



PLAN REVISIONS NEWS



BLM's Revision of Western Oregon Resource Management Plans: Nearing Completion...

Remarks from the State Director:

The Western Oregon Plan Revisions describe management direction for approximately 2.6 million acres of lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), primarily in western Oregon and Klamath County. In this newsletter we will update you on the status of the Western Oregon Plan Revisions and highlight some of the changes you will see in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, due out this fall.

This Final Environmental Impact Statement will reflect significant input from scientists, tribes, and elected officials; other federal, state, and local government entities; interest groups; and some 29,500 members of the public who commented on the August 2007 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. By carefully considering your input, I believe we now have a better plan to provide for permanent forest production, contribute to the conservation of species listed under the Endangered Species Act, and comply with all other applicable laws.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement will include a new alternative, the Proposed Resource Management Plan, that is a modification of the Draft's Preferred Alternative based on everything we've learned since the draft was released last summer. The Proposed Resource Management Plan consists of "parts" of the alternatives already analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. You've already seen all the "parts" of the new plan; they're just arranged in a new way.

Our goal from the beginning has been to engage the public, to hear all sides of the debate, to bring sound science to the process, and to find the appropriate level of use and protection of the public lands necessary for complying with **all** the laws. As I've watched this process unfold, I can proudly say that we are coming to the close of the most comprehensive and state-of-the-art management plan for BLM lands in western Oregon. The BLM will continue to use and protect the forest land it manages in Oregon as prescribed by the many laws that affect its land management responsibilities.

I look forward to releasing the Final Environmental Impact Statement this fall. Thank you for your continued interest and involvement in the Western Oregon Plan Revisions.

Edward W. Shepard
State Director, Oregon/Washington

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PREPARING THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Western Oregon Plan Revisions was released in August 2007. The five-month public comment period of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ended on January 11, 2008. The BLM received 29,500 comments through the Web Forum, e-mail or postal mail. During this time, BLM held more than 170 public meetings at locations throughout western Oregon. Comments were received from across the country from private citizens, organized groups, government officials, Indian tribes, and cooperating agencies. If you'd like to see the comments, we have posted them all on the BLM's website at:

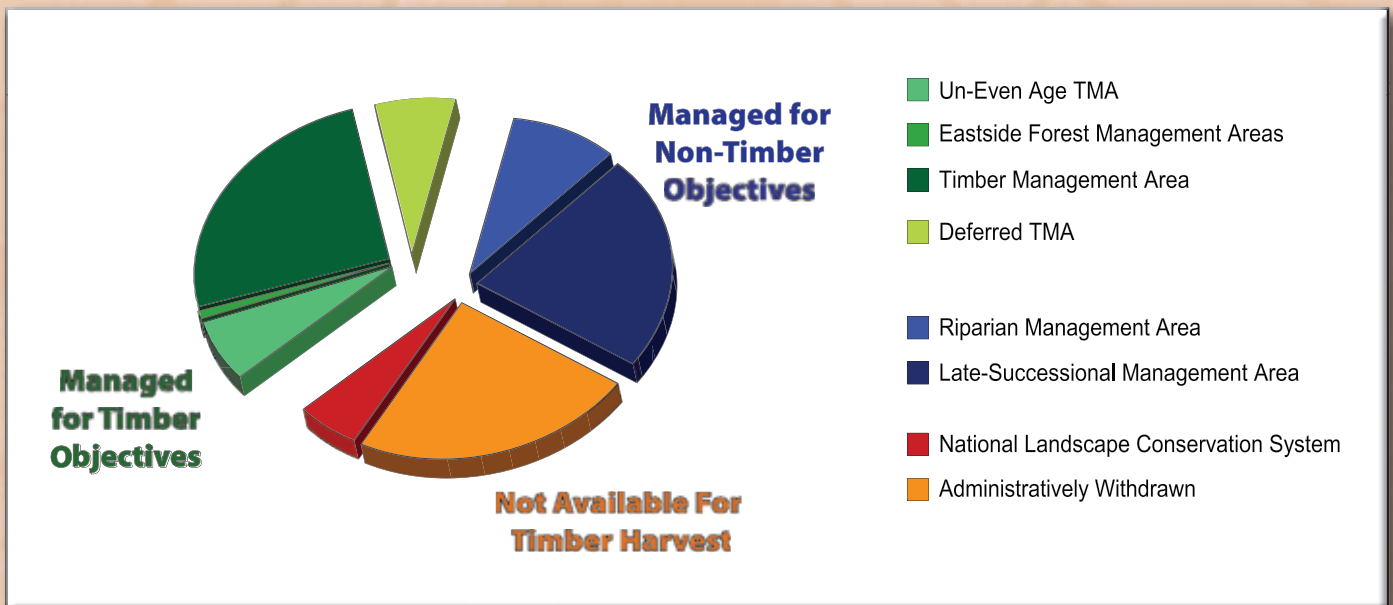
http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr/pub_comments

