad array of natural resources, in both pit houses and conical structures.

Kings Beach Phase, dating from about 1500 years ago to the historic period, during which there appeared to be a preference for chert and obsidian stone tools, use of bedrock mortars for seed grinding, small stone tipped arrows and a bow for hunting, and an

increased emphasis on fishing. This period saw an increase in population size, resource stress and increased use of sedentary winter villages throughout the region.

Historical use of the area by non-Native Americans began as travelers and explorers passed through, including Jedediah Smith in 1827, the 1841 Bartleson-Bidwell party from Independence, Missouri, and military Captain John Fremont in 1844-45. In what would eventually be Alpine County, roads, trails, and the first white settlement in 1847—at Woodfords but known at that time by several names—were established primarily to serve to the needs of numerous travelers. Tens of thousands of emigrants used a variety of routes through Alpine County to reach California from the late 1840s through the early 1860s, with some returning from the west over the Sierra Nevada to the Comstock. Other mining ventures of the late 1850s through the early 1870s occurred such as the Leviathan Mine, Silver Mountain, Silver King, and West Carson Consolidated Mines. In 1860 the Pony Express crossed the Sierra Nevada through Hope Valley and Woodfords.

Settlement in Alpine County has never been substantial, and it remains California's least populated county. Important early historical locations include development of John Carey's (later Daniel Woodford's) water-powered lumber mill in 1853-1854; "Snowshoe" Thompson's cabin, in Diamond Valley in the late 1850s; and Jacob Marklee's 1861 cabin. With hope of mineral developments, Alpine County was created in 1864 out of portions of Amador, El Dorado, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Mono counties. The original county seat was Silver Mountain City but it moved in 1875 to Markleeville after the collapse of the local mining industry. Agriculture and ranching fueled minor settlement of southern Carson Valley in the 1850s through 1890s, with some development of historic ditches. Logging, however, has had a greater impact in local economic development. In addition to Carey's Mill in what is now Woodfords, Ira Luther's 1858 mill in Luther Canyon, and the 1864 mills of Frederick Frevert near Fredricksburg and Peter Curtz north of Markleeville, numerous mills, roads, flumes, and other logging features date to this period and supported the lumber demands of a vibrant Comstock economy. By 1870 Alpine County's population was below 700 people, and remained at that level for the next century.

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and individual tribal members expressed concerns for sacred and ancestral areas within the Plan Area. Government to government consultation has occurred and will continue. Each action that is proposed would continue to be brought forward and consultation as well as individual communication would occur.

3.4.3 INVASIVE NON-NATIVE PLANTS

The spread of noxious and invasive weed plant species contributes to the loss of habitat productivity, reduced water quality and quantity, reduced structure and species diversity, and loss of wildlife-specific habitat. In some instances, these species are hazardous to human health and welfare as emphasized in the Federal Noxious Weed Act (Public Law 93-629) and Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species. To minimize the potential of non-native seeds being brought into the area, California Department of Fish & Game (DFG) has issued guidance to hunters on horseback regarding the use of animal feed.

Most, if not all, non-native plant infestations begin as small outbreaks in disturbed areas, such as utility corridors, trails, range improvement footprints, roadsides, ROWs, and mining disturbances. Seeds of non-native plants may have been transported to the area in feed for pack animals, re-vegetation grass mixtures, or blown in from distant sources. As non-native plants find disturbed areas with no natural competition, they quickly spread, overtaking native vegetation and reducing the biological diversity and ecologic viability of the ecosystem. An initial noxious weed survey was completed in 2001 for public lands in Alpine County. Three locations of noxious weed infestations (yellow starthistle, tall whitetop, and diffused knapweed), were located and treated using integrated management techniques; both chemical and manual. Treatment is ongoing and a few infestations have been eradicated. Other species likely to invade the area include Russian knapweed, spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, and hoary cress.

3.4.4 THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED FOR LISTING, AND CANDIDATE (ANIMALS)

In April 2006 the CCFO reviewed a Master List of federally listed threatened, endangered, proposed for listing and candidate species that occur, may occur or have potential habitat within the Plan Area. Table 3.1 lists known or potential species of federally listed threatened, endangered and candidate species associated with the Plan Area. There are no listed or proposed for listing species in the Plan Area.

Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) occurs in the Carson River portion of the Plan Area. These LCT of the Independence Lake strain did occur at Heenan Lake at one time. This population, however, is thought to have interbred with rainbow trout to the point to where LCT no longer exists in this lake. A detailed discussion of this species can be found in Biological Assessment Evaluation (BAE) #004-06.

Paiute cutthroat trout do not currently occur within the Plan Area. This fish's historic range included the Silver King Creek system. It was introduced above Llewellyn Falls from downstream in settlement days. Later, the population below the falls hybridized with introduced rainbow trout. These hybrids may be found within the Silver King system that occur on across public lands. These fish are not considered threatened. Paiute Cutthroat Trout do not currently occur within the Plan Area. A detailed discussion of this species can be found in BAE #004-06.

Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Listing Status
Lahontan Cutthroat Trout	<i>Onchorhynchus* clarki henshawi</i>	Threatened
Paiute Cutthroat Trout	<i>Onchorhynchus* clarki seleniris</i>	Threatened
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Threatened
Yosemite Toad	<i>Bufo canorus</i>	Candidate
Mountain Yellow-legged Frog	<i>Rana muscosa</i>	Candidate
Fisher	<i>Martes pennanti</i>	Candidate

* *Onchorhynchus* was formerly *Salmo*

Table 3.1

Bald eagles occur within the Plan Area and have been sighted near Indian Creek Reservoir, Stevens Lake and at upland sites near these water bodies. Bald eagle nesting occurs on State of California managed lands near Heenan Lake; adjacent BLM lands supply foraging areas for these eagles. Bald eagles winter in Fay-Luther Canyon on USFS and public lands. Nesting has occurred within the Plan Area as well. This bird uses fish but will also utilize carrion and will catch species such as sage grouse. A detailed discussion of this species can be found in BAE #004-06.

Yosemite toad key habitat consists of wet mountain meadows and borders of forests. The toad obtains shelter in rodent burrows as well as in dense vegetation. It breeds in shallow edges of snow melt pools and ponds or along edges of lakes and slow-moving streams. Threats to this toad are not been fully quantified but appear to be a combination of drought, degraded habitat and disease. This toad is known to occur in the Blue Lakes region north of Ebbetts Pass. It occurs on all USFS administered lands surrounding the project area and occurs in other areas of Alpine County. Its historic range included the Blue Lakes Region of Ebbetts pass and toads persist in that area. It has the potential to occur at the highest elevation lands administered by the BLM. Habitat management for this species is under the umbrella of the Paiute Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan.

Mountain Yellow-legged frog key habitats include riparian/riverine corridors, wetlands, and wetland/upland mosaics often found in association with sub-alpine forests. Sierran frogs are most abundant in high elevation lakes and slow-moving portions of streams. This frog seldom is found away from water, but it may cross upland areas in moving between summer and winter habitats. Wintering sites include areas near shore under ledges and in deep underwater crevices. It also includes any upland habitat regularly used for feeding or wintering (e.g., mesic forest). Threats to this frog come primarily from introduced fish as well as bullfrogs, chytrid fungus, dewatering, water quality impacts and impoundment of water. This frog occurs on all USFS administered lands surrounding the project area and occurs in Alpine County. It has the potential to occur on lands administered by the CCFO. Based on the approximately 1% riparian land cover in Nevada are approximately 190 acres of frog habitat on public lands. Habitat management for this species is under the umbrella of the Paiute Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan.

Population densities for the Fisher are naturally low as they are solitary hunters. This mammal is found in habitat that has high canopy closure (50 %+), large trees and snags, large woody debris, large hardwoods, and multiple canopy layers. It avoids areas lacking overhead canopy cover. Riparian areas may be important to fishers because they provide important rest site elements, such as broken tops, snags, and coarse woody debris. They generally avoid areas with significant human disturbance, are shy and secretive and prefer large areas of contiguous interior forest. When inactive, they occupy a den in a tree hollow, under a log, or in the ground or a rocky crevice, or they rest in branches of conifer (warmer months). Large snags are important as maternal den sites. Adults and young are carnivores and feed on mammals up to raccoon size, in addition to carrion. Nevada Natural Heritage states that there have been scattered sightings of fisher in Alpine County and the California Department of Fish and Game indicates the Plan Area is within yearlong range for this species. Habitat loss and fragmentation, especially

through timber harvest, appear to be significant threats to the fisher. Fisher habitat could occur on public land.

3.4.5 WATER QUALITY (SURFACE)

The State of California is responsible for managing water quality under the federal Clean Water Act, and has created regional boards to accomplish water quality goals in the state. Lands within the Plan Area are administered by Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (LRWQCB).

The LRWQCB (1) designates beneficial uses for individual water bodies, (2) establishes water quality objectives to achieve those uses, and (3) conducts assessments to determine whether the objectives are being met. Water quality objectives are written as narratives and numeric criteria, and they address physical, chemical, and biological parameters. Water quality objectives can pertain to all surface waters, individual water bodies, or specific designated uses (LRWQCB, 1994). In addition to various wetlands and “minor surface waters,” beneficial uses and associated water quality objectives have been established for the following water bodies in the Plan Area.

- Carson River, West and East Forks
- Heenan Creek
- Heenan Reservoir
- Indian Creek
- Indian Creek Reservoir
- Markleeville Creek
- Millberry Creek
- Stevens Lake

When a water body does not meet water quality standards, the LRWQCB may establish a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the pollutant. A TMDL for total phosphorus was established for Indian Creek Reservoir because the reservoir became eutrophic in the 1970's. Only nonpoint sources of total phosphorus have been identified, and internal sources from bed sediments make up about 76 percent of the current load. External sources, primarily direct surface runoff and tributary inflow along with a small amount of precipitation, comprise the remaining 24 percent. Public lands in the watershed could contribute external sources of total phosphorus, mainly through sedimentation to the reservoir. Animal and human waste products are also potential sources. Map 3.1 shows the reservoir drainage area covering 1,583 acres, which includes 1,314 acres of public land (83 percent) and 269 acres of private land (17 percent).

