

Summary of the Proposed Action

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Upper Snake River District (USRD) proposes to amend four land use plans in order to define new land tenure adjustment criteria and designate three new Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) within the USRD's Shoshone Field Office area (see Map 1). The proposed amendments would amend the Magic Management Framework Plan (MFP) (1975), Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP (1976), Sun Valley MFP (1982), and Monument Resource Management Plan (RMP) (1985). [Note: As a result of administrative boundary reorganizations that occurred since completion of the Monument RMP, the eastern section of public lands administered under the Monument RMP are now managed by the Burley Field Office. The proposed amendments would only apply to the portion of the Monument RMP still within the management control of the Shoshone Field Office.] These four plans provide a framework for land use allocations and management of public lands within the 1.44 million-acre Shoshone Field Office area. The proposed amendments would replace existing land tenure adjustment decisions in those plans and make new ACEC designation and management decisions. Other management decisions in the current plans would remain unchanged.

One of the actions proposed (designation of the King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA) would also amend the Jarbidge RMP (BLM 1987). The Jarbidge RMP provides management direction for public lands administered by the Four Rivers Field Office, Lower Snake River District, BLM.

The proposed amendments were developed to achieve the following:

- Establish new direction for land tenure adjustment within the Shoshone Field Office area.
- Make lands available for public purposes, including city, county, State, and Tribal purposes.
- Make decisions regarding ACECs nominations and management direction.
- Provide for planning consistency within the BLM's Shoshone Field Office management area.

The Shoshone Field Office sought public and tribal input on the proposed amendments during an initial scoping period and a recent, 60-day public comment period on a Draft Amendments/Environmental Assessment document (USDI-BLM, June 2002). The BLM also initiated and completed consultation with the two affected tribes (Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State Historic Preservation Office. Further details on the consultation, coordination, and public involvement process for this planning effort are described in Appendix A (see pages 47-48).

The Draft Amendments/Environmental Assessment described and analyzed existing management (Alternative 1) and three "action" alternatives to amend the existing land use plans (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4). Alternative 3 was identified as the BLM's preferred alternative. The proposed amendments carry forward the management direction described as Alternative 3 with only a few changes, as noted below.

Changes to the Preferred Alternative

The list below summarizes the changes made to the preferred alternative (Alternative 3) when developing the proposed amendments. Page number and map references are to pages and maps in this Proposed Amendments document. All text changes are also identified (through highlighting) where they occur in the document.

- **Map 3 (p. 12) and pp. 11 and 14:** Along the west side of the Lincoln-Gooding county line northeast of Gooding, Idaho, approximately 6,000 acres were removed from Zone 2 and placed in Zone 4.
- **Pages 16 and 19:** Zone 5 management direction was revised to clarify that sales to private land owners would only be for small, isolated parcels generally left from mining patents or a resurvey by the USDI Cadastral Survey.
- **Page 20:** Management direction for aquifer recharge sites was revised to provide for potential exchanges with or sales to the State of Idaho or other public entities. The action also describes management direction for an existing flood control site (ancillary benefit to the aquifer recharge program).
- **Page 23:** Changes were made to water rights management direction to clarify that the Shoshone Field Office will follow current Idaho water law and BLM water rights policy.
- **Page 22:** Changes were made to clarify the management direction for future (new) short- and long-term use authorizations.
- **Map 5 (p. 32) and pp. 28-29:** Changes were made to the map and text to revise the King Hill Creek ACEC boundary (changes to the western boundary along the southern-most portion of the ACEC) and acreage (reduced from 2,880 to 2,500 acres).
- **Pages 11, 13, and 25:** Changes were made to clarify the BLM's priorities for acquiring public access in Zones 1 and 2.

Note: Comments on the Draft Amendments/Environmental Assessment pointed out several revisions that were needed to the Environmental Assessment (EA) portion of the document. Those corrections and additions to the EA are described in Appendix B (pp. 49-50).

Planning Issues and Concerns

The proposed amendments address the following concerns related to the two planning issues:

Land Tenure Adjustment

- Improve manageability of public lands by consolidating ownership and focusing on management priorities within watersheds.
- Emphasize retention and acquisition of high resource value lands and public access.
- Provide for disposal of lower resource value and/or scattered and isolated parcels.
- Provide for resolution of long term unauthorized uses.
- Establish criteria to consistently evaluate land tenure adjustment proposals.

- Increase flexibility to meet the existing and future land tenure adjustment needs of private individuals; local, state, and federal government agencies; Indian tribes; and the BLM.
- Improve the efficiency of the land tenure adjustment process.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Designations

- Carry forward ACEC nominations that meet both relevance and importance criteria for designation.
- Propose as ACECs only those nominated areas where designation is the most appropriate avenue to provide special management for the identified values and resources.
- Identify special management to maintain or enhance the identified values and resources.

Consistency with Related Plans, Programs, and Policies

NEPA implementing regulations (40 CFR 1502.16(c)) and BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.3-2) direct the BLM to develop plan amendments that are consistent with the officially approved and adopted resource-related plans, programs, and policies of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian tribes. During scoping and initial coordination with representatives of tribal, local, State, and Federal government, the BLM identified several concerns which were considered throughout the amendments planning effort. These concerns were addressed to the extent possible in the Draft Amendments/Environmental Assessment distributed in June 2001. Representatives of state and local governments commented on the Draft Amendments/EA; these comments were considered when developing the proposed amendments described in this document. The BLM believes the proposed amendments to be consistent with the officially approved and adopted resource-related plans, programs, and policies of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian tribes.

Further information on the BLM's consistency efforts during the amendments planning process is presented in Appendix A (pages 47-48).

Affected Area

The BLM's Shoshone Field Office manages approximately 1.44 million acres of public lands in south-central Idaho (see Map 2). Public lands comprise approximately 52% of the total land within the planning area (2.77 million acres), which lies within Blaine, Camas, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Elmore, and Minidoka counties. Private lands account for approximately 1.2 million acres, or 43% of the planning area, while State lands total 144,000 acres or 5%. The planning area contains 20 areas with special management and/or designations that recognize nationally and locally important resources and values, including 14 Wilderness Study Areas comprising 159,506 acres, five ACECs totaling 18,963 acres, and four Land and Water Conservation Fund purchases totaling 943.01 acres. These designations total about 12.5% of the public lands managed by the BLM Shoshone Field Office. In addition, the planning area has nine eligible Wild and Scenic River segments totaling 88.3 stream miles.

The proposed designation of the King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA would also affect approximately 840 acres of public lands managed by the Four Rivers Field Office - BLM in the King Hill Creek area (see Map 5, p. 32).