



## Community Reports in Support of the Planning Effort in BLM's Baker Resource Area



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Prepared for

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Bureau of Land Management  
Baker Resource Area Office  
Baker City, Oregon

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# Community Reports in Support of the Planning Effort in BLM's Baker Resource Area

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**Executive Summary and Action Strategy**  
**Community Reports in Support of the  
Planning Effort in BLM's Baker Resource Area**

James Kent Associates (JKA) was asked to engage in community fieldwork in the Oregon counties of Baker, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa, as well as Asotin County, Washington and with the Nez Perce Tribe in Lapwai, Idaho. The Baker Resource Area Office will revise and update its Resource Management Plan (RMP) for BLM lands in this area, for which it will use the JKA report to document citizen concerns about public land management, current social and economic conditions, and opportunities for greater community dialogue about alternatives for future management.

The full report documents detailed information of the social, economic and cultural environment for the upcoming planning effort. The report includes community descriptions and geography, trends, citizen issues, and communication strategies for engaging citizens collaboratively.

**Setting the Stage For Successful Collaborative Planning**

We understand that the planning effort will not officially begin for another 18 to 24 months. This situation presents an opportunity. Using this lead -time and the information documented in the Community Reports, Baker Resource Area officials can set the stage for a successful collaborative planning effort. Key contacts for each community are people who are actively involved in their community, who understand current issues, and who want to work collaboratively with BLM. The report contains a “Resolve As You Go Candidates For Early Response” segment for each community. These are issues that are currently important to local citizens. By addressing those issues now, BLM can build trust and capacity with local partners needed to address more complex planning issues later.

We recommend in the intervening time before planning officially begins that BLM use detailed findings in the full report for a particular community to:

- Develop or renew relationships with key contacts in each community, identified in the Communication Strategies section of the report. Many of the key contact individuals expressed a strong interest in helping build closer relationships between BLM officials and local citizens.
- Work with local citizens and officials to address the “Resolve As You Go Candidates For Early Response” in each community. Some of the “Candidates” are easily resolved with an informational phone call or visit. Others are more complex and will take longer.
- Consider its capacity and commitment to develop planning elements that are community-based, knowing that the front-end effort is more intensive and that the potential pay-offs are much greater as well. The report lists the planning elements

in each geographic area that JKA considers to be candidates for community-based efforts.

### **Summary of Human Geographic Areas**

The report is organized by Human Geographic Units. A brief summary of key interests expressed by citizens in each geographic unit follows.

#### **The Baker Human Resource Unit (HRU)**

BLM is generally well thought of by the publics it traditionally works with —ranchers, miners, and timber people, although many of these publics want closer ties and more active involvement with BLM. Citizens living in more urban areas have less awareness of BLM lands and activities than do rural citizens. Small towns in rural areas of the HRU are struggling to survive after losing traditional economies, while Baker City is somewhat more resilient. Newcomers bring improved tax base, but few school aged children. Citizen issues relate to grazing, weeds, fire management, mining, recreation, four-wheeler use, access, and coordination.

#### **The Umatilla HRU**

The “West County” area including Hermiston and the town of Umatilla are experiencing faster growth than the rest of the HRU. Citizens and local officials are interested in addressing land tenure, OHV, recreation, and property management issues on BLM lands in the area. The isolated BLM parcels in this region are highly affected by vandalism and other problems, they are affected by planning undertaken by other levels of government, and very possibly, they have important contributions to make to the growth and quality of life in the area.

The South Fork of the Walla Walla River is an important area for recreationists from southeast Washington and Northeast Oregon and valuable fisheries habitat. Citizens, agency representatives, and tribal officials are eager to resolve a long-standing access issue to private residences in the canyon.

#### **The Confederated Tribes of The Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)**

The CTUIR is very interested in being actively involved with BLM in managing public lands and developing a Resource Management Plan that protects tribal interests. Of special importance is protecting their interests in traditional hunting, fishing, gathering and other activities, having timely and effective consultations on proposed BLM projects, and protection of the fisheries in the South Fork of the Walla Walla River. CTUIR wants early consultations with BLM on the RMP planning area and schedule.

### The La Grande HRU

The La Grande HRU contains 6000 acres of BLM-managed lands, mostly in scattered parcels. Citizens and officials are interested in land tenure issues, fire management, timber management, tourism and recreation planning, and restoration. They believe the current strategy of BLM to manage its modest timberlands through coordination with other agencies with more capacity in the area is a sound one.

### The Wallowa HRU

Citizens in the Wallowa HRU have established a strong tradition of collaborative action between citizens, local government, tribes, natural resource agencies, and special interest groups. They actively address issues important to their economic, social, and environmental well-being. They want to continue that tradition with the BLM planning effort. Citizens want active engagement of BLM on Grande Ronde and Minam River planning and management issues, continued active involvement on weed issues, more visible presence in the area by BLM employees, and updated maps showing BLM lands. They believe the BLM plan should address community development of areas affected by river recreation, particularly the Troy area.

### The Asotin HRU

Citizens and officials are interested in addressing issues about Grande Ronde River recreation management and access, noxious weeds, restoration, land purchases, and updated maps. They believe that the BLM lands and the Grande Ronde River are important components of a viable outdoor recreation economy for Asotin County. Additional property acquisition by BLM along the Grande Ronde is valued as long as the impacts created by additional recreational activity are well managed.

### The Nez Perce Tribe at Lapwai

The Tribe wants early discussions to develop a schedule of involvement for the RMP planning process. They are eager to be involved in order to protect tribal interests within the planning area. Their interests include traditional use and travel areas for hunting, fishing, gathering and ceremonial uses. They have special interest in exploring management agreements with BLM regarding the Precious Lands.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## **Background**

The Baker Resource Area Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), part of the Vale District of the BLM, will be responsible for revising its land use plan in the next couple of years. Known as the Resource Management Plan (RMP), the new revised land use plan will guide the management practices of the Baker Resource Area Office until a new plan is completed, typically every 20 years or so. Among the requirements of the plan is the gathering and analysis of social and economic information regarding communities in which public land management is important. This information is to be integrated with biophysical data in understanding the current situation in an area. It is then incorporated into the formation of alternatives, and included in the analysis of the alternatives for any future course of action.

James Kent Associates (JKA) has specialized in community -based approaches to public land use management and planning for over three decades. JKA uses a social ecology approach that accesses the informal levels of community in order to identify local concerns related to public land management, social and economic trends affected by land use decisions, and opportunities for further communication and dialogue between community residents and BLM. More information about JKA is available at [www.naturalborders.com](http://www.naturalborders.com).

