

PRELIMINARY REPORT

EAST LASSEN

Ecosystem Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Sacramento, 1/10/95

Reno, 1/11/95

Susanville, 1/12/95

Alturas, 1/13/95

The following comments are taken directly from the flip chart notes recorded during the East Lassen public scoping meetings hosted by the Bureau of Land Management's Susanville District:

Vegetation and riparian

- Protect and improve riparian habitat.
- Range Health
 - A. What Is it? How is it measured? How do we get to it?
- What is possible?
 - A. Realistically
 - B. Climate, edaphic factors allow for?
- How much of land is unsuitable for livestock grazing?
 - A. If not for livestock, what is it suitable for?
- What is necessary for restoration and rehabilitation of unhealthy rangelands--need a plan.
- Need to allow for "near native" plant seedings in range improvements.
- Specific identification of problem areas; range damage and what is responsible for it? (Deer, livestock, horses, rabbits, BLM, recreation).
- Unity in concepts and terminology--need to speak the same language.
- Detailed data and mapping of vegetative types and conditions.
- Definition of "fully functioning" riparian areas.
- Detailed data and mapping of riparian areas/conditions.
- Elimination of exotic plants.
- Allow for vegetative manipulation to reduce "unwanted" species.
- Eliminate WSAs or bring to conclusion.
- Data, mapping, and condition of bitterbrush areas.
- Utilize best known procedures to determine actual use by species.
- Do not rely so heavily on utilization data alone. Also use range condition, trend, photo monitoring, fecal counts, etc.
- Eliminate idea that use on riparian areas is always harmful; some use is good on healthy riparian areas.
- Determine potential natural community and potential of each alternative to attain PNC.
- Is monitoring that has been done, done during drought, and is that taken into consideration?
- Recognize that increase in range condition does not necessarily benefit wildlife.
- Preserve riparian areas.
- During drought conditions, lessen impact by closer control of horses and livestock.
- Implement an on-going reseeding program.
- Protection of riparian areas will improve deer habitat and bring back or improve fishing streams.
- Will riparian areas which are less than 10% of total areas, dictate management practices?

- Juniper is replacing other native species.
- Manage and use riparian areas.
- Address medusahead and other non-natives invasion/problem.
- What is wildfire management (currently) and its effect on vegetation?
- Maintain ability of animals (livestock, horses, wildlife) to have water when fencing riparian areas.
- Recognize that a diversity of vegetation types and condition classes needs to be maintained.
- Look at realistic allocation of vegetation to various resources.
- Is vegetation habitat changing?
- Need prescribed burning to change juniper expansion--reduce woodland invasion.
- Better management.
- Have Plan address the trend vegetation is moving--future vegetation--diversity is needed.
- Should plan address modern cultural practices to enhance wildlife [sage grouse], i.e. alfalfa production, (antelope, deer, etc.).
- Public land actions will affect private land because of Threatened and Endangered species management. This will have a negative impact.
- Plan should address areas where livestock have been removed; how did this action affect wildlife numbers?
- Riparian areas need restoration through better management.

Economic Effects

- What is the economic value of deer herd projected for each alternative and non-consumptive wildlife values?
- "Holecheck" analysis of grazing alternatives.
- Include a benefit/cost analysis.
- Identify impacts of BLM decisions on current economic inputs from grazing, wildlife game tags, etc. on the local communities. What are they now?
- Need full analysis of economic impact to local communities and livestock industry for all alternatives, including possible negative impact to wildlife habitat if ranchers are not in operation.
- What impact does "dumping" (via air, water, ground) of millions of lbs. of toxins by the Sierra Army Depot have on this area?
- Cost comparison of livestock grazing/management v. AUM fees (cost v. take in).
- Contributions to economy (actual %) from hunters, fishermen, shooters, camper, hikers, local and transient
- The quantifiable value of fish, game, and varmints, etc.
- Livestock is not the only valuable resource.
- How are mining interests going to be addressed (particularly geothermal).
- What are all livestock operators operating expenses and what do they contribute to local tax base?
 - A. How much meat, lbs. of meat, wool and by products produced in area?
- Total cost of EIS and implementation of new Land Use Plan.
- What % of livestock product is grazed on public land? (some time spent on)
- How much money could BLM make if a percentage of horses/burros harvested (treated as a crop)?
- How does public land grazing fit into the total industry picture?
- Can the fee collected by BLM be kept in a trust fund to be used for the grazing program?
- Nationally what percentage of big game is harvested on public land?

