

Record of Decision Surprise Resource Management Plan



Surprise Field Office

April 2008





United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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In Reply Refer to:
CA-370 1610

April 1, 2008

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to announce that, after several years of collaborative effort, the Surprise Resource Management Plan (RMP) is complete. This document will provide guidance for the management of 1,220,644 acres of lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in northeast California and northwest Nevada.

The staff of the Surprise Field Office of the BLM has prepared the attached Record of Decision (ROD) and RMP in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The ROD links final land use plan decisions to the analysis presented in the Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The ROD describes one change to an RMP decision. In addition, minor changes and points of clarification are described in the ROD, in response to staff review and issues raised in the public protest process.

The ROD serves as the final decision for **Land Use Planning Decisions** described in the Proposed RMP. The public had an opportunity to protest these decisions after the publication of the Proposed Surprise RMP/FEIS in June 2007. Six protests were received. Resolutions to the protests did not result in the necessity for more analysis or repeat publication of the Surprise Proposed RMP/ Final EIS, or for additional public review and protest.

The ROD also describes a set of **Implementation Level Decisions**. Those decisions will authorize the issuance of a travel route network. An appeal opportunity for these decisions is being provided at this time. The process is described in the ROD and the appeal period will close **30 days** from the date the Notice of Availability of the ROD/RMP appears in the Federal Register. This date will also be announced via local news releases. Please review the ROD carefully for a more detailed discussion of the appeal process.

We appreciate your help in this planning effort and look forward to your continued participation as the plan is implemented. For additional information or clarification regarding the attached document or the planning process, please contact Jeff Fontana at (530) 257-5332 or Sue Noggles (530) 252-5345, or by e-mail at rnoggles@ca.blm.gov.

Additional hard copies and CD-ROM versions of the RMP/ROD may be obtained at the address above. The document is available on the internet at <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/surprise.html>.

Sincerely,

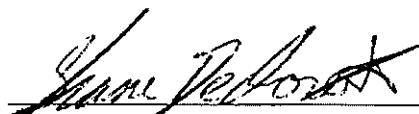
Shane Deforest
Field Manager
Surprise Field Office

Record of Decision

Surprise Resource Management Plan

Manager's Recommendation

Having considered a full range of alternatives, associated effects, and public input, I recommend adoption and implementation of the attached Surprise Resource Management Plan. This plan contains the decisions that will guide management of the lands and resources under the jurisdiction of the Surprise Field Office. The plan addresses all relevant issues raised during the planning process.



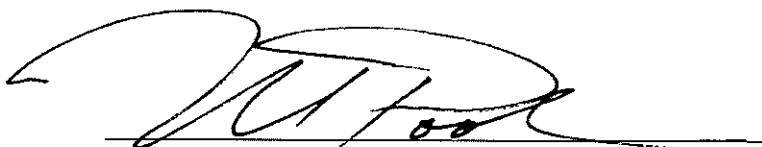
Shane DeForest
Surprise Field Manager

4/17/2008

Date

State Director Approval

I approve the attached Surprise Resource Management Plan. This document meets the requirement of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act to develop a land use plan for public lands administered by the Surprise Field Office.



Mike Pool
California State Director

4/17/2008

Date

Decision

The decision is hereby made to adopt the Surprise Resource Management Plan (RMP) as the land use plan for the public lands and resources managed by the Surprise Field Office. The Surprise RMP was developed under regulations implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 to consider this decision. The Surprise RMP adopted here is nearly identical to the Surprise Proposed RMP presented for public review and protest on June 15, 2007.

Introduction

The Surprise Field Office includes approximately 1,220,644 acres of BLM-managed surface acres in northeastern California and northwest Nevada. The geographic area includes BLM-administered lands within the counties of Modoc and Lassen (California) and Humboldt and Washoe (Nevada). The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands it manages for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Surprise RMP was developed in coordination with the Alturas and Eagle Lake Field Office RMPs to provide a consistent framework for managing public lands and resource uses in northeast California and northwest Nevada.

The Surprise RMP was prepared using the BLM's planning regulations and guidance issued under the FLPMA. An EIS is also included in this document to meet the requirements of NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500-1508), and the requirements of the BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1.

The Surprise RMP includes two levels of decisions in accordance with the NEPA and BLM regulations. These are **land use planning decisions** and **implementation decisions**. Land use planning decisions were protestable during the June 15 2007 – July 16, 2007 protest period in accordance with BLM regulations 43 CFR 1610.5-2. Six protest letters were received. There are also implementation decisions made in the RMP (see below). These decisions may be appealed in accordance with the Department of Interior regulations at 43 CFR 4 and 43 CFR 2450.

Alternatives Considered

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN THE RMP

The underlying goal of developing alternatives was to explore the range of use options, protection options, and management tools that will achieve a balance between protection of the planning area's natural character, and a variety of resource uses and management issues. Alternatives must: meet the project purpose and need; be viable and reasonable; provide a mix of resource protection, management use, and development; be responsive to issues identified in scoping; and meet the established planning criteria, federal laws and regulations, and BLM planning policy.

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Five alternatives were developed for detailed analysis. The “No Action Alternative” was a continuation of current management, and was developed from existing planning decisions, policies, and guidance. Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 were developed with input from BLM internal and public scoping, public workshops, and collaborative work among the BLM interdisciplinary planning team.

Of the management alternatives, Alternative 2 represented less intense management and/or use, emphasizing a greater utilization of natural processes wherever possible, and minimizing human impacts. This would result in lower levels of active involvement in resource restoration and management, as well as limited recreation use. In the middle of the spectrum, Alternative 3 provided a greater diversity of uses and approaches to management, with a broad mix of tools that would allow for moderate levels of use. Alternative 1 took a more active approach, allowing more intense management and/or use while still maintaining and enhancing resource conditions. It included the widest application of management tools and actions, and provided the highest level of recreation use. The Preferred Alternative and Proposed RMP were developed using decisions from each of the management alternatives. See the *Management Considerations* section for more detail.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

Federal regulations (40CFR 1505.02(b)) require that an agency identify the “environmentally preferable” alternative(s) in the Record of Decision (ROD) for an EIS. The environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that would result in the greatest beneficial impacts to the identified aspects of the environment. Compared to the other alternatives analyzed, Alternative 2 and the Preferred Alternative best meet the national environmental goals identified above.

Alternative 2 provides the highest level of protection of natural and cultural resources, however it does not allow for a wide range of beneficial uses of the environment. The Preferred Alternative would enhance the ability of the BLM to achieve the purpose and need of the RMP, as outlined in Chapter 1 of the document, as well as meet desired future conditions, goals and objectives of specific resources as outlined in Chapter 2. The No Action Alternative, as well as Alternatives 1 and 3, do not contain sufficient management emphasis designed to protect native plant communities and restore degraded sagebrush steppe habitats, when compared to the Preferred Alternative. Portions of the field office area that are currently in a degraded condition can only be improved successfully with the scope of active restoration efforts that are provided for within the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative would result in overall minor to moderate adverse impacts to resources, and these impacts would continue to be mitigated. Proposed management actions would result in moderate to major beneficial impacts to native vegetation communities and wildlife habitat from restoration efforts, and the removal of invasive juniper. Improvements to riparian areas, water bodies, and other special habitats would improve soil and water resources, and wildlife habitat. The designation of three areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC), one wild and scenic river (WSR) segment, and an increased emphasis on cultural resource protection and management would have beneficial impacts to these important and unique resources.

Management Considerations/ Decision Rationale

The approved management actions defining the Surprise RMP were selected by the BLM, with input from Tribes, state and county governments, other federal agencies, the Northwest California Resource Advisory Council (RAC), interested organizations, and the public. The BLM considers the Approved Surprise RMP as the best approach to meeting the purpose and need of this project, addressing the planning issues, and providing the optimal combination of flexibility and balance in managing both resources and uses of the lands in the planning area. Factors considered during this selection process include: environmental impacts; issues raised throughout the planning process; specific environmental values, resources, and resource uses; conflict resolution; public input; and laws and regulations.

The Approved Surprise RMP draws from the alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS and is identical to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The FLPMA requires that the BLM manage the public lands according to land use plans (43 U.S.C. 1702; 43 U.S.C. 1732) in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in the natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use (43 U.S.C. 1701); and that will regulate the use, occupancy, and development of public lands (43 U.S.C. 1732). The Approved Surprise RMP is the land use plan that provides the framework to accomplish these mandates. Through implementation of the RMP and other actions that may become necessary, the BLM will prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands it manages.