## **Objectives**

The objectives for JKA related to work in northeast Oregon were three:

1. Identify the range of citizen issues and opportunities related to land use planning in the Bureau of Land Management's Baker Resource Area Office area, located in Baker City, Oregon.
2. On the basis of community fieldwork, develop communication strategies for each geographic area by which BLM can sustain citizen dialogue throughout the planning process to ensure broad-based participation and ownership of the planning outcomes.
3. Develop capacity to use the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as a collaborative tool for building a constituency and a base of support by offering management guidance and staff training for resolving emerging issues as the planning process evolves. A commitment to "Resolve as you go" is the single best way to sustain citizen interest through the planning process.



The Scope of Work related to these objectives included:

1. Community fieldwork (The Discovery Process™)<sup>1</sup> in the Oregon Counties of Baker, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa, with additional fieldwork in Asotin County, in southeast Washington State, and with the Nez Perce in Lapwai, Idaho. The Discovery Process is a way to describe communities, including tribal communities, from social, cultural and economic perspectives as they relate to land use planning, particularly the social and economic trends identified by residents.
2. Identification of the range of citizen issues and opportunities residents identify related to public land use planning.
3. Human geographic mapping at three scales in order to develop culturally appropriate management approaches and to recommend communication strategies that effectively target agency resources for community dialogue and public participation activities.
4. Involve appropriate staff in key network contact regarding citizen issues that can be resolved outside the planning process. These are identified as candidates for early resolution, or “Resolve as you go.” Although not technically required by law, this step is designed to create early success and to build a base of support for the planning process. For those citizen issues more directly related to planning, staff/citizen contact begins dialogue and an understanding of “civic protocol” — how people want to be communicated with and the opportunities for broader dialogue with more diverse voices as the process develops.
5. Develop communication strategies in each geographic area that will allow BLM to sustain formal and informal citizen contact throughout the planning process.

It is important to note that the level of effort varied from county to county, based on BLM direction relative to the amount and importance of BLM lands involved. Table One below shows the amount of land managed by BLM in each of the counties in the target area. Generally speaking, the level of effort in community fieldwork was commensurate with the amount of BLM land in each county.

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<sup>1</sup> Preister, Kevin and James A. Kent, “Using Social Ecology to Meet the Productive Harmony Intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA),” Hastings West-Northwest Journal of Environmental Law and Policy, Volume 7, Issue 3, Spring, Berkeley, CA.: Hastings College of the Law, 2001.

Table One:  
Acres Managed by BLM in Selected Counties

County	Acres
Baker County, Oregon	358,000
Umatilla County, Oregon	23,000
Union County, Oregon	6,000
Wallowa County, Oregon	14,000
Asotin County, Washington	8,000

(Source: BLM, Baker Resource Area)

## **Methods**

The Discovery Process™ used by JKA is a means of “entering the routines” of a community to understand the daily flow of events, to meet people in their normal and comfortable settings, and to learn from residents what is important to them in terms of caretaking, survival and cultural values.

A “snowball” method was used whereby people talked with were asked of others with whom we could talk. Our conversations always included the question, “Who else should I talk with about this?” We also frequented the gathering places of a community such as cafes, laundromats, hardware stores, and post offices—anywhere where people paused to share information and chat with others. Some conversations were short at grocery stores, gas stations, and cafes. As we networked into a community, we made a special point of contacting people whose names were frequently mentioned. We had lengthy conversations with a large number of people who are well regarded in their community. In addition, we contacted numerous elected officials, agency staff, and organizational representatives. Our effort was oriented to hearing the widest range of interests possible in the widest geographic range.

The JKA team asked residents how public lands were important to them, how they used public lands, what has worked well and not worked well about public land management, and ideas they had for making public land management better. Their comments make up the basis of this report. We use quotes extensively so that people can speak for themselves.

In addition to local knowledge of public land management, the JKA team also was interested in how residents viewed their community, key values, and social and economic trends. Our community assessment methodology was employed to a limited extent to understand current community functioning. Appendix B describes this methodology more completely, or the reader may refer to a website location for a fuller description of the seven Cultural Descriptors used for community assessment:

1. Publics
2. Networks
3. Settlement Patterns
4. Work Routines

5. Support Services
6. Recreation Activities
7. Geographic Boundaries<sup>2</sup>

## **Organization of the Report**

The next chapter of this report summarizes the Human Geography of northeast Oregon, and key findings from the community research. The subsequent chapters deal with each of the major human geographic units involving the counties of Baker, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, and Asotin, along the following dimensions:

1. Social Conditions and Trends
2. Community Themes and Issues
3. Natural Resource Themes and Issues
4. Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response
5. Possible Community -Based Planning Elements
6. Communication Strategy

In addition, two chapters contain a description of tribal interests and communication protocols, Chapter Five for the Umatilla and Chapter Nine for the Nez Perce.

## **Acronyms Used**

ATV	All Terrain Vehicle
BLM	The Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior
BPA	Bonneville Power Authority
DLCD	Department of Land Conservation and Development, State of Oregon
DOI	Department of the Interior
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FSA	Farm Services Agency
GIS	Geographic Information System
JKA	James Kent Associates
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
OHV	Off Highway Vehicle
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purpose Lease (BLM)
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District

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<sup>2</sup> A methodological article for community description using seven Cultural Descriptors is contained in Kent, James A. and Kevin Preister, "Methods for the Development of Human Geographic Boundaries and Their Uses", in partial completion of Cooperative Agreement No. 1422P850-A8-0015 between James Kent Associates and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Task Order No. 001. Available at: [http://www.naturalborders.com/Docs/JKent\\_MethodsfortheDevelopment.pdf](http://www.naturalborders.com/Docs/JKent_MethodsfortheDevelopment.pdf)

UGB  
USFWS  
WSA

Urban Growth Boundary  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Interior  
Wilderness Study Area



## CHAPTER TWO: THE HUMAN GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHEAST OREGON, AND KEY FINDINGS

This chapter provides an orientation to the human geography of northeast Oregon, southeast Washington State, and western Idaho in terms of the lifestyle routines and social/cultural practices of residents who live there. A geographic orientation provides a framework with which to understand human society in this region and for displaying the information in the report. The chapter also summarizes the key findings that are further elucidated in the chapters that follow.

### **The Human Geography of Northeast Oregon**

#### **The Concept of Human Geography**

The concept of human geography is that people everywhere develop an attachment to a geographic place, characterized by a set of natural boundaries created by physical, biological, social, cultural and economic systems. Unique beliefs, traditions, and stories tie people to a specific place, to the land, and to social/kinship networks, the reflection and function of which is called culture.