Fish and Wildlife

- Will there be cooperative agreement between California Dept. of Fish and Game and Nevada Division of Wildlife on wildlife management in East Lassen?
 - A. [Will this be] part of the East Lassen Plan?
- State wildlife agencies have provided good data which has not been incorporated by BLM.
- Deer population goals achieved in deer herd management plan:
 - A. CA Fish & Game, NDOW, Modoc Forest, BLM
- Re-establishment of big horn sheep population, historic fisheries.
- Are Elk endemic? Are cows?
- Assessment of microfauna--aquatic organisms (Potentially naturally occurring, What currently exists?)
- Effects of non-native species on native species.
- Cause of deer die-off.
- Comparison of big game population, dynamics to adjacent areas, and statewide average.
- Functioning condition of riparian areas.
- Status of Lassen interstate deer herd plan.
- Stream survey information.
- Status and trend of sage grouse.
- Plans for predator control.
 - A. How can BLM have predator control and ecosystem management?
- Birds--raptors, neotropical migrants, songbirds--status and trend of avian species.
- Potential for chukar enhancement.
- Reptile inventory.
- Assessment of biological diversity.
- Where have deer die-offs occurred?
- Wetland dependent species.
- How does population dynamics of East Lassen deer herd compare to population dynamics of surrounding/neighborhood deer herds?
- Will wild sheep (bighorn) be reintroduced to the East Lassen area?
- Elk? Now moving south from Warner Mountains.
- Buffalo? Historic native species.
- Fish and Game should manage deer the same as a livestock operation--numbers to match forage.
- Consider what wildlife populations were here, and in what numbers historically.
- Will fisheries habitats be restored?
- Need to consider the invasion of Juniper replacing native forage including bitterbrush and grasses.
- Consider effect of predators on all game populations.
- Correlate big game numbers to livestock numbers, historically.
- Correlate big game numbers to predator control, historically.
- Will BLM take unilateral action to implement management plans which may be inconsistent with state wildlife agencies?
- Consider importance of private lands and private land management to all wildlife.
- Need to address fawn losses as well as other wildlife losses due to predators.
- Need to address and quantify predator populations, i.e. mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, etc.
- How will BLM address condition of deer winter range--especially bitterbrush?
- Need neutral 3rd (local) party between BLM and Wildlife agencies to monitor or supervise numbers and management of big game.
- Effect of predators on wildlife numbers.
- No bi-state coordination of season of hunting numbers and time.

- How is BLM going to manage wild horse numbers?
- Address water quality. If riparian is functioning, water quality will be high.
- How to control juniper infestation.
- Importance of addressing non-game wildlife, such as neo-tropical birds.
- Plan for elk, especially damage to private lands.
 - A. Elk are moving in now (check with other states for solutions to problems).
- Sage grouse are important element in plan.
- Where are the Threatened and Endangered species out there?

Wild Horses & Burros

- Current management needs to be improved.
- How are you going to deal with wild horses in relationship to riparian?
- Why were horses removed last '93 Fall and released back into critical areas in Spring '94?
- Need wild horse management plan for entire region in relation to all animals.
- How Does BLM determine the number of wild horses and burros?
- Several areas are damaged by wild horses and burros.
- Wild horses and burros are treated specially by BLM management, this does not fit with a higher authority (multiple use).
- Do Federal laws stipulate the numbers of wild horses?
- Can any common sense be applied?
- Let's replace wild horses by buffalos.
- Let's not replace buffalos with wild horses.
- Has BLM imported wild horses, mules and/or burros from other areas to reproduce and breed?
- Has BLM placed wild horse and burros in places where they historically have not been?
- Does the directive to release wild horses and burros in excess of 5 years of age interfere with the numbers expressed in the AML, thus compromising management?
- Considering that wild horses and burros are now treated as a native species, why are they not managed like big game?
- Which comes first, wild horses or riparian areas?
- Herds need to be cut down in numbers so that they can be reasonably sold each year.
 - A. This would take care of excess.
- Does BLM plan to compensate private landowners due to damage done by wild horses and burros?
 - A. And may they be destroyed for doing this damage on private lands?
- If horses are to be here over winter, fences need to accommodate migration.
- To control wild horse populations, go back to pre Wild Horse Annie days.
- Monitor horse use on riparian areas after the grazing season ends.
- Manage horse numbers as agreed on in LUP, HMAP.
 - A. How is BLM going to manage wild horse numbers as agreed on?
 - B. Put wild horse and burro back within LUP numbers--what originally set at.
- Comply with 1971 census.
- Plan should consider removing all wild horse and burros from allotments with critical wildlife and economic considerations.
- All factors should be managed to achieve equitable balance.
- Plan should address what effect (if any) wild horses and burros have on riparian areas, and how it should be dealt with (because wild horses and burros are on year-round).

