

**COMMUNICATION
AND
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING
FOR
THE BRUNEAU PLANNING AREA**

**SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY
NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA**

AND

OTHER DISTRICT PLANNING EFFORTS

July 5, 2002

CONTENTS

PURPOSE	1
BACKGROUND	1
GOALS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN	2
OBJECTIVES	3
PRELIMINARY LIST OF KEY ISSUES	4
KEY MESSAGES	5
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	6
KEY GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL INTEREST GROUPS	9
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -TOOLS, KEY STAGES, ACTIVITIES & SCHEDULE	10
EVALUATION	14

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this communications plan is to provide guidance and direction for internal and external communications and public involvement activities associated with the development and implementation of the two Resource Management Plans (RMP's) for the Bruneau Planning Area and the Snake River Birds of Prey (BOP) National Conservation Areas (NCA). This document identifies the goals and objectives of the communications and public participation activities that are critical to successful development and implementation of the two RMP's. Also identified are preliminary management concerns, key messages, roles and responsibilities, and targeted audiences. Maps, a schedule of major RMP milestones, and public participation details are also included. A communications strategy was also developed to accompany this document.

2. BACKGROUND

The format and process for the RMP will be based on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land (BLM) planning regulations, manuals and handbooks, and applicable policy documents. This includes the recent CEQ memorandum to the heads of Federal agencies on the subject of "Cooperating Agencies in Implementing the Procedural Requirements of NEPA", to ensure Federal Agencies actively engage state, local and other Federal agencies in preparation of NEPA analyses and documentation.

The BLM, Lower Snake River District (LSRD), plans to use an approach in preparing the two RMP's begun in 2001, and other planning efforts that mirrors the spirit of Secretary Gail Norton's "4C's" initiative - communication, cooperation, consultation, all in the service of conservation". This initiative complements BLM's initiatives to foster citizen participation in the development of its land use plans. The goal of this approach is to provide the public with an opportunity to have some ownership in the plans through participation in their development, with the desired outcome of increased support for the decisions and their implementation. This is a significant departure from the approach of simply seeking public comment on interdisciplinary team-developed alternatives and proposals. Other land and resource "stewards", including the Tribes, Federal and state agencies, state, county, and city governments are being asked to share relevant data and other information that can help during development of management alternatives, and provide review and comment throughout the NEPA portion of the planning process as well. Interested individuals and non-governmental organizations are also invited to actively participate throughout the process.

BLM is hopeful that the citizens, governmental agencies, state and local officials and non-governmental organizations will assist BLM in a meaningful and productive manner in the development and implementation of these two RMPs. Numerous opportunities for information sharing, and participation are detailed in the public participation section.

The RMP process provides significant opportunities for the public to assist with issue identification, alternatives development and analysis and review. From November 2001 to January 2002, BLM hosted six open-house scoping meetings throughout the planning area where individuals, governmental, and non-governmental agencies and organizations were invited to identify and discuss management issues and concerns with BLM's interdisciplinary team. These issues were recorded during the meetings, and other written comments were received during the comment period that lasted from November 2001 through the end of February 2002.

Following the scoping meetings, BLM plans to provide the public with a summary of the issues. Public workshops hosted by the LSRD Resource Advisory Council (RAC) will help BLM develop a range of management alternatives to be analyzed in the RMP/EIS. Currently available data gathered from the two planning areas will be used in developing and assessing the alternatives as well as the issues identified during scoping. Public meetings will be held to explain the preferred alternative and other alternatives analyzed in the draft RMP/EIS. The public will be invited to attend these meetings and will be asked to review the alternatives and provide BLM with written input on the preferred alternatives and analysis in the draft EIS.

These comments will be incorporated into the proposed final RMP/EIS which is scheduled to be available during the spring and summer 2004. The Governor then has a 60-day review period, and there is a 30 day protest period. If appropriate, BLM will amend the document to address specific comments received from the Governor or protests received from the public. A record of decision (ROD) will then be prepared for the BLM State Director's signature. The ROD is scheduled for preparation and signature during the summer 2004.

3. GOALS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

BLM is under increased scrutiny in the management of public lands and national conservation areas. External and internal outreach efforts are critical in communicating goals and objectives for the management and use of the Bruneau Planning Area and Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area.