Changing Land Use Plan Decisions

Land use plan decisions can be changed through a plan amendment. Plan amendments change one or more of the terms, conditions or decisions of an approved plan including resource restrictions. Plan amendments are often prompted by the need to consider a proposal or application for a land use that does not conform to the RMP, or to respond to new or intensified interest in uses on public land.

When an applicant requests that the BLM amend the land use plan to allow an otherwise nonconforming proposal, BLM regulations (43 CFR 1600) and CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1500) guide preparation of plan amendments. The plan amendment process involves and encourages meaningful public participation. This process begins with the publication of a Notice of Intent to amend a land use plan in the Federal Register and local newspapers.

Changes Made To the Approved RMP

This Record of Decision adopts the Surprise Proposed RMP/Final EIS (May 2007) as the Approved Surprise RMP, with a few minor clarifications to the decision, as listed below. One substantive change has been made to a land use plan decision. Based on changed circumstances and protests the BLM received on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the following modifications were made to the Approved RMP:

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1. The BLM has determined that the Fox-Hog Herd Management Area should be enlarged to only 127,618 acres, and not 145,244 acres as listed in the PRMP/FEIS (Sec. 2.21.5, pp. 2-82). The BLM will make the following corrections (shown in bold font) to Sec. 2.21.5 of the Approved RMP.

The SFO would continue to protect and manage wild horses within eight Herd Management Areas (HMAs), and at established Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs), as shown in Table 2.21-1.

Table 2.21-1 Wild Horse Herd Management Areas and Appropriate Management Levels

Herd Management Area Name & No.	Appropriate Management Level (Range)	Acres
Coppersmith (CA-261)	50-75 head	75,547
Buckhorn (CA-262)	59-89 head	76,780
Fox Hog (CA-263)^{1/}	120-220 head	127,618
Wall Canyon (CA-265) ^{1/2/}	15-25 head	41,051
Nut Mountain (CA-266) ^{1/2/}	30-55 head	40,214
Bitner (CA-267) ^{2/}	15-20 head	53,672
Massacre Lakes (CA-268) ^{1/2/}	est. 25-35 head	39,890
Carter Reservoir (CA-269)	25-35 head	23,423
Total	339-550 head	478,195

^{1/} These herds are partially within the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trail National Conservation Area (NCA).

^{2/} These HMAs would be managed as a complex.

Note: The High Rock Herd Management Area (CA-264), administered by the Surprise Field Office is entirely within the NCA and is not considered in this RMP.

HMA boundaries would be redrawn (**notably, 30,600 acres would be added to the Fox-Hog HMA, increasing its size to 127,618 acres**) and some AMLs may be reduced (on the basis of monitoring) to permit recovery of riparian and upland vegetation, wildlife habitats, water quality and soils in order to achieve BLM land health standards.

2. The Approved RMP adopts management guidance from and tiers to the impacts analysis section of the *Final Programmatic EIS on Wind Energy Development on BLM Administered Lands in the Western United States* (Wind Energy PEIS), BLM, 2005, and subsequent amendments. The BLM will follow guidance from BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2006-216, and subsequent BLM policy, in processing right-of-way applications for wind energy projects. In order to reduce adverse impacts to wildlife and habitat the BLM will implement best management practices for wind energy projects in accordance with the Wind Energy PEIS.

Due to the changing energy goals at the national level and particularly here in California, renewable energy production on BLM public lands is growing in importance. While renewable energy such as geothermal and wind are already established uses in some parts of the State, new geothermal and wind proposals as well as new solar proposals are emerging new public land uses in other parts of California.

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Placement of these facilities depends on a number of factors that cannot always be anticipated in BLM's land use plans such as economics, relationship to the State's energy grid, project design, current technology and potential resource impacts. However, BLM land use plans can always be amended through the public process to accommodate such uses when necessary. In addition to renewable energy, other unforeseen public needs and demands often arise outside of the planning cycle and plans are amended according to the process outlined in *Changing Land Use Plan Decisions*.

3. The BLM has clarified the wording of a Proposed Management Action for Lands and Realty, Rights-of-Way, (Section 2.7.5, p. 2-32) that specifies restrictions to new right-of-way developments in sage-grouse habitat and other critical habitats for wildlife.

The Approved RMP has been changed by deleting the following paragraph:

"In addition, all greater sage-grouse habitat and other species critical habitat would be designated as ROW exclusion zones, except ROWs needed to provide reasonable access to non-federal inholdings."

The Approved RMP now states:

"In addition, areas containing special status species habitat, and other locally important species habitat, may be designated as ROW avoidance zones (seasonal restrictions and distance buffers), in accordance with other management in this document."

4. The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) has recently been removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered (T&E) species. At the time of the BLM's request to initiate formal consultation on T&E species with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Draft and Proposed Surprise RMP/EIS, the bald eagle was federally listed as threatened. On June 28, 2007, the Secretary of the Interior announced that the bald eagle was being removed from the federal list of T&E species. The final rule delisting the bald eagle was published on July 9, 2007, and became effective on August 8, 2007 (USFWS, 2007). After delisting, bald eagles will continue to be protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The USFWS has encouraged the BLM to continue managing bald eagles as stated in the Biological Assessment (BLM 2007), which implements management actions from the Preferred Alternative in the Surprise PRMP/FEIS (*Biological Opinion on the Proposed Resource Management Plan for the Surprise Field Office, Cedarville, California*, USFWS, September 2007). The BLM has agreed to manage bald eagles as requested by USFWS, and according to management actions within the Surprise PRMP/FEIS (Sec. 2.22.3.4, p. 2-88). However, the BLM will no longer consider the bald eagle a "threatened" species under the Endangered Species Act.

5. In 2007 the California State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO), in coordination with the California BLM, and the Nevada SHPO, revised the State Protocol Agreement regarding cultural resources. The revised protocol suspends the requirement that all unevaluated cultural resources will be allocated to "use categories", as described in Section 2.2.5 (p. 2-7) of the Surprise PRMP/FEIS.

The Approved RMP has been changed by deleting the following paragraph:

“Evaluate and allocate cultural properties (including cultural landscapes) to one of six uses as outlined in USDI-IB No. 2002-101 “Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management Plans”, and Table 2.2-1 below, regardless of whether their existence is known and recorded or inferred on the basis of current data synthesis”.

The Approved RMP now states:

“The BLM may allocate evaluated archaeological sites to one of six uses as outlined in USDI-IB No. 2002-101 “Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management Plans”, and Table 2.2-1 below.

6. The Approved RMP adopts the visual resources management (VRM) classes listed for all lands in the Proposed RMP, Chapter 2.21 Visual Resources Management, as the official VRM Management Classes.
7. The Draft *Sage Steppe Ecosystem Restoration Strategy* (Modoc National Forest, Alturas BLM, and Modoc County) was completed and published in August 2007. The Approved RMP will incorporate recommendations contained in this document, once it is final, to manage for the improved health of plant communities, and to reduce the encroachment of western juniper.
8. The Approved RMP adopts the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Programmatic Environmental Report, *Vegetation Treatments using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States*, BLM, September 2007; the Environmental Assessment, *Integrated Weed Management Program and Record of Decision*, BLM, Alturas, Eagle Lake, and Surprise Field Offices, EA # CA320-07-14, CA350-07-07, CA370-07-04, June 2007; and the Environmental Assessment, *Integrated Weed Management Program and Record of Decision, BLM Nevada Lands Portion, Eagle Lake, and Surprise Field Offices*, EA # CA350-04-05, CA370-04-05, May 2004 and DNA #CA370-07-02, February 2007.
9. The BLM will designate energy corridors, perform environmental reviews required to complete corridor designation, and incorporate designated corridors into relevant agency land use plans, as defined in the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, *Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the 11 Western States*, Department of Energy, BLM, USDA Forest Service, Department of Defense, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, October 2007, and subsequent amendments.

Approved RMP Executive Summary

The Surprise RMP provides a detailed description of management actions for 25 resource subjects. The desired future condition, goals, objectives, and management actions for each major resource and use are discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of the Proposed/Approved RMP. The highlights of management actions for each resource subject are listed below. Please note that this Executive Summary is designed to provide only an overview of some of the proposed management actions within the Surprise RMP. The table below contains an abbreviated version of the management actions for each subject, and is not a complete listing of all management actions within the RMP.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Air Quality

- Manage prescribed fires (500 – 5,000 acres per year) to reduce impacts to air quality.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

- Develop three on-site cultural interpretive areas.
- Designate three archeological areas of critical environmental concern.
- Develop two cultural resource management areas.