Livestock Grazing

- How to resolve lack of capability to monitor key areas.
- What is allowable?
- If monitoring information can't be obtained, how will BLM deal with this (Goals and Objectives)?
- Do cost/benefit analysis on all range improvement projects, i.e. fences.
- How will BLM resolve riparian/livestock problems without transferring them to the uplands?
- Suitability of livestock grazing needs to be analyzed at the local level (planning area). Ecosystem function.
- How will monitoring be conducted - TR 1737 (riparian areas).
- How to address water issues: development, use, riparian areas.
- Problem with BLM not knowing where the livestock are--numbers.
 - A. How will plan address this; hire a range tech?
- Suitability
 - A. Slope, aspect, water distance.
- Identify physical improvements needed.
 - A. Costs?
- How will existing livestock operator's right to graze be protected?
- If there are livestock AUM cuts, will Wild Horse and Burro AUMs be cut accordingly?
- What restrictions, if any, on-the-ground improvements, include seedings water development?
- What kind of restrictions will there be on riparian areas?
- What changes are planned in season of use?
- BLM should look at private land use studies for public lands, i.e. credible data already developed.
- What wins, riparian areas or cattle?
- How many total acres--How many for riparian? For public? For private?
- Trade off analysis between grazing and other resources--commodity/non-commodity.
- Analysis of improvements provided by ranchers, e.g. water, private and public.
- Address all impacts of range improvements, including fencing and water developments.
- Analyze the economic feasibility of each alternative to be sure they are economically feasible, especially in light of other parts of the plan/BLM commitments.
- Complete a "Holecheck" analysis on the grazing portion of each alternative.
- If there are permit reductions will the plan address just compensation through eminent domain for the rancher?
- Will the plan address annual grazing permits--based on conditions?
- Identify ownership of riparian areas.
- Clarify that grazing is a privilege, not a right.
- Should focus on resources (existing status and potential), not uses.
- Plan must include a no grazing alternative.
- Will the plan reduce seasons of use?
- Plan should recognize the value to other users of range improvements.
- How will plan address local customs and culture relating to livestock?
- Plan must address economic importance of livestock industry to local economy.
- Will plan identify wildlife benefits associated with livestock grazing?
- Plan must address maintaining the family ranch (viable economic unit).
- Plan/EIS must have goals for livestock management. BLM/permittee must work together to set management actions to meet the goals.
- Local people with expertise are a critical part of implementation. Plan needs to recognize.

