



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SPOKANE DISTRICT OFFICE
EAST 4217 MAIN
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 99202



IN REPLY REFER TO:

Record of Decision

for

Spokane Resource Management Plan Amendment

Prepared By
Bureau of Land Management, Spokane District
Spokane, Washington

Introduction

This Resource Management Plan Amendment documents the changes in decisions reached by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for managing 340,000 acres of public land in Spokane District that arose since completion of the Spokane Resource Management Plan of 1985 and subsequently documented in the Record of Decision of 1987. In addition, it also addresses more than 1.38 million acres of federal mineral estate scattered throughout all counties in Washington state east of the Cascades. These are lands on which the BLM has oil and gas and/or other mineral leasing authority. These lands include not only those administered by the BLM, but lands with surface management by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Energy, and U.S. Department of the Army. This RMP Amendment will not address resource issues on BLM-administered land in western Washington nor the BLM-administered mineral estate of U.S. Forest Service and Indian lands.

This decision results in the designation of 5 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern encompassing about 6,300 acres of public land and the de-designation of two existing ACEC's involving about 120 acres of public land,

Off Road Vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails on an additional 38,000 acres of public land to the extent allowed by law and regulation, these restrictions would apply equally to all users.

Alternatives Considered and Rationale for Decision

Two alternatives for management of public lands in the Spokane District were analyzed in the Draft and Final RMPA/EIS.

Alternative 1 (Existing Plan)

Alternative 2 (Amended Plan)

Alternative 1 (Existing Plan)

This alternative consists of continued implementation of the RMP without allowing for adjustments in land management decisions (i.e. ORV designations and additional ACEC proposals) based on new information or policy changes.

Oil and Gas Leasing and Development - This alternative is the most simplistic alternative that can reasonably be analyzed. It is potentially the least restrictive leasing program the BLM would legally be permitted to implement. Approximately 1.1 million acres of public land and private surface/federal mineral estate would be open to leasing subject to Standard Leasing Terms and Conditions.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) - The 12 currently designated ACECs would continue to be managed to preclude land uses that could potentially damage special resource values. No new ACECs would be proposed for designation.

Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Designations - ORV designations would remain as described in the 1987 RMP Spokane District Record of Decision. All 29,000 acres of land acquired since completion of the RMP would remain open to ORV use.

Alternative 2 (Amended Plan)

This alternative addresses BLM's revised guidelines for fluid mineral leasing and development, and also new prescriptions (i.e., ORV designations and additional ACEC nominations) derived from recommendations of BLM staff and the general public. The management area (MAs) boundaries would be reconfigured as follows: The Similkameen and Conconully MAs would be combined and renamed the Okanogan MA; North Ferry, North Stevens, and Huckleberry Mountains MAs would be combined and renamed the Northeast MA; and Douglas Creek and Jameson Lake MAs would be combined and renamed Moses Coulee MA. No boundary changes are being proposed for Badger Slope, Juniper Forest, Rock Creek, and Saddle Mountains. These areas are proposed for consolidation because of their proximity to one another and because the program emphasis of the areas being combined are similar.

Oil and Gas Leasing and Development - Oil and gas resources on about 1.3 million acres would be leased with Standard Terms and Conditions as well as additional leasing stipulations to protect other resources and values. The new stipulations are derived from two sources: the existing stipulations and stipulations developed during this plan amendment process from new inventory information. Since this RMP includes mineral resources of lands managed by other surface management agencies, any leasing recommendations made by BLM must take into consideration the missions of these agencies, their policies and restrictions on oil and gas activities, existing withdrawals, and limits imposed by regulations and Congress.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern - Under this alternative five areas would be proposed for ACEC designation: Coal Creek, Cowiche Canyon, Little Vulcan Mountain, Yakima River Canyon, and Keystone Point. Coal Creek is proposed for designation because it contains habitat for a Bureau sensitive plant species and important riparian habitat, Cowiche Canyon for its unique botanical and recreational values, Little Vulcan Mountain because it provides important habitat for a Bureau sensitive animal species, Yakima River Canyon for its recreational, botanical, wildlife and scenic values, and Keystone Point would be designated because it provides habitat for a Bureau sensitive plant species.

Two existing ACEC designations, Webber Canyon and Roosevelt Slope, would be de-designated. Webber Canyon ACEC designation would be revoked because evaluations subsequent to its designation by both contract paleontologists and district resources specialists, indicated that there were no significant paleontological resource values at this site, and that returning this area to multiple use would not result in any deterioration of the values that are present. Roosevelt Slope ACEC was designated because at the time of designation, it contained habitat for a Bureau sensitive species *Astragalus misellus v. pauper*. Subsequent evaluations or inventories revealed that this species is more common than initially thought (and therefore less sensitive), and that returning this area to multiple use would not result in any deterioration of the values that are present.