Other Resources

The following Other Resources have been identified as being present within the Plan Area and are brought forward for analysis:

- Lands and Realty
- Livestock Grazing
- Migratory Birds
- Recreation
- Socio-economic
- Trails and Travel Management

- Wildlife

The following Other Resource (Geology/Minerals/Locatable and Saleable Materials) has been identified by Bureau specialists as being present in the Plan Area but would not be affected by either alternative:

GEOLOGY/MINERALS/LOCATABLE AND SALEABLE MATERIALS

There are no recognized mining districts within the Plan Area. The nearest known mining districts are located five miles southeast of the Plan Area; known as the Webster Mining District and the Monitor-Mogul Mining District. Little is known about these Districts; however, the Monitor-Mogul Mining District was responsible for the most important mineral production in Alpine County. Discovered shortly after the Comstock Lode, it is believed that between three and five million dollars in gold and silver were recovered from mines in the Monitor-Mogul Mining District.

There is no evidence of geologic structures, alteration, or mineralization typically associated with economic ore deposits within or adjacent to the Plan Area. Therefore, potential for development of locatable mineral deposits is low, as is the potential for any strategic or critical mineral deposits. The andesite breccias, tuffs, and flows exposed on the Plan Area lands do not possess the appropriate hardness, soundness or durability that would make them desirable for common-variety applications. The potential for economic development of salable – mineral deposits is also low. There are no mining claims, minerals leases, or mineral material sales within the Plan Area.

3.4.6 LANDS AND REALTY

RECREATION AND PUBLIC PURPOSE

There is currently one R&PP land patent (04-70-0212) issued to Alpine County for Turtle Rock Park. The park comprises 140 acres. Alpine County has two existing community service structures located on these lands that are in need of upgrading and enlargement. There is public demand to expand these county facilities.

LAND USE AUTHORIZATIONS – RIGHTS OF WAY

The South Tahoe Public Utility District (STUPD) owns and operates the South Tahoe Public Utility District Wastewater Recycling Plant which has an annual peak-day, dry weather flow capacity of 7.7 million gallons per day (mgd). The right-of-way (CA-13255) consists of a dam, reservoir, and pipelines and comprises about 268 acres and is known as Harvey Place Reservoir. The right-of-way was granted for a term of 30 years and subject to renewal upon expiration in December 2014. The facility consists of a filtered-secondary treated wastewater treatment plant, a 58 million-gallon emergency retention basin and an approximately 25-mile long wastewater effluent pipeline export system.

The CCFO holds an easement (CAS-5792) on approximately one-half mile through the Alpine County airport patent that allows for public access to Indian Creek Recreation Area and lands beyond. There are numerous other rights-of-way affecting the planning area including overhead and underground utility lines, pipelines, and roads. No major electric transmission lines or natural gas pipelines traverse the planning area.

WITHDRAWALS**Indian Creek Recreation Area Withdrawal**

A protective withdrawal (Public Land Order 7112 (CA-940-1430-01; CACA-24052)) comprising approximately 2,104 acres of public land, including the original authorization under CA-2451 and other lands surrounding the recreation area, was established in January 1995 for a term of 20 years (*Federal Register* Vol.60, No. 11, Pg 3555, January 18, 1995). The withdrawal protects the recreation improvements and resources in the Indian Creek Recreation Area. The withdrawal precludes settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general land laws and mining laws. The lands are not withdrawn from leasing under the mineral leasing laws and are subject to valid existing rights. Currently, there are no existing mining claims or mineral leases on these withdrawn lands.

Land tenure actions precluded by the withdrawal would include disposal by sale or exchange, Recreation & Public Purposes (R&PP) leases or patents, desert land entries, and mining claim location. The withdrawal made by the referred order does not alter the applicability of those public land laws governing the use of the land under lease, license, or permit, or governing the disposal of their mineral or vegetative resources other than the mining laws. The order will expire in January 2015, unless as a result of a review conducted before the expiration date pursuant to Section 204(f) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 USC 1714 (f) (1988), the Secretary determines that the withdrawal shall be extended.

Bureau of Reclamation/BLM Withdrawals

The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) maintains two withdrawals comprising 80 acres as part of the Newlands Reclamation Project for a segment of the Snowshoe Thompson Ditch northeast of Woodfords within Section 25, T. 11 N. R. 19 E. Concurrently, BLM also holds a withdrawal on the same lands for federal power site purposes (in the 1980's a dam in the area was proposed). As withdrawals are no longer needed for power purposes, both BOR and BLM have indicated an interest in pursuing revocation of the withdrawals. Upon revocation, the land would then be restored to the operation of the public land laws and general mining laws under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management in a manner consistent with adjacent lands within the Indian Creek Recreation Lands (ICRL) boundary.

Pending Federal Land Use Authorizations

The U.S. Forest Service will pursue an administrative withdrawal of 15 acres of land for a guard station and headquarters adjacent to Turtle Rock Park.

3.4.7 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

There are currently seven livestock grazing allotments within the Plan Area. These seven allotments are depicted on map 2.4 for convenience of the reader. The only allotments to be discussed below are those proposed to be amended for livestock grazing.

The Indian Creek, Harvey Flat, Millberry Canyon, and Bagley Valley allotments are heavily timbered, and this results in low quantities of livestock forage. Livestock numbers on these allotments are historically low, and interest in grazing these areas has fallen off in the past several years. There are no applications pending for livestock grazing on Indian Creek, Harvey Flat or Millberry Canyon allotments. There is no

application pending for cattle on the Bagley Valley allotment. There is one permit authorized for sheep on Bagley Valley allotment

INDIAN CREEK ALLOTMENT

The Indian Creek Allotment consists of 346 acres of public land and is adjudicated for 59 Animal Unit Months (AUMs). There are mixed private and public lands within the grazing allotment and the property boundaries are not fenced. The private lands within the allotment were owned by the previous livestock operator who had the BLM grazing permit. These private lands within the allotment were also designated as base property for the livestock operation. There is currently no permittee on the allotment, as the base property for this grazing preference was disposed of some time ago. The new private property owners have not applied for the grazing preference or a grazing permit. Grazing within this allotment without use of the private lands is impractical due to the mixed land status and unfenced property boundaries.

HARVEY FLAT ALLOTMENT

The Harvey Flat Allotment has a total of 4,312 acres of public land, and a grazing preference of 300 AUMs. There is currently no permittee or active application for a permit on this allotment. There are concerns about the presence of livestock on the southern portion of the allotment due to the Indian Creek Recreation Area and the airport that are located there. A large part of the northern portion of the allotment is private property and the property boundaries are not fenced. Historically the private lands within the allotment were owned by the livestock operator who had the BLM grazing permit and the private lands within the allotment were also designated as base property for the grazing operation. The new private property owners have not applied for the grazing preference or a grazing permit.

There is periodic use of the airstrip owned by Alpine County located within the allotment and unauthorized livestock wandering onto the airstrip is a safety concern. These unauthorized livestock are also a concern when they breach fencing that surrounds the Indian Creek Campground.

MILLBERRY CANYON ALLOTMENT

The Millberry Canyon Allotment contains 1,480 acres public land, but has only 40 AUMs of grazing preference associated with it. These AUMs are based on a very low quantity of livestock forage in the area. There is currently no grazing permit on this allotment. A large portion of the allotment is private property and owned by several individuals, and the property boundaries are not fenced. Historically, the private lands within the allotment were owned by the livestock operator who held the BLM grazing permit and the private lands within the allotment were also designated as base property. The new private property owners have not applied for the grazing preference or a grazing permit.

BAGLEY VALLEY ALLOTMENT

The Bagley Valley Allotment contains 5,768 acres of public lands. The BLM permits 131 AUMs of sheep use on the east slope of Bagley Valley. Sheep are herded and trespass onto adjacent ungrazed lands does not occur. This low number of AUMs indicates that the BLM managed lands do not have an abundance of livestock forage or water. Public

lands on this allotment produce some forage and have a limited water supply (Snow Lake).

Bagley Valley also has an additional 1,731 AUMs of grazing preference for cattle, but no grazing permit. Historically, the Bagley Valley Allotment contained private property and 5,768 acres of land managed by the BLM. Most of the land within the valley bottom was privately owned. The slopes on the east side of the allotment were and continue to be managed by the BLM. The private lands were used as a base of operation for a cattle and sheep ranch. The majority of the livestock forage and all of the streams and springs for this operation were located on private lands in the valley bottom. Cattle and sheep were grazed on private lands in the valley bottom and the private land owner was also permitted to graze his livestock on the BLM managed lands.

In the early 1990's the private lands within the allotment were acquired by the Forest Service and the State of California for the purpose of watershed restoration. Once these lands were acquired, these entities decided not to graze livestock on the acquired lands and restored the riparian areas within the valley. When these bottom lands within the grazing allotment changed ownership, BLM recognized that permitted grazing associated with a cattle operation was conflicting with the goal of watershed restoration and cattle were no longer permitted on BLM managed lands.

3.4.8 RECREATION

Bureau of Land Management lands in Alpine County are recognized for their high recreational values. Overall, BLM management decisions reflect the public desire to enhance and protect these recreation values. Historically, these decisions have centered on facility/campground development and land acquisition and retention in an effort to preserve the character, setting and recreation resources and opportunities unique to this area.