Human geographic units seldom correspond to geo-political boundaries. Instead, the focus is on how people actually interact with their landscape, the territory that they associate with “home” or their “turf” beyond which is some other community, and their mental map for that territory.

Human geographic maps represent the culture of a geographic area, especially the informal systems through which people adapt to changes in their environment, take care of each other, and sustain their values and lifestyles. The maps represent the boundaries within which people mobilize to meet life’s challenges. Hence, their experiences are used through their participation as place-based knowledge to create ownership in issue resolution, project planning and implementation, public participation, and public policy development.

#### **Three Scales of Human Geography in Northeast Oregon**

This report shows three scales of human geography. The Social Resource Unit (SRU), the largest scale, displays regional affiliation, the Human Resource Unit (HRU) shows the functioning social and economic unit, and the Community Resource Unit (CRU), the smallest scale, depicts the “zone of influence” of individual communities, characterized by face-to-face relations and informal caretaking systems. The reader is referred to the JKA website, [www.naturalborders.com](http://www.naturalborders.com), for a rationale and methodology for human geographic mapping, as well as information on the other scales of geography from neighborhood to global.

Figure One on the next page shows the human geographic units of northeast Oregon. The Social Resource Units (SRUs) are shown in **red**, which reflect the regional territorial affiliation that people report in referencing their attachment to the land.

SRUs are characterized by a sense of belonging. These are rather large areas and one's perception as to the Unit's boundary is that when you cross the SRU boundary you are in an entirely different culture. There is a general feeling of "oneness" as being a part of this regional Unit. There is a general understanding and agreement on beliefs, traditions, stories and the attributes of being a part of the Unit.

Social Resource Units are the aggregation of HRUs on the basis of geographic features of the landscape, often a river basin, for example, or a geologic province, and they are the basis of shared history, lifestyle, livelihood, and outlook. At this scale, face-to-face knowledge is much reduced. Rather, social ties are created by action around issues that transcend the smaller HRUs and by invoking common values ("We always gotten by on our own in this country.").

The planning area for the Baker Resource Area includes the BLM lands in the Oregon Counties of Baker, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, the Washington State County of Asotin, and the Umatilla and Nez Perce tribal areas. It can be seen from Figure One on the next page, that the Baker BLM office planning will affect three SRUs, namely:

- Blue Mountains SRU (Baker, Union and Wallowa Counties)
- Columbia SRU (Umatilla County)
- Clearwater SRU (Asotin County, Washington)

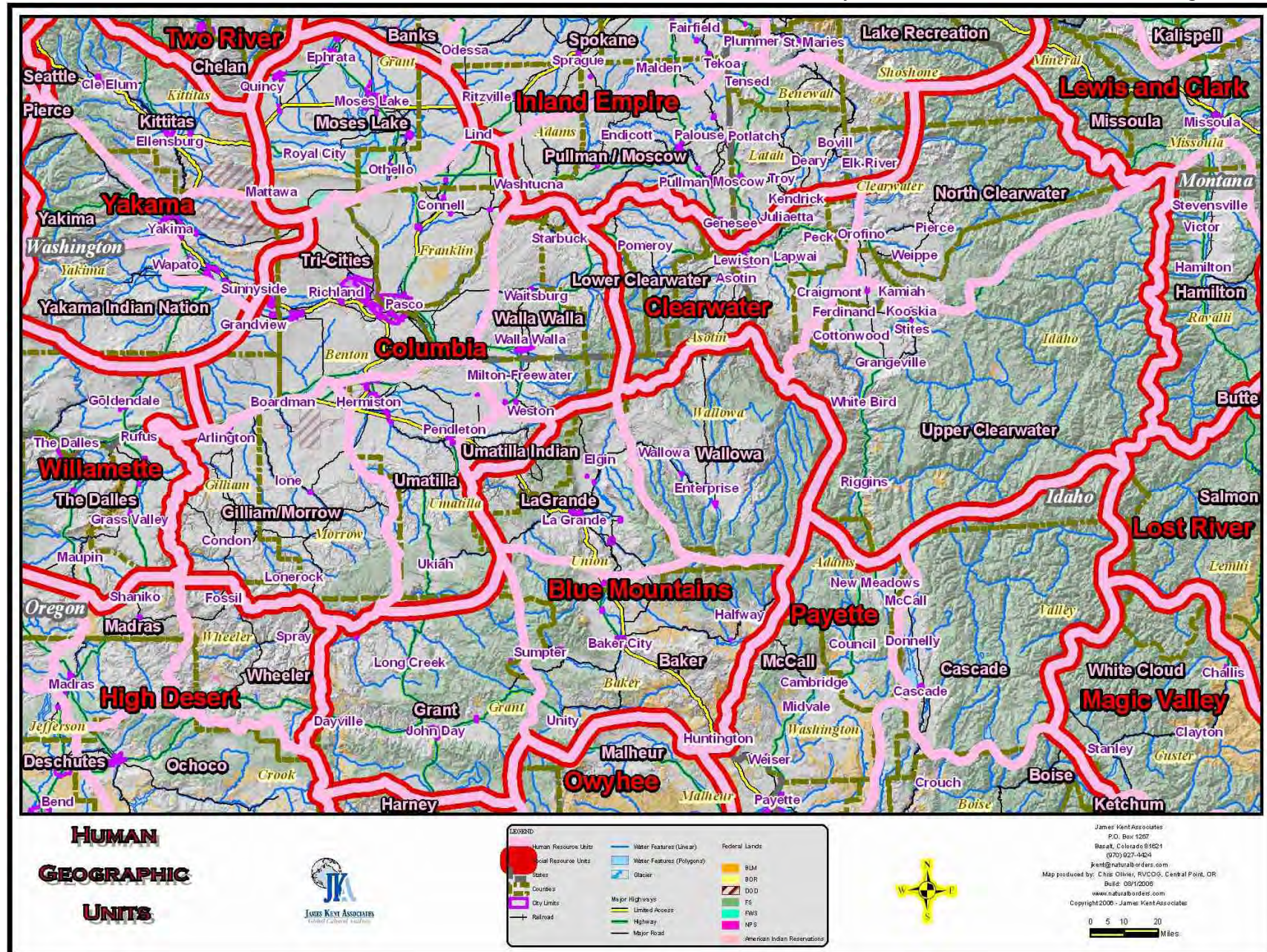
What this means is that, in listening to people's stories about their communities and lifestyle routines, there are regional differences, reflected by the SRUs, which will influence BLM planning. Residents of Baker, Union and Wallowa Counties have a regional affinity by virtue of being part of the Blue Mountains. Named for the blue sheen of the mountains when seen from a distance, the Blue Mountains were a daunting barrier for pioneer emigrants as they prepared for their last push into the Willamette Valley. White settlement of this area, in fact, happened *back* from the Willamette Valley into the Powder River Basin and surrounding areas, after the Willamette Valley became more saturated and settlers realized the quality of the Blue Mountains area. As this report shows, common values and outlooks have resulted from this regional affinity, as reflected in the community themes described further below:

- "We know how to create success."
- "We take care of each other."
- "We've always learned not to give up without a fight." And,
- "No one looks down on you here."