Energy & Minerals

- Manage 980,442 acres as 'Open' to mineral leasing under standard terms and conditions.
- Manage 1,220,644 acres as 'Open' to locatable minerals.
- Manage 1,037,063 acres as 'Open' to saleable minerals.
- Manage 1,035,142 acres as 'Open' to renewable energy. Manage WSAs (183,581 acres) and the Bitner ACEC (1,921 acres) as renewable energy exclusion zones. Designate two areas of critical environmental concern (45,827 acres) as renewable energy avoidance areas.
- Adopt management guidance for wind energy development from the *Final Programmatic EIS on Wind Energy Development on BLM Administered Lands in the Western United States* (Wind Energy PEIS), 2005, and subsequent amendments. Environmental analyses for wind energy development will tier to the impacts analysis section of the Wind Energy PEIS.
- Implement best management practices for wind energy projects in accordance with the *Wind Energy PEIS* in order to reduce adverse impacts to wildlife and habitat.

Fire Management

- The NorCal Fire Management Plan identifies aggressive, full suppression as the appropriate management response (AMR) under conditions of severe fire intensity, especially in the wildland urban interface. However, exceptions may be made where resource objectives could safely be achieved.
- Under conditions of low fire intensity, a less aggressive AMR, such as containment/confinement, would be implemented in previously identified areas likely to benefit from wildland fire use.
- Manage wildland fires using the Appropriate Management Response (AMR):
 - Full suppression AMR 891,695 acres
 - Full range of AMR suppression options 328,949 acres

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Forestry Resources

- Manage all forests for improved forestland health and do not authorize timber production and harvest of commercial forestlands.
- Restore forestland health on commercial forestlands through fuels reduction treatments using mechanical and prescribed fire treatments at a rate of 25 to 150 acres per year.
- Implement reforestation projects on commercial forestlands and allow post-fire timber salvage sales.
- Manage low-site forestlands and woodlands for fuelwood removal, removal of invasive juniper to improve land health, and for biomass production.
- Allow public woodcutting on 119,426 acres of commercial and non-commercial forest and woodlands. Target locations with invasive western juniper to aid in fuels reduction work.
- Commercial, non-commercial and free-use firewood cutting would be conducted on level or gently sloping locations with stable soils.
- Close sensitive resource areas to public woodcutting of invasive juniper, e.g. wilderness study areas (WSAs), research natural areas (RNAs), and areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs), and areas of special status and special interest species.
- Allow temporary road construction, on a case-by-case basis, where deemed necessary for the management of commercial and low-site forests and juniper woodlands.

Fuels Management

- Implement fuels treatments through mechanical, prescribed fire, and biological methods to reduce build-up of hazardous fuels, provide fuel breaks, and create defensible space in communities at risk.
- Teach classes in local schools and fire safety council meetings regarding fire protection and hazard reduction, and the natural role of fire in the ecosystem.
- Implement hazardous fuels reduction treatments using various methods:
 - Prescribed fire and mechanical treatments: 500 – 5,000 acres/year
 - Biological treatments: 0 – 25 acres/year
 - Chemical treatments: 0 – 500 acres/year

Lands and Realty

- Prioritize acquisition of lands within and adjacent to wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, areas of critical environmental concern, and conservation and scenic easements. Also acquire lands with high resource values.
- Prioritize retention of BLM lands that have high public resource values. Allow exchanges when private parcels have higher resource values than BLM lands.
- Prioritize potential disposal of BLM administered lands that are small tracts, difficult to manage, or do not contain high resource values.

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Rights-of-Way

- Wilderness study areas would be designated as rights-of-way exclusion zones. All proposals must meet non-impairment criteria, which prohibit permanent facilities unless they are grandfathered, they have valid existing rights, or they provide access to private inholdings.
- Manage the Bitner ACEC as a right-of-way exclusion zone.
- Create rights-of-way avoidance zones in the Massacre Rim and Rahilly-Gravelly ACECs (45,827 acres) and important wildlife habitat areas.
- Allow development of existing utility corridors for expanded use up to 1 mile wide.
- Restrict development of existing communication sites to areas previously disturbed, except where needed for BLM management and upgrade.

Livestock Grazing

- Maintain livestock grazing within 49 allotments on 1,445,443 acres.
- Authorize 92,465 animal unit months annually.
- Comply with the Approved Northeastern California and Northwestern Nevada Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing.
- Areas burned by wild or prescribed fire would be rested from livestock grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons.
- Livestock salting would not be allowed within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of springs, meadows, NRHP-quality archaeological sites, streams, and aspen areas. Location of salting stations would be determined by the BLM in consultation with livestock permittees.
- Maintain 5,500 acres of existing livestock exclosures. Meadows and aspen stands of significant value to wildlife will receive priority for additional livestock exclusion. When fencing natural water sources, water would be provided outside fences for livestock, wildlife, and wild horses.
- The needs of wildlife and wild horses would be considered in water developments for livestock grazing. Water would be retained and provided at ground level in all livestock water developments. Natural riparian habitat, and a substantial portion of the surrounding cover, would be protected for wildlife use where water is developed from natural sources.
- Utilization levels will not exceed 40%–60% on key species of grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Guideline number 16 of the *Standards and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing* would be implemented on allotments not meeting Standards for Rangeland Health at current forage utilization levels.
- Maintain domestic sheep permits in specific grazing allotments (Tuledad, Selic-Alaska, and Red Rock Lake), unless operator elects to convert or vacate allotment.
- Allow trailing of domestic sheep on a case-by-case basis.

Recreation and Visitor Services

- All areas not managed under a special designation would be managed as the extensive recreation management area, and managed for low impact activities.
- Special recreation permits would be allowed for events provided there is adequate resource protection.
- Develop three seasonal wild horse viewing sites at Buckhorn Road, near SOB Lake; Lost Creek Road, near Cottonwood Creek; and HWY 299/8A near the Nevada California Border.

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Recreation and Visitor Services (continued)

- Throughout the Surprise Field Office area, recreational camping is limited to 14 consecutive days. Campfires are allowed on all lands except when fire restrictions are in effect. Campfire permits are required on public lands in California, but not in Nevada.
- The existing Barrel Springs and Buckhorn scenic byway designations would remain unaltered. Designation of additional scenic byways or vehicle routes would be considered provided they are consistent with OHV designations and resource concerns are addressed.
- Collection of petrified wood would be managed under existing policy.
- Assign Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes to all lands to provide a diversity of recreational experiences:
 - Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized 450,636 acres
 - Semi-Primitive Motorized 636,018 acres
 - Roaded Natural 127,038 acres
 - Rural 6,952 acres

Soil Resources

- Implement management practices to promote recovery of 49,894 acres of upland soils not meeting Standards for Rangeland Health.
- Ensure all management activities result in no net loss of soil mass or productivity within the management area.
- Consumptive uses and developments would be restricted to soils which are considered unproductive or most suitable for construction purposes.
- Livestock grazing would be managed to promote healthy watersheds as evident by productive soils, natural hydrologic function, biological integrity, and the preservation of biological crusts.
- Employ bio-engineering projects to improve soil condition and achieve 'Proper Functioning Condition' (PFC).
- Apply sediment intrusion buffer zones around sensitive resources on a case-by-case basis.
- Implement mitigation actions to offset soil and productivity losses within the same fifth-level watershed area (conceptually 40,000 – 250,000 acres).

Special Designations: *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)*

- Designate and manage 957 acres of the Rahilly-Gravelly ACEC to conform to the Lakeview Resource Management Plan, 2004.
- Designate the Massacre Rim ACEC, 44,870 acres.
- Designate the Bitner ACEC, 1,921 acres.
- New rights-of-way would be excluded in the Bitner ACEC and avoided in Rahilly-Gravelly and Massacre Rim ACECs.
- Livestock grazing would continue according to permit stipulations and allotment management plans.
- Noxious weeds would be aggressively controlled in all ACECs.
- Firewood, post, or pole cutting for commercial or domestic use will not be allowed in any ACEC.

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Special Designations: *Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)* (continued)

- An approved plan of operation is required for locatable minerals in an ACEC; other restrictions may apply for salable minerals. The Bitner and Rahilly-Gravelly ACECs would be managed under no surface occupancy restrictions for leasable minerals. Where ACECs overlap WSAs, further constraints on mineral activities apply under the Wilderness IMP.
- Traditional uses by Native Americans would be protected and tribal collecting of plants allowed within ACECs.

