

Snake River Birds of Prey

National Conservation Area



Bruneau Planning Area

RMP News

August 2002

Public Helps with Issue Development

On the evenings of July 8, 9, 10 and 11 public land users joined BLM staff in working through issue development for both the Bruneau and Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Resource Management Plans. Participants engaged in discussions regarding kinds and levels of decisions made in a Resource Management Plan. In addition, participants reviewed the Draft Issue Statements and provided valuable feedback on how the statements could more accurately reflect public concerns.

What We Heard About the Issues

A sampling of the comments are provided below:

- In many instances, issue statements are value laden and may imply a preference for one type of quality of land use over another.
- There is an implied preference for protection and enhancement of the resources without an adequate recognition of the role that agriculture and grazing play in also providing for that protection and enhancement.
- The rights and values of native people were not adequately addressed; there was similar feedback that the rights and values were overstated.
- Support for increased use of fire management as a tool in achieving desired vegetative conditions.
- Separate issues for wildlife and grazing need to be developed.
- Semantics were sometimes a concern.

If you would like to review the complete list of public comments, please check out the planning web site or contact Mike O'Donnell at 208-384-3315.

Why are Issues Important...

Land use issues and conflicts that need to be resolved must first be identified. Once the issues are identified a variety of alternatives can be developed and analyzed to come up with a "preferred alternative" for addressing these issues.

What Happens Next in Issue Development

The BLM Resource Management Plan Interdisciplinary Teams, along with Resource Advisory Council members, will meet on Tuesday, September 10.

The goals of this meeting are to:

1. Review and revise issue statements based on public input gathered during the July meetings;
2. Determine if all issues are represented; and
3. Finalize issue statements.

The meeting are open to anyone who is interested in observing this process. An opportunity to provide feedback will be made available. ***More details about this process will be provided in the near future.***

Types of Decisions in an RMP

At the public meetings we talked about the kinds of decisions made in Resource Management Plans versus “project level” decisions. *What’s the difference?*

Resource Management Plans

- # Are the BLM’s basic land use document;
- # Guide land use decisions and management actions for 20 years or more;
- # Establish goals and objectives, i.e., desired future conditions of the land;
- # Identify lands that are open, closed or restricted for certain uses; and
- # Provide the basis for future “project level” analysis and decisions. They generally describe what can be done and where but don’t usually authorize specific management activities.

Project level decisions, on the other hand, determine specific management activities.

- # Are made to implement the goals and objectives identified in the RMP;
- # Generally authorize a specific management activity to take place in a specific area under specific conditions; and
- # Generally require a separate and individual environmental document and public notification and involvement process (under NEPA) in order for these specific activities to be authorized.

Watch for...

Planning Criteria. Planning criteria define what is, and what is not, “on the table.” They are intended to help focus on the issues that can be resolved within the scope of a Resource Management Plan and may be updated and changed as needed. You will be provided an opportunity to review and comment on these in the next few months.

Draft Desired Future Conditions. An important section in the upcoming Resource Management Plans is the description of “desired future conditions.” The desired future conditions describe the resource management goals for the planning area, establishing the target at which management actions are aimed.

Resource Management Plans determine

- Areas suitable for livestock grazing
- Special designations (for example, areas of critical environmental concern, recommended wilderness study areas, recommended segments for Wild and Scenic Rivers, etc.)
- Areas open, closed or limited for off-road vehicle use
- Areas open or closed for mineral entry

Project Level Decisions determine

- Livestock grazing systems
 - Construction of fences and waterlines
 - Construction of recreation facilities
 - Vegetation treatment projects
- Project level decisions must be consistent with the guidance provided in the Resource Management Plan and require their own NEPA documentation.*

Let’s Talk...

An important part of the public process is the opportunity for focused discussions between the BLM and organized interest groups. Such discussions provide for information exchange and help build good working relationships.

If your interest group or organization is interested in meeting with the BLM to discuss specific areas of interest and/or to share inventory and other information, please contact Mike O’Donnell at the LSRD office, 208-384-3315.

Check out the BLM, Lower Snake River District planning web site at
www.id.blm.gov