Figure One:

Columbia, Blue Mountains, and Clearwater: Three Social Resource Units With Community Interests in the Baker BLM Planning Effort





People in the Blue Mountains SRU are extremely outdoor oriented in work and play, linked to the core with grazing agriculture and timber management. They have created communities which are relatively safe and family -oriented, and which comfortably absorb newcomers who make an effort to fit in. Residents pride themselves on self-sufficiency and interdependence and want government influence to be practical, effective, and minimal.

By contrast, people in the Columbia SRU, by virtue of being part of the Columbia River Plateau, are much more oriented to farming than to grazing and timber. To get to these areas from the south is to rise in elevation, to leave the trees, and to enter a windy and open land. People here are also outdoor oriented but it is much less dominant. The presence of the freeway and proximity to urban areas create a more urban oriented area in terms of livelihood and recreation. The Columbia River dominates recreation interests, while the agricultural focus is on farming. People here tend to relate more the Tri-Cities area than to La Grande or Baker City.

Asotin County residents, as part of the third SRU, the Clearwater, are oriented to the Snake and Clearwater Rivers and those accompanying watersheds, reflecting the settlement patterns that date back a hundred fifty years and more. The Lewiston-Clarkston metro area is the urban center of an area devoted to agriculture and river recreation.

Embedded within SRUs are Human Resource Units (HRUs), shown in Figure One in **pink**. HRUs are the functioning social and economic units within which most day -to-day and week-to-week activities take place. People's daily activities occur primarily within their HRU including work, school, shopping, social activities and recreation. Health, education, welfare and other public service activities are highly organized at this level with a town or community almost always as its focal point.

As Figure One shows, the Blue Mountains SRU contains the four smaller HRUs of Grant, Baker, La Grande and Wallowa, with a focus here on the Baker, La Grande and Wallowa. The Columbia SRU contains the Umatilla HRU, of interest because of the BLM lands near Hermiston and in Juniper Canyon, and the Walla Walla HRU, which contains BLM lands along the South Fork of the Walla Walla River. In the Clearwater SRU, the Lower Clearwater HRU contains Asotin County, of interest because of the BLM lands along the Grande Ronde River.

Human Resource Units (HRUs) are characterized by frequent and customary interaction. People's daily and weekly activities occur primarily within their HRU including work, school, shopping, social activities and recreation. Health, education, welfare and other public service activities are highly organized at this level with a town or community almost always as its focal point.

This territorial level is characterized by: a sense of place; a sense of identity with the land and the people; a sense of a common understanding of how the resources of their Unit

should be managed; and a common understanding of how things are normally done. The regularity of interaction within an HRU reinforces recognition and identification by the residents of natural and man-made features as “home.” Because of this familiarity, boundaries between Human Resource Units are clearly defined in the minds of those living within them.

The HRUs contain the third level of human geography, the Community Resource Units (CRUs). CRUs are not shown in Figure One but in the individual chapters. CRUs show the “catchment” area of a community, or its zone of influence, beyond which people relate to another community. Where does Enterprise end, for example, and Joseph begin? Geographic features and settlement patterns often determine these boundaries. In rural areas, it captures the perception of local residents that certain areas outside of town are part of the town. In urban areas, it reflects the perception that there are sections of the city with unique identities and patterns that can be distinguished from each other. It is within the CRUs that face-to-face recognition and informal caretaking systems are at their strongest, creating a sense of community and a history of supporting relationships

## **Planning and Management Implications of Human Geography**

Given the differences in these areas produced by the physical, biological, social, cultural and economic systems, it can be expected that public land management will be, and should be, different as well. Not only are the ecological attributes of BLM land variable, but the social, economic and cultural attributes in these areas are variable as well. The understanding and integration of both natural and human elements should produce a plan that is sensitive to the differences, responsive to the survival issues of the area’s residents, and sustainable in the long term.

A look at the human geography provides a first broad brush understanding of management differences. Residents in Baker are very oriented to grazing because of the presence of low elevation BLM lands, while Union and Wallowa are oriented to forest management and river recreation. Umatilla residents are interested in BLM land in relation to urban growth issues, while Wallowa, Union and Asotin share a passion for noxious weed abatement. Unifying issues across the five county area include communication, access, recreation, economic development, and land disposal.

In addition, human geographic maps indicate strategies for effective citizen involvement. Generally speaking, meetings at the CRU level are more effective in creating broader participation, while often in the latter phase of a public involvement program, meetings at the HRU level are sufficient. A focus at the SRU level is more effective for dealing with issues that are widespread throughout the region, such as access. The general progression is to start broadly, build relationships, and then rely on fewer, more central locations.

## Key Findings

### Social Findings

1. The population dynamics in the region are flat, showing very little population growth. The exception is the “West County” area of Umatilla, which is steadily urbanizing.

2. The most rural areas in an already rural area are experiencing a declining population, declining school population, and key survival issues for the future. While this project did not allow for a regional or comparative analysis, Table Two below is instructive in making the point. The table shows school enrollment trends in the four county region in northeast Oregon. As many local people already know, the statistics show significantly declining enrollments in the very rural areas of the region. With the exception of some of the urbanizing areas of Umatilla County, enrollments have declined significantly throughout the region. The trend is most significant in the school districts of Baker County (Burnt River, Huntington, Pine Eagle), Umatilla County (Ukiah), Union County (Elgin), and Wallowa County (Enterprise, Joseph, Troy, and Wallowa).