- Must address juniper displacing palatable vegetation species for livestock and wildlife.
- Plan must recognize the economic investment the ranchers have in the land.
- Plan must recognize private property rights--preservation of those rights under 5th amendment.
- Plan must address the importance of private land and water to all users, including users of the public lands.
 - A. Don't endanger private property rights.
- Look at increasing livestock use.
- Look at impacts of reduced livestock use--wildlife use.
- Increase livestock forage through vegetation manipulation, i.e. seeding non-native species and burning.
- What will be the economic effect of BLM's Plan be on ranching? The economic effect of recreation?
- What is the economic importance of hunting?
- Does the Plan adequately recognize the value (not just the numbers) of dollars produced by agriculture?
- Look at all aspects that will be economically affected.
- What is the Economic effect of the Plan on land value?
- What is the economic effect to local counties and communities?
- Distinguish "hard dollars", i.e. timber, agriculture, mining, from "trade" dollars in economic analysis.
- The Plan should increase hard dollars, e.g. AUMs.
- How will this plan affect livestock seasons of use? Numbers?
- Plan should address economic importance of ranching. Cuts in AUMs affect local, state, national economies.
- Healthy range for livestock benefits wildlife--Plan needs to recognize.
- How will plan address the importance of prescribed fire in creating healthy range?
- Plan needs to address juniper encroachment--it is killing riparian, reducing livestock forage, and killing bitterbrush (deer habitat).
- Plan needs to recognize the ranchers for the improvements they make on public lands--importance of partnerships.
- Plan needs to provide incentives--recognize ranchers for good stewardship.
- Good past stewardship needs to be recognized up front. A good steward should not have to prove himself over again under this plan.
- Will the plan determine whether there is a correlation between declining wildlife values and ongoing livestock grazing; if there is none, then livestock reductions would be inappropriate.
- Don't put one use on a pedestal over another. Respect the land.
- Downsizing of Federal agencies will have a local economic effect.

Recreation

- Camping grounds and areas - how to be maintained, managed, improved.
 - A. Emphasis on future use
 - B. Trash, toilets
- How will BLM protect riparian (streams, reservoirs, hillsides), livestock, horses, and the recreationist?
- Compare value of recreation use to commodity production.
- What are recreation uses and demands?
- Will existing access remain?
- Will campgrounds be built?

- Data on water quality.
- What WSAs are recommended for wilderness status?
- Preserve access for recreation such as hiking, camping and mountain biking.
- Develop OHV use with the area.
- What will happen to abandoned roads?
- What will be impacts on OHV trails for casual and organized events?
- If range management changes, will it affect public access (OHV, Mountain bikes, etc.)?
- See that roads on private land stay open to public access.
- How does R.S. 2477 tie into ELEMP/EIS?
- Will all OHV/access roads be identified in this plan?
- Will all potential recreational opportunities be identified in this plan, i.e. horseback riding, rock hounding, hang gliding, etc.?
- Recreational opportunities have significant effect on local economy.
- What will WSA do to recreation?
- What is the cost v. income to BLM?
- Investigate opportunities for acquiring public access to public land.
- Pursue public access through public land.
- Protect private land from recreation users.
- Will plan address recreation carrying capacity?
- All trails and roads identified on BLM maps. Be declared as R.S.2477 roads.
- Public Access
- Get rid of any cat bigger than a tabby.
- Respect private property.
- Public education/awareness.
- Respect public property.
- Correct and accurate signing of public land.
- OHV designations.

Other

- Need to implement plan
 - A. What happens, how to address non-compliance, non-implementation of the plan, in-house accountability.
- Viability of plan--based on budget constraints, personnel, etc.
- When conflicts occur--resolve based on what?
- Must have one set of law, policy, objectives, and goals for all alternatives in EIS and plan.
- State clearly in plan what dictates management parameters.
- BLM send draft out to publics.
- BLM relate management parameters to current management
- Err on side of resource protection.
- Have heard at other meetings BLM need to identify constraints, i.e. legal--law and policy.
- Health of land should be priority.
 - A. Make sure plan includes comprehensive economic analysis, local, state, etc. should include more than just grazing.
 - B. What are the applicable policies and laws concerning this land?
 - C. How will these be resolved based on the law?
 - D. How will historical and cultural sites be protected?
 - E. Need to base management decisions on best scientific information. How will plan meet this need?
- Need access for all values, i.e. wildlife, restoration, scenic, wild horses, etc.
- Important bitterbrush areas like Rowland Mtn. should be maintained and improved for deer.