Special Designations: *Wild & Scenic Rivers (WSR)*

- A 2.2 mile section (457 acres) of Twelvemile Creek would be recommended as suitable for designation as a wild and scenic river.
- Manage this section of Twelvemile Creek as VRM Class II to protect the scenic quality of the area.
- Pursue acquisition of non-federal lands along Twelvemile Creek to enlarge the eligible and suitable portion of this stream. This would be done on a voluntarily basis from willing sellers and/or exchange proponents.

Special Designations: *Wilderness Study Areas (WSA)*

- The existing wilderness study areas (WSAs) would be managed under the "Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review" (Wilderness IMP) (USDI BLM 1995, as amended):

Sheldon Contiguous	23,700 acres
South Warner Contiguous	4,500 acres
Massacre Rim	101,290 acres
Wall Canyon	46,305 acres
Buffalo Hill	47,315 acres
- Prioritize acquisition of land parcels within and adjacent to WSAs (on a willing-seller basis).
- Existing and new mining operations under the 1872 mining law would be regulated under 43 CFR 3802 only.
- Any new roads or trails that have been created or discovered would be closed to vehicle use, with the exception of authorized rights-of-way.
- All proposals for uses and/or facilities within WSAs would be reviewed to determine whether the proposal meets the nonimpairment criteria or a permitted exception.
- Assign off-highway vehicle designations in WSAs: Four WSAs: Limited to Designated Routes; One WSA: Closed

Travel Management

- Manage off-highway vehicle (OHV) use to protect resource values, promote public safety, provide OHV use opportunities where appropriate, and minimize conflicts among various users.
- Manage 1,809 miles of routes as the designated route network for access to BLM-administered lands.
- Vehicular travel would conform to the *Northeast California Resource Advisory Council Recommended Off-Highway-Vehicle Management Guidelines, 2000* (Appendix C).
- Implement closures on 92 miles of routes within WSAs.

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Travel Management (continued)

- Assign OHV use area designations:
 - Open 0 acres
 - Limited to designated routes 1,208,670 acres
 - Closed 11,994 acres
- An OHV special recreation management area would be developed if the need arises.
- Commercial, competitive, and other organized OHV activities would be managed with special recreation permits.
- Road maintenance would continue at a rate of 30 to 75 miles per year.

Vegetation

- Vegetation manipulation would be prioritized to sagebrush-steppe communities with juniper encroachment, decadent big sagebrush and greasewood stands, and low elevation brush communities dominated by exotic annual grasses.
- Vegetation manipulation will seek to restore natural ecosystems, establish wildfire fuel breaks, and increase forage production for livestock, wildlife and wild horses.
- Native juniper woodlands would be maintained on approximately 17,500 acres.
- Quaking aspen woodlands would be maintained on at least 1,800 acres. Restore 20 acres of historic aspen stands using seeds, roots, or saplings. Construct 20 acres of new livestock exclosures to protect quaking aspen stands and mountain mahogany.
- Remove invasive juniper within quaking aspen, bitterbrush, and mountain mahogany communities on 10 – 100 acres/year.
- Prioritize restoration of sagebrush–steppe communities on 500 – 4,000 acres/year.
- Restoration of communities encroached by invasive juniper would be treated using prescribed fire, mechanical, chemical, and manual treatments.
- Restore native grassland communities on 50 – 100 acres/year.
- Prioritize restoration treatment methods for removal of invasive juniper within riparian areas on 50 – 100 acres/year.
- Maintain 36,740 acres of existing crested wheatgrass seedings in good condition. Restore 8,400 acres of existing crested wheatgrass seedings in poor condition to native species.

Noxious Weeds & Invasive Species

- Integrated Weed Management (IWM) will continue to promote education and prevention as well as cultural, physical, biological, and chemical treatments.
- All hay, straw, or mulch used on BLM-administered lands must be certified as free from noxious weed seed.
- Cooperative weed control programs will continue on the Upper Alkali Lake restoration project, the Snake Lake experimental medusahead project and on watershed restoration projects in Wall Canyon.
- Conduct IWM inventories in coordination with adjacent weed management areas for early detection of new infestations.

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Special Status Plants

- Manage all special status species habitats or populations so that BLM actions do not contribute to the need to list these species as federally threatened or endangered.
- Allow for no more than 20% (by plant species) elimination of occupied habitat and no greater than 20% total decrease in any plant species occurrence, except as directed in biological assessments, biological evaluations, habitat management plans, and conservation strategies/species management guides for specific species.
- Require stipulations during surface disturbing activities (e.g., road construction, trails) to protect special status plant habitat.
- Acquire lands from willing sellers that support unprotected populations of special status plants.
- Special management considerations and permit stipulations that would be applied to protect populations of special status plants would apply equally for special interest species to prevent them from becoming listed as special status plants.
- Manage off-highway vehicle use as 'Limited to Designated Routes' to protect special status plant habitat.

Visual Resources

- Manage all wilderness study areas as VRM Class I.
- Assign VRM Class designations to all BLM-administered lands, and manage lands according to these class requirements, to protect scenic quality:
 - VRM Class I 183,587 acres
 - VRM Class II 437,553 acres
 - VRM Class III 227,134 acres
 - VRM Class IV 372,390 acres
- Manage the (proposed) Twelvemile Creek Wild and Scenic River under VRM Class II criteria. The Massacre Rim, Bitner, and Rahilly-Gravelly ACECs would also be managed for VRM Class II, in order to preserve the existing character of the landscape.

Water Resources

- Achieve measurable progress toward proper functioning condition (PFC) or desired future condition (DFC) on 53 miles of perennial and intermittent streams and 2,500 acres of riparian/wetland areas.
- Apply restoration treatments to improve hydrologic function and water quality, including bio-engineering treatments, improved livestock grazing strategies, planting woody riparian vegetation, and installing in-stream structures.
- Maintain existing water sources and manage to promote wildlife habitat, improve distribution of livestock and wild horses, and provide for recreational uses.
- Prioritize development of new water sources to extend seasonal water availability for wildlife and to benefit desired ecosystems.
- Withdraw state-appropriated water rights on waters that are not 'waters of the state'.
- Assert in-stream flow rights in Nevada and riparian rights in California on all perennial and important intermittent streams.
- Projects that involve inter-basin transfer of water would be coordinated with local and regional governments.

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Wild Horses and Burros

- Manage wild horses within 8 established herd management areas (HMAs), on 478,195 acres.
- Enlarge the Fox-Hog HMA boundary to 127,618 acres. (See note under *Changes Made to the Approved RMP*).
- Manage Nut Mountain, Bitner, Wall Canyon and Massacre Lakes HMAs as a complex.
- Prioritize selection of animals returned to BLM-administered lands after gathers based on traits desirable by public for adoption (color, size and conformance) and for historical traits in the Carter Reservoir HMA only.
- Develop three seasonal wild horse viewing sites at Buckhorn Road, near SOB Lake; Lost Creek Road, near Cottonwood Creek; and Hwy. 299/8A near the Nevada California Border.
- Maintain herd management area (HMA) populations within established appropriate management levels (AMLs) by conducting periodic gathers.
- Eliminate unnecessary fences and minimize construction of new fences in HMAs that prevent seasonal wild horse movement or migration.
- Implement fertility control in some or all of the HMAs (based on funding) to assist in maintaining populations at AMLs.
- Adjust AMLs when monitoring data indicates wild horse populations are not achieving a thriving natural ecological balance. Remove wild horses found outside HMAs.

Wildlife and Fisheries

Federally Listed Species

- Follow management guidelines within applicable biological opinions and conservation strategies.

Carson wandering skipper

- Conduct surveys to determine habitat suitability and cooperate as a partner in recovery plans.

Bald eagle – see note under *Changes Made to the Approved RMP*

- Conduct population surveys and implement seasonal protection measures.
- Develop GIS information system for nesting, roosting, and foraging areas.
- Follow the *Pacific Bald Eagle Recovery Plan* and BLM Manual 6840 for management guidance.

Warner sucker

- Manage habitat according to current guidelines, conservation strategies, and biological opinion.

State- and BLM-Listed Sensitive Species

- Limited operating periods (LOPs) and buffer zones would be implemented as necessary to reduce disturbances to wildlife.
- Acquire lands from willing sellers that contain important habitat for special status and special interest species. Retain lands with important breeding habitats.