We have made changes to the Final Environmental Impact Statement and prepared a Proposed Resource Management Plan based on the comments we

received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Adjustments were also made to achieve consistency with the recently released Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan and Critical Habitat Rule, prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and in consideration of discussions with cooperating agencies, including the State of Oregon, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and interested county governments in western Oregon.

Nearly four years after we started, we now enter the final stage of the land use planning and environmental review process. Consistent with the BLM's planning regulations and the National Environmental Policy Act, the BLM will soon issue the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Resource Management Plan. No sooner than 30 days after the Final Environmental Impact Statement is released, a Record of Decision will be issued and BLM will begin to implement the new Resource Management Plans. Additional public input opportunities will be provided as our district offices move to implement on-the-ground projects under this management direction.

RELATIVE SIZES OF THE LAND USE ALLOCATIONS IN THE WESTERN OREGON PLAN REVISIONS



Only the Timber Management Area, the Uneven-Age Timber Management Area, and the Deferred Timber Management Areas contribute to the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ). However, no harvest will come from the Deferred Timber Management Areas until after 2023. Any harvest in the other land use allocations will be targeted for specific non-timber purposes and will not contribute to the ASQ.

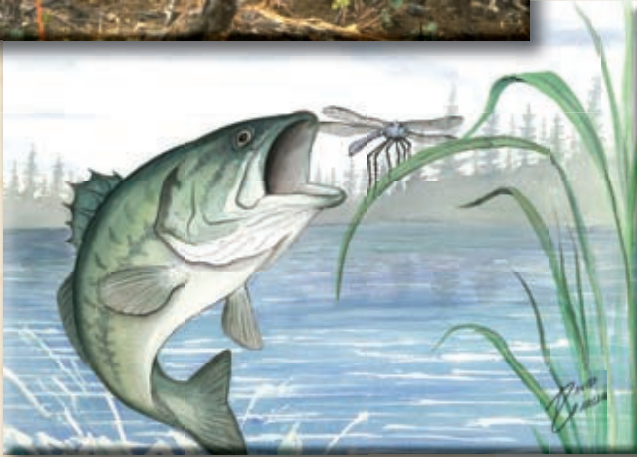
LAND USE ALLOCATIONS

The **Timber Management Area** will be intensively managed for timber production. We will conduct regeneration harvests in forest stands no longer growing consistent with their potential due to age or other conditions, such as inadequate stocking, or to meet other resource objectives, such as improving stand health or age class distribution. Forest management activities will also include a proactive approach to thinning to improve stand health and enhance growth on remaining trees. The BLM Special Status Species Policy will be applied to all lands to conserve listed or sensitive species.

The estimated ASQ from the timber management areas will be between 400 and 600 million board feet. Receipts to the counties generated from this harvest are estimated to be between 65 and 85 million dollars per year. These receipts fund many county activities including public safety, health and community services, education, and transportation.

Deferred Timber Management Area. This land use allocation depicts areas of "...older and more structurally complex multi-layered conifer forest" stands, as described in the Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, for areas between the Late Successional Management Areas. Because of uncertainty about the state of the northern spotted owl, harvest is deferred in these areas for 15 years.

