

9/12/95

IN REPLY REFER TO:



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SUSANVILLE DISTRICT OFFICE
705 Hall Street
Susanville, California 96130

1730 IVMP
(CA-020)

SEP 12 1995

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a copy of the Bureau of Land Management's Preparation Guide for the East Lassen Project. This preparation guide reflects comments provided during scoping meetings on the East Lassen Project. Two fundamental needs to be addressed include ways to maintain and improve the health of the land and guidance for maintaining a sustainable natural resource base that provides social and economic benefits to our communities.

This preparation guide is not a draft management plan or environmental impact statement. The document outlines the purpose for the East Lassen plan, ways the BLM and everyone interested can collaborate on this effort, and discusses planning alternatives to be considered. It serves also as a means for the BLM to consult, cooperate and coordinate with affected public lands users.

Please review this document and provide us with your comments, advice, and opinions. We will take these into consideration as we move forward with development of the draft East Lassen Plan and a draft environmental impact statement. An address for providing comments is on page three of the Preparation Guide.

The next step in development of the East Lassen Plan will be public workshops where everyone can work together to develop alternatives. Release of a draft management plan and environmental impact statement will follow. A 90-day public comment period for those documents will precede release of a final plan, final EIS and Record of Decision.

We appreciate your participation in the East Lassen Plan to date, and look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the management of our public lands.

Sincerely,


Linda D. Hansen
Acting District Manager

Enclosure:
Preparation Guide for the East Lassen Management Plan



Bureau of Land Management
Susanville District

Preparation Guide
for the
**East Lassen
Management Plan**

September 1995

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SUMMARY

This summary provides information on the process the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Susanville District and those interested in public land management will use to develop the East Lassen Management Plan. Readers may provide written comments prior to October 9, 1995. Comments and questions on the Preparation Guide, or requests to be placed on the mailing list for subsequent documents should be made in writing and sent to:

Bureau of Land Management
705 Hall Street
Susanville, CA 96130
Attention: East Lassen Plan

Telephone (916)257-5381
Telefax (916)257-4831

The East Lassen Management Area covers roughly 1.4 million acres and is bisected by the California and Nevada state line with land in portions of Lassen, Modoc and Washoe counties. Many people are concerned with BLM's management within this area, and the apparent competition among livestock, wildlife, and wild horses and burros for the vegetative resources existing there. These apparent conflicts, as well as apparent inconsistencies and shortcomings in existing BLM plans, demonstrate a NEED to develop the East Lassen Plan. The PURPOSE of the plan is to amend portions of three existing land use plans and address major PLANNING ISSUES including fish and wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, riparian and wetland areas, upland vegetation, and wild horses and burros. To address these issues, BLM recommends development and analysis of four LAND MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES. These alternatives have slightly differing goals, but all must be consistent with the PLANNING CRITERIA. BLM has developed a list of MANAGEMENT DECISIONS to be made in the plan in order to aid the public and BLM in working together on development of the plan.

The Preparation Guide includes a description of the manner in which BLM will work with interested people and other agencies in development of the plan. The Susanville District is committed to working with everyone interested in this area to develop a plan that will serve as guidance for our later collaborative work to effectively manage the natural resources in the East Lassen region.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This Preparation Guide is intended to inform agencies, organizations, and individuals that BLM is preparing a plan and accompanying environmental documentation for the East Lassen Management Area. This document defines the major planning issues and management alternatives and familiarizes readers with the process and products of this planning effort.

Because this is an introductory document, the Preparation Guide will not analyze environmental impacts or assess socio-economic consequences. Moreover, this document will not provide specific recommendations for management actions or detailed management alternatives. These analyses and developments will be included in the subsequent Draft Plan, Proposed Plan, and

WHY ARE WE DOING THE EAST LASSEN PLAN/EIS?