Recreation opportunities present in the county include dispersed (undeveloped and unstructured) recreation activities such as dry camping, hunting, exploring, horse-back riding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Off-road vehicle (ORV) opportunities are limited due mainly to topography and are typically focused around exploring, hunting, and trail riding and occur on primitive roads and trails. Modes of motorized use are generally high ground clearance vehicles and all terrain vehicles. There is little documented cross-country motorized travel, however, recently the Carson Ranger District has documented increasing cross-country OHV travel adjacent to the Carson River. Other BLM recreation opportunities in the Carson-Iceberg and Slinkard Wilderness Study Areas offer more primitive experiences and solitude.

Fishing along the East Fork of the Carson River and white water boating access at Hangman's Bridge are also popular. Commercial outfitters and guides provide permitted fishing and seasonal boating opportunities on the East Fork. The Forest Service is the lead agency for permitting commercial white water boating use since the majority of the river corridor is located on Forest lands

In the 1960's, the South Lake Tahoe Public Utility District undertook a program to develop an advanced treatment process to handle waste disposal in the Lake Tahoe Basin. To ensure Lake Tahoe's preservation, the decision to export all sewage out of the

basin was implemented. A twenty-seven mile pipeline was installed from the treatment plant in South Lake Tahoe to what was to become Indian Creek Reservoir (ICR). The exported tertiary treated effluent was colorless and odorless. Indian Creek Reservoir was created out of this reclaimed water, becoming a focal point for recreational activities in the area.

Through joint efforts of the BLM, Alpine County, South Tahoe Public Utilities District, and the State of California, the Indian Creek recreation facilities were opened in 1974. Construction of the facilities was realized through grant monies obtained through State of California appropriations known as the Davis-Grunsky Act. Recognizing the increasing importance of recreation opportunities in the area, the following BLM actions were implemented to further protect recreational values:

- 1974 - Designated 562 acres of public land as the Indian Creek Recreation Site;
- 1977 - Designated 7,044 acres as Indian Creek Recreation Lands (ICRL);
- 1982 Management Framework Plan – Designated approximately 6,000 acres as *limited* to designated routes;
- 1986- Designated 6,065 acres around the Indian Creek and the East Fork of the Carson River as a Special Recreation Management Area;
- 1995 - Withdrew 2,104 acres of public land disposal under federal land laws.

The Indian Creek Recreation Site includes about 562 acres of land set aside for the development of public recreation facilities that include a developed campground, boat ramp, paved access and parking. The Indian Creek Recreation Lands are more extensive and delineate those lands that have high recreation value. The ICRL encompass Indian Creek Reservoir and Campground, Curtz Lake Environmental Study Area, maintained access roads and a system of hiking trails. Collectively, these lands and facilities provide developed recreation opportunities that include fishing, camping, hiking, bicycling, white water rafting, wildlife viewing, nature study, photography, boating, and sightseeing.

The ICRL are a destination spot for local and regional visitors that frequent the area throughout the year. Use levels increase in the spring and peak during the summer months with use tapering off by mid-fall. During the winter months recreation use levels are weather dependant, typically low and centered on day use. The average number of visits to the area has been estimated at 30,000 annually. Since 1970 there have been over one million visits to the area, a testimony to how attractive and popular the facilities are.

The Fay-Luther Canyon Area, located in the northern portion of the county, is a very popular recreation day-use area for non-motorized activities. This area straddles the Nevada/California border with all public lands in Nevada managed by the Forest Service. In 1999, the Forest Service constructed a formal trail-head for parking. There is pedestrian and equestrian access. There is also administrative access for authorized uses.

This area has deep loose decomposed granite and does not provide quality recreation opportunities for mountain bikes, however, it is frequently used by equestrians, hikers and walkers. Vegetation is easily disturbed in this soil type. In 1988, an Emergency Closure Order to protect 745 acres with sensitive resource values (cultural, vegetation/habitat) was published in the *Federal Register* (January 12, 2001, Vol. 66, No.

9). This notice specifically closed public lands to motorized vehicles in Sections 26, and 35, T. 12 N., R. 19 E., until such time as a resource management plan or plan amendment are completed.

3.4.9 SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Alpine County's economy is especially dependent on recreation tourism. Generally, the county's income is derived from visitors from the booming tourism communities of Lake Tahoe and western Nevada who seek out the county for its rich outdoor recreation opportunities. Fishing, camping, hiking, rafting, skiing and winter snow sports are the most popular activities.

Alpine County has the smallest population of all counties in California (about 1200 people in 2000), most of which is concentrated around the mountain communities of Markleeville, Woodfords, Bear Valley and Kirkwood. Residents enjoy a rural lifestyle, with the convenience of several city areas in the neighboring counties. Markleeville is the county seat, and home to many of the county's offices. Since Alpine County has no incorporated cities, most public services are provided by county departments and agencies. With 96 percent of its land in public ownership, opportunities for community growth and economic expansion are few. Despite its limitations, surveys suggest that residents of Alpine County are content in their relaxed rural lifestyle, even boasting of the fact that the County has no traffic light, bank, movie-theater, dentist, or supermarket.

3.4.10 TRAILS AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Approximately 70 miles of roads, primitive roads, and trails exist on BLM managed lands in Alpine County. Road types range from paved to unimproved two track. Types of vehicle use range from recreational vehicles at Indian Creek Campground to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) in the back country. Existing trail types are primarily non-motorized single track and used predominantly by pedestrians and equestrians. There are a limited number of motorized single-track trails being established. Current travel management designations on BLM managed lands in Alpine County are as follows:

Table 3.2

Area Identifier	Designation (acres)		
	Open	Limited	Closed
Bagley Valley	0	6,200 acres	0
Indian Creek Recreation Lands	0	6,065 acres	0
Fay-Luther Canyon	894	0	0
Other	5,521	0	0
Total	6,415	12,265	0

3.4.11 Wildlife

Although the Plan Area is located in California, the eastern Sierra Nevada region is more similar to Great Basin environments. The description of major Nevada wildlife habitat types is from the 2006 Wildlife Action Plan and describes general wildlife conditions in the Plan Area. The major types include:

Lower Montane Woodlands – Piñon-juniper dominate this habitat type. Sagebrush, mahogany, ceanothus and Manzanita can be found in the understory. Some conifers intermix at higher elevations. Wildlife species such as Western Scrub Jay, long-eared myotis and mountain kingsnake can be found in this habitat type.

Sierra Conifer Forests and Woodlands – Jeffrey pine is found on warmer, drier sites. In the plan area it occurs in dense stands to open park lands. White fir is found at the upper elevations in more moist, cool sites. In the Plan area, it is found on many north facing slopes and along deep canyons. Snowberry, wyethia and bitterbrush can be found in the understory. Wildlife species such as blue grouse, montane shrew and Sierra Nevada alligator lizard can be found in this habitat type.

Sierra Rivers and Streams – Mountain alder and cottonwood generally dominate these areas with aspen occasionally occurring. The understory contains willows, wild rose and other riparian species. These areas serve only as foraging areas, reproductive and seasonal use areas, as well as provide travel corridors for many species. Wildlife species such as Broad-tailed hummingbird, broad-foot mole, water shrew, Lahontan cutthroat trout and mountain yellow-legged frog can be found in this habitat type.

Lakes and Reservoirs – Indian Creek Reservoir is the dominant water body in the Plan Area. It contains emergent marshes, mud flats and an aquatic habitat that supports species such as Western grebe, northern leopard frog, Lahontan cutthroat trout and a variety of stone, caddis and mayflies.

Wet meadows, springs, grassland meadows, marshes, cliffs and canyons occur as inclusions within the major habitat types. Plant species associated with these areas include cinquefoil, tufted hairgrass, yarrow, false hellbore and sedges. Some of these areas are large enough to support wildlife species such as pika, spotted bat, mountain beaver, frogs, and various shrews and hummingbirds. Some inclusions are very small and serve to enhance the surrounding habitat type.

Aquatic habitats include Indian Creek Reservoir which maintains water yearlong. Indian Creek Reservoir contains tui chub, Tahoe sucker and stocked rainbow and Lahontan cutthroat trout. Stevens Lake is adjacent to Indian Creek Reservoir, but has no fish since it is a secondary effluent treatment structure. Curtz Lake is a small pond that often dries in summer. It supports a high quality, late seral ephemeral wet meadow. Summit Lake has water yearlong and is stocked with rainbow trout as a put- and- take fishery. It supports a small wet meadow around the fringe of the lake. Several bat species would use the Reservoir and small ponds for insect foraging.

The East Fork of the Carson River flows through the area. It contains Lahontan cutthroat and brook trout, brown trout, mountain whitefish, a species of Tahoe sucker, speckled dace and Lahontan red-shiner.

Several streams occur in the Plan Area including Millberry Creek, Markleeville Creek, Indian Creek, Scott Creek and Luther Creek. Markleeville and Indian Creeks probably support game fish. Millberry, Scott, and Luther Creeks do not support game fish, but may support non-game species.

Each of the lakes supports emergent and floating aquatic vegetation as well as ephemeral wet meadow vegetation. The smaller streams support riparian vegetation including aspen cottonwoods and chokecherry. The Carson River supports riverine riparian habitat with gallery cottonwood and willows. Wildlife species such as California toad, Townsend's chipmunk and several species of hummingbirds can be found in the riparian habitat types.

Both timbered areas and higher elevations contain meadows dominated by grasses and forbs. These inclusions support wildlife species such as pocket gophers, night snake and Northern Rough-winged swallow.

Wild turkeys occur within the Plan Area; however, no roosting or gobbling sites have been identified. Meadows and selected Jeffrey pine would be key habitat areas for this game bird. Mountain quail are present and recent wetter years have produced good populations of this species in montane habitats.

The Carson River deer herd uses the Plan Area at least part of the year. The area contains winter range, summer range and migration corridors. Critical deer winter range is located on the east bench of the Sierra Nevada range from Markleeville north. The Fay-Luther Area emergency closure order was in part enacted to protect this critical habitat. This deer herd is considered stable to declining, as are most western deer herds due in part to land management practices that have precluded fire.