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Ungulates

- Implement treatments to remove invasive juniper from important wildlife habitats on 250 – 2,500 acres/year. Reduce invasive juniper where it threatens meadow systems and quaking aspen stands, to improve ungulate habitat.
- Remove invasive juniper from bighorn lambing habitat.
- Coordinate augmentation and reintroduction of native wild ungulates, in cooperation with state wildlife agencies, where habitats are suitable or when adequately restored (with the exception of bighorn in the Warner Mountains and Coppersmith Hills).
- BLM's *Guidelines for Managing Domestic Sheep and Goats in Wild Sheep Habitats*, 1998, and subsequent amendments, would provide operational guidance for domestic sheep and goat management in the Surprise Field Office.
- Cooperate with state wildlife agencies to build and maintain additional guzzlers east of Surprise Valley to discourage bighorn sheep from crossing to the Warner Mountains and Coppersmith Hills.
- If Rocky Mountain elk become established within the field office area, coordinate with state wildlife agencies and other cooperators, including livestock operators, to develop and implement management plans.

Sagebrush Ecosystems and Sagebrush Obligate/Associated Species

- Locally developed conservation strategies or plans developed for sage-grouse, pygmy rabbit, burrowing owl and other special status species would be used to identify high-priority treatment and fire suppression areas.
- Implement the *Conservation Strategy for Sage-Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus) and Sagebrush Ecosystems within the Buffalo-Skedaddle Population Management Unit (PMU)* (Northeast California Sage-Grouse Working Group, 2006).
- Implement the *Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan for Nevada and Eastern California*, First Edition (2004), including the Vya and Massacre Conservation Strategies.
- Implement juniper reduction to enhance sagebrush ecosystems; focus on providing diverse composition and age classes of shrubs and healthy understory vegetation.

Other Native Wildlife Species

- Retain and protect caves identified as important to bats. Limit disturbances near identified bat hibernacula and maternity colonies.
- Maintain existing waterfowl nesting islands and structures.
- Protect known raptor nesting trees from removal during project activities.
- Manage migratory birds in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Migratory Bird Executive Order 13186, *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*.
- Coordinate with game agencies in maintenance and construction of wildlife guzzlers.
- Continue cooperative efforts to reintroduce native fauna back into the planning area and do not encourage non-native species introductions.
- Design and locate new livestock water developments to avoid dewatering natural springs or wetland areas. Outfit all livestock troughs with wildlife access ramps. Strive to provide water at ground level for wildlife at all developments, as feasible.
- Retain vegetation buffers for wildlife cover at water sources, wetlands, and riparian sites.

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Native and Non-Native Fish and Aquatic Species

- Improve fishing opportunities and fish habitat along the east slope of the Warner Mountains (20-25 miles).
- Manage for both native and non-native game fish where they coexist—except where a non-native game fish is highly detrimental to any species of native fish. In such cases, work with the appropriate state agency to eliminate the non-native fish.
- Use riparian functional assessments and BMPs to repair eroded streambanks, restore streamside vegetation and shade, lower water temperature, and improve water quality to achieve healthy and productive fish habitats.
- Use only native fish and strains for transplantation, when degraded streams (or stream segments) are sufficiently restored to support viable fish populations.

Protest and Appeal

The Surprise Proposed RMP decisions were available for protest to the BLM Director for a 30 day period, between June 15, 2007, and July 16, 2007, in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5-2. Six protests were received. Resolutions to the protests did not result in the necessity for more analysis or repeat publication of the Proposed Plan/FEIS for additional public review and protest.

The decisions designating routes of travel for motorized vehicles, as described in Chapter 2.14 Travel Management of the RMP, are **implementation decisions** and are appealable under 43 CFR Part 4. The appeal procedures are summarized below. These travel management decisions are effective upon issuance of this Record of Decision, unless a stay of the decision is granted.

Public notice was provided for the land use plan in accordance with 43 CFR 8342.3(b) through publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register* for the Surprise Proposed RMP/FEIS (Volume 72, Number 115, June 15, 2007) and for the Surprise Record of Decision and Approved RMP.

APPEAL PROCEDURES

Any party adversely affected by the proposed route designations may appeal within 30 days of receipt of this decision in accordance with the provisions of 43 CFR Part 4.4. The publication of the Notice of Availability of this ROD and approved RMP will be considered the date the decision is received. The appeal should state the specific route(s), as identified in Chapter 2.14 Travel Management of the RMP, on which the decision is being appealed. The appeal must be filed with the Field Manager, at the following address:

Bureau of Land Management
Surprise Field Office
602 Cressler Street
Cedarville, California 96104

You may include a statement of reasons when the notice of appeal is filed, or you may file the statement of reasons within 30 days after filing the appeal. A copy of the appeal, statement of reasons, and all other supporting documents must also be sent to the

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Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2800 Cottage Way, Suite E-1712, Sacramento, CA, 95825.

If the statement of reasons is filed separately, it must be sent to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 801 N. Quincy Street, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203. It is suggested that any appeal be sent certified mail, return receipt requested.

REQUEST FOR STAY

If you wish to request a stay of the decision pending the outcome of the appeal, the motion for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer at the time the appeal is filed and must show sufficient justification based on the following standards under 43 CFR 4.21:

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

Mitigation and Monitoring

The BLM has incorporated design features into proposed management actions that will avoid or reduce adverse impacts to resources. Design features include standard operating procedures and best management practices. For many resources, the environmental analysis has indicated that significant adverse impacts would not occur, or that their magnitude would be negligible. The BLM will employ all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm while still meeting the goals, purpose and need requirements of the Surprise RMP. In addition, all implementation level projects will undergo a site specific environmental analysis. Mitigation measures will be incorporated as necessary to reduce adverse impacts identified in the environmental analysis.

This ROD approves monitoring programs that aid in managing and protecting the resource values of the planning area. The BLM will monitor biological resources in order to evaluate if desired outcomes (goals and objectives) as described in the RMP are being met as management actions are implemented. The Surprise RMP Monitoring Plan is included in the ROD under Appendix A.

Public Involvement

SCOPING AND ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

The BLM officially initiated the planning process for the Surprise Draft RMP/DEIS with publication of a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* on July 22, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 140). The BLM hosted six public scoping meetings in August and September 2003, with a total of 205 people attending these meetings. Four meetings were held within the planning area. Two others were held in Redding, California, and Reno, Nevada, to ensure that the BLM heard the concerns of user groups residing outside the planning area. The BLM also conducted a scoping meeting in the field in August 2003.

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A community workshop was conducted to discuss economics and social values in December 2003.

Issues related to resource management in the Surprise planning area were assembled during the scoping process, which consisted of public scoping meetings, field tours, socioeconomic workshops, and interactions with federal, state, tribal, and county collaborators. The scoping process generated 15 key issues to be addressed in the Surprise RMP. These issues were used to develop alternatives and are addressed in other sections of the RMP (for example, effects on local economies).

DRAFT RMP/DRAFT EIS AND PROPOSED RMP/FINAL EIS

The public comment period for the Surprise Draft RMP/Draft EIS opened with publication of the NOA in the *Federal Register* on April 28, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 82). This NOA announced the publication of the Draft RMP/DEIS, and also solicited public comments and participation. The BLM distributed approximately 250 copies of the Draft Surprise RMP/DEIS. The public had 90 days (until July 27, 2006) to submit comments on the Draft RMP/DEIS. To facilitate this process, the BLM held seven public comment meetings.

The public comment period generated approximately 36 unique comment letters from individuals and groups. The number of comments that the BLM analyzed and responded to was approximately 547. These comments and the BLM's responses to them are summarized in Appendix K of the RMP. Based on the comments and feedback received, the BLM prepared the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The BLM made several edits and clarifications regarding management decisions in the Proposed RMP. In addition, two substantive changes were made to management decisions:

1. Change of language related to domestic sheep grazing near bighorn sheep habitat, in accordance with BLM's "*Guidelines for Managing Domestic Sheep and Goats in Wild Sheep Habitats*" (BLM 1998).
2. Designation of the potential California-Nevada (east-west) utility corridor as a right of way corridor as defined in the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, *Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the 11 Western States*, Department of Energy, BLM, USDA Forest Service, Department of Defense, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, October 2007, and subsequent amendments.