Expectations regarding the use and management of federal lands continues to grow. Existing BLM land use plans are not meeting the expectations of many people. There are longstanding and diverse concerns about the management of rangelands in the East Lassen region. It is the challenge of the Susanville BLM District and those interested in these lands to develop and implement management actions that will meet the needs of all concerned to the greatest extent possible. To accomplish this, the BLM, interested people and other agencies must examine the current multiple use direction for these lands, then develop a management plan that more effectively integrates all resource management needs into one plan to the greatest extent possible. **The plan will allow for management actions to be implemented in a timely manner.**

WHAT IS THE EAST LASSEN MANAGEMENT AREA?

The East Lassen Management Area encompasses about 1.4 million acres in the northwestern Great Basin, with lands in portions of Washoe County, Nevada, and Lassen and Modoc counties, California (refer to map). Public lands and resources are managed by the BLM Susanville and Winnemucca districts, the Modoc National Forest, Sierra Army Depot, the State of California, Nevada Division of Wildlife, and the California Department of Fish and Game. There are private lands throughout the region. The area is bounded by the Jess Valley Road on the north; Modoc County Road One, Nevada Highway 447, the Gerlach Road, and Sand Pass Road on the east; the Wendel Road on the south; and U. S. Highway 395 on the west (see map).

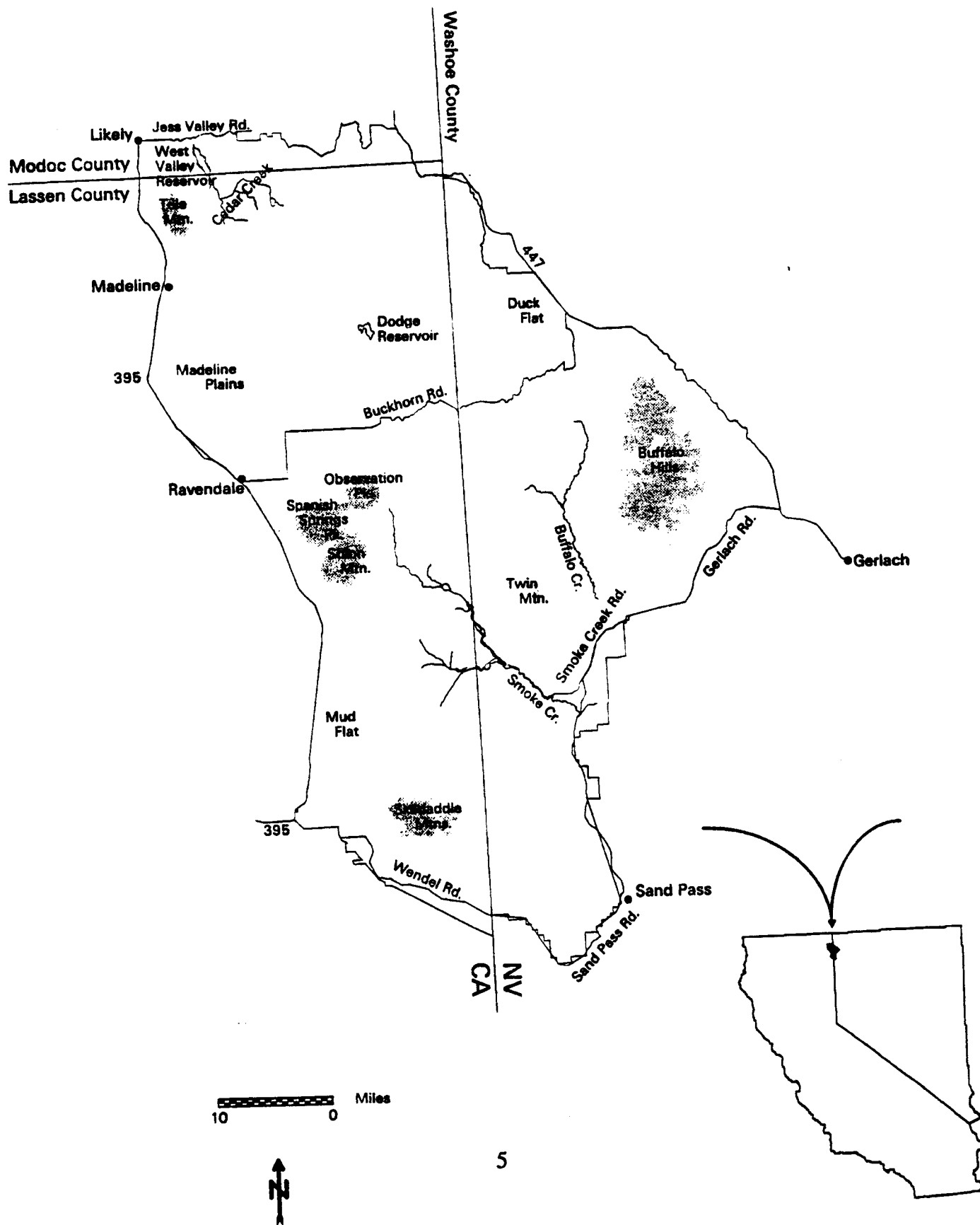
This area is home to the East Lassen Deer Herd, described by the California Department of Fish and Game as the state's "premier" deer herd. However, deer are not the only species of concern within the East Lassen Management Area. The area also supports pronghorn antelope, cattle and sheep grazing, wild horses and burros, sage grouse, as well as many other species. State wildlife agencies and others have indicated concerns over declines in some wildlife populations (especially mule deer) and believe the BLM has not done enough to implement existing land use plan provisions to protect or improve wildlife habitat. Livestock operators say they have reduced livestock numbers over the years and are concerned that management changes might result in more negative economic impacts. Wild horse and burro advocates want assurances that management will address the needs of the herds and population levels will not be reduced without monitoring data to support those reductions.