Greater sage grouse is considered an upland game species by California Fish and Game and is hunted. Sage grouse found within the Plan Area belong to the Mono sub-population of sage grouse, a population whose genetics are in the process of being described and confirmed. No known use areas have been identified in the Plan Area, but grouse occur and the existence of lek areas is nearly certain. Prior to 2005, the USFWS received three petitions that triggered a review for federal listing. In January 2005, the USFWS determined that listing was not warranted at that time. Documented threats to this sub-population are located on other federal lands and do not include public lands in Alpine County.

Special Status Species (Animals)

BLM Sensitive Species

It is BLM policy to provide sensitive species with the same level of protection that is given federal candidate species. The major objective of this protection is to preclude the need for federal listing. The State of California 2006 list of sensitive species for BLM is extensive. Only a portion of these species has potential for occurring on the east slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Because the Plan Area is located on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada, its wildlife and plant habitats often resemble those of the Great Basin. Several Nevada BLM sensitive species are found in or near the Plan Area. The list of

Nevada and California BLM sensitive species that occur or are likely to occur in the Plan Area is shown in Appendix B.

Migratory Birds

On January 11, 2001, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13186—the Land Bird Strategic Plan, placing emphasis on conservation and management of migratory birds. Species are not protected under the Endangered Species Act, but most are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. No BLM policies have been developed to provide guidance on how to incorporate neotropical migratory (NTMB) birds into NEPA analysis. Advice based on past USFWS Memorandum of Understanding agreements list items the USFWS believes are fundamental for the analysis of impacts to and planning for these birds. These items are (1) effects to highest priority birds listed by Partners In Flight (PIF); (2) effects to important bird areas (IBA's); (3) effects to important over wintering areas.

Although located in California, the Plan Area's bird habitats most closely resemble the Intermountain West Avifaunal Biome described by PIF and PIF-Nevada. The Intermountain West is the center of distribution for many western birds. Over half of the biome's Species of Continental Importance have 75% or more of their population here. Many breeding species from this biome migrate to winter in central and western Mexico or in the Southwestern biome. The species of concern listed by PIF that could occur in the Plan Area are shown in Appendix A.

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter evaluates potential environmental effects that could result from implementing any alternative described in Chapter 2 of this Resource Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Assessment. The baseline used for this section of the analysis is the current resource condition described in Chapter 3. The purpose of this chapter is to determine if there would be any potential direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to the natural and human environments from either alternative.

This analysis is a cause and effect process. The analysis in this Chapter is based on the planning team's knowledge of resources and the Plan Area, reviews of the existing literature, and information provided by experts in the BLM and other agencies.

The resources were analyzed and discussed commensurate with resource issues and concerns identified through scoping. GIS analysis and data from existing sources were used to quantify potential effects where possible. In the absence of quantitative data the best professional judgment was used.

This section serves to define for the reader the terms found in Chapter 4. The terms "impacts" and "effects" are used interchangeably. To the extent possible, impacts are identified objectively, without characteristics as positive or negative, so that the reader may make his or her own judgment.

Other terms that are used in this chapter are:

Direct effect: These are effects that are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.

Indirect effect: These are effects that are caused by the action and occur later in time or are removed in the distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.

Cumulative effect: These are impacts on the environment which result from the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions occurring within the same area of influence to other past, present.

Negligible: The impact is at a lower level of detection, and there would be no measurable change.

Minor: The impact is slight but detectable and there would be a small change.

Short-term effect: The effect would only occur during or immediately after implementation of the action.

Long-term effect: The effect could occur for an extended period after implementation of the action. The effect could last several years or longer.

4.2 AIR QUALITY

AIR QUALITY ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Under this alternative approximately 18,680 acres of public land would be identified for retention. No ground disturbing activities would commence that could create a short-term air quality issue. The present levels of off-road vehicle activity do not create any direct or indirect impacts to air quality in Alpine County. Should suspended particulates from ground disturbing activities occur, these would be considered short-term. Suspended particulates from authorized grazing could occur but is determined to be short-term. Livestock grazing management that is currently allowed would have no direct or indirect impacts to air quality. There would not be any cumulative effects to air quality from this alternative.

AIR QUALITY ALTERNATIVE B - PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Under this alternative approximately 955 acres would be identified for lease to a qualified applicant. Future ground disturbing activities may take place. Should these lands be leased, further environmental analysis is required as a separate lands and realty action. Designation of a road and trail network in and of itself would not lead to any indirect or direct impacts to air quality. Under this alternative three allotments would be closed to all grazing and the fourth closed to cattle grazing. The livestock grazing alternative would not have any direct or indirect impacts to air quality. There would not be any cumulative effects to air quality from this alternative.

4.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES

CULTURAL RESOURCES ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Under the current management alternative there would be no potential direct or indirect effects to cultural resources because all lands would remain identified for retention.

Current management concerning cultural resources within the Fay-Luther Canyon area would continue to be susceptible to degradation from soil disturbance due to random motorized travel. There is an assumption that uncontrolled motorized activity in this area could have potential to impact documented and undocumented cultural resources sites that hold both scientific and cultural values should this alternative be chosen. Current trails and travel management within other areas of Alpine County would constitute no potential direct or indirect effects to cultural resources.

Current management concerning livestock grazing in the Harvey Flat, Indian Creek, and Millberry Canyon allotments could have negligible potential for direct or indirect impacts to documented and undocumented cultural resources sites that hold both scientific and cultural values. However, since livestock actually graze one area of one allotment, only that area may be potentially affected. Current livestock utilization levels are not causing known cultural resources degradation. There would not be any cumulative effects to cultural resources from this alternative.

CULTURAL RESOURCES ALTERNATIVE B -- PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Under this alternative lands identified for disposal could potentially impact currently unknown locations of cultural resources. Further environmental analysis would occur as a separate action from this plan amendment as required. Per federal cultural resources laws, regulations, and protocol, lands for disposal would be inventoried for cultural resources and Native American tribal entities consulted prior to any specific action. If cultural resources are identified and evaluated as important and retaining scientific and/or cultural values, they would be treated on a case-by-case basis and according to Federal cultural resources laws, regulations, and protocol. This alternative does not have potential for direct or indirect effects to cultural resources.

Designation of travel routes within the Plan Area would have long-term beneficial effects specific to cultural resource locations and cultural landscapes. Roads and trails could be closed or realigned in order to mitigate or avoid important resource locations. This would be accomplished during the implementation phase of trails and travel management. The proposed designation of closure to motorized vehicle travel for Fay-Luther Canyon area would allow protection of cultural resources relative to motorized travel; thus no direct or indirect effects to cultural resources are identified.

The closure of three grazing allotments and a fourth specifically for cattle would also protect documented and undocumented cultural resources sites that hold both scientific and cultural values. There would not be any cumulative effects to cultural resources from this alternative.

4.4 INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Under the continuation of current management alternative for lands and realty there would be no potential direct or indirect impacts from invasive, non-native species. Roads and trails would remain undesignated. This may contribute to proliferation of invasive, non-native weed dispersal and have potentially minor effects along undesignated roads and trails. In this alternative, should these lands remain open to grazing there could be negligible effects to Millberry, Indian Creek, Harvey Flat and Bagley Valley (cattle) allotments concerning invasive, non-native weed dispersal. There would not be any cumulative effects to invasive, non-native species from this alternative.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES ALTERNATIVE B - PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Under this alternative introduction of invasive, non-native species could occur on lands identified for lease. However, as discussed above, further environmental analysis would be required as a separate action. A designated trails and travel network would have minor benefits regarding the proliferation of invasive, non-native species. There would be less opportunity for seed dispersal by limiting the amount of randomly created trails, primitive roads, or roads. There could be minor benefits concerning the spread of invasive, non-native species by closing Harvey Flat, Indian Creek, and Millberry Canyon Allotments. No potential direct or indirect impacts from invasive non-native species would result if this alternative were selected. There would not be any cumulative effects to invasive, non-native species from this alternative.

4.5 THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED FOR LISTING AND CANDIDATE (ANIMALS)

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED FOR LISTING AND CANDIDATE (ANIMALS) ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Under the current management regarding lands and realty there would be no public land identified for disposal under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, thus there would be no potential for direct or indirect effects to threatened and endangered species.

The current management of *limited* to existing roads and trails in Bagley Valley and Indian Creek Recreation Area could enhance Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) potential and existing habitat; bald eagles; and the Yosemite toad and by minimizing habitat fragmentation from proliferation of non-authorized roads and trails. Areas *open* to motorized travel could potentially impact all of the federally listed species and their occupied and potential habitat in the short and long-term.

Continuing livestock grazing in Millberry, Indian Creek and Harvey Flat, and Bagley Valley allotments could have potential direct and indirect impacts to both listed species of fish, the Yosemite toad and the Mountain yellow-legged frog as well as their respective potential habitats in the long-term. There would not be any cumulative effects to threatened and endangered species from this alternative.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED FOR LISTING AND CANDIDATE (ANIMALS)

ALTERNATIVE B - PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Closing public access to lands leased to STPUD for health and safety could be beneficial specifically for Bald eagle nesting as there would be fewer instances of disturbance and intrusion from the public during nesting season. This alternative for land disposal would not have any potential impacts to federally listed species because there are no listed species located on lands proposed for disposal.

Designation of travel routes within the Plan Area would be beneficial for federally listed species and habitats in the short and long-term since travel management planning for the designations would avoid or provide mitigation for potential and occupied habitats. The proposed *closed* to motorized vehicles travel designation for Fay-Luther Canyon area would reduce or eliminate any potential direct or indirect impacts that might be occurring to the Bald eagle and its habitats (BAE #004-06).

