

Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan

**APPROVED
ALPINE COUNTY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AMENDMENT
AND
DECISION RECORD
EA-NV-030-07-02**

Prepared by:
Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City Field Office

The *Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment*, as described and analyzed in the June 13, 2007, *Alpine County Proposed Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment* (EA-NV-030-07-02) and as follows, is approved.

/s/ Ron Wenker

Ron Wenker
State Director, Nevada

August 23, 2007

Date

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INTRODUCTION

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.

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.

On June 13, 2007, the *Proposed Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment* (EA-NV-030-07-02) was completed and issued to the public. The proposed plan amendment was prepared under regulations implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 CFR 1600) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (40 CFR 1500-1509). At the conclusion of the 30-day protest period and the Governor's Consistency Review, no protests had been received and the proposed plan amendment was found to be consistent with state of California plans, policies, and programs.

DECISION RECORD

The decision is to approve the *Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment* (Plan Amendment). The approved Plan Amendment is identical to Alternative B – Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment, as described and analyzed in the June 13, 2007, *Alpine County Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment* EA-NV-030-07-02.

The Plan Amendment will change the land tenure designation of selected parcels of public land from retention to conveyance to Alpine County for community expansion

through Recreation & Public Purposes Act (R&PP). The decision will also designate travel management on public lands as open, limited or closed to motorized travel and close three allotments to all livestock grazing and one allotment to cattle grazing.

ALTERNATIVES

Two alternatives were considered in the *Proposed Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment*. Those alternatives analyzed were:

Alternative A – No Action, Continuation of Current Management is a continuation of current management and is based on current decisions found in the CRMP.

- Continue to manage public lands in Alpine County for retention in federal ownership.
- Continue to manage public land within and immediately adjacent to, the Indian Creek Recreation Area and Bagley Valley as limited to designated roads and trails motorized travel.
- Continue to manage the public land (other than Indian Creek Recreation Area and Bagley Valley) as open to motorized vehicles.
- Continue to manage Harvey Flat, Indian Creek and Millberry Canyon Grazing Allotments as available for livestock grazing use under a permit.
- Continue to manage Bagley Valley Allotment as available for livestock grazing use under a permit for both sheep and cattle.

Alternative B – Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment would amend the CRMP concerning:

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

RATIONALE

In 1999, Alpine County Board of Supervisors contacted the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City Field Office to request additional lands made available for community expansion. The request made by Alpine County met the R&PP criteria; however, these requested lands were not identified for conveyance in the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (CRMP). Prior to conveyance of these lands to the County, an amendment to the CRMP to change that designation is required. This amendment to the CRMP provides land for community expansion through conveyance to Alpine County.

Bureau policy states that when amending resource management plans, amendments should include designations for motorized uses. This amendment to the CRMP will

designate motorized vehicle travel management on public lands within Alpine County. This designation includes areas that may be open, limited or closed to motorized travel.

Increasing population and private land subdivision within the past twenty years in Alpine County and the eastern Sierra front-range has shifted public land use from agriculture based economy to providing recreation experiences for the public. The need for public lands available for livestock grazing under a permit has subsequently been decreasing during this twenty-year period. More than five years have past since the CCFO has received any applications to graze livestock (cattle and sheep) on three allotments and more than seven years for cattle grazing on another allotment. This amendment to the CRMP provides for closure to three allotments to all livestock grazing and one allotment to cattle grazing.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an Amendment to the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan was published in the *Federal Register*, Vol.71, No.6, January 10, 2006. Publication of this notice in the *Federal Register* initiated the public scoping period. Comments were accepted throughout the entire plan amendment and environmental assessment process.

Carson City Field Office personnel and cooperating agencies attended a planning kick-off meeting February 28, 2006. 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 regularly scheduled monthly meeting May 12, 2006.

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.

On June 13, 2007, the *Proposed Alpine County Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment* was completed and issued to the public for a 30-day Governor's Consistency Review and protest period. Notification of the availability of the document was made via the local media, the California State Clearinghouse, and posted on the Carson City Field Office website. A public presentation was conducted before the Alpine County Board of Supervisors July 3, 2007. One question from the Alpine County Board of Supervisors rose during this meeting. They inquired how soon they could proceed with the R&PP application concerning lands the County needs for expansion. At the conclusion of the 30-day protest period and Governor's Consistency Review (July 18, 2007), no protests were filed at the Washington Office level and the proposed plan amendment was found to be consistent with the State of California plans, programs, and policies.

APPROVED ALPINE COUNTY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

The *Alpine County Resource Management Plan Amendment*, as described and analyzed in the June 13, 2007, *Alpine County Resource Management Proposed Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment* (EA-NV-07-02) and as follows, is approved.

LAND TENURE

Revocation and Restoration of Land Withdrawals Administered by the Bureau of Reclamation

1. 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 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. 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 will be managed by BLM in a manner consistent with adjacent lands located within the Indian Creek Recreation Lands boundary.

Retention

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

Conveyance under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act

3. Designate 955 acres for conveyance to Alpine County for community expansion 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 will be required to obtain legal access to these parcels across adjacent private lands.

TRAILS and TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

1. Designate 5,521 of public lands as limited to designated roads and trails.
2. Designate 894 acres in the Fay-Luther Canyon area as closed to motorized vehicle travel. Administrative access will be authorized when necessary.
3. 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 closure will prevent unauthorized access or contact with the discharged filtered-secondary treated wastewater (California Title 22, Sec. 603010(g) prohibits human contact with recycled wastewater).
4. Designate 5,143 acres in Bagley Valley as limited to designated roads and trails.

5. Designate 378 acres within Bagley Valley as closed to motorized vehicle travel.
6. Designate 2,375 acres in the Slinkard Wilderness Study Area as closed to motorized vehicles regardless of Wilderness status.
7. Designate 550 acres in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Study Area as closed to motorized vehicle travel regardless of Wilderness status.

Roads, Primitive Roads and Trails Network

8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 will be allowable.
11. An inventory and assessment of roads, primitive roads, and trails not identified in the preliminary network will be completed by 2009. Any new roads or trails constructed will require further environmental analysis.
12. A completed roads, primitive roads, and trails network will be established through travel management planning by 2010.
13. Factors to consider in further documenting and designating the roads, primitive roads, and trails network may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Road, primitive road, or trail densities;
 - b. Soil erosion;
 - c. Water quality;
 - d. Existing and proposed utility and access rights-of-way;
 - e. Cultural resources;
 - f. Threatened & endangered plants and animals;
 - g. Invasive non-native plants and noxious weeds;
 - h. Priority species and habitats.
14. Areas not yet inventoried will be managed as limited to existing roads and trails for all motorized travel until designations and signing are completed.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

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