

National Wildlife Refuge and the reintroduction or augmentation of another population as restored habitat on private land becomes available, would result in the greatest biological benefit to the red-cockaded woodpecker.

As stated above, the Service has made a preliminary determination that the issuance of the ITP is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. This preliminary information may be revised due to public comment received in response to this notice and is based on information contained in the EA and HCP. An appropriate excerpt from the FONSI reflecting the Service's finding on the application is provided below:

Based on the analysis conducted by the Service, it has been determined that:

1. Issuance of an ITP would not have significant effects on the human environment in the project area.
2. The proposed take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity.
3. The Applicant has ensured that adequate funding will be provided to implement the measures proposed in the submitted HCP.
4. Other than impacts to endangered and threatened species as outlined in the documentation of this decision, the indirect impacts which may result from issuance of the ITP are addressed by other regulations and statutes under the jurisdiction of other government entities. The validity of the Service's ITP is contingent upon the Applicant's compliance with the terms of the permit and all other laws and regulations under the control of State, local, and other Federal governmental entities.

The Service will also evaluate whether the issuance of a Section 10(a)(1)(B) ITP complies with Section 7 of the Act by conducting an intra-Service Section 7 consultation. The results of the biological opinion, in combination with the above findings, will be used in the final analysis to determine whether or not to issue the ITP.

Dated: June 14, 2002.

Tom M. Riley,

Acting Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID-076-4610-00]

Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of proposed ACEC designations.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and BLM Planning Regulations (43 CFR part 1600), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Upper Snake River District has prepared and analyzed draft amendments to the Shoshone Field Office's land use plans. The draft amendments propose the designation of additional Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), as well as addressing other planning issues for the Shoshone Field Office. These amendments would apply to approximately 1.44 million acres of public lands managed by the Shoshone Field Office within Elmore, Gooding, Camas, Jerome, Blaine, Lincoln, and Minidoka counties in south-central Idaho. One proposed amendment action would also amend the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan which provides direction for public lands managed by the Four Rivers Field Office, BLM; this amendment action would only apply to about 1,220 acres of public lands.

Ten ACECs were nominated for consideration in these land use plans amendments. Only seven of the nominated areas met the relevance and importance criteria that are required for potential designation. Depending on the alternative selected, up to seven additional ACECs may be designated through these amendments. Some of these ACECs may have an additional designation of "Research Natural Area" (RNA) because the ACEC values have special importance for educational and/or research purposes. Two of the ACECs (Bennett Hills ACEC and King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA) would include approximately 1,220 acres of public lands managed by the Four Rivers Field Office, Lower Snake River District, BLM. Again depending on the alternative selected, the proposed ACEC designations would amend two Shoshone Field Office land use plans (the Magic Management Framework Plan (MFP) approved in 1975 and the Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP approved in 1976) and the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (RMP)

(1987) which provides management direction for some of the public lands managed by Four Rivers Field Office.

The draft amendments and accompanying Environmental Assessment/FONSI have been published and distributed. Copies are available for review and comment (see the "Dates" and "Addresses" sections below). In compliance with 43 CFR 1610.7-2(b), this notice constitutes a notice of potential and proposed ACEC designations and commences a 60-day public comment period. More detailed information about the seven proposed ACECs is provided in the "Supplementary Information" section of this notice.

DATES: The public comment period on the proposed ACEC designations begins on August 27, 2002. Written comments on the Shoshone Land Use Plans Draft Amendments/EA must be submitted or postmarked no later than August 27, 2002. Comments, including the names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the address listed below during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Meetings will be held to receive public comments on the Draft Amendments/EA; the dates, times, and locations of these public meetings will be announced locally through public mailings and area media.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Shoshone Land Use Plans Draft Amendments/EA may be obtained upon request by contacting the Bureau of Land Management, Shoshone Field Office, at P.O. Box 2-B, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, Idaho 83352, or by phone at (208) 732-7200. Written comments on the Draft Amendments/EA should be sent to Bill Baker, Field Manager, at the address listed above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bill Baker, Field Manager, at the address listed above or by calling (208) 732-7286. Documents related to the Shoshone Land Use Plan Amendments/EA planning process are available at the

above address for public viewing during normal office hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following 10 ACECs were nominated for consideration during the amendments planning process: Bennett Hills, Big Wood/Warm Springs, Camas Creek, Coyote Hills, Dry Creek, Fir Grove, King's Crown, King Hill Creek, McKinney Butte, and Tee-Maze. Three of these nominated ACECs (Big Wood/Warm Springs, Fir Grove, King's Crown) did not meet required relevance and importance criteria (as per 43 CFR 1610.7-2). The remaining seven nominated ACECs are proposed for designation under one or more of the three action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, and 4) analyzed in the Shoshone Land Use Plans Draft Amendments.