The closure of three grazing allotments and limitations on livestock grazing in the Bagley Valley allotment would ensure the toad, the frog, and LCT and PCT historic habitat would not be impacted by livestock use in the long-term. There would not be any cumulative effects to threatened and endangered species from this alternative.

A Memorandum from the US Fish and Wildlife Service dated May 29, 2007, (Appendix C) concurred with the Carson City Field Office request for informal consultation concerning the Lahontan cutthroat trout and bald eagle.

4.6 WATER QUALITY (SURFACE)

WATER QUALITY (SURFACE ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT)

Under the current management regarding water quality there would be no public land identified for disposal under the R&PP Act, thus there would be no potential for direct or indirect effects to water quality.

Under this alternative motor vehicles would continue to be allowed in the Fay-Luther Canyon area and water quality impacts could occur. This alternative may compromise water quality from sedimentation that would result from soil disturbance in the watershed.

Under this alternative continuing to limit motorized vehicle use to designated roads and trails in Bagley Valley and the Indian Creek Recreation Area would provide some

protection of water quality by preventing new soil disturbance in the watersheds and near streams and other water bodies. Unsurfaced roads and trails can be major source areas for sediment, and ongoing use of undesignated routes would generate sediment that could reach water bodies. Motorized vehicle use also poses some risk of fuel or fluid spills, and indirect impacts associated with vehicle access, such as trash dumping.

The current *open* designation in the Plan Area to motorized vehicles could result in potential direct or indirect impacts to water quality. Demand for recreational access is increasing and an *open* designation could result in a proliferation of new roads and trails. Each new route could increase the area of disturbance and amount of soil erosion. The risks of fluid spills and other indirect impacts could also increase.

Continuing current livestock management under the alternative could affect water quality to varying degrees in the Plan Area. Livestock could potentially degrade water quality by removing and trampling vegetative cover, disturbing soils, and producing animal waste. The Indian Creek, Harvey Flat, and Millberry Canyon allotments are not currently under permit for livestock grazing, so no potential direct or/or indirect impacts are occurring. If they were permitted in the future however, potential direct and/or indirect impacts could result. In particular, the Harvey Flat allotment could further degrade water quality in Indian Creek and Indian Creek Reservoir. These water bodies were placed on the 303(d) list for habitat alterations and pathogens, and total phosphorous, respectively. Phosphorous inputs to the reservoir would be the most serious problem because the TMDL implementation plan for total phosphorous requires BLM to limit potential sources. Livestock grazing was cited as a potential source of the water quality limitations. Issuing livestock grazing permits would likely result in increased levels of these pollutants; to what degree would depend on permitted use levels and allotment management. There would not be any cumulative effects to water quality from this alternative.

WATER QUALITY (SURFACE) ALTERNATIVE B – PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

The proposed revocation of the Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal would not have potential direct or indirect effects to water quality. This action would involve a short length of Snowshoe Thompson Ditch and management would not be expected to change.

Possible acquisitions from willing sellers in addition to designating 17,615 acres for retention would allow the BLM to more effectively manage public lands for water quality protection and improvement as well as other resources. Designating approximately 955 acres for disposal under the R&PP Act would not cause potential direct or indirect impacts to water quality. Development subsequent to an actual disposal might pose risks to water quality, and any future proposals would require additional analysis to analyze potential impacts.

Limiting the use of motorized vehicles to designated roads and trails would protect water quality from increased degradation in the long term. The designation would

diminish the proliferation of new roads and trails that could cause soil erosion possibly leading to sedimentation of streams and other water resources. The motorized vehicle closures in the Fay-Luther Canyon Area and Indian Creek Recreation Area would afford even greater protection for water quality.

The Indian Creek, Harvey Flat, and Millberry Canyon allotments are not currently permitted for livestock grazing, so no potential direct or indirect livestock impacts are occurring. Under Alternative B water quality would be protected from grazing impacts in the future by closing grazing within these allotments. In addition, water quality would benefit by closing grazing to cattle on the Bagley Valley allotment. Closing the allotment to grazing on the Harvey Flat allotment would be especially beneficial for water quality in Indian Creek and Indian Creek Reservoir. Livestock grazing was cited as a potential source of the water quality limitations for these water bodies, which were placed on the 303(d) list for habitat alterations and pathogens, and total phosphorous, respectively. Reducing phosphorous inputs to the reservoir would be the most significant benefit because the TMDL implementation plan for total phosphorous requires BLM to limit potential phosphorous sources. There would not be any cumulative effects to water quality from this alternative.

4.8 LANDS AND REALTY

LANDS AND REALTY ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Existing land use authorizations would not have any potential impacts under the continuation of current management. Pursuit of revocation and restoration to the operation of the public land laws and general mining laws of 80 acres currently held under withdrawal by the Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management in Section 25, T. 11 N., R. 19 E. would not be considered. Conveyance of 955 acres of public land to Alpine County for public purposes under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926 would not be considered. There would be no lands identified to meet public demand for community expansion (new public facilities) in the community.

The existing situation for travel management would have negligible effects on lands and realty. Land use applications would continue to be processed on a case-by-case basis.

The existing situation for livestock grazing would have negligible effects on lands and realty. Under this alternative no lands would be conveyed out of public ownership. Any potential direct or indirect impacts to proposed conveyances from existing grazing permits would not occur. Other land use applications would be processed on a case-by-case-basis. There would not be any cumulative effects to lands and realty from this alternative.

LANDS AND REALTY ALTERNATIVE B – PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Under this alternative R&PP applications from qualified applicants would be accepted on the 955 acres identified by Alpine County. Applications would be processed in accordance with current BLM regulations and policy. Existing individual wildlife species and local habitats on lands identified for disposal could have potential impacts on future land disposals to the county. Placement of proposed rights-of-way or maintenance on existing rights-of-way could be impacted by existing wildlife populations. Prior to authorizing any proposed land use, appropriate NEPA analysis would be required for all resources potentially affected. Identification of significant cultural resources, threatened or endangered species or other resource issues could result in modifications to the proposed land use. Under this alternative for lands and realty, there would be no potential for direct or indirect effects to livestock grazing. Lands managed by Bureau of Reclamation would be managed by BLM and managed consistent with adjacent lands within the ICRL boundary. There would not be any cumulative effects to lands and realty from this alternative.

4.9 LIVESTOCK GRAZING**LIVESTOCK GRAZING ALTERNATIVE A – NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT**

Under this alternative there would be no direct or indirect effects to livestock grazing from the present management of retention of lands in Alpine County. Forty AUMs of livestock forage would continue to be available in the Millberry Canyon allotment.

Travel management in the Bagley Valley allotment and portions of the Indian Creek allotment is *limited* to existing roads and trails. Livestock grazing would not be affected by a *limited* travel designation. Access to range improvement projects for maintenance is permitted through administrative permit. There would not be any potential direct or indirect effects to livestock grazing.

Under current management a total of 2,130 AUMs combined from the Indian, Millberry, Harvey Flat and Bagley allotments would remain available to grazing under a permit. There would not be any cumulative effects to livestock grazing from this alternative.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING ALTERNATIVE B – PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Under this proposal 955 acres within the Millberry Canyon Allotment would be identified as available for disposal to Alpine County through the R&PP Act. If this alternative is selected, 40 AUMs of forage on public lands would no longer be available for livestock use.

Under this alternative limiting motorized travel to existing roads and trails would not have any potential direct or indirect impacts to livestock grazing.

This alternative would close the following to livestock grazing: 1,480 acres (40 AUMs) in the Millberry Canyon allotment; 346 acres (59 AUMs) in the Indian Creek allotment; in the Harvey Flat allotment of 4,312 acres (300 AUMs), and (cattle only) in the Bagley Valley allotment 5,768 acres (1,731 AUMs). These proposed administrative changes to livestock grazing on BLM managed lands reflect management directions on the surrounding private and Forest Service lands. The grazing permittees for these allotments voluntarily relinquished their grazing privileges and permits several years ago when they sold their base properties. The new base property owners did not apply for the BLM grazing permits. There would be no potential direct or indirect effects to livestock grazing. There would not be any cumulative effects to livestock grazing from this alternative.

4.10 RECREATION

RECREATION ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Under this alternative BLM managed lands located primarily west of Highway 89 would remain available for recreation to the public and not be identified for disposal.

There would be no potential effects to recreation opportunities from continuing current management concerning travel designations of *open* and *limited* to existing roads and trails.

Under this alternative BLM managed lands in the Harvey Flat Allotment, which encompasses a large portion of the Indian Creek Recreation Lands, would remain available for livestock grazing use. If this alternative is selected the potential for stray cattle entering the campground and recreation lands around the reservoir would continue to exist. As a result, minor impacts to public health and safety within the developed area may occur. There would be no potential direct or indirect effects to recreation within the Millberry, Indian Creek or Bagley Valley allotments. There would not be any cumulative effects to recreation from this alternative.

RECREATION ALTERNATIVE B -- PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Under this alternative BLM managed lands located west of Highway 89 would be identified as available for use by Alpine County for public purposes. Lands identified for disposal would not be available for dispersed recreation or developed recreation opportunities. However, any potential direct impacts to dispersed recreation would be negligible considering the amount of undeveloped public lands (BLM and FS) in the immediate area. Documented recreation uses west of Hwy 88 on public lands indicate that the use is limited or is not present. There would be no potential direct or indirect effect to recreation from this alternative.

This alternative may have negligible effects to recreation opportunities for dispersed camping on lands designated as *limited* to existing travel on roads and trails. However, public lands in Alpine County have a network of roads and trails that provides access to all but the most remote and rugged terrain. The preliminary road and trail network provides approximately 10.8 linear miles of travel opportunity. There would be no potential direct or indirect effect to recreation from travel management designations in this alternative.