This communications plan establishes six key goals:

1. Develop a consistent, meaningful and coordinated approach to external and internal communication themes and outreach strategies for development of the Resource Management Plans for the Bruneau Planning Area and Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Areas.
2. Increase public awareness and understanding of natural resource planning and public lands stewardship through meaningful and productive constituent and local stakeholder involvement in the development of the two RMPs.

3. Achieve increased public support for RMP decisions.
4. Increase use of the “4C’s”- communication, cooperation and consultation all in the service of conservation with Tribes, Federal and state agencies, state, and local elected and appointed officials.
5. Encourage BLM employee participation in the development and implementation process.
6. Evaluate the success of the communications and public participation activities through external and internal feedback mechanisms.

4. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are key to meeting the goals of this communications and public involvement plan and associated actions having measurable results:

- Establish networks and procedures to ensure that accurate and consistent messages are communicated about the RMP’s to internal and external stakeholders and the public.
- Develop and implement communications tools, products and services to meet the informational and educational needs of the public and the many constituencies served by BLM. (Tools include news releases, newsletters, an internet planning website and a situation assessment.) Continue to identify and use creative and non-traditional planning and collaboration options.
- Provide frequent opportunities for two-way dialogue throughout the planning process with interest groups, (e.g. Audubon Society) and interested constituents (e.g. livestock permittees). Extensive public involvement is an integral part of the communications plan. A public participation section is included with this plan.
- Use a collaborative approach with Tribes, Federal and state agencies, and state, and local government officials throughout the planning process to address common needs and goals within the planning areas. A collaborative approach will provide opportunities for other land and resource stewards to identify sources for additional data, to comment on the preliminary list of bundled issues to help the public understand the process as management alternatives are developed for analysis in the RMP/EIS, and to provide BLM with comments on any other decision documents prior to public issuance.
- Solicit the active engagement of Tribal, state, and local governments and other Federal agencies as cooperating agencies in preparation of NEPA analyses and documentation for the two RMPs and for other planning efforts.

- Ensure continued internal communication with BLM employees about the RMP process, public involvement and collaborative approaches being undertaken, with frequent invitations to participate.
- Develop mechanisms to continually improve communications processes; identify successful efforts; enhance existing approaches (e.g. feedback cards can be used at open houses and workshops to solicit suggestions of participants for improvements to meeting format, presentations, information materials, meeting notification, etc...).

5. PRELIMINARY LIST OF KEY ISSUES

The BLM's interdisciplinary team identified a number of preliminary management issues common to both the Bruneau Planning Area and Snake River Birds of Prey NCA. There are also issues that are unique to each of the planning areas. This preliminary list was discussed, revised, and expanded at the open houses during scoping. A discussion of each issue is included as an attachment.

Common Issues:

Transportation and Off-Road Highway Vehicles (OHV) Management
 Recreation Management
 Special Status Species
 Cultural Resources
 Fire and Fuels Management
 Livestock Grazing Management

Bruneau RMP Issues:

Livestock Grazing Management
 Wilderness Study Areas
 Wild and Scenic River Designations
 Riparian-Wetland Habitat Management
 Fish Habitat Management
 Socio-Economic Sustainability of Local Communities

Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Issues:

Raptor Population Declines
 National Guard Military Training
 Habitat Restoration
 Upland Vegetation Management
 Urban Interface and Expansion
 Land Tenure Adjustments (including possible withdrawal of unexploded ordnance area)
 NCA Boundary Adjustment and Monumentation