With these concerns in mind, the BLM's Susanville District embarked on an integrated management approach focusing on vegetative health as the common ground for all interests. For the short term, the District proposed management actions to alleviate livestock pressure on selected areas during crucial times of the year. Development of the integrated and coordinated East Lassen Management plan was seen as the long-term method to provide for improved management of the resources in the East Lassen region. This would include provisions to monitor the effect of management actions, and to adapt management if needed to meet resource goals.

This planning effort is aimed at developing management practices and resource allocations that ensure the long-term sustainability of healthy and productive rangelands.

This is an outstanding opportunity for the BLM and interested people to work as partners to manage critical natural resources. It can provide a model of cooperation for other regions facing similar resource management challenges.

East Lassen Management Area



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN?

The purpose of this plan is to:

- Reduce conflicts among authorized (and sometimes competing) uses of the public lands within the management area.
- Improve the effectiveness of BLM's management authorizations, approvals, and actions to achieve desired future landscapes.
- Amend existing Susanville District land use and activity-level plans to reflect decisions made through this public planning effort.
- Improve the opportunities for everyone concerned to collaborate on improvement of natural resources in this region.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS PLAN?

This plan is needed because interested people and agencies have indicated current management is not resolving conflicts and achieving desired resource conditions. These concerns were relayed in correspondence to the BLM, and in public scoping meetings which have been held periodically during the past three years. BLM's review of three existing land use plans revealed conflicts within and among the plans.

WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD US

During initial public meetings (scoping) people from various groups and agencies, and individuals, identified which concerns can be addressed in the plan.

BLM will cooperate with everyone interested to ensure these concerns are considered during this planning effort. Those concerns deemed beyond the scope of this effort, however, are dismissed from further consideration. Examples of these concerns are found in the PLANNING ISSUES section of this document.

To address major categories of concern, the plan must:

- Analyze the effect and impact of this plan on local economies.
- Recognize the social and economic benefits and uses and resources of the public lands. Consider the relative significance of those uses, services, products and resources.
- Consider the costs, benefits, short term and long term consequences of implementing the plan.
- Consider the impacts of public land uses on adjacent lands and the uses of those adjacent lands on public lands.
- Coordinate the planning effort with the work of other agencies and local governments.
- Address the function and condition of wetlands and riparian areas.
- Consider water quality.

