

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[OR-050-1220-00; GP7-0284]

Notice of Supplemental Scoping for the John Day River Management Plan and Potential Related Amendments to the Two Rivers and John Day Resource Management Plans**AGENCY:** Prineville District, Central Oregon Resource Area; Interior.**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare a Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Management Plan for the Wild and Scenic John Day River and related Resource Management Plans; and notice of supplemental scoping period.**SUMMARY:** In accordance with 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610.2 and 1610.3 and 43 CFR 8350, notice is given that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the State of Oregon, Prineville District, Central Oregon Resource Area, intends to analyze potential amendments to the relevant geographic and resource program sections of the Two Rivers and John Day Resource Management Plan (RMPs) in combination with completion of the Management Plan for the Wild and Scenic John Day River.**DATES:** The public scoping period is ongoing and will continue until October 30, 1997. The draft river management plan and environmental impact statement (EIS) will be available for a 90 day public review period in the early summer of 1998. The proposed river plan, related RMP amendments and final EIS is expected to be available in the winter of 1998-1999 with decisions made and published following resolution of any protests or any intergovernmental natural resource plan inconsistencies. Future opportunities for public review and comment will be announced through the **Federal Register**, direct mailings to known interested parties, and announcements in Prineville's newspaper, the *Central Oregonian*. Supplemental public scoping meetings will be held in an Open House format. Persons wishing to attend these meetings may come at anytime between 7:00 pm and 9:00 pm on the dates of the meetings to ask questions and submit scoping comments directly to John Day River Planning Team members. The Open House public meetings will be held in the following locations:*September 24, 1997*

Wheeler County Fairgrounds, Fossil, Oregon

September 25, 1997

Senior Center, 142 NE Dayton, John Day, Oregon

September 30, 1997

Jefferson County Fairgrounds, 430 SW Fairgrounds, Madras, Oregon

October 8, 1997

Double Tree Hotel, 310 SW Lincoln, Portland, Oregon

The need for additional meetings will be evaluated based on the level of public input as a result of public notification procedures. Any public meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dan Wood, Project Manager, Prineville District BLM, PO Box 550, Prineville, Oregon 97754 (Telephone 541-416-6751, FAX 541-416-6798). Anyone interested in participating during the public review process of this planning effort may request to be added to the mailing list. Individuals should specify if they wish to have their names and addresses withheld from public access under the privacy provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Bureau of Land Management intends to begin preparation of a Revised Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public lands along the John Day River system in Oregon. The planning and analysis process will comply with the procedural requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Wild and Scenic River Act (as amended) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The resulting decisions are expected to satisfy the requirements of the 1989 Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, amend relevant portions of the Two Rivers and John Day Resource Management Plans (both within and outside the river corridors) and address relevant issues from ongoing litigation concerning the John Day River Plan. The John Day River watershed encompasses all or portions of eleven counties, six of which would be directly affected by the proposed plan. These are Gilliam, Grant, Jefferson, Sherman, Wasco and Wheeler Counties in north-central Oregon. The federally designated Wild and Scenic segments of the John Day River managed by the Bureau include 147 miles of the John Day River mainstem from Service Creek to Tumwater Falls and 47 miles of the South Fork of the John Day River from the Malheur National Forest boundary to Smokey Creek. The 54 mile federally designated Wild and Scenic segment of the North Fork of the John Day River is

managed by the Umatilla National Forest under a previously prepared and approved plan.

In addition to mailed scoping notices to known interested parties, a series of public meetings will be held in September-October, 1997 to assist in this planning effort. These meetings will be conducted as workshops and open houses so that BLM and concerned publics may review past planning documents and current situations to identify issues to be addressed by the plan and to develop alternative ways of managing resources to be analyzed by the EIS. The public may submit comments at these meetings or directly to the Prineville BLM office at any time during the scoping period. The draft plan and EIS will analyze public lands managed by the Bureau along the John Day River segments which are federally designated as Wild and Scenic and segments which are not so designated, some of which may be potentially suitable for designation as additional components of the National Wild and Scenic River System. Special emphasis will be given to management strategies that protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values for which the Bureau managed segments were designated. These outstandingly remarkable values are scenic, recreational, geologic, fish, wildlife, historic and cultural. Other values identified as significant are botanical, ecological, paleontological, and archeological resources. Planning and analysis issues will include management, protection and enhancement of the identified river related values, plus any related Bureau authorized activities or resource uses such as, but not limited to, livestock grazing, irrigated agriculture, road and facility construction and maintenance, noxious weed control, streambank stability and stabilization, acquisition and management of additional lands within the river corridor and attainment of State of Oregon approved water quality standards.

The BLM developed a draft plan and EIS for the John Day River system and released it for public review and comment in 1993. The draft plan focused primarily on recreation, and proposed that other resource uses be managed according to existing resource management plans and other guidance documents. Many of those who commented on the draft plan stated that the plan should address all resource uses, particularly livestock grazing.