Public notice was provided for the Surprise Proposed RMP/FEIS through publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register* (Volume 72, Number 115, June 15, 2007). The NOA also described public protest procedures. The BLM distributed approximately 200 paper copies and CDs of the Surprise Proposed RMP/Final EIS to interested parties and made the document available on the web, at BLM offices, and at the Cedarville public library.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

The Surprise Field Office interacts with 6 federally recognized tribes. Consultation with tribes regarding the Surprise RMP began in July, 2003. On July 24, 2003, certified letters were sent to tribal offices containing a packet of information about resource

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management plans and the BLM planning process. The tribes were also formally invited to attend a scoping meeting set up especially to address their concerns and involvement with the Surprise RMP. Consultation meetings were held during which the tribes provided input into plan development.

Tribal consultation continued during the alternative formulation process in 2004 to 2005. The Draft Surprise RMP/DEIS was made available for public review in April of 2006, and copies of the document were sent to the tribes along with a letter informing the tribes to provide their written comments to the BLM by September 27, 2006. Each of the tribes provided comments on the Draft RMP/DEIS either in letters or during consultation meetings.

A briefing was held on the Surprise Draft RMP/DEIS with the California State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO) on April 5, 2006 and with the Nevada SHPO on March 30, 2006. Planning and process procedures were discussed in addition to discussions about outreach and coordination efforts of the Surprise Field Office. Each of the tribes was also consulted with on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL PARTICIPATION

During the planning process Modoc, Lassen and Washoe Counties requested more specific information regarding certain aspects of the RMP of interest to them such as land tenure, special designations, recreation management, access, and energy development. In each instance, the Surprise Field Manager and representatives from the Surprise staff met personally and or talked by telephone with local county officials and discussed their issues and how the RMP would address their concerns.

The following state agencies have been provided with information and have participated in the RMP process: California and Nevada SHPO, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Water Resources, and Nevada Department of Wildlife. The Surprise Proposed RMP was submitted to the California Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, for review by appropriate agencies. The Surprise Field Manager received a notification of consistency with the State of California for the RMP on September 17, 2007. The BLM initiated formal consultation on the Proposed RMP by submitting a Biological Assessment to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as described below.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA) CONSULTATION

The BLM has determined that three federally threatened and endangered wildlife species, Warner sucker (*Catostomus warnerensis*), (threatened); bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), (threatened); and the Carson wandering skipper (*Psuedocopaodes eunus obscurus*), (endangered) are of concern in the SFO planning area. Pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA, the BLM initiated formal consultation on the effects of the Proposed RMP by submitting a Biological Assessment to the US Fish and Wildlife Service on these three species. The USFWS issued a Biological Opinion for the Surprise Proposed RMP on September 11, 2007, which concurs with the BLM's effects analysis.

At the time of the BLM's request to initiate formal consultation, the bald eagle was federally listed as threatened. For additional information, see *Changes Made to the Approved RMP*.

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NORTHEAST CALIFORNIA RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)

The Northeast California RAC members were kept involved with the process through briefings provided during the regular council meetings, and through workshops designed to gather and disseminate key information and data.

ADVERTISEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

News media press releases were issued or posted to notify the public of the project, to announce public meetings and workshops, to request public comments, and to provide contact information. Press releases were sent to local and major northern California and Nevada newspapers, radio stations and TV stations, and meeting announcements were published in several local and regional newspapers. These include the *Lassen County Times*, Susanville; the *Reno Gazette Journal*, Reno; the *Modoc County Record*, Alturas; *Mountain Echo*, Fall River Mills; *Inter Mountain News*, Burney; *Butte Valley Star*, Dorris; *Herald and News*, Klamath Falls; and the *Modoc Independent News*, Cedarville. Announcements were also broadcast by the news department at Sierra Radio Network, Susanville, which airs news on two regional radio stations. All announcements were posted on the BLM's news release website, and carried in the BLM's *News.bytes* electronic newsletter, which circulates to more than 30,000 readers inside and outside of the BLM. Stories were printed in at least two local newspapers on the RMP development at different points in the process.

PROJECT WEBSITE

An informational website, <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/surprise.html> has been available to the public throughout the planning process. It provides background information on the Surprise Field Office, downloadable version of documents including the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and Record of Decision.

PLANNING UPDATE MAILERS

The BLM produced four special Planning Update mailers: one to announce public scoping and alternative development meetings, and to announce the publication of the Draft RMP/DEIS. These were sent via direct mail to the Surprise RMP mailing list and were also distributed at public meetings. The Planning Updates included background information on the Surprise Field Office's lands, a description and timeline for the upcoming planning process, dates and locations of the public scoping meetings, and contact information for getting public comments to the BLM.

APPENDIX A

SURPRISE FIELD

OFFICE

MONITORING PLAN

Surprise RMP – Monitoring Plan

Resource	RMP Goal/Objective	Suggested Methodology
<p>Cultural and Paleontological Resources</p>	<p>The BLM Surprise Field Office would seek to protect and preserve significant cultural and paleontological resources and ensure that these resources are available to present and future generations for appropriate uses. Manage legitimate activities in a manner that will ensure preservation and provide public benefits through education, interpretation, research, public uses and conservation for future generations. Locate, evaluate and classify paleontological resources and protect them where appropriate.</p>	<p>Continue on-the-ground monitoring of identified sites to determine condition, impacts, deterioration, and use of such sites. Priority for site monitoring will be based on: 1) site significance or site's potential to yield significant information to determine its eligibility to the National Register, 2) the severity of threat to a site, 3) the immediacy of threat to a site.</p> <p>Visit cultural resource sites within the planning area on a periodic basis, at a minimum of 10 sites annually. Monitor the condition of the site and document any disturbance or deterioration of the site, and enter information into the cultural resource database. If a disturbed site is considered eligible to the National Register of Historic Places initiate appropriate consultation to determine the appropriate action to stop site deterioration or apply mitigation measures.</p> <p>When able, coordinate with BLM Law Enforcement to monitor sensitive cultural resource areas.</p> <p>Meet with communities, groups, and educational institutions to evaluate effectiveness of educational and interpretive information.</p> <p>Inventory newly identified geographic areas for cultural and paleontological resources. Record and document new sites and any disturbances.</p>
<p>Fire Rehabilitation and Stabilization</p>	<p>Burned areas would be stabilized and rehabilitated to minimize threats to life and property and to mitigate the adverse effects of wildland fires on soils, vegetation, and waterways.</p> <p>Provide appropriate levels of rest or deferment from grazing after a wildfire to meet emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Monitoring is required on all Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) plans. Monitoring and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments will be funded for up to three years following containment of a wildfire. The monitoring plan will contain provisions for monitoring and evaluation of treatments and activities (including criteria for measuring a successful treatment or activity), techniques, and a procedure for collecting, archiving, and disseminating results. The monitoring plan must have clearly stated and measurable goals and objectives. Photographs are strongly encouraged at all monitoring sites.</p> <p>Monitoring methods may include photo points, density, cover, gap intercept, frequency plots, ocular estimates, and soil erosion within each eco-region and plant community. The elements of a defensible monitoring program applicable to ES&R and Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan (BAER) projects that most of these manuals have in common are objectives, stratification, control areas, random sampling, data quality, and statistical analysis.</p> <p>Livestock are to be excluded from burned areas until monitoring results, documented in writing, show emergency stabilization and rehabilitation objectives have been met. Objectives must be clearly defined in the ES&R and/or BAER plan.</p>