The Deferred Timber Management Area will provide additional habitat for the northern spotted owl while a strategy to deal with invading barred owls is being developed. However, these deferred harvest acres will remain in the harvest land base and will be considered available for harvest 15 years from now.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Final Environmental Impact Statement contains a range of alternatives that will comply with all applicable Federal laws. One of these, the Proposed Resource Management Plan, is the alternative BLM proposes to adopt. It contains several Land Use Allocations and associated management directions.

Throughout the planning process we heard from many of you about the **management of older forests**. Under all alternatives, there will be more mature forests in the future on BLM-administered lands than what currently exists today. Mature forests are defined similar to the mature forests as described in the Northwest Forest Plan. This classification is subdivided based on whether the forest has a single canopy layer or multiple canopy layers. In addition, older and more structurally complex, multi-layered conifer stands outside the Late Successional Management Areas and Riparian Management Areas are deferred from harvest for 15 years, as described in the graphic on the left.



Late-Successional Management

Areas. The Late Successional Management Areas in BLM's management plans coincide with the Managed Owl Conservation Areas in the Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan and designated Critical Habitat.

This land use allocation will also include identified stands within the current marbled murrelet critical habitat boundaries that have or could have primary constituent elements (for example, large trees with nest platforms) within 30 years, as well as known marbled murrelet sites. We will survey for marbled murrelets and, if found, add new sites to the Late Successional Management Area network. Some stands within these areas are younger stands that will develop older forest characteristics over time. The management direction for these areas allows thinning stands to improve habitat.

Riparian Management Areas. The BLM proposed adoption of the Alternative 1 Riparian Management Areas from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement: one site potential tree (averaging about 180 feet) each side of perennial or fish bearing streams and one-half site potential tree (averaging about 90 feet) each side of intermittent non-fish bearing streams. The management direction for this land use allocation calls for limited disturbance areas 60 feet on each side of perennial and fish bearing streams and 35 feet each side of intermittent non-fish bearing streams. Thinning stands to improve water quality or fish habitat is permitted outside the limited disturbance area.

The **Uneven-Age Timber Management Area** is found in the southern part of BLM's Medford District and all of the BLM's Klamath Falls Resource Area. This land use allocation was added to reduce fire hazard and improve the forests' ability to survive and recover from fire (fire resiliency). Uneven-aged management will be applied based on the fire regime condition class and precipitation zone. The BLM will still maintain large blocks of habitat for the northern spotted owl. The management direction is focused on thinning, single-tree, and group selection harvest methods.



Administratively Withdrawn Areas are lands not available for timber harvest for a variety of reasons, including: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Research Natural Areas; roads, buildings, maintenance yards, quarries, and other facilities and infrastructure; recreation sites; sites managed for Special Status Species; areas not suitable for sustained yield timber production (for example, unstable slopes or woodlands), and non-forest.

National Landscape Conservation Area/Congressionally Designated/Acquired Lands include Wild and Scenic rivers; wilderness, wilderness study, and wilderness instant study areas; Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument; Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail; Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area; Mt. Hood Scenic Corridor; Bull Run Watershed Management Unit; and acquired lands for specific purposes and with separate management plans (West Eugene Wetlands - Eugene District, and Wood River Wetland - Klamath Falls Resource Area). These areas will be managed according to their designations or reason for their acquisition.

An **Eastside Forest Management Land** land use allocation would be established in the Klamath Falls Resource Area. It will consist only of those to forested public domain lands east of Highway 97. This area is not managed under the Oregon and California (O&C) Lands Act of 1937. No ASQ is assigned; forest management activities are driven by restoration or forest health needs.

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY, HABITAT, AND COMMUNITIES

In the Western Oregon Plan Revisions, the BLM approached sustainability with three essential goals in mind: sustainable harvest, sustainable habitat, and sustainable communities.