Table Two:  
School Enrollment Trends for Selected Northeast Oregon Counties, 1980 -2005

<b>October 1 Enrollment for Oregon School Districts*</b>							
County	District	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1995-96	2000-01	2005-06
BAKER	Baker 5J	2,405	2,164	2,242	2,465	2,343	2,010
BAKER	Burnt River 30J	138	80	88	103	79	76
BAKER	Huntington 16J	158	155	135	133	92	86
BAKER	Pine-Eagle 61	416	371	358	368	312	184
UMATILLA	Athena-Weston 29J	568	580	598	642	625	613
UMATILLA	Echo 5	203	185	175	203	221	267
UMATILLA	Helix 1	112	111	96	149	154	174
UMATILLA	Hermiston 8	3,178	3,644	3,661	3,730	4,096	4,641
UMATILLA	Milton-Freewater 7	1,643	1,695	1,737	1,895	1,939	2,009
UMATILLA	Pendleton 16	3,552	3,335	3,401	3,659	3,629	3,434
UMATILLA	Pilot Rock 2	555	486	525	481	473	415
UMATILLA	Stanfield 61	513	546	586	625	481	556
UMATILLA	Ukiah 80	82	81	62	55	58	44
UMATILLA	Umatilla 6	982	973	977	1,007	1,202	1,266
UNION	Cove 15	274	212	268	237	218	254
UNION	Elgin 23	634	544	527	524	438	424
UNION	Imbler 11	367	354	353	391	310	307
UNION	La Grande 1	2,921	2,806	2,984	2,775	2,472	2,189
UNION	North Powder 8J	177	125	220	252	268	211
UNION	Union 5	510	472	492	530	471	458
WALLOWA	Enterprise 21	594	504	570	651	526	371
WALLOWA	Joseph 6	375	384	443	468	324	267
WALLOWA	Troy 54	15	5	4	8	5	6
WALLOWA	Wallowa 12	385	325	360	391	343	263
* Adjusted for past district consolidations. Does not include students enrolled in schools run by Education Districts or the State of Oregon							
Source: Oregon Department of Education, Policy Research and Analysis Office							

3. These areas were born and survived in a culture of self-sufficiency and interdependence, which fosters its continued resilience.
4. The population continues to be outdoor oriented in work and play which remains a key value in local communities and an amenity which attracts newcomers.
5. A steady, though not overwhelming, influx of newcomers are typically urbanites, older or retired, wealthier, and environmentally oriented. While some residents complain that newcomers do not get involved, there is much anecdotal evidence that they do become part of the community and that cultural absorption is successful.
6. Settlement patterns are changing as wealthier people are buying up ranches and larger landholdings. Many people see this as a positive development because the newcomers have the financial resources to invest in the land and, moreover, these people tend to spend and hire locally. However, observers still note the change in culture that this change represents and see that the ranching base of the Old West is disappearing.

## **Economic**

1. The economies of the region show a modest but consistent decline in the traditional economic sectors of agriculture and timber.
2. The trades and services sectors, consistent with a recreation, visitor, and retirement focus, show growth in jobs and income generated. However, such growth has been uneven and sometimes has been associated with a decline of per capita income and real earning power. Nevertheless, the trades and services sectors have been the means of survival in the region, with leadership and organizations displaying more focused and effective direction in supporting these sectors.



## CHAPTER THREE: THE BAKER HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT

### **Baker County Summary**

Figure Two shows the Baker Human Resource Unit, which contains the Community Resource Units (CRUs) of Baker City, Hells Canyon, Huntington, Unity, North Powder/Haines, and Sumpter. In this chapter, all the CRUs, with the exception of Sumpter, which has little BLM land, are described along the following dimensions:

1. Community Conditions and Trends
2. Community Themes and Issues
3. Natural Resource Themes and Issues
4. Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response
5. Possible Community -Based Planning Elements
6. Communication Strategy

The Baker HRU is affiliated regionally with the Blue Mountains Social Resource Unit (Figure One, Chapter Two) which contains the other HRUs of Grant, La Grande and Wallowa. The Baker HRU boundary on the north corresponds generally to the county line, although the North Powder area is included because those residents affiliate with Baker City. The western boundary includes the Elkhorn Mountains and the Sumpter area, the southern line south of Unity and Huntington distinguishes the Baker area from the Owyhee SRU and the eastern line is the Hells Canyon, which is also the state line with Idaho.

Table Three below shows the population trends for Baker County and its communities. It shows that the very rural areas of the County are indeed losing population, or barely sustaining their population, to which many people interviewed for this report attested. The Table further shows that population growth in the County as a whole, and in Baker City, has held steady with very little increase.

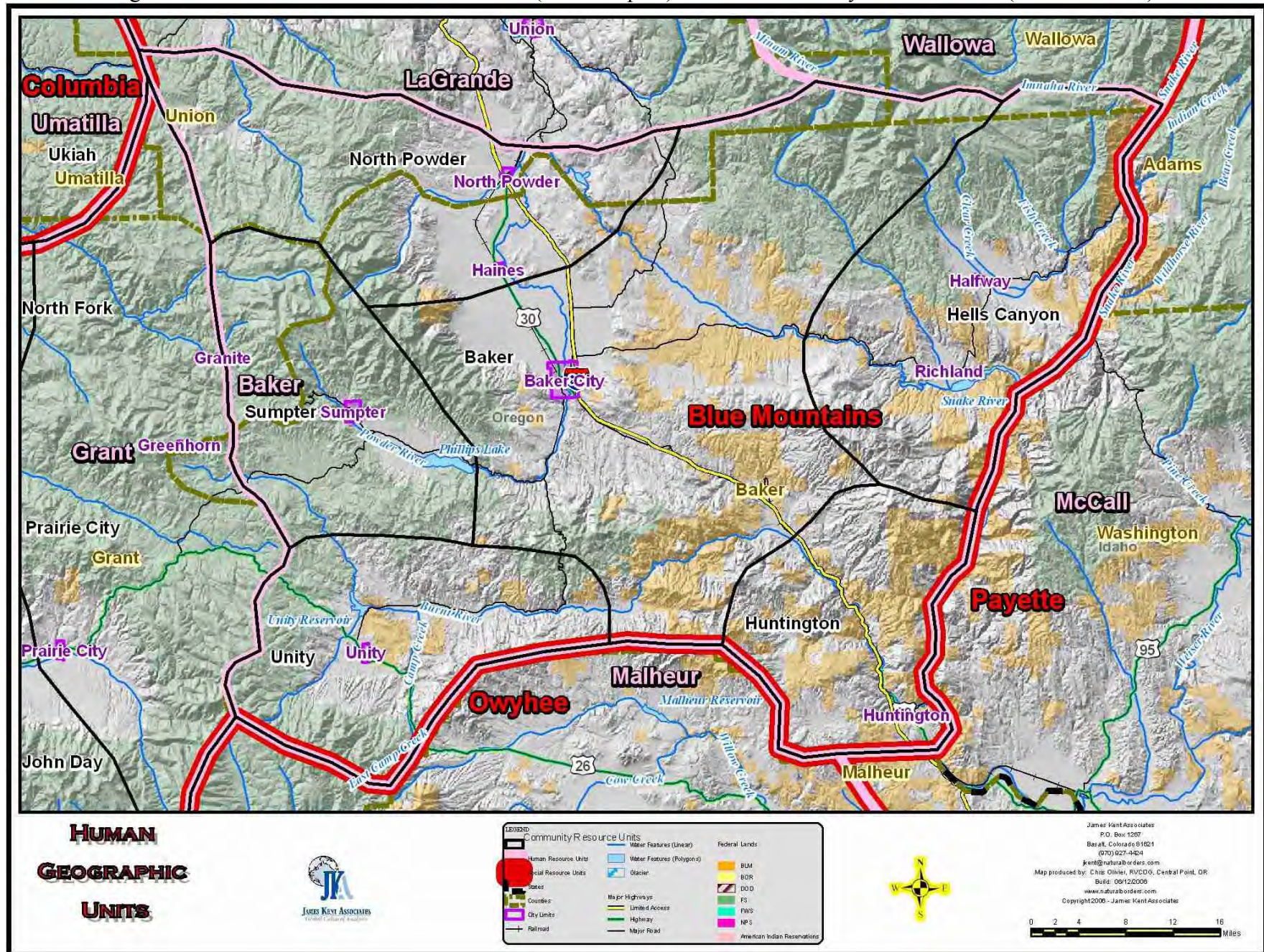
Table Three:  
Population Trends for Baker County and Towns

