

PART I

PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Cascade Resource Management Plan (RMP) is being prepared to provide the Bureau of Land Management, Boise District Office with a comprehensive framework for managing 487,466 acres of BLM-administered public land over the next 20 years.

The Cascade Resource Area (CRA) encompasses approximately 2.77 million acres of land bounded by the Snake River on the south and west, the boundary of the Payette National Forest (as far north as Oxbow Dam and Payette Lake), the boundary of the Boise National Forest to the east, the Mora Canal/Boise River to the south and the Ada-Canyon County line from the Mora canal to the Snake River. Of this area, 18% (487,466 acres) is public lands administered by the BLM, 7% (approximately 183,000 acres) is state lands and 75% (approximately 2,100,000 acres) is private or other land holdings. The public land holdings containing both scattered tracts and large blocks of land (Map 2) are located in Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Gem, Payette, Valley and Washington Counties in Idaho.

The basic purposes of this plan are: 1) to ensure that public lands will be managed in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield and other principles as outlined in BLM planning regulations; and 2) to ensure that the objectives and actions are responsive to the major issues and achieve an equitable and proper balance of resource use and protection as determined through public participation, consultation, coordination, and cooperation.

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process described in BLM Planning Regulations 43 CFR 1600 used for preparing the RMP contains nine steps. These steps and the dates they were completed are shown in Figure 1. The planning process started in October 1983 and will be completed by October 1987. The process was driven by planning issues identified by the BLM and the general public. These issues are discussed in detail in the following section and addressed in all alternatives.

ISSUES

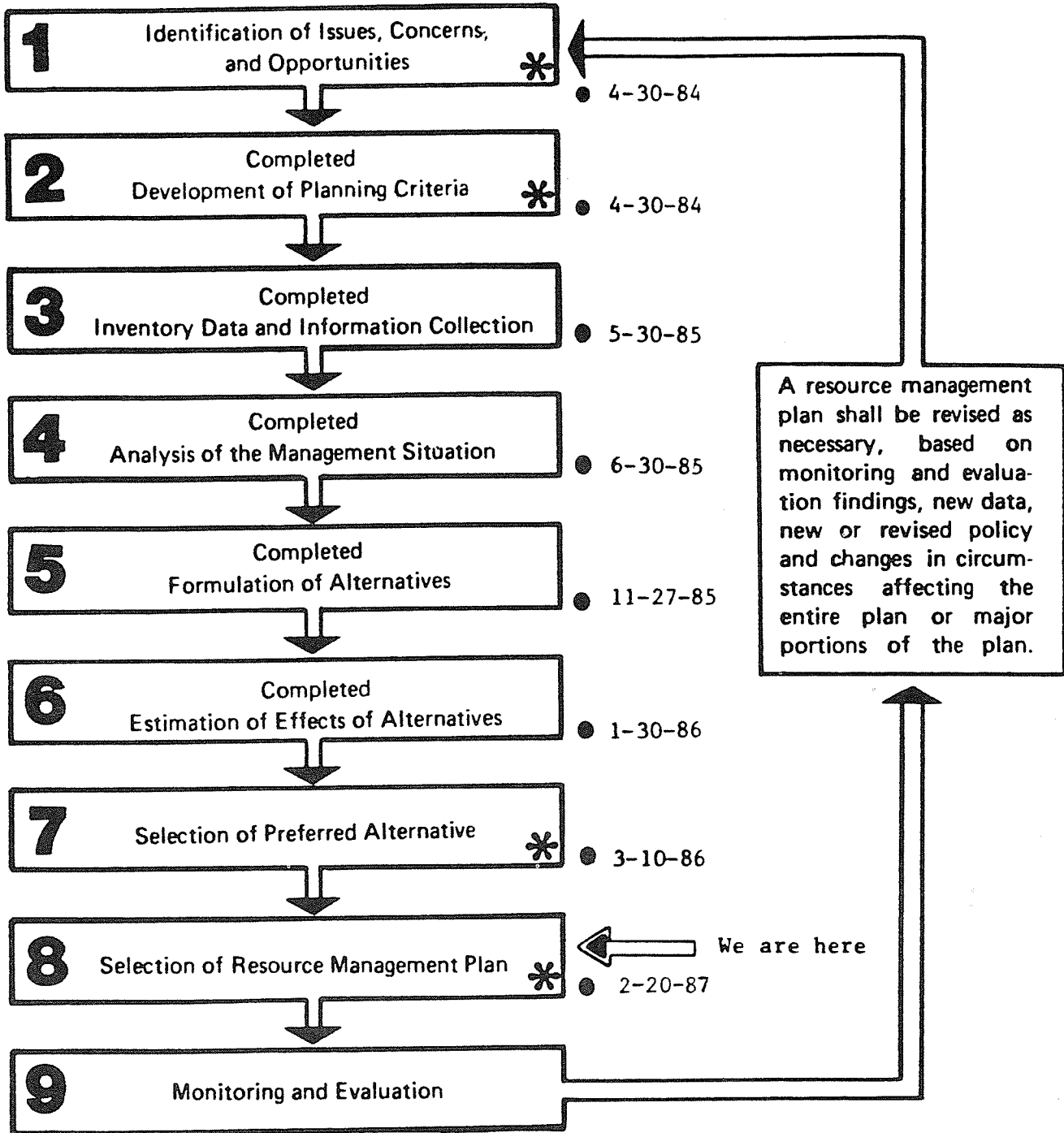
RANGELAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Issue Analysis