Resource	RMP Goal/Objective	Suggested Methodology
<p>Forestry</p>	<p>Control hazardous fuels on commercial and low-site forests where there is significant risk of stand destruction by fire, insect infestation, or disease.</p>	<p>Using the FORVIS database (Forest Vegetation Stand Health Monitoring), Monitor trends in vegetative production, structure, and composition, soil/site stability, watershed function, and integrity of biotic community.</p>
	<p>Achieve significant timber stand improvement on commercial and low-site forestlands—chiefly by removing invasive juniper and other non-marketable timber.</p>	<p>Document trends in availability of forest and woodland products and biomass offered (i.e. post /pole / woodcutting permits). Record accomplishments for providing wood products in the Timber Sale Information System database and in MIS reporting.</p>
<p>Fuels Management</p>	<p>Fuel treatments would prioritize wildland/urban interface areas of communities situated in the midst of juniper-invaded sagebrush-steppe. Projects would also be designed to enhance important wildlife habitats and protect cultural resources.</p>	<p>Measure density of fuel loads (biomass) before and after treatment, using the NWCG (National Wildfire Coordinating Group) Stereo Photo Series for Quantifying Natural Fuels and other fuel load density methods.</p>
		<p>Conduct photo trend monitoring before and immediately after project completion and then at periodic intervals after completion.</p>
<p>Livestock Grazing</p>	<p>Adequate forage would be produced to support sustainable levels of livestock grazing where compatible with objectives for other resources and resource users.</p> <p>Work cooperatively with ranchers and other stakeholders to implement treatments to reduce juniper encroachment in sagebrush/grassland communities, with the goal of restoring sagebrush communities to a healthy condition, and thereby maintaining (or potentially increasing) forage production of native grasses, forbs, and shrubs.</p>	<p>Collect actual use reports from grazing permittees (report includes livestock numbers, pasture use, turnout and gather dates).</p> <p>Use the rangeland health assessment process prescribed in the most current versions of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines, and BLM Manual 4180 and Handbook H-4180-1 guiding implementation of the rangeland health standards.</p> <p>Conduct periodic measurements of plant composition, vigor, and productivity, as well as measurement of the amount and distribution of plant cover and litter. Monitor herbaceous or woody utilization, actual use, and climatic conditions to determine the effectiveness of established tools in meeting objectives. Monitoring of existing condition of vegetation would consist of identifying ecological sites, determining ecological status, determining soil types, vegetation mapping, baseline inventory, and assembling existing basic information. Procedures used (and frequency of use) would be primarily those in BLM Technical References 1734-7 and 4400-5.</p> <p>Continuous, long-term monitoring will be conducted on priority allotments. This long-term data will be incorporated with compliance data and analyzed for use in gauging the effectiveness of current management and in the establishment of future management objectives. Allotment management plans will be developed based upon analysis of all monitoring data and future management objectives.</p> <p>In “I” category allotments, examine trend plots every five years, and record utilization data (Landscape Appearance Method, USDI BLM 1989) as indicated in the AMP or applicable activity plan. In “M” allotments, determine trend, and utilization on periodic basis. Monitoring in “C” allotments is limited to periodic inventories and observations to measure long-term resource condition changes.</p>

Resource	RMP Goal/Objective	Suggested Methodology
<p>Livestock Grazing (continued)</p>		<p>Measure trend by noting changes in composition, density, cover, production, vigor, age class, and frequency of the vegetation and related parameters of other resources. Use step-point, nearest plant, nested frequency, line intercept, photo plots, Parker three-step, and other methods as appropriate.</p> <p>On a periodic basis, evaluate every allotment using the “Healthy Rangelands Standards and Guidelines” (see Vegetation monitoring, above). Currently, this is expected to occur about once every 10 years.</p>
<p>Recreation and Visitor Services</p>	<p>Ensure that a wide range of developed and undeveloped recreational opportunities are sustained or created on lands administered by the Surprise Field Office.</p>	<p>Conduct monitoring, including periodic patrols to check boundaries, signing, and visitor use; to ensure visitor compliance with rules and regulations; to establish baseline data and observation points to determine current impacts from recreational use; and to develop studies to help determine appropriate levels and patterns of recreational use and the influences of other resource uses.</p> <p>Focus field monitoring on visitation levels, compliance with rules, regulations, and permit stipulations for specific sites, dispersed uses, and prescribed standards and guidelines. Use visitor surveys, traffic counters, surveillance at developed recreation sites, documentation of user conflicts, and photo documentation of the changes in resource conditions over time.</p> <p>Monitoring may also include collection of data from visitor comments and complaint or information request calls or emails. Use monitoring data to manage visitor use, develop plans and projects to reduce visitor impacts, and to provide appropriate facility or transportation system design.</p> <p>Special Recreation Permits will be monitored for compliance with the terms of the permit.</p>
<p>Soil Resources</p>	<p>Maintain areas that currently meet the land health standard for soils. Improve (or mitigate where this is not feasible) the productivity and/or stability of soils not meeting this standard to such a degree that soil health is achievable.</p> <p>Prevent or eliminate erosion and sedimentation in sensitive aquatic (or other sensitive) environments to ensure there is no threat to property or human health.</p>	<p>Use the rangeland health assessment process, particularly the health standard for soil, prescribed in the most current versions of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines, and BLM Manual 4180 and Handbook H-4180-1 guiding implementation of the rangeland health standards.</p> <p>Use Photo Points, Line-Point Intercept, Canopy and Basal Gap Intercept and Soil Stability Test will be used as outlined in “Monitoring Manual for Grassland, Shrubland and Savanna Ecosystems, 2005”. The above monitoring methods will be used to monitor three rangeland attributes: soil and site stability, watershed function and biotic integrity.</p> <p>Soil health will be monitored by conducting site specific reviews of ground disturbing projects for implementation and effectiveness of BMPs to ensure there is no threat to property or human health.</p>

Resource	RMP Goal/Objective	Suggested Methodology
Special Designations – Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)	The outstanding natural and cultural resources contained in three areas would be preserved by protecting them as areas of critical environmental concern.	Monitor ACECs for impacts according to ACEC management plans.
Special Designations – Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR)	A 2.2 mile section (457 acres) of Twelvemile Creek will be managed to protect and enhance its suitability for wild and scenic river designation.	Annually monitor Twelvemile Creek to ensure the outstandingly remarkable values are protected and the free-flowing condition of the river is maintained consistent with the “National Wild and Scenic River Act.” Monitoring methods could include field surveillance, user contact, permit review and photo documentation. Monitoring will be coordinated with the Lakeview BLM.
Special Designations – Wilderness Study Areas (WSA)	WSAs will be managed under the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review (Wilderness IMP).	Follow direction within the existing policy for WSAs (USD1-BLM 1995). Monitor WSAs during the months the area is accessible by the public, or more frequently if necessary because of potential use activities or other resource conflicts. Use aerial surveillance, on-the-ground surveillance, visitor contact, permit compliance checks, and other methods as appropriate.
Travel Management	Manage off-highway vehicle use to protect environmental resources, promote public safety, and provide OHV use opportunities where appropriate. Minimizing conflict between various user groups must also be addressed.	Conduct monitoring, including periodic patrols to check boundaries, signing, and visitor use; to ensure visitor compliance with rules and regulations. Periodically check that developed roads are available to all communities and routes are planned to public and private lands where the road will cross public lands. Periodically check for newly created unauthorized roads. Monitor road closures to insure compliance.
Vegetation – Native Plant Communities	Ensure that the natural distribution, variety, and abundance of native plants, plant communities and associations are restored and native plants and ecosystems remain healthy throughout their range. Restore degraded landscapes—especially shrublands dominated by exotic annual grasses, perennial grasslands choked with brush, and decadent mountain big sagebrush. Eliminate encroachment and significantly reduce invasive juniper in order to restore shrub-steppe, aspen, riparian, and mountain mahogany plant associations. However, maintain ecosystem integrity in natural juniper woodlands.	Measure trends in vegetative production, structure, and composition, soil/site stability, watershed function, and integrity of biotic community. Use the rangeland health assessment process prescribed in the most current versions of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines, and BLM Manual 4180 and Handbook H-4180-1 guiding implementation of the rangeland health standards. Conduct periodic measurements of plant composition, vigor, and productivity, as well as measurement of the amount and distribution of plant cover and litter. Monitor herbaceous or woody utilization, actual use, and climatic conditions to determine the effectiveness of established tools in meeting objectives. Monitoring of existing condition of vegetation would consist of identifying ecological sites, determining ecological status, determining soil types, vegetation mapping, baseline inventory, and assembling existing basic information. Procedures used (and frequency of use) would be primarily those in BLM Technical References 1734-7 and 4400-5.