Location	1990	2000	2005	% Annual Change
Baker County	15,317	16,741	16,287	0.422
Baker City	9,140	9,860	9,703	0.41
Halfway	311	337	319	0.17
Richland	161	147	138	-0.1
Huntington	522	515	481	-0.5
Unity	87	131	124	2.8

(Source: U.S. Census)



Figure Two: The Baker Human Resource Unit (shown in pink) with Its Community Resource Units (shown in black)





These key findings that relate to Baker County as a whole are highlighted with more details in the pages that follow:

1. BLM gets good citizen reviews with its traditional publics (ranchers, miners, recreationists) for management practices, although there are many specific issues that people would like to see addressed. Positive relations are evident in the development of the Interpretive Center, the fire plan, Bishop Springs, as well as in the personal relationships between individual staff members and members of the public.
2. Awareness of BLM lands and activities is very low, particularly in the urban areas of the County. It is fair to say that most people talked with by the JKA team do not feel connected with BLM, although numerous individuals expressed interest in closer ties, outlining many opportunities (for example, the Partners' Breakfast) for BLM to establish closer relations in the community.
3. When most people talked about public lands, they referred to Forest Service and BLM interchangeably. When pressed to clarify to which agency they were referring, people inevitably said "Forest Service" with a negative connotation, with BLM comparing much more favorably.
4. Many of the issues people related, particularly the most heated issues, are what JKA calls "embedded" issues, those historical issues that were not resolved and still raise the emotional tone in dealing with current issues. Examples are: the removal of old mining equipment on Balm Creek; the closure of certain off-highway trails in the Elkhorn Mountains; and development at Swedes Landing, all creating issues at least ten years old but still referred to when residents talked about current issues. This finding implies a disconnect between BLM and community members regarding current issues. In these stories, there was as much concern on how BLM (or others) took the action as the action itself. "Government workers are a strange breed. If we see something that needs done, we just do it," one person said, implying that it is difficult for government to get things done. "Precipitous," "unannounced," and "surprised" were some of the language used.
5. Residents in Unity, Huntington and Richland say that their towns are "dying," which they attribute to declines in the traditional employment in agriculture, timber, and mining. While tourism and recreation are generating significant economic revenues, their dynamics do not appear to lend themselves to healthy rural economies. For example, the recreation economy attracts newcomers to the area, but they tend to be older people without children, improving the tax base and the construction sector somewhat, but not generating significant employment. Visitors may come to their area but are often day visitors only or they bring their supplies with them. In addition, much of the decline can be attributed to extreme



isolation, as in Unity, or a reliance on water-based recreation, as in Richland and Huntington, subject to water draw downs that give priority to electrical generation and flood control, and not to stable tourism seasons. School enrollments are universally reported to in significant decline in these areas, and residents say when the school goes, “the community goes.”

Efforts to support these areas through public land management practices are especially appropriate.

6. Baker City has high resilience and high absorption capacity for change, which can be supported in a number of ways through public land management practices.
7. The social environment is changing. Different kinds of people, with newcomers from Bend, Seattle, Boise and other urban areas, purported to be bringing an environmental ethic and recreation interests, will continue to change the nature of natural resource management. That BLM lands are closer to the population centers will only make these shifts more pronounced. It is likely that these shifts will require more outdoor education, emphasis on recreation, and community - based approaches in the future. The trend will also favor service-based management, not project-based management, and foster relationship building and facilitation skills among staff.
8. There are ample opportunities to broaden influence and leverage project success. Recreation and tourism development can be furthered by supporting and facilitating current efforts to coordinate the marketing of the many visitor attractions, both locally and regionally, and by re-development of local capacity to participate in the Interpretive Center.

## **The Baker City Area**

### **SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS**

Baker County had 16,500 residents in 2003, about 10,000 of whom live in Baker City. The County grew by 1,659 between 1970 and 2000, a growth rate of 1.1% a year (Sonoran Institute, citing 2000 census data, 2006). The population has been stable for 100 years, residents say. The town was settled mostly through mining, agriculture and timber. A lot of the buildings are from late 1800s and early 1900s, and they have become a valued and prided asset in the community.

The population in Baker County is aging, with older residents making a larger share of the total population. Children under age 15 are making up less of the population, as are the people aged 25-34. Residents pointed with regret to school closures that reflect this changing demography. While retirement age category has been stable, the “young retirees” category (age 45-64) has been gaining as a share of the population.

Residents reported that about half the land in the County is privately owned, while the Forest Service owns about 33% and BLM owns about 19% (358,000 acres).

The local economy is made up of agriculture, forest products, manufacturing and recreation. Census data reveal the shifts in the economic base of Baker County during the last 30 years. Farm employment dropped from 19% to 12% of total employment between 1970 and 2000, while health, legal and business services increased from 15% to 24% of total employment, and finance, insurance, and real estate climbed to 7% from 4% during this period. Government and manufacturing employment slipped by 2%. In 1970, 73% of gross farm income was from livestock, while 15% was from crops. By 2000, 51% of gross income was from livestock, and 28% from crops. Total farm and ranch income dropped from \$27.5 million in 1970 to -\$8.5 million in 2000 (Sonoran Institute, citing 2000 census data).