Land use and activity level plans have short comings, particularly in light of recent BLM policy changes. For example, existing land use plans fail to address prescribed fire as a management tool and inadequately address riparian and wetland management. Finally, some decisions made in land use plans are out of date.

WORKING AS PARTNERS

BLM has encouraged everyone interested -- agencies, organizations and individuals -- to help develop the plan by direct involvement at each step of the planing process. The agencies invited to participate include: Modoc National Forest, Sonoma-Gerlach Resource Area (BLM-Nevada), California Department of Fish and Game, Nevada Division of Wildlife, Sierra Army Depot, Washoe County, Modoc County, Lassen County, and the University of California Cooperative Extension. Other agencies, such as the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the (California) Governor's Clearinghouse are involved in a more formal review capacity.

The Native American tribes of Pyramid Lake and the Susanville Indian Rancheria have been invited to participate to the degree they deem appropriate.

In addition to this collaborative approach, BLM has reviewed several non-BLM land use plans for adjacent areas to ensure that the final decisions of the East Lassen Management Plan are as consistent as feasible with those other agencies. **HOWEVER, BLM WILL NOT BE MAKING DECISIONS FOR LANDS OUTSIDE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION OF THE SUSANVILLE DISTRICT.** BLM will be working closely with the responsible agencies toward a consistent approach regarding plans already in place and other planning efforts underway during the course of this planning effort.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

BLM will be working closely with everyone interested in development of this plan while following the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Additionally, those interested will be involved in:

- A thirty-day review and comment period for this document.
- Workshops to develop, evaluate and improve land management alternatives.
- Collaboration and consultation with the BLM on development of each planning document.

Further, community meetings will be held to enable people to comment on the the Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement and the Proposed Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Review and comment periods are detailed in the **TIMELINE FOR THE PLANNING EFFORT SECTION** of this document. BLM will also issue periodic status reports through the news media and mail.

WHAT ARE THE PLANNING CRITERIA?

Planning criteria are broad, usually policy-level, statements which help guide this planning effort. They help ensure the proposed action and other management alternatives considered are consistent with Federal law and other statutes and policies. The Planning Criteria statements for the East Lassen Plan are:

- Address diversity, health and productivity of vegetation communities and wildlife habitat.
- Identify the various management practices which can achieve a desired balance of uses.
- Consider authorized uses of the public lands which are consistent with improving, maintaining and conserving the natural environment within the management area.
- Consider the role of fire in impacting, maintaining or achieving desired future landscapes.
- Recognize the dynamics of natural systems and the implications and effects of management practices.
- Use an integrated planning approach.
- Fully involve all interested people in this undertaking
- Recognize and respect private property rights and the potential impacts of this plan.
- Describe how the implementation of the plan will be monitored, evaluated and modified.
- Outline management on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield.
- Provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals.
- Protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resources and archeological values.
- Protect certain public lands in their natural condition.
- Protect places designated by BLM as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Review of Existing Susanville District Plans

The East Lassen Management Area falls within three Resource Areas of the Susanville District which manage the East Lassen under the broad level guidance of three land use plans: the Tulead-Homecamp Management Framework Plan (1978), the Cal-Neva Management Framework Plan (1982), and the Alturas Resource Management Plan (1984). Under the management direction of those land use plans, there are 10 allotment management plans, 2 aquatic habitat management plans, 5 wild horse and burro herd management plans, 1 integrated resource management plan, 3 Grazing Environmental Impact Statements, 1 forest sustained yeild use plan, and 1 resource natural area habitat management plan. Review by BLM and interested parties revealed inconsistencies and shortcomings within and between these plans.