The management of the rangeland resource involves the distribution of vegetation among consumptive and nonconsumptive uses. Nonconsumptive uses include protection of the watershed, maintenance of visual or esthetic values, providing for the physiological needs of the vegetation and satisfying habitat requirements of wildlife. The vegetation available for

Figure 1

STEPS IN THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS



* Steps Requiring Public Participation

● Date Completed

consumptive uses includes production of forage for wildlife, livestock and wild horses. Other considerations in the management of the range resource include the protection of crucial wildlife habitat (including big game, upland, and sensitive species), the management of riparian and wetland/meadow areas, the development of projects to improve the forage resource base, the management of the wild horse herds and protection of threatened and endangered plants.

Competition exists between and among the interests. As an example, the livestock industry endorses management to increase forage production and in return increase the number of AUMs available. Other interests contend that not enough attention and protection is given to other important uses such as critical wildlife areas or watershed.

Issue Questions

In order to resolve this issue, this plan will address the following questions:

1. In what proportion will vegetation be provided for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses including livestock, wild horses, wildlife, watershed and esthetics?
2. In what proportion will increased vegetation be provided for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses?
3. What areas have the potential and what range improvement practices will be used to increase forage production?
4. What areas will be covered by management plans or intensive management?
5. How will ranges dominated by cheatgrass/medusa be managed?
6. What management and protection actions should be established for riparian, wet meadow, and natural areas?
7. What management actions are needed in critical wildlife and watershed areas?
8. What management objectives, including herd size and use areas, will be established for the wild horse herds?
9. What criteria should be established for fire rehabilitation?

RMP Action Contemplated

1. Identify areas that are currently understocked/overstocked or contain a forage utilization conflict. Propose adjustments as deemed necessary, monitor to further define the extent of the conflict and make appropriate adjustments based on the monitoring.
2. A list of conditions to be satisfied will be developed. Availability (use of) of vegetation will be based on these conditions.

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3. Specific sites will have various potentials and be suitable for various treatments. Evaluate the various alternatives and designs of range improvements and identify any conflicts these alternatives may create. The general types, locations and extent of range and watershed improvements will be outlined.
4. Identify areas on which AMP's, HMP's, WHMP's or watershed management plans will be implemented.
5. Evaluate management techniques and monitor areas to determine whether effective management can be applied to this range.
6. Evaluate condition of these zones. Projects will be designed and established for the protection, improvement and maintenance of these areas. Which areas should be managed as natural areas (outstanding, research, etc.).
7. Evaluate AUM utilization, wildlife needs, vegetation condition and soil management and develop management objectives.
8. Determine viability of present horse herds. Determine if present management plans are adequate.
9. A list of constraints or guidelines will be developed for fire rehabilitation areas. Procedures will be detailed on a case by case basis.

LAND TENURE ADJUSTMENT

Issue Analysis

A significant portion of the public lands within the Cascade Resource Area consists of scattered isolated tracts with no legal access. Because of these characteristics, they are difficult and uneconomic to manage. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 provides for the transfer (sale or exchange) of such tracts if they are not suitable for management by another Federal department or agency.

In spite of the authority and tract characteristics, segments of the public believe that these lands should be retained in Federal ownership to maintain the public land base or known resource values and preserve future management opportunities and options. Similarly, a second segment of the public believes the lands should be retained, or, if necessary exchanged to block-up existing public land holdings or acquire land with significant public values.

In contrast to the two above, a third segment of the public believes the tracts should be sold.

Issue Questions

The Cascade Resource Management Plan will address the question, "What lands should be sold, exchanged or retained to best serve the public interest and/or improve public land management?"

RMP Action Contemplated

Identify lands for disposal (sale or exchange) or retention.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS IN THE PAYETTE RIVER CORRIDORIssue Analysis

The Payette River System is an important resource area with numerous multiple-use concerns. The concerns involve existing and potential uses including recreation activities on and adjacent to the river, wildlife habitat (including fisheries), timber, minerals, hydroelectric power generation and water quality. There are conflicts between and among these various uses.

Administration of the public lands along the river is a complex issue because of the various interests; State of Idaho, BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Payette River system is very popular and use levels for recreation are increasing because of the proximity to the Treasure Valley and the national recognition the river has received for its whitewater boating qualities.

Segments of the river have been identified as having potential for addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and appeared in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory, National Park Service, January, 1982.