Off Road Vehicle Designations - Most of the ORV designations made in the 1987 RMP Record of Decision would not be changed. Only those areas where new information indicates that additional restrictions are necessary to protect resource values are limitations proposed. The specific changes being proposed are as follows: Yakima River Canyon and Upper Crab Creek Management Areas ORVs are limited to designated roads and trails (34,000 acres); in the Okanogan Management Area north of the Simiikameen River ORVs would be limited to designated roads and trails on another 4,000 acres.

ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERABILITY OF THE ALTERNATIVE

Environmental preferability is judged using the criteria in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

Title 1, Section 101 (b) of NEPA establishes the following goals:

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

The two alternatives considered in this RMP Amendment were rated against these criterion. There was little difference between these alternatives however, under Alternative 2, the Amended Plan, criterion 3 and 4 would be better served or met than under Alternative 1 simply because of the additional oil and gas leasing stipulations, additional ACEC designations, and increased ORV limitations provide a high degree of protection to important resource values. Consequently this would be the environmentally preferred alternative.

IMPLEMENTATION

Decisions in this plan will be implemented over a period of years and are tied to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) budgeting process. General priorities for overall management guidance will be developed through long-term budgeting processes. Specific priorities for each program will be reviewed annually to help develop the work plan commitments for the coming year. The procedures to implement each decision are shown in the Plan on a decision-by-decision basis.

Valid Existing Rights

This plan will not repeal valid existing rights on public lands. Valid existing rights are those claims or rights to public land that are valid as of the date of this decision. Such rights will take precedence over the actions in this plan. Valid existing rights may be held by other federal agencies or by private individuals or

companies. For example valid existing rights may pertain to mining claims, oil and gas leases, rights-of-way, and water rights.

Administrative Actions

Various types of administrative actions will require special attention beyond the scope of this plan. Administrative actions are the day-to-day transactions required to serve the public and to provide optimal use of the resources. These actions are in conformance with the plan. They include issuance of permits for fuelwood, saw-timber, gravel, and competitive and commercial recreation activities; iands actions, including issuance of grants, leases, permits and resolution of trespass; facility maintenance; law enforcement; enforcement and monitoring of permit stipulations; cadastral surveys to determine legal land ownership; and engineering support to assist in mapping designing, and implementing projects. These and other administrative actions will be conducted at the resource area, district, and state level. The degree to which these actions are carried out will be based upon BLM policy, available personnel, and funding levels.

MITIGATION AND MONITORING

All protective measures and standard operating procedures identified in the plan will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts. These measures will be strictly enforced throughout implementation. All practicable means to avoid or reduce environmental harm will be adopted.

Monitoring needs identified in this plan will be employed on a priority basis subject to funding and staffing availability and incorporated into existing monitoring plans and schedules identified in the 1987 Record of Decision. Monitoring and evaluations will be utilized to ensure that decisions and priorities conveyed by the Plan are being implemented, that progress toward identified resource objectives is occurring, that mitigating measures and standard operating procedures are effective in avoiding or reducing adverse environmental impacts, and that the plan is maintained and consistent with the ongoing development of national and state guidance.

Public Involvement

On May 19, 1989, a notice was published in the Federal Register to announce the formal start of the RMP Amendment planning process. At that time a planning newsletter was sent to the public requesting further definition of major issues within the planning area and explaining the scope of the plan amendment.

On June 30, 1990, another newsletter was posted to those interested in the planning process, affected parties, and the local news media. In addition to outlining the proposed alternatives, this document also listed major issues and planning criteria.

On October 23, 1991, a notice of document availability was published in the Federal Register and in local news media for the Draft Spokane District Resource Management Plan Amendment. This Draft plan was sent to a list of over 900 individuals, organizations and agencies. The comment period was ended on February 16, 1992. Eight individuals, organizations or agencies responded.

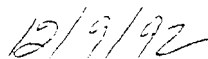
Minor changes and corrections were incorporated into the Final EIS. In June of 1992, the FEIS was published and a notice was published in the Federal Register on August 21, 1992. No protests were received. In addition, the Governor of Washington State did not identify any inconsistencies with officially approved or adopted State of local governmental natural resource related plans, programs, or policies. Comment letters on the PRMP Amendment/FEIS were received from one individual and one organization. These comments have been considered in the process of making the final decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

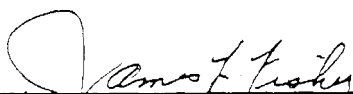
With full knowledge of the commitment to resource management presented in this proposed plan amendment, the Spokane District recommends adoption of the Spokane RMP Amendment.