The Ellingson Mill closed in 1993, which was a significant loss to the community. Currently, there is a single mill, a “secondary producer” that takes scab products, resizes them and ships them. There is a modest manufacturing segment in the local economy.

“In 1992, the town had a heart attack when the mills stopped turning its saws. About 1600 people worked in the mills. They all had families, and they all left.”

“In 1983, there were 34 dairies in the county and now I’m the only one left.”

“The ranches here are generational.”

“I used to build sawmills. We knew we had to shift to another business if we wanted to stay here, so we did.”

In recent decades, recreation and tourism have come to play an increasingly important role in the local economy. Some of the recreation resources in Baker County include the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and Old Oregon Trail, Sumpter Gold Dredge Park and ghost towns, Sumpter Valley Railroad, Baker City Restored Historic District (including Geiser Grand Hotel), Anthony Lakes Ski Resort and summer picnic areas, camping and hiking trails, Eagle Cap Wilderness area, Brownlee, Oxbow and Hells Canyon Reservoirs and Hells Canyon (<http://bluebook.state.or>).

“Over half of the people living in Baker City are self-employed, scratching a living so they can stay here. School enrollment is down.”

Census data indicate that 52% of new jobs between 1970 and 2000 was in proprietors, and further, that most new businesses are small businesses. The largest growth has been in firms of 1-4 employees, with 76 new businesses between 1990 and 2000. Non-Labor Income grew substantially between 1970 and 2000, reflecting the growth of dividends, interest and rent, (what is usually referred to as money earned from investments), as well

as transfer payments (payments from governments to individuals, age-related, including Medicare, disability insurance payments, and retirements) in the local economy (Sonoran Institute, citing 2000 census data).

Residents believe that the Baker City area has a high degree of women-owned businesses. While some thought this was window dressing to get tax breaks by being a woman-owned company, stories from several well-placed business people in the community emphasize that this can only be a partial answer. Women business owners stated that they wanted control of their own destiny and believed that self-employment was the means to achieve that. They were willing to take the risks of business ventures in return for the independence and the value of living in a healthy community. Moreover, the economic activities of the men have traditionally been agriculture, mining and timber. As those sectors have declined, men have shifted to more regional work—they are often gone from the area to earn their income. Some ex-loggers, for example, now do long-haul trucking.

“We stay home and run the business and the town, while the men go out of town to work for others.”

The settlement patterns in this area in the early years witnessed the proliferations of small towns, each with schools, commercial activity, and a local economic base, linked to at least partial self-sufficiency. The modern era has brought better transportation, more commuting, and a shifting economic base, which has resulted in some towns becoming ghost towns and some current towns struggling to stay alive. A gradual de-population of the countryside has been the trend.

“I learned to walk up in the mountains, following my dad around when he herded sheep.”

“They tell me that all sheep ranching is gone, there is only one band left, the Jacobs own that, but there used to be 30 bands in this area.”

The physical setting of Baker City reveals that downtown still has major business facilities down town. The Ford Dealership, Chevrolet Dealership, Sears, Ace Hardware are still in the core. There are many small, non-chain stores throughout the community. A waitress, when asked why there are no Big Box stores in Baker City, responded: “We don’t want any,” and “Anyways, there are some 35 miles away.”

“We like shopping trips to Boise. We make a day of it. It makes me glad there are no box stores.”

“I’m really grateful that there is no Wal Mart here, and I hope there never is one. People come here for the pace of life and the beauty of the outdoors.”

“It’s the kind of town you can still bundle your kids up at Christmas time and spend the day downtown hanging out. It’s not like downtown La Grande, where a

Wal Mart has forced small retailers to leave and now downtown is more a professional center than a family down town area.”

“Wal Mart came in and wanted to set up a store, but the historical society and city council said ‘No.’”

“That is why I live here” is a major theme. There seems to be a settlement pattern of people “coming home.” Some leave when they are young and return some 15 or 20 years later. This gives the town an intergenerational renewal that continues. People who grew up in this ecological area and understand its resources, bring new experiences developed elsewhere back to apply to an area they already appreciate. This understanding of the rivers, valleys, mountains, towns, and their neighbors is widespread and it is important to recognize this knowledge base in resource planning. It is an enormous energy source for federal agency planning.

Observations around town reveal a mix of housing types—mobile, modular, and conventional. The hillsides and a couple neighborhood areas have newer, larger and more expensive homes (Highland Park by the golf course, out in the foothills, and by the freeway), but most are very modest in size and variable in value. The mix of houses indicates that the range between rich and poor is not extreme, and that the middle class is prolific and healthy. At the same time, many homes were observed that were abandoned or in need of significant rehabilitation. Some homes had plastic in their windows and unpainted outsides.

Baker is made up of mostly one-story homes. Many are about 500-900 sq. ft. or so. Every now and then there is a two-story house. The homes are fairly tightly spaced. There are not many houses for sale, indicating a low turnover of residents. Many homes have low, chain-link fences, except for one street that uses high wood posts. Many of the homes have at least two vehicles, one of which is a truck or 4-wheel drive.

There are many campers and trailers with pop-up tents. There are street signs saying that trucks are allowed and may park. There are kid sized bicycles and swings in the yards occasionally. Several homes have semi-truck cabs parked near them.

South Baker is on the other side of the railroad tracks. The railroad tracks are a physical barrier to the south side. There is an underpass for walking from the south side to downtown. The physical characteristics of the neighborhood include houses with small front porches. The lots have working machinery in them, for example, logging trucks and regular trucks. Also there are many adult toys such as snowmobiles, four-wheel recreation vehicles, and so on. The houses are small with larger ones interspersed. There is evidence of young families as well as middle and older families. There are mailboxes so these folks do not have to gather at the Post Office every day. There are commercial operations surrounding this area as well as interspersed throughout the residential area. Also present are Head Start facilities, employment training facilities, and a closed

elementary school. There is no elementary school serving this area within their neighborhood boundaries.

Many of the houses burn wood and have woodpiles and woodsplitters in their yards. It is suspected that they get wood permits from the Forest Service for their wood cutting and gathering. Some residents work together when they go for their wood gathering. This cooperation, if it is as pronounced as indicated, reveals a core value not only in the neighborhood but one that may permeate the larger area of Baker City. If so this is a potential base for working with these families as to Forest Service and BLM plans.