6. KEY MESSAGES

- Resource Management Plans are BLM's basic land use document. They guide land use decisions and management actions on public lands for 20 years or more. RMP's establish goals and objectives for resource management (i.e. desired future conditions), and the measures needed to achieve these goals and objectives.
- RMP decisions ordinarily are made on a broad scale and customarily guide subsequent site-specific implementation decisions.
- RMP-level decisions may have broad implications for those who manage adjacent lands or resources. Thus, coordination is vital with Tribal, and other Federal and state agencies, and state and local government elected and appointed officials.
- When people, communities and governments work together towards a common objective, there is significant improvement in the stewardship of public lands. Thus, BLM is committed to completing these plans with an open, active public participation process.
- The RMP public participation process and other LSRD planning efforts mirror the intent of Secretary Norton's "4C's" initiative - "communication, cooperation and consultation, all in the service of conservation".
- BLM is inviting the Tribes, Federal and state agencies, state and local governments to become cooperating agencies, specifically those having jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise with respect to all reasonable alternatives or significant environmental, social or economic impacts associated with a proposed action that requires NEPA analysis.
- Throughout the RMP process and other planning efforts, we will look for opportunities to develop consultation agreements and other partnering arrangements with the Tribes, other Federal and state agencies, state and local governments, as well as non-governmental organizations interested in assisting LSRD as management alternatives are developed for analysis in the RMP/EIS and for other NEPA analyses and documentation.
- We will work with the public and constituents throughout the development and implementation of these two RMP's and other planning efforts in order that common needs and goals are addressed within the planning area, and there is shared "ownership" of the planning process, documents, management decisions, and implementation.
- The RMP and subsequent Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) route designation processes will result in the designation of a road and trail system to provide appropriate travel opportunities that balance public access needs and resource protection.
- Inventory and evaluation of the current road and trail network will lead to development of an OHV transportation system that balances public access and resource protection.

- The RMP's will incorporate the Idaho Standards and Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
- Rapid population growth in southwestern Idaho has led to increased demand for recreational opportunities on public lands. This increased recreational use may require restrictions to protect vulnerable resources and reduce user conflicts.
- The planning areas contain thousands of recorded and undiscovered prehistoric and historic sites. Management actions will be identified in the RMP's to protect cultural resources from the impacts of increased land use and associated development.
- The use of fire as a management tool will be addressed throughout the process.
- Rapid population growth in southwestern Idaho has led to increased demand on public lands, especially near the Boise urban interface area. The RMP's will analyze how potential BLM decisions may impact positively or negatively on the socio-economic structure of adjacent communities.
- The RMP will analyze and define a long-term strategy to maintain and restore the habitat components that are essential for preserving and enhancing prey and raptor populations in the NCA.
- The NCA enabling legislation provides for the continuation of existing uses unless they are determined to be incompatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established. The RMP will evaluate the compatibility of current and future uses that are proposed for the NCA, including recreation, livestock grazing and military training.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Participants with ongoing roles and responsibilities in the process include: a BLM Management Team; BLM Interdisciplinary Team; an Intergovernmental Coordination Group, Native American Tribes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Army National Guard, (for Birds of Prey NCA RMP only); and Lower Snake River District Resource Advisory Council.

BLM Management Team

State Director - Approves preparation plan; ensures availability of adequate budget and staff to complete planning efforts; approves documents for publication; files draft and final EIS with Environmental Protection Agency; signs Record of Decision for EIS; and approves RMP.

District Manager - Ensures availability of appropriate personnel to complete planning effort; briefs State Director on plans progress; and approves planning criteria

Field Office Managers - Owyhee Field Office Manager, Jenna Whitlock (Bruneau) and Four Rivers Field Office Manager, Daryl Albiston (Birds of Prey NCA) set priorities for planning effort; provide general direction for plan; and manage budget.

RMP Team Leaders - Mike O'Donnell is the lead for both RMP's. Implements priorities for completing planning efforts, provides oversight of plan details; coordinates with collaborators; tracks budget; and supervises interdisciplinary team. John Sullivan is the manager for the NCA, and Jenna Whitlock for the Bruneau. MJ Byrne oversees development of communication tools and public participation activities.

BLM Interdisciplinary (ID)Team

The ID Team identified the preliminary list of key issues in the two RMP's. After the preliminary list was reviewed by the public, this team reviewed the available data and determined additional data needs. Representatives from the ID team will meet with Federal and State agencies, Tribal, county and city interests to review the data needs and approach to be used in the analysis. Representatives from the ID team will meet with interested individuals, Tribal, governmental and non- governmental organizations at key decision points to keep them informed of progress during the analysis.

Team Lead/Planner	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Botanist	Socio-Economic Specialist
Ecologist	Soils/Hazmat Specialist
Fire/Fuels Management Specialist	Wildlife Biologist
GIS Specialist	Writer/Editor
Realty Specialist	Public Affairs Specialist
Geologist	Reviewers/LSRD/ISO
Rangeland Management Specialist	Archeologist

Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG)

The purpose of this group is to provide a forum for coordination and collaboration in development of the two RMPs and other planning efforts in southwestern Idaho. The ICG is a group of intergovernmental entities meeting to: increase two-way information sharing about natural resource guidance, documents, data and initiatives to ensure that information is considered; and to assist in resolving inconsistencies between federal and non-federal plans. The Idaho Army National Guard also participates, recognizing their significant presence within the NCA.