In some cases, decisions within a single land use plan conflict with each other. For example, one land use plan has decisions to substantially increase numbers of livestock, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope within the planning area. The vegetation resources cannot support simultaneous increases in all species. In other cases, objectives established in activity level plans are inconsistent with decisions in the land use plans. For example, one land use plan states there will be no juniper reduction while a subordinate activity level plan focuses on juniper reduction.

- Maintain or enhance water quality.
- Maintain or enhance soil productivity.
- Maintain or enhance native plant communities and wildlife habitat.
- Restore and maintain riparian-wetland areas so that 75 percent or more are in properly functioning hydrologic condition (PFC) by 1997.
- Enhance perennial vegetation composition within plant communities.
- Clearly identify the current and potential capability of the natural system (environment) and recommend management actions which are consistent with the resource's capability.
- Maintain or enhance populations of special status plants and wildlife.
- Control noxious weeds and invasive exotic annuals when and where possible.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES? WHAT WILL BE DECIDED?

The plan will develop management alternatives to address those planning issues raised in public meetings and by people who have contacted BLM. In addition to the planning issues, BLM considered other concerns raised through scoping. Some of these concerns are beyond the scope of this planning effort. Other concerns are addressed elsewhere in the plan as management guidance, management decisions, or as impact topics.

During typical planning efforts, decisions are made at only one level. However, during this planning process decisions will be made at two levels, i.e. strategic (area-wide) and prescriptive (local). Strategic level decisions will amend portions of the three existing Susanville District BLM land use plans. These decisions could include, for example: standards and guidelines for domestic livestock grazing and plant communities needed to help achieve the desired future landscapes. Prescriptive decisions will amend, supplement, or supplant decisions made in existing Susanville District BLM activity level plans such as allotment management plans and habitat management plans. These decisions could include, for example: areas to be open or closed to domestic livestock grazing, appropriate wild horse and burro numbers, and special designations for specific areas. The following discussion explains the major planning issues and management decisions needed to address planning issues.

Five planning issues to be addressed include: 1) fish and wildlife habitat, 2) livestock grazing, 3) riparian-wetland conditions, 4) upland conditions and 5) wild horses and burros.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Many individuals and two state wildlife agencies have expressed concerns regarding the habitat conditions for certain fish and wildlife species. Mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse and trout were identified as "featured species" due to a high level of public interest. Other people are concerned about the overall variety and abundance of species and their habitat within the management area as well as overall resource conditions. Maintaining habitat for viable populations of special status animals is also of particular concern.

Key questions to be resolved include:

1. What are the desired future landscapes necessary to sustain or enhance habitat for fish and wildlife populations?
2. What actions will be implemented to meet these desired future landscapes?
3. Should habitat be provided so that some wildlife species, including non-natives, might be reintroduced and/or augmented within the management area?

Management decisions to be made regarding this issue include:

1. Designation of habitat areas which must be maintained or enhanced to benefit native wildlife species (including special status species).
2. Designation of habitat areas that will be maintained or enhanced to benefit featured (game) species i.e. mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse and trout.

Livestock Grazing

Grazing by domestic livestock is authorized under Federal law on public lands within the management area. Livestock grazing is the largest BLM regulated use in the East Lassen Management Area. Some people are concerned about grazing impacts on the health of plants and wildlife. Others are concerned about grazing competition with uses such as recreation and resources such as wildlife. Livestock operators are deeply concerned about their future on public lands.

The key question to be resolved include:

1. What are the appropriate management strategies (e.g. times of use, places of use, and levels of use) needed to integrate livestock grazing with management of other resources and uses.

Management decisions to be made regarding this issue include:

1. Designation of areas which may be opened, modified or closed to livestock grazing to protect sensitive natural resource values or to achieve the desired future landscapes.
2. Description of the grazing strategies which will be used for the management of domestic livestock on public lands within the management area to meet desired future landscapes and multiple use objectives.

