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BLM extends comment period on draft North Fork Malheur Plan

VALE, Oregon – The public will have an additional month to comment on the North Fork Malheur Geographic Management Area Plan and Environmental Assessment released for comment by the Bureau of Land Management's Vale District in April.

The original deadline for comment was May 22. Several comments have already been received according to Pat Ryan, Malheur Resource Area Manager, including a request to allow more time to review the lengthy document. Today Ryan announced his decision to extend the comment period to June 22.

The North Fork Malheur Geographic Management Area (GMA) is located on the western boundary of the Vale District at the junction of Malheur, Harney and Grant counties. The area encompasses 123,000 acres of public land consisting of 19 grazing allotments managed by 14 livestock permittees.

BLM Field Offices throughout the West have been directed to conduct rangeland health assessments. The purpose for the assessments is to provide BLM with a rational basis for determining whether current management practices are meeting the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health as described in the Code of Federal Regulations.

The upland rangelands and riparian areas within the North Fork Malheur GMA were assessed by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists. This document reports the findings of the assessment as well as develops recommendations that should provide progress in meeting the Standards.

The recommendations are described under three alternatives and were developed to address natural resource concerns within the GMA. The proposed alternative would implement changes in livestock management, and proposed rangeland projects would be constructed or implemented in order to make progress in achieving the Standards.

The resource area will be contacting those individuals making comments if any clarification is needed on the ideas presented. Following evaluation of the comments received, the Resource Area will address the input and issue a Record of Decision.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the plan, please contact the Malheur Resource Area Manager at 541-473-3144.