The ICG objectives are to:

- Pursue opportunities to develop complementary and coordinated plans with agencies and local governments
- Serve as liaison with state and Federal agencies, counties and communities

- Review and comment on issues to be addresses, alternatives formulation, and draft documents to identify potential inconsistencies with existing agency and local government plans and ongoing management initiatives
- Coordinate the sharing of data
- Assist in identifying opportunities for public involvement

The ICG confirmed that is expects to conduct meetings at the following junctures:

- Prior to finalizing issues to be addressed
- Prior to finalizing management alternatives to be analyzed in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Prior to finalizing decision documents so the ICG will have the opportunity to comment on consistency of issues and areas fo concern.
- At the request of any of the members

Native American Consultation

The primary tribes that we will consult with during the RMP/EIS planning process are the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation. We meet monthly with representatives of the two tribes for formal government-to government consultations to discuss our activities on public lands where they have demonstrated geographic, cultural, historic and other ties. The meetings are called Wings and Roots Native American Campfire. These meetings provide the Tribes an opportunity to express their concerns and participate in BLM’s decision-making process. We also have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. This MOU facilitates BLM’s consultation responsibilities and formalizes the government-to-government relationship between the BLM and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes as we work together to promote wise cultural and natural resource stewardship of public lands and protect the cultural heritage of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. In February 2002, this forum was expanded to begin an additional monthly meeting for consultation communication and collaboration focused specifically on the two RMPs.

Consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act

In August 2000, the BLM, Forest Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding programmatic consultation for RMP’s under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The MOA outlines guidance and procedures for section 7 consultations as well as consideration of candidate species conservation in the RMP’s. In April 2001, under the MOA, a Consultation Agreement was developed between the BLM and FWS as part of the planning process. It is anticipated that the Conservation Agreement for the Bruneau RMP will be developed and signed by the time scoping is initiated in October 2001. The Bruneau RMP will include appropriate protection and conservation elements for listed, proposed, and candidate species, and proposed or designated critical habitat.

Consultation with Idaho Army National Guard-(for Birds of Prey NCA RMP only)

The Idaho Army National Guard (IDARNG) conducts military training on about 30 % of the NCA in the Orchard Training Area (OTA). Because of the extent of this involvement, and decisions that the IDARNG needs to consider for future training, IDARNG has agreed to be a cooperating agency during the RMP/EIS planning and development process. An Interagency Agreement is nearing completion. This document will outline roles and responsibilities for communication, cooperation and consultation and result in a partnership that will enhance data sharing protocols, public participation activities, ID Team interactions and funding to address their training activities in the OTA.

Lower Snake River District Resource Advisory Council Planning Subgroup

The LSRD Resource Advisory Council (RAC) was created to provide representative citizen counsel and advice to BLM concerning the planning and management of the public land resources located within the Lower Snake River District. This group's membership consists of individuals who are holders of federal grazing permits, and representatives of energy and mineral development, timber industry, transportation, OHV, commercial and other private recreation interests. The group also has membership from nationally or regionally recognized environmental, archeological, and wild horse and burro groups, elected officials and employees of State agencies with natural resources responsibility, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes and the public-at-large. This broad cross section provides a unique opportunity to open the lines of communication between the public and the BLM planning teams. It was formed in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committees Act (FACA). This group will serve as a connection with various special interests to encourage their involvement, assist BLM with information dissemination, provide analysis of specific issues and concerns, assist with development, review and analysis of management alternatives for the two RMPs, and other planning efforts.

An RMP subgroup has been approved by the RAC to lead their efforts in assisting LSRD with the management alternatives development for the two RMPs.

8. KEY GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL INTEREST GROUPS

A mailing list identifying individuals (as Points of Contact) in organizations, agencies, and interest groups has been compiled and is used for information sharing and public education, notification of publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI), public meetings, input deadlines, other key milestones and announcements during the public participation process. Throughout the RMP/EIS process, the mailing list will be periodically revised, updated and expanded.