Riparian and Wetland Conditions

Riparian and wetland areas provide valuable fish and wildlife habitat, forage and water for livestock and wild horses and burros, and are valued by recreation users. Competing uses in these areas have resulted in some conflicts and impacts.

Key questions to be resolved include:

1. What are the desired future landscapes for these areas?
2. How will the Bureau of Land Management and its partners achieve these desired future landscapes?

Management decisions regarding this issue must include:

1. Description of the desired future landscapes for riparian and wetland areas including plant communities and hydrologic conditions.
2. Identification of the riparian and wetland areas for which desired future landscapes will be described to benefit fish and wildlife.
3. Identification of the riparian and wetland areas which will be managed principally as water sources for domestic livestock, wildlife or wild horses and burros.
4. Description of methods or combination of methods which are most appropriate to achieve the desired future landscape.

Upland Conditions

Some Federally-administered uplands within the management area have received extensive, and sometimes intensive use. Many vegetation communities have changed as a result of these historic uses as well as through natural changes such as fire and drought. Many people have expressed concerns regarding these uplands.

Key questions to be resolved include:

1. What are the desired future landscapes for these uplands?
2. How will the Bureau of Land Management and its partners achieve these desired future landscapes?

Management decisions to be made regarding this issue include:

1. Description of the desired future landscapes for uplands.
2. Identification of upland areas for which desired future landscapes will be described to benefit of wildlife habitat.
3. Identification of upland areas which will be managed principally for domestic livestock, wildlife habitat, or wild horses and burros.
4. Description of methods or combination of methods which are most appropriate to achieve the desired future landscapes.

Wild Horses and Burros

Federal law requires the protection, management and control of wild horses and burros on the public lands. Some people are concerned about the population and distribution of wild horses and burros within the management area.

Key questions to be resolved include:

1. What are the acceptable populations for wild horses and burros within the management area?
2. What are the desired future landscapes to sustain these populations?

Management decisions to be made regarding this issue include:

1. Identification of habitat areas that will be maintained or enhanced to benefit wild horses and burros.
2. Identification of specific areas where wild horses and burros will be closely controlled, or their use limited.
3. Establishment of the appropriate population levels of wild horses and burros needed to maintain and protect the health of wild herds while meeting desired future landscape objectives.

In addition to the above management decisions, BLM needs to make additional decisions addressing a few specific public concerns and to clarify or enhance BLM administration within the area. These decisions are considered important but are not directly related to the primary planning issues. Some of these decisions will, for instance, ensure other BLM management actions, such as fire management, are consistent in achieving the desired future landscapes. Other decisions could simplify BLM administration, and enhance access and use of public lands.

WHAT WILL WE NOT ADDRESS?

During the initial scoping phase, BLM received a number of recommendations and concerns which fall outside of the scope of this planning effort. Some comments related to changes in Federal statutes (suggestions to repeal the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act) or national policies. BLM has no authority to affect legislation. Similarly, local offices of BLM have no authority to dictate national policy. Other concerns or recommendations were inconsistent with existing legislation or were impractical, such as totally removing livestock, wild horses and burros, or certain native plant or wildlife species from the planning area.

A number of other issues were identified by initial scoping which will be addressed in this planning effort but are not considered part of the major planning issues. Some of these include: the public role in the BLM planning and decision-making process, assessment of the impacts of BLM actions on local communities and establishment of guidelines for BLM management actions. These concerns will be addressed in plan sections titled Coordination and Consultation, Assessment of Environmental Consequences, and Management Guidance Common to All Alternatives. The plan will address all public concerns raised in scoping -- either by including them in the planning effort dismissing them from further consideration. BLM has made every effort to fully consider all comments received.

WHAT ARE THE LAND MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES?

The land management alternatives (or simply "alternatives") are the core of the plan. An array of feasible and achievable alternatives will be developed as a means to resolve the major planning issues. BLM-Susanville will host a series of "alternative formulation workshops" in which anyone interested will help to finalize a range of land management alternatives. They will work from the basic outline of alternatives described below. These alternatives were developed by BLM staff after consideration of a number of proposed alternatives.