In order to meet a December 31, 1996 deadline set in the Northwest Power Planning Council's 1992 "Strategy for Salmon," the BLM Prineville District

suspended further development of the river plan in order to focus its limited resources on allotment-specific evaluation and improvement of grazing management in the John Day basin. This effort has continued under the joint BLM/U.S. Forest Service's 1995 "Interim Strategies for Managing Anadromous Fish-producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and portions of California" (known as PACFISH), and has resulted in a number of changes in grazing management and reductions in authorized grazing use on public lands along the John Day River.

The BLM is now re-initiating development of the John Day River management plan. In light of comments on the 1993 draft plan, the BLM intends to address all significant resource uses in the revised draft plan, including grazing and agricultural leasing.

Preliminary future management strategies (alternatives) to be addressed are (1) Baseline/Current Use, Development and Management (No Action), (2) Maximum Enhancement of Natural Values With Minimal Development, (3) Required Protection and System Restoration with Moderate Use and Development, (4) Increased Use and Development to Enhance Local Economic Activity and Developed Recreation Consistent with River Resource Protection and (5) a Preferred Alternative (to be developed from elements of the other alternatives with public input). Any decisions which are inconsistent with the current Two Rivers or John Day RMPs would result in amendments to the applicable plans as a result of the Oregon State Director approval of the Record of Decision. A team of interdisciplinary specialists, whose backgrounds are in the resources to be affected, will be involved in the review and development of the description of the affected environment, development of alternatives and impact analysis. Disciplines to be represented on the team preparing the plan amendment and EIS include, but are not limited to: Archeology, anthropology, economics, lands and minerals, recreation, forestry, fisheries, hydrology, botanical, soils, wildlife, geology and hazardous materials.

The Prineville District's Two Rivers (1986) and John Day (1985, 1995) Resource Management Plans (RMPs) currently provide general management for the river corridors and known river related values as well as overall land resource use allocations and resource protection or enhancement. Although it is anticipated that the final decisions for river management considered through this analysis could be in full

conformance with the applicable RMPs, it is possible that portions of some actions under some alternatives may not be in full conformance with the approved RMPs, as required by 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subpart 1610.5-3, "Conformity and Implementation". The environmental analysis and public and interagency review process anticipated for this analysis are expected to fully comply with the Bureau's regulations for land use planning, including land use plan amendments, public involvement and coordination with other Federal agencies, State and local governments and Indian tribes (43 CFR 1610.2, 1610.3 and 1610.5-5). This will allow the analysis to consider river corridor and value strategies which are inconsistent with the current direction or substantially affect other resource uses and allocations in one or more of the subject approved RMPs. Any approved decisions which amend the applicable plans will be incorporated into the plans and become part of the permanent planning record. Any refinements or clarifications or management direction, priority of river resource allocations and use of final river corridor boundaries will be incorporated into the applicable plans and documented through published plan maintenance reports, as provided under 43 CFR 1610.5-4. Copies of the two existing approved plans (as amended) will be available in the same locations as the other elements of the supporting record, as noted elsewhere in this notice.

The decisions made through this analysis are expected to be implemented in a series of actions over a period of several years. While the BLM intends to implement most of the final river plan within approximately two years of the approval of the decision(s), some actions that are in conformance with the analysis and decisions and associated approved RMPs may occur over a period of ten or more years. This analysis will serve to facilitate the immediate need for a comprehensive river plan and some immediate changes in resource use, resource allocations, vegetation remediation or recreational facility projects. It will also provide for future long-term actions that fall under the programmatic nature of this analysis dealing with "desired future conditions". Future site developments, land use allocation changes and projects would be subject to appropriate environmental analyses, public and interagency reviews and will be reported in the applicable District periodic planning update reports which

are distributed to known interested parties.

Dated: September 4, 1997.

James G. Kenna,

Acting District Manager.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Land Use Plan Amendment, Jefferson County, ID

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a plan amendment for the medicine lodge Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved in April of 1985, to provide for the adjustment of the Sand Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) Boundary and a proposed direct land sale.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the regulations found at 43 CFR 1600, the Idaho Falls District Office of the Bureau of Land Management proposes to amend the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan in order to adjust a Wilderness Study Area boundary. The amendment would also provide for the direct sale of approximately 10 acres of public land.

DATES: Comments regarding the proposed plan amendment must be received by October 27, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Joe Kraayenbrink, BLM Area Manager, Medicine Lodge Resource Area, 1405 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Additional information concerning the proposed plan amendment may be obtained by contacting Bruce Bash, Realty Specialist, at the above address or by calling (208) 524-7521.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed plan amendment would adjust the boundary of the Sand Mountain Wilderness Study Area to exclude existing developments which were included in error within the WSA boundary. These developments consist of powerlines, roads and trails, numerous dispersed recreational sites, and a parcel of privately-owned land. The developments impair the naturalness of the WSA and should not have been included within the WSA boundary during the original inventory process. The amendment would also allow the BLM to sell approximately 10 acres of public land to resolve an encroachment problem.