- Interested individuals (the public)
- Congressional representatives
- Native American Tribal governments
- State, county and local elected and appointed governmental representatives
- Federal, state and local agencies
- Resource Advisory Council
- County weed districts

- Grazing permittees
- Adjacent private landowners
- Right-of-way, permit and lease holders
- Interested businesses and consultants
- Commercial outfitters and guides
- Special interest groups
- News Media

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -TOOLS, KEY STAGES, ACTIVITIES & SCHEDULE

The goal of the public participation effort is to give all those identified in the previous section an opportunity to help identify issues, assist in shaping the alternatives that will be analyzed in the RMP/EIS, and to comment on the plans as they are formulated. Through participation in the development process, it is hoped that there will be greater ownership of the plans, as well as cooperation and participation in their future implementation.

The BLM seeks to provide public participation opportunities during key stages in the RMP planning process and the associated EIS that go beyond the formal requirements as stated in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. To do so, LSRD entered into an agreement in August 2001, with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (ECR) to help facilitate LSRD's collaborative public involvement process.

ECR is a federal program established by the U.S. Congress to assist parties in resolving environmental, natural resource, and public land conflicts. As part of the ECR team, two local facilitators were used to organize the scoping meetings and to provide on-going assistance with other public participation planning and activities. During the winter and spring of 2002, ECR conducted an Assessment of the current relationship between the LSRD and RMP stakeholders and inquired about the public's desired public involvement process. At the time of this printing, the Assessment is being prepared for distribution to Assessment interviewees, the ICG and the RAC.

Assessment results were used to design the next phase in the public participation plan. Those results told LSRD that given the existing state of the relationships of the LSRD with stakeholders and the relationship of stakeholders amongst themselves, that LSRD's objective for a highly collaborative and hands-on approach is not likely to be well received. Instead, the Assessment advised LSRD to design an approach that emphasized working within existing group structures (RAC, ICG, special interest groups) on a more individual basis. With ECR's assistance, the LSRD has designed a public participation program, the goal and objectives of which are outlined below:

Goal: To make better decisions with a greater base of public understanding, support and ownership.

Objectives:

1. To learn as much as possible from stakeholders to inform BLM decisions. Use stakeholders to help create a good information base.
2. To have an understanding of the agency's role and responsibilities, and what is and is not negotiable (laws, requirements, previous decisions, etc...)
3. To engage involved stakeholders in product development; Issue identification, issue bundling, alternative development, and review of draft EIS.
4. To provide a variety of involvement opportunities that enables stakeholders to engage at that level that best suits their level of interest.
5. To provide the public an accounting of how their input is used.
6. Seek as much consensus and common ground as possible.

Assumptions:

1. The proposed collaborative process is based on the assessment recommendations.
2. The process may be modified/enhanced based on expressed public interest and needs during process implementation.
3. BLM and neutrals must be mindful of the need for balanced representation of interests.

TOOLS

Partnering - Potential partnership opportunities exist throughout the Treasure Valley and to the south that could help BLM develop broader involvement in the planning process, and wider acceptance and ownership in the future management of the two areas. Agreements with the local counties and communities need to be explored to help identify activities and needs such as planning, transportation, emergency services, law enforcement, infrastructure and tourism. Potential partnerships include the cities of Kuna and Mountain Home, the NCA's two prominent gateway communities. Grandview and Bruneau are gateway communities for the Bruneau Planning Area.

Potential agency and private partners include the Idaho Army National Guard, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Power Company, Golden Eagle Audubon Society, Snake River Raptor Volunteers, Inc., Idaho Cattleman's Association, Owyhee Cattleman's Association, People for the Owyhees and other off highway vehicle (OHV) Associations, Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, Owyhee Borderlands Trust, Owyhee Soil Conservation Districts, The Nature Conservancy, The Wilderness Society, The Idaho Conservation League, and hunting and shooting organizations. As previously stated, BLM through the existing Memorandum of Understanding with the Shoshone-Paiute Native American Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation will offer to provide additional briefings and consultations on a government-to-government level, with members of the Tribal Business Council and other tribal officials. Briefings and consultations will also be offered with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation. These would be in addition to the already existing monthly consultations. The Tribes were invited and encouraged to participate in the scoping process, in development of alternatives, and in providing comments on the draft RMP/EIS. They are invited to attend and participate in the ICG, and in development of management alternatives. They will be asked to provide comments on the draft RMP/EIS,

and to provide feedback as part of an evaluation of the process.