WHAT ALTERNATIVES ARE TO BE ANALYZED IN THE PLAN

The following alternatives are not mutually exclusive. In fact, all of them have common elements. For example, the desired future landscape at various locations may be similar among some alternatives, given the planning criteria for the entire area, i.e. water quality, soil productivity, native species, hydrologic function, and perennial vegetation.

The four alternatives selected for analysis are:

Current Management (No Action) Alternative

This alternative would continue the decisions of the existing land use plans. These plans provide direction for activity plans by specifying management emphasis (e.g., maximize livestock forage and wildlife habitat), and specifying desired future landscapes objectives. Management actions include limited prescribed fire and random natural fire to improve the diversity of the plant communities. This alternative results in a very slow but steady improvement in upland and riparian conditions.

The land use plans do not address completion schedules for activity plans, variability in weather conditions, vegetation trends (e.g. juniper expansion), or implications of budget levels. Activity plans are written one-by-one, based upon greatest immediate need, specific resource program (or emphasis) and a relatively small geographic focus.

This alternative operates within existing budgets for individual BLM programs such as range, wildlife, fire, etc.

Alternative A

This alternative emphasizes the broadest practical vegetative diversity. It emphasizes a desired vegetative landscape which ensures healthy plants while creating a mosaic network of interconnected vegetative resources. This would represent a more refined mosaic than now occurs in the plant communities currently found in the East Lassen Management Area. Emphasis would be placed on promoting a variety of native grass, forb (plants such as sunflowers and clover), and shrub species. Various age classes of shrub and tree species would be represented within and among plant communities. Compared to current conditions, the amount of bitterbrush would be expected to increase while juniper and sagebrush would be reduced, especially in monoculture stands. Riparian-wetland areas would be expected to be more diverse in structure and age class of woody species and herbaceous species would be more dense and cover larger areas within riparian areas.

Natural and prescribed fire would be used to increase vegetative diversity. Designation of livestock numbers, grazing periods, timing and other administrative measures would be used to

help achieve desired future landscapes. Fences, reservoirs or similar developments may be used to control livestock grazing in riparian areas and where vegetative restoration is needed. Successful and complete implementation of this alternative would require additional (and possibly different) funding and labor, and cooperation from private landowners and other agencies.

Alternative B

Emphasis would be placed on a variety of native perennial grass and forb species as well as native annual forbs. Compared with current conditions, the amount of grasses and forbs would increase while juniper and many shrubs would be expected to decrease. Riparian areas would have more woody species, such as willows, than they have now.

Prescribed fire would be used to increase perennial herbaceous species (grasses and forbs). BLM-Susanville's fire management practices would be changed to allow fire to return to its natural role. Intensive grazing management would be used to improve perennial herbaceous plant communities. Additional funding may be required in fire management and reseeding efforts.

Alternative C

This alternative emphasizes a more shrub (bitterbrush, mountain mahogany, snowberry, etc.) dominated landscape than currently exists.

Particular emphasis would be placed on providing increased populations and age classes of bitterbrush and other shrub and forb species which provide crucial forage and cover for transitional and wintering mule deer. Riparian areas would have more woody species and greater diversity than they have now.

Intensive management of juniper would be used to increase the amount and diversity of shrub communities. Aggressive fire suppression would be required to protect and enhance shrub communities. Prescribed fire may be used to reduce the number of juniper trees.

Compared with current conditions, the overall amount of shrubs would be expected to increase while herbaceous communities would be expected to decrease. Livestock grazing management would be used to help achieve the desired shrub communities. Additional funding may be required in fire suppression and shrub reseeding efforts.

What Alternatives Were Dismissed from Further Analysis?