Under this alternative BLM managed lands in the Harvey Flat Allotment, which encompasses a large portion of Indian Creek Recreation Lands, would no longer be available for livestock grazing use. If this proposed action is selected it would eliminate the potential for stray cattle into the campground and around the reservoir. As a result, public health and safety and user experiences associated with developed recreation opportunities in the area would benefit. There would be no potential direct or indirect effect to recreation in this alternative. There would not be any cumulative effects to recreation from this alternative.

4.11 SOCIO-ECONOMIC

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Under current management there would not be any lands identified for disposal to qualified applicants under the R&PP Act. Future opportunities for community expansion or economic development would not occur. There could potentially be minor direct and indirect socio-economic effects. The existing management for travel or livestock grazing would not have potential for direct or indirect impacts to socio economics. There would not be any cumulative effects to socio-economic resources from this alternative.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVE B – PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Under this alternative 955 acres are identified for disposal to qualified applicants under the R&PP Act. Community infrastructure needs would be met under this alternative, resulting in both direct and indirect benefits.

Designation of travel management routes on approximately 18,680 acres would not have any potential direct or indirect effects concerning socio-economic resources.

Under this alternative Indian Creek (59 AUMs), Harvey Flat (300 AUMs), Millberry Canyon (40 AUMs) and Bagley Valley (1,731 AUMs Cattle) allotments would be cancelled and the BLM lands within the Indian Creek, Harvey Flat and Millberry Canyon allotments would no longer be available for livestock grazing use under a permit. Any potential direct or indirect socio-economic effects associated with the

loss of AUMs would have occurred when private property owners decided to no longer graze livestock and/or the management of the base properties changed through land ownership. As described in Chapter 3, unfenced mixed land ownership and low availability of forage and water make it impractical to graze livestock solely on BLM managed lands within these allotments. There are no potential direct or indirect effects to socio-economics concerning livestock grazing should this alternative be selected. There would not be any cumulative effects to socio-economic resources from this alternative.

4.12 TRAILS & TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Retention of public lands would have negligible impacts to travel management. Public use of undesignated roads and trails would continue to occur.

Under current management 268 acres adjacent to Harvey Reservoir (STPUD) would remain *open* to motorized use and public access. Also under this alternative motorized use would continue on approximately 12,265 acres and remain managed as *limited* to designated routes and approximately 6,415 acres would remain managed as *open*. Under this alternative roads and trails would remain undesignated and undefined. The potential for cross-country use to increase could be minor to moderate. Potential conflicts and safety concerns between motorized and non-motorized recreation uses would exist and are likely to increase. Motorized opportunities would increase and would eventually detract from both the motorized and non-motorized user's experience. Under current management the Fay-Luther Canyon Area (894 acres) would retain the designation of *open* to motorized travel. There could be direct and indirect effects to wildlife, soils, and water quality should this alternative be selected.

Non-motorized passive recreation opportunities and experiences would continue at current levels. Under this alternative 6,200 acres of public lands currently managed as *limited* to designated road and trails in Bagley Valley would remain undesignated as such. Under current management there are no potential impacts to trails and travel management from livestock grazing. There would be no cumulative effects to trails and travel management.

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE B -- PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Conveyance of lands under the R&PP Act to a qualified applicant would not have an adverse impact on travel management. The lands are located on the west side of Highway 89 opposite of the core BLM lands to the east. The majority of existing recreation opportunities are located on public lands east of Hwy 89. The proposed disposal acreage is relatively low, fractured, removed from the main BLM land base and therefore would not be considered a priority to incorporate into overall travel

management. There would not be any potential direct or indirect effects to trails and travel management.

In this alternative motorized use on BLM managed lands would be managed as either *closed* or *limited* to designated routes. Under this alternative all motorized recreation opportunities would be eliminated in the Fay Luther Canyon area (894 acres). Safety concerns and conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreation users would decrease. Potential direct and indirect effects to water quality would be prevented. Non-motorized, passive use experiences would be enhanced. Lands identified as the Carson-Iceberg and Slinkard WSAs would be designated as *closed* to motorized activities regardless of their WSA status.

Lands amounting to 268 acres would be closed to pedestrian and motorized access for health and safety concerns in the vicinity of Harvey Reservoir. Under this alternative 268 acres within the South Tahoe Public Utility District right-of-way would be *closed* to motorized travel and public access for health and safety reasons. Dispersed camping or public access has not been documented within the 268 acres presently under a right-of-way permit to STPUD.

Under this alternative a road and trail network would be identified and managed to enhance motorized and non-motorized opportunities and experiences. All cross-country motorized travel would be eliminated. Indirect impacts to motorized dependant dispersed recreation opportunities (i.e. hunting) would be minor. Non-motorized recreation opportunities would be maintained and enhanced by allowing managed motorized access to the backcountry. Non-motorized experiences would be enhanced and opportunities for solitude would increase. There would not be any potential direct or indirect effects to trails and travel management.

Under this alternative there are no potential direct or indirect effects to livestock grazing from trails and travel management. There would be no cumulative effects to trails and travel management.

4.13 WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION, CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Under this alternative retention of lands could have long-term benefits for wildlife.

Under this alternative the current travel designations have potential for direct or indirect impacts to general wildlife habitat via fragmentation, interruption of reproductive processes and physical habitat destruction. Key mule deer fawning and sage grouse use areas may currently be impacted due to motorized, off-road uses of the *open* to motorized travel areas.

Continuing the current situation of allowing livestock grazing in Harvey Flat, Indian Creek, Millberry and Bagley Valley allotments would favor general wildlife species associated with mid or low-seral vegetation conditions. However, since livestock

actually only graze one area of one allotment, only that area is currently effected. The other allotments are at or nearing potential for species richness and diversity. There is no sage grouse habitat degradation. There would be no cumulative effects to wildlife.

Special Status Species

Under this alternative retention of lands could have long-term benefits for BLM sensitive and California species.

Under this alternative those areas with *open* to motorized travel could have minor impact for some sensitive and California status species by fragmenting habitats, and blocking movement of some species and by interrupting reproductive processes.

Continuing the current situation of allowing livestock grazing in Harvey Flat, Indian Creek, Millberry and Bagley Valley allotments would favor sensitive and California status species associated with mid or low-seral vegetation conditions. However, since livestock actually only graze one area of one allotment, only that area is currently effected. The other allotments are at or nearing potential for species richness and diversity. There would be no cumulative effects to special status species wildlife.

WILDLIFE ALTERNATIVE B -- PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Land disposal could have potential direct or indirect impacts to individual(s) of local wildlife species and local habitats in the long-term due to potential future Alpine County use under an R&PP lease. Subsequent environmental analysis would be required for lands identified for lease under an R&PP as required by NEPA. Overall wildlife populations and landscape scale habitats would not be affected. Any potential impacts to key game species areas could be avoided or minimized during future project specific planning. This could be a benefit to general wildlife species.

Designation of travel routes within the Plan Area would benefit general wildlife habitat and game species key habitats in the long-term. Fragmentation of general wildlife habitats, disruption of reproductive processes and habitat destruction could be mitigated or avoided during designation planning. A designation of *closed* to motorized vehicles for Fay-Luther Area, Carson-Iceberg WSA, and Slinkard Valley WSA would allow general wildlife species diversity and richness to move toward potential and would curtail further damage to, and fragmentation of, general wildlife habitats. There are no potential direct or indirect effects to trails or travel management from wildlife.

The closure of three grazing allotments and a fourth to cattle grazing would allow general wildlife species to reach and/or maintain potential species diversity and richness in the long-term because livestock grazing would be precluded. There are no potential direct or indirect effects to livestock grazing from trails and travel management. There would be no cumulative effects to wildlife.

Special Status Species

Land disposal could impact individual sensitive and California status species in the long-term due to potential future county use. However, site specific project planning would identify, analyze and mitigate effects to potentially affected species.

Designation of travel routes within the Plan Area would benefit sensitive and California status wildlife species in the long-term. Fragmentation of sensitive and California status habitats could be avoided or mitigated as could impacts to movement, reproduction and special habitats such as stopover habitat. The proposed *closed* to motorized vehicles designation for the Fay-Luther Canyon Area would allow sensitive and California status species of wildlife diversity and richness to reach potential.

The closure of three grazing allotments and a fourth to cattle grazing would allow populations of sensitive and California status to reach potential in species diversity and richness in the long-term because livestock grazing would be precluded. In the short-term, closing the allotment would benefit sensitive and California status species by allowing this area to move toward potential for species diversity and richness. There would be no cumulative effects to special status species wildlife.

Migratory Birds

Under Alternative A current management within the Fay-Luther Canyon Area could contribute to minor impacts to individuals of neotropical migratory bird (NTMB) species. Those areas with *open* to motorized travel designations could currently impact some NTMB species by fragmenting habitats, and blocking movement of some species and by interrupting reproductive processes. Individuals may be affected but not populations.

Continuing the current situation of allowing livestock grazing in the allotments associated with the Plan Area would favor NTMB species associated with mid or low-seral vegetation conditions. However, since livestock actually only graze one area of one allotment, only that area is currently affected. The other allotments are at or nearing potential for species richness and diversity. There would not be any cumulative effects to migratory birds from this alternative.

Under Alternative B land disposal could impact individuals of NTMB species in the long-term due to potential future county development. However, site specific project planning would identify, analyze and mitigate effects to potentially affected species.

Designation of travel routes within the Plan Area would enhance NTMB wildlife species in the long-term. Fragmentation of NTMB habitats could be avoided or mitigated as could impacts to movement, reproduction and special habitats such as stopover habitat. The proposed *closed* to motorized vehicles designation for Fay-Luther Canyon area would allow NTMB species the potential to achieve additional diversity and richness.

The closure of three grazing allotments in the Plan Area would allow populations of NTMB to reach potential in species diversity and richness in the long-term because livestock grazing would be precluded. In the short-term, removing livestock from the portion of the grazed allotment would enhance NTMB species by allowing this area to move toward potential for species diversity and richness. There would not be any cumulative effects to migratory birds from this alternative.