The RMP Team Leader provides updates at the quarterly meetings of the LSRD's full Resource Advisory Council (RAC). An RMP subgroup was approved at the RAC's May 2002 meeting. This subgroup will assist LSRD in development of management alternatives for analysis in the EIS, by hosting public workshops where draft alternatives developed by the interdisciplinary team can be commented on. The RAC provides LSRD with advice on a range of issues including planning. The RAC includes representatives of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, the ranching community, environmental, motorized off-highway vehicles, mustang and wild horses, elected officials, state employees, and the public-at-large, in accordance with the requirements of FACA.

Web Site: An interactive internet web site was developed in the fall 2001 in cooperation with Idaho BLM. The address is <http://www.id.blm.gov/planning/index.htm>. The web site is home to all BLM planning efforts across the state. It provides educational information about both of the RMP and the NEPA processes. It provides diagrams illustrating both the RMP and NEPA processes, and answers to frequently asked questions about the RMP process. A map of the state shows the location of the RMP planning and the Monument areas. Key milestones and planned completion dates for the RMPs are shown. Fact sheets describing each RMP and maps of each area are included. The web site will enable the public and other interested governmental and non-governmental organizations to submit comments electronically throughout the planning process.

News releases will be issued by BLM to local and regional print, television and radio news media outlets throughout the planning process to provide background information, identify issues and concerns and updates about the planning and EIS process, and public participation activities. Two editions of the RMP newsletter have been published. The first was mailed to an extensive list of individuals and organizations prior to the scoping meetings. The second edition provided highlights of the public meetings. Future editions can be published quarterly to provide additional means of sharing information and updates. News releases and all newsletter editions will be added to the interactive planning web site as they are published.

B. KEY STAGES, ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

The RMP/EIS process began with the development of a Preparation Plan and publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register. The Plans were issued in the spring of 2001 and the NOI was published in the summer of 2001. Letters and information about the process were sent to points of contact on an extensive mailing list, notifying them of the publication of the NOI, informing them about the preparation and content of the plan, and outlining BLM's extensive public participation process. Briefings were conducted in the fall 2001, with Congressional, Tribal, and County officials from the four counties within the planning area, the ICG, and the RAC. LSRD has offered to brief other special interest groups if requested. Briefing materials developed include fact sheets on the NCA, and the Bruneau Planning Area, a list of frequently asked questions, and public participation strategy, a schedule that identifies planned completion dates of key milestone activities in the planning process, and maps of the planning areas. The fact sheets have been downloaded onto a land use planning web site for electronic

access and reading. Other documents may be developed as necessary during the development process. Print, television and radio news media will be kept informed about progress in development of the RMP's, the EIS's, and BLM's plans for extensive public participation during the four year planning process. They will be encouraged to provide ongoing coverage about the process as the RMP's are developed.

Scoping meetings Six facilitated open-house public meetings were held from November 2001 into January 2002. The open-house format was used to encourage two-way dialogue and to encourage discussions about: issues to be addressed in the plans; concerns with the process; the planning criteria; and development of the range of alternatives to be analyzed in the draft RMP/EIS. A public comment period provided opportunities to submit written comments on the proposed scope of the plan, planning criteria, etc. The web site address can be included in all the communications so comments can be submitted electronically.

Print, television and radio news media were also be notified with a news release. Paid advertising was placed in local and statewide newspapers about the scoping meetings. Phone calls were placed to local media outlets encouraging them to provide coverage of scoping meetings and as the process for the RMP's develop.

The time line is included as Attachment B, which outlines planned public involvement activities, and RMP and EIS development activities through the remainder of the RMP development process ending in the summer 2004. This document will be updated on a regular basis.

Following the scoping meeting, BLM briefed the ICG and the RAC on the bundled issues that were already identified by the RMP Interdisciplinary Team, those received at the scoping meetings and during the comment period.