A few alternatives were dismissed after initial consideration because they were not feasible under existing mandates or were otherwise impractical. Examples of these alternatives include the total elimination of livestock grazing, total elimination of wild horses and burros and the elimination of certain native wildlife or plant species.

Several alternatives were dismissed after considerable discussion and debate. Rationale for the dismissal of these alternatives is generally similar, i.e. the emphasis of the alternative was only a slight shift from one of the four alternatives to be analyzed. The alternatives dismissed from further analysis include: Domestic Livestock Emphasis; Featured (Game) Species (mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse and trout) Emphasis; Accelerated Native Species Restoration Emphasis; and, Wild Horse and Burro Emphasis.

WHAT DATA WILL BE USED IN THE PLAN?

The previous discussions in the Planning Framework section illustrate the need for information to address the issues raised. This information will come from data sources which are currently available and relevant to the issues raised. These data will be used for description, analysis, and prediction for current management and the alternatives considered in the plan.

Data which are currently available and relevant include:

- Land data such as ownership, topography and climatic variables.
- Historic and current use data indicating the effects of past and present management for wildlife, livestock, wild horses and burros, recreation, special use areas and others.
- Biological and ecological data such as soil, water, vegetation characteristics, vegetation trend, vegetation inventories, habitat inventories, ecological site inventories, and condition ratings.

With the exception of information collected in an ongoing riparian functional assessment, and scheduled annual monitoring, very little new data are being collected. Instead, the focus is to produce this plan with what we now know, and to provide mechanisms which adjust management as new data and information comes forth.

SCOPE OF WORK

The planning effort consists of six remaining steps: issuance of a Draft Plan - Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), issuance of a Proposed Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD); implementation of the plan, monitoring and evaluation of the plan; and modification of the plan as needed. Each step of this process is sequential, however, work may progress on two or even three steps simultaneously (e.g. implementation, monitoring and modification). As noted earlier, BLM will work with everyone interested through this planning process.

Products of the Planning Effort

There will be four published documents: the Plan Preparation Guide (this document), the Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, the Proposed Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement and, lastly, the Record of Decision which approves the implementation of the Plan. Draft Plan and Proposed Plan documents will be issued as two-volume sets. The plan will comprise one volume. The remainder of the environmental impact statement will comprise a second volume.

After the plan is in place, BLM and its partners will continue to monitor the success on the ground, and revise the plan if needed. Everyone interested will be involved in this ongoing effort.

Timeline for the Planning Effort

The entire planning process, in following guidelines set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), takes approximately two years to complete from scoping to signing the final Record

of Decision (ROD). Optimistically, the timeline from distribution of this Preparation Guide to signature of the final Record of Decision is expected to take a minimum of 18 months.

The following timeline is intended to show how the major steps of the planning process are accomplished to result in the ultimate publication of the Record of Decision. Review periods (including public meetings), preparation tasks and administrative requirements are shown.

EAST LASSEN MANAGEMENT PLAN MILESTONES

ACTION	Public Release of Preparation Guide	Public Release of Draft Plan-EIS	Public Release of Proposed Plan-FEIS	Public Release of Record of Decision
30-day Public Review		EIS	EIS	EIS
Briefing of Key Publics		UNKNOWN PRINTING TIME		
Compile Affected Environment				
Compile Alternative				
Public meetings - Re: Alternatives				
Analyze Envir. Conseq.				
Prepare Chptr 5, 1, & Summary				
Review Internal DEIS			UNKNOWN PRINTING TIME	
Modify Internal DEIS				
90-day Public Review				
Brief Key Publics			UNKNOWN PRINTING TIME	
Public Meetings Re: Comments				UNKNOWN PRINTING TIME
Analyze Comments				
Revise Draft Plan EIS				UNKNOWN PRINTING TIME
Review Internal FEIS				
Brief Key Publics				
Protest Period				
Respond to Protests				
Compile Record of Decision				
Review Internal ROD				
Brief Key Publics				
Modify Internal ROD				

The BLM Planning Process *and* East Lassen Plan Status