Alternative 1, the "no action" alternative, does not propose any additional ACECs for designation. (Note: Five existing ACECs totaling 18,963 acres (including a 105-acre Natural Area) would continue to be designated under existing management and all three "action" alternatives.) *Alternative 2* describes seven additional ACECs for designation: Bennett Hills ACEC, Camas Creek ACEC/RNA, Coyote Hills ACEC, Dry Creek ACEC/RNA, King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA, McKinney Butte ACEC/RNA, and Tee-Maze ACEC/RNA. These ACECs would include approximately 384,015 acres managed by the Shoshone Field Office and about 1,220 acres managed by the Four Rivers Field Office, for a total of approximately 385,235 acres. *Alternative 3* (the BLM's preferred alternative) and *Alternative 4* describe three additional ACECs for designation: King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA, McKinney Butte ACEC/RNA, and Tee-Maze ACEC/RNA. These designations would apply to about 16,186 acres managed by the Shoshone Field Office and approximately 1,220 acres managed by the Four Rivers Field Office, for a total of approximately 17,406 acres.

The paragraphs below summarize additional information about the ACEC designations for Alternatives 2, 3, and 4. Each paragraph lists (a) the ACEC's name and size, (b) the values which qualified it for potential designation, and (c) any resource use limitations which would occur within the specified ACEC if it were formally designated.

Proposed ACEC Designations—Alternative 2 Only

None of the constraints listed under this alternative would reduce current use. They would constrain only potential future actions.

Bennett Hills ACEC (cultural resource values)—Designate approximately

381,471 acres as an ACEC, including about 1,220 acres managed by the Four Rivers Field Office. Implement the following resource use limitations to protect the identified ACEC values: Limit mineral material sales and free use permits to existing sites and public lands adjacent to State Highway 75, State Highway 46, and the Bliss-Hill City Road; limit OHV use to designated and signed roads and trails.

Camas Creek ACEC/RNA (scenic canyon, pristine low elevation riparian system)—Designate approximately 420 acres as an ACEC/RNA. Implement the following resource use limitations to protect the identified ACEC values: Close the ACEC to livestock grazing, except for sheep trailing; exclude the ACEC from new land use authorizations; stipulate the ACEC no-surface-occupancy for leasable mineral exploration and development; close the ACEC to mineral material sales and free use permits; limit motorized vehicle use to designated and signed roads and trails; designate as VRM Class II (manage visual resources to maintain the existing character of the landscape).

Coyote Hills ACEC (cultural resources)—Designate approximately 49,062 acres as an ACEC. Implement the following resource use limitations to protect the identified ACEC values: Limit mineral material sales and free use permits to existing sites and public lands adjacent to the Bliss-Hill City Road and State Highway 46; limit OHV use to designated and signed roads and trails.

Dry Creek ACEC/RNA (scenic values, near-pristine riparian system)—Designate approximately 869 acres, including 3.8 stream miles of stream reaches, as an ACEC/RNA. Implement the following resource use limitations to protect the identified ACEC values: Close the ACEC to livestock grazing, mineral material sales, and free use permits; designate the ACEC as closed to OHV use; do not allow any new land use authorizations; designate as VRM Class I (manage visual resources to maintain a landscape setting that appears unaltered by humans).

Proposed ACEC Designations—Alternatives 3 and 4

None of the constraints listed under these alternatives would reduce current use. They would constrain only potential future actions.

King Hill Creek ACEC/RNA (scenic canyon; genetically pure Interior redband trout (a BLM sensitive species); near-pristine low elevation riparian area)—Designate approximately 2,880 acres as an ACEC/RNA, including 10 miles of stream reach and 1,220 acres

managed by the Four Rivers Field Office. Implement the following resource use limitations to protect the identified ACEC values: Close the ACEC to livestock grazing; close aquatic habitat within the ACEC to introduction of genetic strains of trout which are not native to the King Hill Creek watershed; exclude the ACEC from new land use authorizations; close the ACEC to mineral material sales and free use permits; designate the ACEC as "closed" to OHV use; designate the ACEC as VRM Class I (manage visual resources to maintain a landscape setting that appears unaltered by humans).

McKinney Butte ACEC/RNA (cave scenery and resources; bat populations (BLM sensitive species); cave-adapted insect community; vertebrate fossils)—Designate approximately 3,764 acres as an ACEC/RNA. Implement the following resource use limitations to protect the identified ACEC values: Prepare an activity plan which identifies Limits of Acceptable Change and management actions to protect cave resources; restrict access to caves containing bats during winter hibernation periods; seasonally prohibit access to caves which provide maternity roosts; close the ACEC to mineral material sales and free use permits; limit OHV use to designated and signed roads and trails; do not allow new land use authorizations; designate 13 caves as "significant" (this administrative determination may result in additional resource use limitations as determined on a case-by-case basis).

Tee-Maze ACEC/RNA (cave scenery and resources; bat populations (BLM sensitive species); cave-adapted insect community; vertebrate fossils)—Designate approximately 10,762 acres as an ACEC/RNA. Implement the following resource use limitations to protect the identified ACEC values: Prepare an activity plan which identifies Limits of Acceptable Change and management actions to protect cave resources; restrict access to caves containing bats during winter hibernation periods; seasonally prohibit access to caves which provide maternity roosts; close the ACEC to mineral material sales and free use permits; limit OHV use to designated and signed roads and trails, except for allowing cross-country vehicle access within two existing mineral use areas; do not allow new land use authorizations; designate 12 caves as "significant" (this administrative determination may result in additional resource use limitations as determined on a case-by-case basis).