- Is monitoring data being gathered and used in a timely manner? This info needs to be disclosed to the public and the public needs to be a part of the process of using it to adjust management activities.
- Aspen and riparian areas along streams, meadows, springs, drainages, etc. have been overutilized & damaged by livestock. This needs to stop, now -- move the livestock.
- Important archeological sites, petroglyphs/middens, etc. --need large exclosures around them.
- Will plan coordinate with federal, state and county laws?
- Plan must be specific enough to address past, present, and future conflicts on the land.
- Plan should address:
 - A. Should not be just a wildlife/livestock issue.
 - B. Functions of the entire ecosystem
- Plan should implement ecosystem management.
- The plan needs to provide for management of soil health and sustained productivity of the soil resource.
- Relationship to Rangeland Reform?
- Should this plan be implemented prior to the final Rangeland Reform?
- Will minerals issues/concerns be addressed in the Plan/EIS, or will they be changed in any way?
- Are we [BLM] in contact with all appropriate agencies in Nevada, including: Dept. of Agriculture, Minerals, Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, Dept. of Business and Industry, Wild Horse Commission, etc.
- Develop plan consistent with Nevada Water Pollution Control regulations and policies.
- Develop Plan consistent with Nevada Water Pollution Control Regulations, programs, or policies.
- Specific identification of conflicts necessitating this plan (if we can't identify, should we go any further).
- Specify Laws/Regulations which exist and are pertinent to the area.
- Suggestion for BLM to conduct game census independently of existing census procedure.
- Identify any existing CRMPs and impacts associated with Plan revision.
- Estimate cost for planning process.
- Cost estimate of implementation of alternatives.
- Private cost?
- Common Vision = Public Involvement.
- Is there enough data to determine potential of land?
- Goals
- Objectives
- Methods to achieve
- Actions
- Define issues/conflicts.
- How do we resolve common issues?
- Physical limitations?
- BLM run their own meeting.
- Accountability (Don't let CFG run a bluff).
- ELEMP will end up with different Standards and Guidelines within the "zone" and outside area (potentially) right across the road, so the excuse that things are different in each RA doesn't wash.
- BLM has not identified where the current LUPs conflict internally.
- The "data" on the walls and presented here is simply inventory data which does not identify any conflict.

- BLM's regulations and policies allow for habitat management plans within each LUP--do them.
- Money is being spent reinventing the blueprint rather than "building the house".
- What does the mule deer habitat condition data say? Is there any data collected, especially for the whole area.
- BLM personnel, who write and implement the plans, have to be qualified and knowledgeable about Lassen area.
- Specific areas identified and habitat/ecological condition identified (upland riparian, mule deer habitat, sage grouse habitat, etc.).
 - A. Once areas/habitat identified, we need specific habitat conversion criteria--where are we going, what else do we affect?
- Define ecosystem.
- Specialists who collect data should be personally liable for accuracy.
- Is management goal quantity of deer, or quality of habitat?
- R.S. 2477-Accessibility.
- Water rights--who owns it on public and private lands?
- Public lands--what are the beneficial uses of the water?
- What is impact of WSA management v. new plan objectives?
- Cultural Resources
- What data of historic land use/vegetation re: ranging from G.L.O. Survey Maps to Count Sheep License tax to provide data on grazing.
- What are the specific concerns of the game agencies?
- Use money spent on this process spent on ground improvements.
- How can "we" get county trappers back?
- Will the BLM East Lassen Management Plan comply with California Fish and Game policies on wildlife management plans?
- Will BLM be writing a Habitat Management Plan?
- Where is the East Lassen Deer Herd Management Plan?
- How is BLM going to do all the monitoring that they're supposed to do?
- How is BLM going to do "Ecosystem Management"?
- Are the pieces of the pie all considered as equally important? is this appropriate? can they be prioritized.
- The Plan needs to address juniper management in regards to improving deer forage in the summer and transition ranges.
- Make sure we have a voice in the future of management (balanced approach, meaning uses, decision matters, flexibility), but not so much as to prevent functioning.
 - A. Plan need to contain mechanisms to achieve this.
- BLM needs to make the hard decisions and achieve balance.
- Be progressive; have permittees do the monitoring. That is, hire someone to do the monitoring. Include any public who wants to be involved.
- Establish "milestones" with long-range realistic goals. If milestones are not met, go to drastic "contingency" actions/efforts. Use all tools available, including vegetation goals.
- Use tools which are appropriate but may not currently be allowed, e.g. fire, mountain lion management, juniper management, wild horse and burro management.
- How can plan address all of the questions raised (11,009, according to B. Phillips).
 - A. Good questions should be addressed--is timeline realistic?
- Review other agencies' plans--maybe BLM can use pieces of different plans.