

CHAPTER 2

ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

INTRODUCTION

The development of the alternatives for the Cascade Resource Management Plan was guided by the regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the BLM resource management planning regulations and the Idaho Guidebook for preparing the RMP. These guidances require that alternatives be developed that addressed each issue. Of the alternatives developed, one alternative is a no action alternative which means a continuation of present levels of resource use. This alternative satisfies the requirement of BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-5).

The basic goal for developing alternatives for the RMP was to prepare different combinations of resource use that addressed each issue and management concern. A range of resource utilization levels or intensities of management was developed for those resources that were issue related. Non-issue related resources only had minor or no differences in use levels or management intensity between the alternatives.

Each alternative had to satisfy standards (criteria) as outlined in the "Idaho Guidebook." These standards stated that each alternative must be a complete resource management plan for the public lands within the planning area and must:

- be reasonable;
- include multiple use and transfer area designations, all the resource management guidelines and goals, resource management objectives and required actions;
- provide for a certain level of resource protection, management use and development;
- be responsive to the issues (each issue must be addressed in at least one alternative or subalternative); and
- meet BLM requirements (all required alternatives for range, wilderness, or other programs must be incorporated in at least one alternative or subalternative).

ALTERNATIVES

There are five alternatives developed in this document. Alternative E has been selected as the Preferred Alternative. All alternatives respond to the planning questions that have been asked about the respective issues. Each alternative has categorized the public lands into one of four multiple use and transfer classes. The classes are discussed below.

Multiple Use and Transfer Classes

Each alternative will have its public lands assigned to one of these three multiple use or transfer classes: moderate use class, intensive use class, limited use class, or transfer class.

Description of Alternatives

Multiple use and transfer classes serve two purposes in this plan. The first is to describe overall resource opportunities and constraints by indicating what level of resource production and use is appropriate, what intensity of management is needed, whether there are sensitive and significant resources which must be protected, and whether BLM would transfer public lands from its jurisdiction. The second is to provide a basis for developing specific resource management objectives and actions for each multiple use area with general purpose and policy statements.

Prior to undertaking or approving any proposed resource management action on public lands in the Resource Area, BLM will ensure that such action is consistent with the purpose and policies of the multiple use or transfer class or classes involved and that adequate public involvement is obtained.

Public lands are placed in the multiple use or transfer class that best reflects the specific resources and management priorities for the area. The purposes of these classes are described below and to a greater degree, in Part I page 18 of the Plan.

Moderate Use Class

Purpose - The purpose of a moderate use class is to delineate public lands which are suitable for a wide variety of existing and potential uses.

Intensive Use/Development Class

Purpose - The purpose of an intensive use/development class is to delineate areas suitable for large scale, intensive use and development such as developed recreation, communication or power sites.

Limited Use Class

Purpose - The purpose of a limited use class is to delineate public lands where strict environmental controls are required to protect sensitive and significant resources.

Transfer Class

Purpose - The purpose of a transfer class is to delineate public lands which may be considered for transfer out of federal ownership. The transfer class is divided into five categories: Sale (T1), Sale or Exchange (T2), Exchange (T3), Agricultural Entry (T4), and Special Exchange Lands (T5).

ALTERNATIVES IN DETAIL

The following section describes the formatting used to present all five alternatives developed for the Cascade RMP. The format for the presentation of the alternatives is as follows: goal, resource activity, management objectives, management actions and special considerations. The activities that relate to the issues are addressed in the following sequence:

Livestock Resources		
Watershed Resources		Issue: Rangeland
Vegetative Resources	relate to	Resource Management
Wildlife Resources		
Riparian & Aquatic Resources		
Lands and Realty	relate to	Issue: Land Tenure Adjustment
Recreation Resources	relate to	Issue: Payette River Corridor Management
Cultural & Paleontologic Resources		Management Concerns
Forest Resources	relate to	and general
Mineral Resources		management
Off-Road Vehicles		

This format is used to assist the reviewer in comparing and tracking the differences between the alternatives and to see how the issues are handled. The Preferred Alternative appears in both Part I (The Plan) and Part II (FEIS).

OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

The following planning decisions from the approved Boise Front and Black Canyon management framework plans (MFPs) would apply to all alternatives:

Boise Front MFP

Recreation

Vehicular use on public land would be restricted to designated roads and trails as identified on the MFP Step II overlay. Highland Valley Road and Shaw Mountain Road would be closed to vehicular travel from December 15 to April 1 for deer winter range protection.