Public participation will continue throughout the remainder of the Shoshone Land Use Plans Amendments/EA planning process.

Following the 60-day public review and comment period for these proposed ACEC designations, the BLM will prepare, publish, and distribute the Proposed Amendments. The proposed amendments will be subject to a 30-day public protest period and a 60-day Governor's consistency review prior to issuing the BLM's final decision.

Dated: March 18, 2002.

James E. May,

District Manager, Upper Snake River District—BLM.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[NM-070-1610-DP]

Notice of Availability of the Draft Farmington Resource Management Plan Revision and Draft Environmental Impact Statement; Farmington Field Office, New Mexico

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the Draft Farmington Resource Management Plan Revision and Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the Draft Farmington Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public review and comment. This document identifies and analyzes land use planning options for managing approximately 2 million acres of public land and just over 3 million acres of Federal mineral estate administered by the Farmington Field Office (FFO) and in the San Juan Basin portion of the area administered by the Albuquerque Field Office (AFO) (formerly Rio Puerco Resource Area) in New Mexico. The FFO covers all of San Juan County and portions of McKinley, Rio Arriba, and Sandoval Counties and the AFO portion of the San Juan Basin includes parts of McKinley and Sandoval Counties in northwest New Mexico. The BLM is recommending undesignating 4 previously designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), designating 14 new ACECs, and changing the size or use limitations of 42 existing ACECs. BLM is also applying off-highway vehicle (OHV) designations to lands administered by FFO.

DATES: Comments will be accepted for 90 days from the date that the Environmental Protection Agency publishes a Notice of Availability and Filing of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. Public hearings and meetings will be held to discuss the management alternatives, answer questions, and to receive comments on the draft.

Comments can be made orally at the public hearings and/or in writing to the FFO Manager at the address given below. At least 15 days notice in local media will be given for activities where the public is invited to attend. All meeting notifications will be published on the FFO Web site www.nm.blm.gov under "Field Offices, Farmington Field Office" (subject to Internet availability), and in the Farmington Daily Times and the Albuquerque Journal newspapers.

Comments, including the name and addresses of commenters, will be available for public review. Respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and/or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials or organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Comments are most meaningful and helpful if they address one or more of the following:

- Errors in the analysis.
- New information that would have a bearing on the analysis.
- Misinformation that could affect the outcome of the analysis.
- Requests for clarification.
- A substantive new alternative whose mix of allocations differs from any of the existing alternatives.

Where possible, refer to the pages and paragraphs on which you are commenting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

RMP Project Manager, Farmington Field Office, 1235 La Plata Highway, Suite A, Farmington, NM 87401-8754. Comments should be sent to this address.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Draft RMP/EIS pertains to public land in the FFO area, except where a small portion of the San Juan Oil and Gas Basin lies within the administrative boundary of the AFO. The Draft RMP/EIS fulfills the requirements of the Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLPMA) and

the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Draft RMP/EIS addresses the full range of resources and multiple uses in the planning area. The five major issues raised during scoping that are addressed in the Draft RMP/EIS are: (1) Oil and gas leasing and development; (2) landownership adjustments; (3) specially designated areas; (4) off-highway vehicle (OHV) use; and (5) coal leasing suitability assessment.

Four alternatives for managing the public lands in the FFO are proposed. Each of the alternatives has been prepared to provide a comprehensive framework for managing the public lands and for allocating resources during the next 20 years using the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The four alternatives are:

- *Alternative A* is "no action," in which management would remain under current RMP and NEPA documents and policies.
- *Alternative B* emphasizes maximum recovery of the hydrocarbon and other resources as the primary goal.
- *Alternative C* emphasizes conservation, protection, and enhancement of natural and cultural resources through more stringent management of designated areas.
- *Alternative D*, the preferred action, balances the two goals to achieve maximum practicable recovery of oil and gas, while also maximizing protection of the most sensitive environmental resources.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Four currently designated ACECs are being dropped in the plan because they are not necessary (three are within a wilderness area, and one was for a plant species that is more widely spread than previously known). The remainder of previously designated ACECs are being carried forward, but some changed in size or use limitations. Following the description of the values for which the area was nominated are the major use restrictions (alphabetical characters) that apply to the ACEC. The alphabetical characters are defined at the end of the ACEC discussion.

New ACECs

1. *Albert Mesa ACEC:* 177 total acres—Cultural Resources, Historic Sites: Major use restrictions include: A, C, D, E, F, G, J, K, L, M, O, Q.
2. *Cedar Hill ACEC:* 1,886 total acres—Cultural Resources, Anasazi Communities (Non-Chacoan): Major use restrictions include: A, C, D, E, F, H, I, K, R.