Facilitated public workshops may conducted during fall 2002, to provide opportunities for the public, governmental and non-governmental organizations to assist BLM in review and refining of the draft management alternatives to be analyzed in the RMP/EIS. The RAC's subgroup on RMPs will assist LSRD with these workshops. Letters can be sent out to those on the mailing list inviting their participation in the workshops, and via a newsletter. During the workshops, participants can be asked whether they would like to be sent a copy of the draft RMP/EIS for their comments. News releases can be sent to the media before the workshops informing them of the purpose, dates and locations. After the workshops have concluded, a new edition of the newsletter could be developed and mailed giving an update on progress and accomplishments at the workshops. A news release can also be sent to local and regional print, television and radio media summarizing the progress made during the workshops.

Thirty days prior to issuance of the draft RMP/EIS, a notice can be published in the Federal Register, announcing the beginning of a 90-day public comment period on the draft RMP/EIS, providing information about the preferred alternative, and identifying dates and locations for public meetings to receive comments on the document. The notice can also be added to the planning web site. The comment period and availability of the draft RMP/EIS is scheduled to begin during the fall of 2003. Letters can sent to inform those on the mailing list of the

availability of the draft RMP/EIS, and about plans to conduct facilitated public meetings in order to gather comments and to provide another opportunity for the public to discuss their issues regarding the preferred alternative and the draft RMP/EIS with LSRD's RMP ID team. They will also be asked to notify BLM if they would like to receive a copy of the draft EIS.

Briefings can be conducted with Congressional, state and county government officials, the ICG, the RAC, and other special interest groups if requested. A news release can be sent to local and regional print, television and radio media. The next edition of the newsletter could be published announcing the availability of the draft RMP/EIS and 90 day comment period, dates and locations for the public meetings, and information about the preferred alternative. The draft RMP/EIS can be added to the land use planning web site in a read-only format. An electronic address will be included in all communications identifying where comments can be sent electronically.

Responses to comments received will be prepared as a comment response document and made available to the public when the Final RMP/EIS document is issued.

During the winter of 2004, the final RMPs and EISs will be prepared. A notice can be published in the Federal Register of the availability of the proposed final RMP/EIS. Copies can be sent to those that participated in the planning process along with a letter providing information about a 30-day protest period. A 60-day consistency review for the Governor also begins at the same time the notice is published. Congressional, state, and county government official briefings can be conducted and for other special interest groups if requested. News releases can be sent to local and regional print, television and radio news media announcing the availability, including information about the 30-day protest period. A new edition of the newsletter can be published and sent to those on the mailing list. It can announce the availability of the proposed final RMP/EIS, provide information about the 30-day protest period, and the 60-day period for the Governor's consistency review. The announcement of the availability and the document can also be added to the land use planning web site.

When the protest period has ended, and BLM has responded to all protests, a Record of Decision (ROD) is prepared for the BLM State Director's signature. That is scheduled to occur during the summer 2004. The ROD will include the two approved RMP's. The two approved plans are scheduled to be made available to the public by the summer 2004.

When the plans are published, letters can sent to those on the mailing list announcing the availability and providing a contact number or address to request a copy. A news release and new edition of the newsletter can be published summarizing key parts of the RMP's and providing information regarding ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities that will commence. The two RMP's and information regarding ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities can also be downloaded onto the planning web site.

10. EVALUATION

In order for the communications and public participation processes of the RMPs and other planning efforts to continually improve, by identifying successful efforts and others that can be improved the following tools can be used:

- Progress reports addressing the issue of cooperating agency status will be provided to CEQ bi-annually, beginning October 31, 2002.
- RMP newsletter published quarterly with an invitation for the public to provide feedback about the contents and suggestions for future articles.
- Provide monthly updates on RMP and other planning efforts including upcoming public participation opportunities to local, statewide and regional newspapers, television and radio stations across the LSRD.
- Solicit periodic evaluation and feedback of the public participation process including all printed informational material used for external audiences from managers and staff within BLM, and key stakeholders, especially those involved in the assessment process. The purpose will be to review the effectiveness of messages, coverage of issues, and to assess whether public understanding of the RMP process and other planning efforts has increased.
- Survey those individuals and organizations that are on the mailing list at the conclusion of the RMP process. Seek their input in what impact they felt they had at various points in the process and overall whether they felt their time and participation was useful and impacted the decision making process, ownership in the decisions and support for implementation of them.