Issue Questions

In order to resolve this issue, the plan will address the following questions:

1. Should the BLM recommend (via the Department of the Interior) that Congress amend the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to add the South Fork and Main Stem from the Sawtooth Wilderness Area boundary downstream to Banks, and/or the North Fork Payette from McCall downstream to slack water at Cascade Reservoir and from Cascade Dam downstream to confluence with mainstem at Banks, Idaho as a study river?
2. How should the public lands (BLM) along the river and within the Payette River corridor be managed?
3. What types and levels of recreation use should BLM plan and provide for on those public lands within the corridor?

RMP Action Contemplated

1. The RMP will recommend which segments of the Payette River system should be studied for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and how the public lands in the corridor will be managed during the interim.
2. Recreation facility developments and use levels will be identified.

3. Make recommendations concerning existing withdrawals and any need for future withdrawals, such as for mineral segregation.

IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE ISSUES

The Analysis of Management Situation has assessed future management opportunities. New issues/concerns/policy requirements may emerge at any time during the planning process, and if significant, will be added as an issue/concern for consideration in the RMP.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

Access

The public expressed an interest in having access to all public lands. The RMP will identify where access to public lands is needed.

Off-Road Vehicles

All public land will be placed in one of three categories - open, limited or closed. The Boise Front MFP designated all land in the planning unit as limited to designated roads and trails, and this classification will stand in the RMP. The Black Canyon MFP identified three areas as open ORV parks while the rest of the area is limited to designated roads and trails.

Fire Management

The RMP will identify specific areas where fire will be used as a vegetative management tool. The entire area has been identified for full suppression.

Timber Base Allocation

The RMP will evaluate changes in the commercial forest base and levels of timber harvest due to acreage lost through exchange or restrictions such as critical, threatened and endangered habitats. A range of harvest levels will be developed in the plan. One will be identified as the preferred level.

Wilderness

The Cascade Resource Area was reviewed for wilderness study area status. One area, Box Creek, adjacent to the Payette National Forest was previously identified because of its proximity to a Forest Service roadless area. There were no additional lands identified in the scoping process for consideration as wilderness under Section 202 of FLPMA. The Box Creek WSA (110-91A) will be analyzed in a separate wilderness document and not in this plan/EIS. To avoid impairment of wilderness values, it will be managed under the provisions of the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review pending a final wilderness decision.

Special Designations

The RMP will identify areas for special designation and management (ACEC, National Register of Historic Places and Research Natural Areas).

APPROVED MFP PLANNING DECISIONS CARRIED THROUGH RMP

Boise Front MFP

Recreation

Vehicular use on public lands will be restricted to designated roads and trails as identified on the Step II overlay. Highland Valley Road and Shaw Mountain Road - will be closed to vehicular travel from January 1 - April 1 for deer winter range protection.

Black Canyon MFP

Recreation

Off-road vehicles - open areas identified on Step II overlay are: 1) Little Gem Cycle Park, and 2) Parma and Dewey ORV Parks. Limited Use Area - restrict motorized vehicles to existing roads and trails throughout the remainder of Black Canyon 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 during nesting season, litter control, and maintenance of the short grass types.

NON ISSUE/MANAGEMENT CONCERN PROGRAMS

Resource programs which have not surfaced as issues or management concerns will be addressed as follows in all alternatives.

Minerals

Areas now restricted/closed to mineral leasing, exploration, and development will continue to be so designated in all alternatives. Any additional segregations/restrictions (or revocations) on mineral activities will be evaluated during impact assessment and identified in Chapter 4.

Visual

Current visual resource management will apply to all alternatives.

Social and Economic

Social and economic concerns will be considered during all phases of the planning process, although no major concerns have been identified at this time.

Cultural and Paleontologic Resources

The RMP will provide for management and protection of these resources at generally the same level in all alternatives unless future information, policy, or public concerns dictate otherwise.

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PLANNING CRITERIA

The following general criteria were used to prepare this plan:

1. Social and economic values;
2. Plans, programs, and policies of other Federal agencies, State and local government, and Indian tribes;
3. Existing laws, regulations, and BLM policy;
4. Future needs and demands for existing or potential resource commodities and values;
5. Public input;
6. Public welfare and safety;
7. Past and present use of public and adjacent lands;
8. Public benefits of providing goods and services in relation to costs;
9. Quantity and quality of noncommodity resource values; and
10. Environmental impacts.

Specific Idaho State-wide Planning Criteria (Idaho RMP Guidebook) and Instruction Memorandum ID-83-396 (governing land tenure adjustments) were followed. In addition, the following land disposal criteria were used to guide our land tenure related issues/questions.

1. Lands identified for transfer by sale may also be considered for disposal by means of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, Desert Land Act, Carey Act, state-in-lieu selection, exchange or other means authorized by law.
2. Lands identified for transfer by "exchange only" will not be considered for disposal by other means.