Resource	RMP Goal/Objective	Suggested Methodology
<p>Vegetation – Native Plant Communities (continued)</p>	<p>Achieve healthy and productive wetland and riparian habitats through measures that will restore and protect riparian vegetation, and achieve habitat diversity and hydrologic stability.</p> <p>Produce healthy aspen stands (upland and riparian) through measures that will promote regeneration and growth, and create size and age class diversity. Restore and maintain ecosystem integrity and productivity in natural mountain mahogany woodlands.</p>	<p>Conduct periodic measurements of plant composition, vigor, and productivity, as well as measurement of the amount and distribution of plant cover and litter. Monitor herbaceous or woody utilization, actual use, and climatic conditions to determine the effectiveness of established tools in meeting objectives.</p>
<p>Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species</p>	<p>Integrated weed management will succeed in curtailing introductions and limiting the proliferation of noxious weeds and other invasive plants throughout the management area. As a result, native ecosystems will be rejuvenated or (eventually) reestablished, in areas now dominated by noxious weeds.</p>	<p>Continue to manage the SFO Integrated Noxious Weed Management Program in partnership with the local working groups, counties, states, federal agencies and in cooperation with adjacent weed management areas.</p> <p>Inventories to identify new introductions, distribution and density of noxious weed populations will be conducted annually on a 3 - 5 year rotation throughout the planning area. All burned areas (natural or prescribed) will be surveyed for noxious weeds for 3 years following the burn. Any new sites will be documented using a global positioning system unit with the SFO Noxious Weed Data Dictionary, photographed and a determination of the need for future treatments will be made.</p> <p>Known noxious weed sites which are identified as priority for treatments will be visited each year and evaluated for effectiveness of control. Known sites not identified for priority treatments will be visited on a rotational basis over a 3 - 5 year period. All known sites visited will be relocated with a global positioning system unit with the SFO Noxious Weed Data Dictionary, photographed and a determination of the need for future treatment will be made.</p> <p>Evaluation of treatments would continue in cooperation with the states of California and Nevada, Modoc County Department of Agriculture, Nevada Department of Agriculture, Counties of Modoc, Lassen, Washoe and Humboldt, USFWS, USFS, private landowners and adjoining Weed Management Areas.</p>
<p>Special Status Plants</p>	<p>Take action to maintain reproductive viability and ensure that BLM management actions, and those of its permittees, do not contribute to the decline of any special status plant.</p>	<p>Long-term monitoring would be conducted using permanent vegetation transects read according to the method chosen. Visual reconnaissance would be used to obtain general information on the habitats of special status plants. Individual special status plant species populations and habitats would be monitored annually or bi-annually and a CDFG native species field survey form filled out.</p>

Resource	RMP Goal/Objective	Suggested Methodology
<p>Water Resources</p>	<p>On a priority basis, take action to improve hydrologic function and/or water quality in areas not meeting State standards – especially where hydrologic function and/or water quality problems are major factors inhibiting the success of other resource programs. Ensure that hydrologic function and water quality are preserved in areas where standards have been met.</p>	<p>Use the rangeland health assessment process, particularly the health standards 2 stream health, 3 water quality and 4 riparian and wetland sites, prescribed in the most current versions of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (USDI-BLM, 2000b), Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines (USDI-BLM, 1997), and BLM Manual 4180 and Handbook H-4180-1 guiding implementation of the rangeland health standards.</p> <p>Water quality monitoring would be conducted at the established water quality sampling stations on a priority basis using the following indicators that were chosen based on the standards contained in the Northeastern California and Northwestern Nevada Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1999). These indicators are temperature, nutrients, fecal coliform, turbidity, sediment, dissolved oxygen, and stream channel condition. The protocol is outlined in the USDI - BLM National Field Manual for the Collection of Water Quality Data and the Susanville District Bioregional Assessment Water Quality Inventory Statement of Work.</p> <p>Best Management Practices are developed and implemented to protect and restore the quality and beneficial uses of water at the project level. BMPs will be monitored and evaluated on implementation and effectiveness as part of the project or activity plan.</p>
	<p>Determine minimum seasonal flow requirements to support diverse and healthy populations of riparian and aquatic vegetation and aquatic wildlife species in watersheds throughout the management area.</p> <p>Acquire and maintain water rights necessary to protect federal investment and ensure a reliable water supply for BLM programs.</p>	<p>Conduct Proper Functioning Condition Assessment TR 1737-9 and TR 1737-15 (assessment for lotic systems) and TR 1737-11 and TR 1737-16 (assessments for lentic systems) to assess the functionality of riparian and wetland areas.</p> <p>Additional stream Habitat Condition Surveys and macro-invertebrate sampling would be conducted as needed to assess functionality of streams for fish and other aquatic resources.</p> <p>Completion of the Water Source Inventory and maintenance of water rights data base would provide needed information to assert federal water rights, especially Public Water Reserves to protect federal investments and to ensure a reliable water supply for beneficial uses of public lands.</p>

Resource	RMP Goal/Objective	Suggested Methodology
<p>Wild Horses and Burros</p>	<p>Achieve ecological stability so that healthy herds of wild horses can be maintained while making significant progress in achieving BLM land health standards within the life of this RMP. Toward this end, ensure that wild horses are limited to established herd management areas and maintained at appropriate management levels so that vegetation, native wildlife, soils, and archaeological sites are not degraded, but maintained.</p> <p>Promote and manage wild horses in a manner that will encourage tourism and boost economic development.</p>	<p>On a periodic basis, evaluate every herd management area using the “Healthy Rangelands Standards and Guidelines”. Field data collection includes using the rangeland health and riparian functional assessment process, as prescribed in the most current versions of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines, and BLM Manual 4180 and Handbook H-4180-1 guiding implementation of the rangeland health standards. Currently, periodic evaluate is expected to occur about once every 10 years, or when changes in resource conditions are apparent.</p> <p>In coordination with livestock grazing activities, conduct periodic measurements of plant composition, vigor, and productivity, as well as measurement of the amount and distribution of plant cover and litter. Monitor herbaceous or woody utilization, actual use (population data), and climatic conditions to determine the effectiveness of established tools in meeting objectives. Monitoring of existing condition of vegetation would consist of identifying ecological sites, determining ecological status, determining soil types, vegetation mapping, baseline inventory, and assembling existing basic information.</p> <p>The analysis of monitoring data maybe conducted on herd management area basis or can be implemented in a multiple-use context with livestock and wildlife. Herd population monitoring and distribution data collection would occur periodically. Aerial census would be completed at 3-year intervals.</p>
<p>Wildlife and Fisheries</p>	<p>Habitats of federally listed (endangered, threatened, or candidate), state-listed and BLM sensitive wildlife will be protected, restored, and maintained so that species populations increase in size and stability, and occupy available habitats.</p> <p>Habitat for native wildlife species will be managed in such a manner that forage, water, and cover--of appropriate diversity and structure--will be present and sufficient to meet their life-cycle requirements.</p>	<p>In conjunction with other federal, state, or private agencies, continue to monitor wildlife populations in the planning area. Do this for individual species such as bald and golden eagles, sage-grouse, deer, and pronghorn; and groups of species associated with source habitats such as sagebrush-steppe, juniper, and mixed conifer forest. Priority will be given to federally listed species. This could include aerial and ground monitoring of sage-grouse leks, eagle nests, analysis of state game counts and university or NGO data for birds and small mammals.</p> <p>Periodically determine the adequacy of existing data for supporting management decisions. Periodically assess the effectiveness of a sampling of different vegetation treatments and disturbance actions to determine effectiveness of management decisions. This may include both vegetation and species population composition and trend data.</p> <p>Assess quality and quantity of key habitats such as riparian zones, sage steppe, aspen woodlands, bitterbrush and mountain mahogany stands. This could include measurements of stems/acre, horizontal and vertical canopy cover, structure, browse condition, residual stubble height of grasses, and GIS analysis of habitat fragmentation.</p> <p>Periodically assess conditions of natural and artificial waters in relation to wildlife needs. This includes assessing the needs for additional game guzzlers as well as the condition of livestock troughs.</p>

Resource	RMP Goal/Objective	Suggested Methodology
<p>Wildlife and Fisheries (continued)</p>	<p>Cooperate with state and federal agencies to monitor fish and other aquatic fauna, as well as riparian and in-stream conditions.</p> <p>Improve degraded upland, riparian, and aquatic habitats in order to re-create suitable habitat conditions for fish and wildlife.</p>	<p>In conjunction with other federal, state, or private agencies, continue to monitor fish populations in the planning area. Concentrate efforts on federal or state listed species, BLM sensitive species and recreationally important species. Methods may include electro-shocking of streams and dip-netting.</p> <p>Measure bank stability, stream cover/shading, stream cross-section, and stream substrates to determine habitat suitability.</p> <p>Measure water quality via parameters such as temperature, pH, conductivity, and macro-invertebrate abundance and diversity.</p> <p>Measure % sediment in pools and riffles as well as pool to riffle ratios.</p> <p>Monitor riparian habitat condition on an allotment basis during allotment evaluations or during rangeland health assessments. Determination of proper functioning condition (PFC) as well as other approved methods will be used.</p> <p>See other suggested methodology in the livestock grazing and vegetation sections above.</p>

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