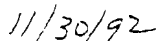
Ann B. Aldrich
Border Resources Area Manager




Date



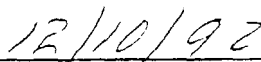
James F. Fisher
Wenatchee Resource Area Manager



Date



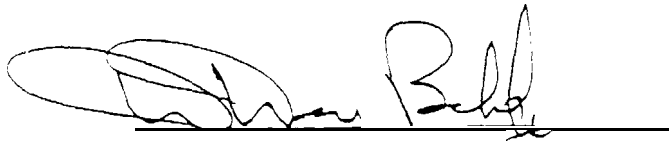
Joseph K. Buesing
District Manager, Spokane



Date

STATE DIRECTOR APPROVAL

I approve the Spokane RMP Amendment/EIS as recommended. This document meets the requirements for a Record of Decision as provided in 40 CFR 1505.2.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Dean Bibles", written over a horizontal line.

D. Dean Bibles
State Director, Washington/Oregon
Bureau of Land Management

DEC 17 1992

Date

Table S-I Summary 0 Long-Term Environmental Consequences and Comparison of Alternative Allocations

	unit of Measure	Alternative #1 Existing Plan	Alternative #2 Amended Plan
Soil (Erosion Potential)		+L	+L
Water			
Quality		NC	NC
Quantity		NC	NC
Vegetation			
Ecological Condition			
Climax	Acres	7493	NC
Late Seral	Acres	35376	NC
Mid Seral	Acres	40725	NC
Early Seral	Acres	59556	NC
Unclassified	Acres	106324	NC
Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species Habitat		No Affect	No Affect
Wildlife			
Upland Habitat		-L	NC
Riparian Habitat		-L	NC
Fish Habitat		-L	NC
Livestock Grazing			
Available Forage	AUMs	30073	NC
Recreation			
Visitor Use Levels		NC	NC
Off-Road Vehicle			
Limitation/Closure	Acres	77100	93400
Open	Acres	254100	234600
Cultural Resources		No Affect	No Affect
Visual Resources			
Protection/Enhancement of Visual Quality		-L	-L
Special Management Areas	#	14	17
Forest Products			
Sustainable Harvest Level	MMbf	4	4
Energy & Minerals *			
Closed to Leasing	Acres	458000	422000
Open Subject to Standard Lease Terms and Conditions * *	Acres	1123080	1021080
Open Subject to Timing or Other Constraints, NSO, CSU, Special Administrative Stips.	Acres	138920	107900
Economic Conditions		+L	NC

ise
ise

L Low
M Moderate
H High
NC No Change

* Includes All Federal Minerals within Planning Area except for Tribal Lands and lands administered by the USFS.

** All leases within the planning area will include the controlled surface use stipulation for special status plant species



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Burns District Office
74 South Alvord, Burns, OK 97720

November 14, 1984

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review and comment is the John Day proposed Resource Management Plan and final Environmental Impact Statement for the John Day Planning Area, Burns District, Oregon. The Bureau of Land Management has prepared this document in partial fulfillment of its responsibilities under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The proposed RMP and final EIS is published in an abbreviated format and is designed to be used in conjunction with the Draft RMP/EIS published in June of 1984. Additional copies of the Draft RMP/EIS are available upon request from Bureau of Land Management, 74 South Alvord, Burns, Oregon 97720.

This proposed RMP and final EIS contains a summary from the draft, introduction, the proposed plan, text revisions to the Draft RMP/EIS, public comments received on the draft, and the Bureau's response to these comments.

If you wish to comment for the District Manager's consideration in the development of the decision, please submit your comments to the District Manager by December 31, 1984. Your comments should be sent to:

District Manager
74 South Alvord
Burns, Oregon 97720

The plan decisions will be based on the analysis contained in the EIS, any additional data available, public opinion, management feasibility, policy and legal constraints. The approval of the plan will be documented in a record of decision, which will be available to the public.

The proposed plan cannot be approved until after the Governor of Oregon has had an opportunity to review it to identify any inconsistencies and provide recommendations in writing. Approval of the plan will also be subject to the final action on any protest that may be filed. Protests must conform to the requirements of Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Subpart 1610.5-Z and be filed with the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely yours,


Joshua L. Warburton
District Manager