CHAPTER 5

CONSULTATION, COORDINATION, REFERENCES AND APPENDICES

5.1 LIST OF PREPARERS

Don Hicks	Carson City Field Office, Manager
Bryant Smith	Associate Field Office Manager
Desna Young	Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Project Lead
Arthur Callan	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Ken Nelson	Realty Specialist
Rita Suminski	Supervisory Wildlife Biologist
John Axtel	Natural Resource Specialist
Russ Suminski	Lead Range Management Specialist
Dan Erbes	Geologist
Jim Schroeder	Hydrologist
Jim Carter	Archaeologist
Jim deLaureal	Soil Scientist
Katrina Leavitt	Range Ecologist
Timothy Roide	Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist
Terry Knight	Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner
Dean Tonenna	Plant Ecologist
Terry Neumann	Geologist/Hazardous Materials Coordinator

5.2 PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

Alpine County
 South Tahoe Public Utility District
 U.S. Forest Service, Carson Ranger District
 Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
 Bureau of Reclamation
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Bureau of Indian Affairs
 California State Office, Bureau of Land Management
 Nevada State Office, Bureau of Land Management

5.3 REFERENCES

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5.4 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Primary habitats and suites of neo-tropical migratory birds associated with these habitats in the Intermountain West Avifaunal Biome are listed. These Partners in Flight species were chosen because they were most in need of attention at the continental scale (Latta et al 1999).

Coniferous Forest - This habitat type includes Ponderosa pine, mixed conifer and spruce-fir among others. Several suites of birds can be identified due to the many forest types included in the category. Species of concern associated with this habitat type in the plan area,

Lewis's Woodpecker - *Melanerpes lewis* - open, Jeffrey pine, snags/hollow trees (Latta 1999, (www.natureserve.com 2006)

White-headed Woodpecker – *Picoides albolarvatus* - open, dry, old Ponderosa (Latta 1999)

Flammulated Owl - *Otus flammeolus* - open, dry, old Ponderosa (Latta 1999)

Cassin's Finch – *Carpodacus cassinii* – open, dry, old Ponderosa (Latta 1999)

Olive-sided Flycatcher – *Contopus cooper* - mixed conifer and/or spruce-fir (Latta 1999)

Western Bluebird - *Sialia mexicana*- snag / hollow tree (www.natureserve.com 2006)

Threats to this habitat type include logging and fire suppression that alters age class, structure and species composition of forests.

Deciduous Forest – This habitat type includes aspen forests which can be found in the Plan area. Many birds reach their highest breeding densities in this forest type. Aspen stands grow not as random individual trees, but rather in colonies that sprout from a common parent root system. Disturbance events such as fire or clear cutting of aspen groves stimulate the root system to produce suckers, effectively perpetuating aspen on the site. When found in association with coniferous species, aspen frequently represents a seral stage that progresses toward coniferous dominance without disturbance (Neel 1999). No bird species are obligate of this habitat type, but several are associated with aspen (Neel 1999). Species of concern associated with this habitat type in the plan area,

Northern Goshawk – *Accipiter gentilis* – nests in aspen in Nevada

Orange-crowned Warbler – *Vermivora celata*- migrant needing stopover habitat (www.natureserve.com 2006)

Yellow Warbler – *Dendroica petechia*- - migrant needing stopover habitat (www.natureserve.com 2006)

Red-naped Sapsucker - *Sphyrapicus nuchalis* - cavity nester (Latta 1999)

Aspen stand decline has been attributed to the lack of disturbance, especially where aspen is seral to coniferous forest (Neel 1999). Threats to this habitat type include fire suppression that results in conifer succession and overgrazing by ungulates (Latta 1999).

Woodland – Pinyon-juniper woodlands are characteristic of this habitat type. It supports the largest nesting-bird species list of any upland vegetation type in the West (Latta 1999). Height and density of pinyon-juniper woodlands are highly variable throughout the state, even within a single mountain range. Singleleaf pinyon begins abruptly at the Truckee River and Interstate 80, then increases in dominance as one moves southward (Neel 1999). Species of concern associated with this habitat type in the plan area,

Pinyon Jay – *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*

Western Bluebird- *Sialia mexicana* – snags / hollow tree (www.natureserve.com 2006)

Gray Flycatcher – *Empidonax wrightii*

Juniper Titmouse – *Baeolophus ridgwayi*

Black-throated Gray Warbler – *Dendroica nigrescens*

Mountain Bluebird – *Sialia currucoides* – cavity nester (Latta 1999)

Issues related to this habitat type include fragmentation from man-caused activities.

Western Shrublands – Shrubsteppe was identified as the highest priority habitat for conservation for breeding birds. This habitat type supports the largest nesting-bird species list of any upland vegetation type in the West (Latta 1999). The plan area has communities of montane shrubs with dominant plant species that include serviceberry, elderberry, currant, snowberry, bitterbrush and buckbrush. Manzanita, oak and bittercherry can also be found in montane shrub stands in the west. There are no obligate bird species (Neel 1999). Species of concern associated with this habitat type in the plan area,

Western hummingbird species – montane shrublands embedded as inclusions provide food and cover. These may serve as critical migration areas (Latta 1999)

Sage grouse – *Centrocercus urophasianus*

Sage thrasher – *Oreoscoptes montanus* – migrant needing stopover habitat

(www.natureserve.com 2006)

Brewer's sparrow – *Spizella breweri* (Beidleman,2000)

Virginia's warbler – *Vermivora virginiae*- migrant needing stopover habitat

(www.natureserve.com 2006)

Green-tailed towhee – *Pipilo chlorurus*

Short-eared owl – *Asio flammeus* - montane meadows that occur as inclusions in this type (Neel 1999)

Loggerhead Shrike – *Lanius ludovicianus* - migrant needing stopover habitat

(www.natureserve.com 2006)

Blue Grosbeak – *Passerina caerulea*

Issues related to this habitat type include fragmentation from man-caused activities.

Threats to this habitat type include overgrazing of grasses and forbs that alter community structure, invasion of non-native grasses and fire suppression / crown-killing wildfire (Latta 1999).

Riparian – This habitat type supports the highest bird diversity of any western habitat type but is one of the rarest. Mountain riparian sites in the Plan area include aspen, alder, birch, willows, wild rose and red-osier dogwood with a host of herbaceous understory. Species of concern associated with this habitat type in the plan area,

Rufous hummingbird – *Selasphorus rufus* - migrant needing stopover habitat

(www.natureserve.com 2006)

Willow flycatcher – *Empidonax trailii*

Calliope hummingbird – *Stellula calliope*- woodland, conifer, shrub riparian

(www.natureserve.com 2006)

Wilson's Warbler – *Wilsonia pusilla*- woodland / conifer riparian (www.natureserve.com 2006)

MacGillivray's Warbler – *Oporornis tolmiei* – shrubby riparian (www.natureserve.com 2006)

Cooper's Hawk – *Accipiter cooperi* – riparian woodlands, riparian conifer

(www.natureserve.com 2006)

Threats to this habitat type include road construction, invasion of nonnative species, recreational use and severe overgrazing (Latta 1999).

APPENDIX B

The following is a list of BLM Sensitive Species for the BLM in Nevada and California that do occur or are likely to occur in the Plan Amendment area. A notation of the State list the species occurs on is given for each entry.

Amphibians and Reptiles

Sierra alligator lizard - *Elgaria coerulea palmeri* - NV
Northern leopard frog - *Rana pipiens* - NV

Birds and Raptors

Golden Eagle – *Aquila chrysaetos* -CA, NV
Ferruginous Hawk - *Buteo regalis* – CA, NV
Greater sage-grouse- *Centrocercus urophasianus* - NV, CA
Burrowing owl - *Athene cunicularia* – CA,NV
California spotted owl - *Strix occidentalis occidentalis* - CA
Bendire’s Thrasher – *Toxostoma bendirei* - CA
Northern Goshawk - *Accipiter gentilis* - NV
Short-eared Owl - *Asio flammeus* - NV
Long-eared Owl - *Asio otus* – NV
Flammulated Owl - *Otus flammeolus* - NV
Juniper Titmouse - *Baeolophus griseus* - NV
Pinyon Jay - *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus* - NV
Lewis’s Woodpecker - *Melanerpes lewis* - NV
Mountain quail - *Oreortyx pictus* - NV
Red-naped Sapsucker - *Sphyrapicus nuchalis* - NV
Black Rosy-Finch - *Leucosticte atrata* - NV

Mammals

Pallid bat – *Antrozous pallidus* - CA
Spotted bat – *Euderma maculatum* - NV, CA
Long-eared myotis – *Myotis evotis* - CA
Fringed myotis – *Myotis thysanodes* - CA
Yuma myotis – *Myotis yumanensis* - CA
Silver-haired bat - *Lasionycteris noctivagans* - NV
California wolverine - *Gulo gulo*– NV
Western white-tailed jackrabbit - *Lepus townsendii* – NV
California myotis - *Myotis californicus* - NV
Small-footed myotis - *Myotis ciliolabrum* - NV
Long-eared myotis - *Myotis evotis* - NV
Little brown myotis - *Myotis lucifugus* - NV
Fringed myotis - *Myotis thysanodes* - NV
Long-legged myotis - *Myotis volans* - NV
Townsend’s big-eared bat - *Corynorhinus townsendii* - NV
Big brown bat - *Eptesicus fuscus* - NV
Hoary bat - *Lasiurus cinereus* - NV
Western pipistrelle bat - *Pipistrellus hesperus* - NV

Brazilian free-tailed bat - *Tadarida brasiliensis* - NV

Invertebrates

Carson Valley Silverspot -*Speyeria nokomis carsonensis*– NV

Mono checkerspot butterfly- *Euphydryas editha monoensis*– NV

APPENDIX C

The following are correspondence received during the 30-day comment period for the draft Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment.