Black Canyon MFP

Recreation Off-Road Vehicles

Open ORV use areas identified on Map 2-4 are: 1) Little Gem Cycle Park, and 2) Parma and Dewey ORV parks. Limited ORV use would restrict motorized vehicles to existing roads and trails throughout the remainder of the planning unit.

Wildlife

A long-billed curlew habitat area has been identified in the Black Canyon Planning Unit with management guidelines that include retention of the area in federal ownership, ORV restrictions, litter control, maintenance of short grass types and development of the habitat management plan.

Description of Alternatives

The following objectives and actions would apply to all alternatives:

Watershed

Objectives

Improve or maintain the condition of annual and native ranges.

Protect high erosion hazard (HEH) areas and the banks of streams, lakes and reservoirs.

Actions

Prevent or control surface disturbing activities on soils with high or very high soil erosion hazard ratings.

Seed disturbed areas (burn or mechanical) with selected plant species.

Limit ORV activity in most areas of High Erosion Hazard (HEH) potential to existing or designated roads and trails.

Establish grazing management systems for critical HEH areas.

Limit mechanical rangeland treatments in HEH areas.

Wildlife

Objectives

Protect crucial habitat of federal and state listed "endangered, threatened or sensitive" species.

Protect crucial habitat of big game and upland game bird species.

Actions

Allow no disturbance during crucial time periods (see special stipulations).

Initiate special management for crucial habitat areas.

Riparian and Aquatic

Objectives

Protect stream, lake and reservoir banks from disturbance, erosion or pollution.

Actions

Provide buffer zones along stream banks and implement guidelines for activities occurring within this zone.

Lands and Realty

Objectives

Optimize public use and management of the public lands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

Actions

Remove unneeded withdrawals on public lands.

Provide opportunities for utility rights-of-way. Encourage future rights-of-way to be located within or adjacent to existing rights-of-way. Restrict rights-of-way in areas with high resource values.

Cultural Resources

Objectives

Protect cultural resources.

Actions

Design and locate projects to minimize impacts.

Salvage those sites where avoidance is not practical. Consult with the SHPO on possibly significant sites.

Paleontologic

Objectives

Protect paleontologic values found on public lands and ensure that they remain available for collection as appropriate.

Actions

Allow no mechanical disturbance (including fire equipment) on scientifically significant paleontologic sites.

Collection of vertebrate fossils will be by permit only for professional use.

Allow no surface occupancy (leasable minerals) on sites with known paleontologic values.

Surface or subsurface ROWs will be designed and routed to avoid paleontologic sites.

ORV activity will be limited to existing roads and trails on known paleontologic sites.

Description of Alternatives

Recreation

Objectives

Provide for a variety of recreation opportunities.

Action

Continue management of intensive use areas for ORV activities, boat launching, and camping.

Continue to make all lands available for casual, dispersed recreation use.

Visual

Objectives

Protect the scenic values of public lands, particularly along the Payette River Scenic Route and along the South Fork of the Payette River.

Manage 81,000 acres under Class II, 383,466 acres under Class III and 23,000 acres under Class IV VRM guidelines.

Actions

All land manipulation (burns, seeding, timber harvest, etc.) or project development (fences, transmission towers, etc.) will be designed to have no or minimal visual impacts (blend into setting) particularly along the Payette River (all forks).

Fire

Objectives

Protect the public resources from damages due to wildfire (natural or human caused).

Use prescribed fire to help meet livestock and wildlife objectives.

Reduce frequency of and potential for fire, especially human-caused uncontrolled wildfire.

Rehabilitate all burned areas where feasible.

Actions

Take full suppression action on all fires. High intensity suppression actions will be taken where fire danger is rated as extreme, or when high resource values are threatened. Schedule prescribed fire to improve vegetative production or wildlife habitat.

Pursue an aggressive prevention program.

Give full consideration to wildlife and livestock needs when rehabilitating burned areas.

Create buffer strips (greenstripping) utilizing vegetative species resistant to fire spread. Buffer strips would be established to reduce fire size and occurrence on large expanses of annual grasses. Strips would also be used to protect remaining valuable brush habitat.

Minerals

Objectives

Insure that energy and nonenergy minerals development is encouraged in a manner that satisfies national and local needs and provides for economically and environmentally sound exploration, extraction, and reclamation practices.

Actions

Continue to allow energy and nonenergy mineral leasing and development.

Work with mining claimants to minimize or eliminate adverse environmental impacts.

Encourage the use of existing materials sites as needed and allow new sites to be developed in an environmentally sound manner.