The BLM is required by the O&C Lands Act of 1937 to produce a sustained yield of timber – to harvest no more than we can grow. The proposed Resource Management Plan will do that. The O&C lands are capable of producing 1.2 billion board feet per year if they were managed strictly for timber production. The ASQ (between 400 and 600 million board feet) anticipated under the Proposed Resource Management Plan reflects what can be produced as timber in support of local communities, conservation of threatened and endangered species and protection of air and water quality under the principles of sustained yield management while also meeting the requirements of other laws such as the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act. Our forest growth and yield modeling tools affirm that harvests in this range are sustainable through the 400 years we modeled.

History supports this conclusion. In 1950, the forests on the O&C lands contained a standing volume of greater than 50 billion board feet. Fifty years later, after selling 45 billion board feet, the standing volume is now 70 billion board feet due to the application of sustained yield principles embodied in BLM forest management practices.

Working with the regulating agencies and the best available science, the Proposed Resource Management Plan is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. It meets the Recovery Plan and Critical Habitat

requirements for the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet. To avoid future listings, we are protecting populations of sensitive species, in coordination with the Oregon Natural Heritage Plan, through our Special Status Species Policy. In response to recommendations from regulating agencies, the Riparian Management Areas have been enlarged to protect aquatic habitat for listed fish and to protect water quality.

The O&C Lands Act has long been responsible for a truly unique relationship between the BLM and the 18 O&C counties that rely on a sustainable flow of timber and the sharing of timber-related receipts. Timber sold as part of the allowable sale quantity will help in two ways. First, half of the revenue from the timber sales will go into the general funds of the 18 counties in western Oregon, as mandated under the O&C Lands Act. These funds have been used as discretionary funds for services such as libraries, law enforcement, public health services, roads, etc. Second, this plan will have a favorable impact on local economies, linked to increased BLM harvest levels, and will result in jobs being created that will ripple additional benefits through the local economies.



WHAT'S NEXT?

The Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Resource Management Plan, when approved, will provide management direction for 2.6 million acres of land administered by the BLM through six individual, but coordinated, Resource Management Plans in the Salem, Eugene, Coos Bay, Roseburg, and Medford Districts, and the Klamath Falls Resource Area of the Lakeview District. These Resource Management Plans, when approved, will:

- Set objectives for the management of BLM-administered lands and resources.
- Establish land use allocations for the purposes of achieving the various objectives.
- Provide management direction that identifies where future actions may or may not be allowed, what restrictions or requirements may be placed on those future actions, and that identifies objectives for future actions anticipated to be necessary to achieve the goals set for the BLM-administered lands and resources.

Approval of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Resource Management Plan does not authorize any on-the-ground action, does not create any legal right or obligation, and does not grant, withhold or modify any legal license, power, or authority. Site-specific management decisions for projects will be made in the future. Before those decisions are made many things must happen, including appropriations, design of a project proposal, and completion of additional National Environmental Policy Act analysis. The BLM District Managers will continue to involve the public in local, site-specific management actions as the plan is implemented.



TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETION OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Early October 2008 – Governor's 60-Day Consistency Review commences

Fall 2008 – Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement made available to the public

Mid-December 2008 – Records of Decision signed

FUTURE BLM PLANNING EFFORTS

NOTE: If you would like to continue to receive information about this planning effort you **MUST RETURN THIS CARD.**

The electronic version can be found here: http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr/final_eis/request.php

If you received this newsletter in the postal mail, your name is on a mailing list of people and organizations that have indicated an interest in the BLM's process to revise the six Resource Management Plans in western Oregon. As you may know, that process is nearing completion. You may have received a Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement in the mail in August 2007. These may have come as a three-volume set of books in a cardboard box, or on a CD, or perhaps you indicated that you were fine with the on-line version.

Through this card, we are asking how you would like to be informed about the process as we bring it to conclusion. The BLM always accepts comments on our actions, but there will be no formal comment periods on the Final Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. After final decisions are issued for each of the BLM's six western Oregon Resource Management Plans, local BLM district offices may hold information meetings to discuss their new plan with the public. If you have questions, please visit the project website: <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/wopr>

You can also contact the Western Oregon Plan Revision office at:

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