David E Loomis <dloomis@fs.fed.us>

04/18/2007 02:09 PM

To: desna_young@nv.blm.gov

cc: Gary Schiff <gschiff@fs.fed.us>, Cheryl Probert <cprobert@fs.fed.us>

Subject: Comments on BLM's Alpine county resource management plan

Thanks for the opportunity to review BLM's Alpine County resource management plan amendment. Your proposals appear to present a sound land management strategy that is compatible with adjacent National Forest System lands. We have two minor editorial comments:

Map 2.3 - this map would be more clear if it indicated the travel management designation for the Indian Creek lands - a limited designation would be most compatible with Carson River corridor management by the Forest Service.

Pgs. 3-6 and 3-7 - please contact Jason Kling of this office for specific locations of mountain yellow legged frog and Yosemite toad on National Forest System lands in the area.

Please call if you have questions.

David Loomis
Sierra Zone Environmental Planner
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
1536 S. Carson St. Carson City, NV 89701
775 884 8132

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ALPINE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

P.O. BOX 158
MARKLEEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 96120

April 4, 2007

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FAX
530-694-2491
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DTH 4/9/07
Donald T. Hicks, Manager
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City Field Office
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, NV 89701

RE: Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental
Assessment – SUPPORT of Alternative B

Dear Mr. Hicks:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Alpine County DRAFT Resource Management Plan Amendment, presented to the Board of Supervisors at its meeting April 3, 2007. This amendment covers approximately 19,000 acres of lands administered by BLM in Alpine County. The County initially requested the plan amendment in 1999 as a means to meet the expanding public needs of the community.

The Board of Supervisors supports Alternative B, specifically the disposal of approximately 955 acres of land to the County for public purposes under the Recreation and Public Purposes (RP&P) Act of 1926. As well, the County looks forward to working with the BLM as a stakeholder in the development of a road and trail management plan.

Thank you for your attention to our comments. If you have any questions regarding the Board's comments, please contact me at any time.

Very truly yours,



Henry C. Veatch
Chair

Cc: Public Works
Planning Director

4.20.07
4/23/07

Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Environmental Protection Department



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Desna Young, Project Lead
BLM-CCFO
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, NV. 89701

April 18, 2007

Subject: Alpine County RMP Amendment and Environmental Assessment-Comments

I have reviewed the Alpine County RMP (Draft); and the following is a list of comments and questions that the Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada's Environmental Protection Department has concerning the Alpine County RMPA.

- (1) Map 2.3 Designated motorized access; the map designation adjacent to the Woodfords Washoe Community open for motorized use is misleading. Map 2.4 reflects a better rendition of the proposed route that should be used to reduce confusion and clearly delineates the route designation.
- (2) The close proximity of the designation to the community may present conflicts between Off-Road-Vehicle users and the community residents. We are concerned with the fact that Washoe youth frequently explore the surrounding areas and it is inevitable that the two users will collide when this area is designated for recreational activities.
- (3) No references to the Tribe's concerns and comments; a letter dated October 30, 2006 from Max Kalhammer Tribal Planner and a letter dated October 31, 2006 from Darrel Cruz, Environmental Specialist II.
- (4) 3.4.2 The term "Religious" should be omitted because it is not a religious concern.
- (5) We understand that an additional section will be added in Chapter 1 explaining the Tribe's interest in the land (previously indicated by Tribal Planner Max Kalhammer) and the process for transferring it from BLM to the Washoe Tribe.

Other than those items listed above I think the draft plan is on course. Thank you for accepting our comments and understanding the challenges we have faced with the recent turnover of Tribal government. You can direct your questions or comments to Darrel Cruz at 775-265-8692 or email, darrel.cruz@washoetribe.us.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrel Cruz", written over a horizontal line.

Darrel Cruz, ES-II
Washoe Environmental Protection Department



United States Department of the Interior



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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234

Reno, Nevada 89502

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2007 MAY 31
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May 29, 2007
File No. 1-5-07-I-122

Memorandum

To: Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, Carson City Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, Carson City, Nevada (Attn: Rita Suminski)

From: Field Supervisor, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, Reno, Nevada

Subject: Informal Consultation Regarding the Draft Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment Biological Assessment

This memorandum responds to your request for informal consultation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), received on March 22, 2007, for the proposed Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment (Amendment). You are requesting concurrence on your determination that the proposed Amendment *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*, Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT; *Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi*) and bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). We are basing our evaluation of your determination on information provided to us in the Biological Assessment and Evaluation for the Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment (#012-07).

Background and Need

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City Field Office, is proposing to amend the Consolidated Resource Management Plan. The Amendment is needed to address land use issues, transportation networks, and grazing. Currently, land use decisions for approximately 18,680 acres of BLM-managed public land in Alpine County, California, derive from resource management plans and amendments from the 1960's, 70's, and 80's. The proposed Amendment will designate land tenure for approximately 18,680 acres of BLM-managed lands, identify and designate trails and travel management for approximately 18,680 acres of BLM-managed lands, and close three allotments to all grazing and close one allotment to cattle grazing totaling 11,906 acres. Specifically, the Amendment will:

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Land

- Pursue revocation and restoration of 80 acres of land along Snowshoe Thompson Ditch to BLM management. This land is currently managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. The land would be managed by BLM consistent with adjacent lands located within the Indian Creek Recreation Lands Boundary.
- Designate 17,725 acres for retention in public ownership under the administration of BLM.
- Designate 955 acres for disposal to Alpine County for public purposes under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926.

Transportation Network

- Designate 5,521 acres of public lands as “Motorized Use Limited to Designated Roads and Trails”.
- Designate 894 acres in the Fay-Luther area as closed to motorized vehicle travel. Administrative access via motorized vehicle would be authorized when necessary.
- Designate 550 acres in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Study Area closed to motorized vehicles regardless of Wilderness status.
- Designate 2,375 acres in the Slinkard Wilderness Study Area closed to motorized vehicles regardless of Wilderness status.
- Designate 378 acres within Bagley Valley as closed to all motorized vehicle travel.
- Designate 5,143 acres in Bagley Valley as limited to designated roads and trails.
- Designate 268 acres within the Indian Creek Restoration Withdrawal Area as closed to all motorized vehicle travel. (Specific to South Tahoe Public Utility District Right-of-Way).
- Roads, primitive roads, and/or trails designated within the network may be altered through adaptive management with segments closed, realigned, or added when conditions warrant.
- Designate a preliminary network of roads, primitive roads, and trail networks on approximately 4 miles of nonmotorized and 6.8 miles of motorized linear trails.
- An inventory and assessment of roads, primitive roads, and trails not identified in the preliminary network would be completed by 2009. Should any new roads or trails be constructed, further National Environmental Policy Act analysis would be required.
- A completed road, primitive road, and trail network would be established through travel management planning by 2010.
- Roads needed for administrative purposes such as, but not limited to, fuel wood sales, traditional cultural uses, search and rescue, fire suppression, and livestock grazing would be allowable.
- Areas not yet inventoried would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails for all motorized travel until designations and road signing is completed.

Grazing

- BLM managed lands would be closed for livestock grazing use in the Harvey Flat, Indian Creek (California portion only), and Millberry Canyon Grazing Allotments.
- Sheep grazing would continue to be permitted on the Bagley Valley Allotment.

Affected Habitat

LCT

The BLM has determined that the proposed Amendment may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect LCT. There are no known populations of LCT in the Amendment area on BLM managed lands, but portions of the area have been identified as potential habitat (Kling 2006). The draft actions proposed under this Amendment, along with future transportation management could have cumulative positive effects on long-term LCT recovery. LCT are being managed under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) *Recovery Plan for the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout* (Service 1995) such that completed projects will not preclude the recovery and survival of the species.

Bald Eagle

The BLM has determined that the proposed Amendment may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect bald eagles. The proposed draft land disposal, transportation designations, and grazing management would not affect nesting or foraging habitat, and would likely be beneficial to bald eagles. The Amendment area is either yearlong or winter bald eagle habitat. Successful nesting has occurred within the Amendment area in at least two nest sites. All known and potential nest sites in the Amendment area are located on public lands with the exception of one nest site located on land leased to the South Tahoe Public Utility District (Utility District). The Utility District has closed the area to the general public and is managing the area compatible with bald eagle management objectives. The BLM is managing bald eagles under the Service's *Recovery Plan for the Pacific Bald Eagle* (Service 1986).

Conclusion

Under the Act, completed projects should not preclude future recovery and survival of threatened or endangered species. Based on the information provided, we concur that the proposed project *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect* LCT or the bald eagle. Therefore, formal consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Act is not required.

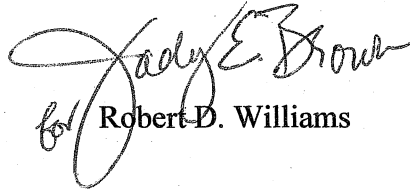
This response constitutes informal consultation under regulations promulgated in 50 CFR § 402, which established procedures governing interagency consultation under section 7 of the Act. If the proposed actions as described are changed, or if new biological information becomes

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available concerning listed or candidate species which may be affected by the Amendment, your agency should reinitiate consultation with the Service.

Thank you for your efforts to conserve federally protected species. Please reference file number 1-5-07-I-122 in future correspondence concerning this consultation. If you have any questions or concerns about this consultation or the consultation process in general, please contact me or Todd Gilmore at (775) 861-6300.


for Robert D. Williams

References

Kling, J. 2006. East Fork Carson River: 2006 Stream Habitat Survey Report. Carson Ranger District. U.S. Forest Service. Unpublished Document Carson City Field Office Files. p. 5-6.

Service 1986. Recovery Plan for the Pacific Bald Eagle. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Portland, Oregon. 160 pp.

Service 1995. Recovery Plan for the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Portland, Oregon. 108 pp.