The type of trucks and equipment in the yards indicate that there are many family enterprises as indicated on the signs painted on the doors of the trucks. If true there is potential for great involvement of involving these enterprisers with the Forest Service and BLM understanding one segment of their citizen base for involvement in planning activities. The activities would have to form around these folks in their natural habitat and routines.

Newcomers are a frequent topic of conversation in Baker City. Residents' descriptions of newcomers showed a number of patterns. One, there appears to be a geographic pattern to it, with lots of people moving in from Bend, Boise, California. Two, there are many stories of re-settlement of people who left out of high school and have returned with their families. Three, newcomers without prior affiliation to the area are attracted not only by the physical beauty but by the friendliness and family -orientation of the towns.

Early retirees from elsewhere are reportedly buying houses in Baker County. Prices for houses have started upward in the last year, residents said. Many are starting small businesses (for example, a cabinet maker in South Baker, a plastic playg round equipment manufacturer on 4<sup>th</sup> St.).

“We’re being discovered. Two guys from Bend bought the Carnegie building.”

“Californians are really moving in.”

“My husband and I are from Seattle and we’d ride through on motorcycle trips and fell in love with the area.”

“People are flocking here from Boise, Bend, Portland because it’s still beautiful and affordable. Last summer, half the shops in town were empty, but a lot of young entrepreneurs are coming in and opening places up.”

“We moved around for 20 years, then lived in Phoenix for 25 years, and we’ve just been back for a year or so.”

“\_\_\_\_\_ was born here, her grandparents are here and she moved back a while ago.”

“Californians come and go. We call it ‘the California winter kill’ because after about three years, they can’t take the winters.”

“I moved here with my daughter about a year ago from the San Diego area. I liked the friendliness of Baker.” [Business owner]

“I like this better than Las Vegas. I raised my kids here.”

“I’d like to move back to Baker if I could find a job.”

“I needed a change of pace.” [Newcomer]

## COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

Themes for JKA are widely shared perceptions, values, and attitudes that shape people’s perception of their local environment. By contrast, issues are statements people make that can be acted upon, indicating partnership opportunities in using public land management practices to resolve them. A focus on issues is the means by which citizen and agency interests can become aligned to foster “productive harmony” in the local environment, as called for by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This section focuses on community themes and issues while the following section describes themes and issues related to natural resource management.

The themes discovered in the Baker County area are numbered and described below.

### **1. “We know how to create success.”**

“We have a history of coming together and working together here.”

Baker County society creates cooperation and success among widely diverse sets of interest. Two areas of concerted and visible success in recent years are the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and the rehabilitation and showcasing of historical assets.

The success of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is a wonderful tale of a citizen-led effort that brought local, state, and federal leadership along to create success. The success can be measured not only by bricks and mortar and increased local revenues, but by social capital created by diverse people working together to overcome obstacles. The Center helped Baker become one of the top tourism counties in the state. It is now a destination market for tourism, even though the number of visitors to the Center has not met earlier expectations. A later section describes citizen issues related to the Interpretive Center.

The success of the Center propelled the rehabilitation of several downtown buildings from about 1992 to 2000. Residents created enormous success in the development of its historic heritage as an economic development asset.

“In 2000, Baker County was at the pinnacle of its success in terms of generating projects, bringing in resources, and community unity. In the last 5 years, things have regressed and people would rather fight than cooperate.”

“When I grew up in the ‘60s and ‘70s, Baker was kind of run down. On an anniversary in Baker in around 1976, people began to realize this was a cool historic area.”

## **2. “We take care of each other.”**

It is clear from the stories of residents that this is an area in which family life is valued, multi-generational activities are the norm, and there are ongoing patterns of caretaking and mutual support. A few examples of the way this theme is expressed are:

- The number of public events that include food, all ages, and are well attended. The level of “civic engagement” appears high.
- The number and wide variety of events at the Senior Center.
- Support for youth as shown in the health and vigor of 4-H clubs.
- There are three places in town at which a public piano is available.
- The Adler Foundation commitment to college scholarships for youth and community development.
- The support of Behlen Manufacturing for high school employment and college education.

## **3. “No one looks down on you here.”**

“I could have gone on food stamps but I didn’t. People here just know that winter will be slow and make allowances for it.”

The following statements summarize the community values and conditions expressed in Baker City:

- There seems to be a high conscious level about the quality of life in Baker City. People talk about that quality of life and are assertive about talking about living here and its merits. “That’s why I live here.”
- There appears to be a high absorption level in the Baker City culture. Evidence of this is the commercial and residential area as that exist in the same physical space, the friendliness of the shop owners and workers to talk to strangers. Absent from the talk is demonizing language about new people. Instead, it’s resettlement of families and individuals who used to live here. Intergenerational families and business owners are very pronounced.

- Women owned businesses and their business property create a predictability and permanence about the Baker City area that allows people to use the energy for creative integrative activities rather than worrying about outside intrusions destroying their town.
- Women are natural collaborators since they function to take care of the education, health and social activities of families: survival, cultural maintenance, and caretaking. Two women run the Cornerstone-Carnegie development project. Women turn up in other rehabilitation of building endeavors.
- There is a core value for historic preservation and education of others about that preservation. There are historical icons all around the town; some labeled as such and others represented in the rehabilitation of older buildings
- There have been historical agreements that larger -outside owned stores should not be allowed in town. Safeway and Albertson are two examples of the only large stores in town, approximately 60,000 sq. ft. These struggles over the scale of Baker City armored citizens with strategies to take charge of maintaining and enhancing their physical and social environments.
- Baker is proliferated with local individuals and families owning their own businesses. That means that an ownership culture (great resilience and capacity to support community activities and absorb change) exists rather than a management structure where outsiders own the building and the means of commerce and hire locals to manage “for” them. This is an exportation of power and money that is crippling to the communities who fall prey to such outside forces. In today’s local social and economic structure, it appears that the dollar and its multiplier are staying in Baker.

Residents expressed the following issues related to current community life.

“We thought we’d get more jobs from the prison.”

“Meth is getting to be more of a problem here.”

“I’m concerned about cutbacks of local Forest Service and BLM staff. Those are the better paying jobs, they usually have school -age kids and have money to spend on Main Street.”

“How should interested parties envision a linkage between the chamber, the museum, the Hill [the Interpretive Center] and the scenic byway, in order to make sure the effort is integrated?”

A number of people are looking into biomass and alternative energy development in the County, promoted by state and federal officials. Apparently, there is opportunity to use biomass at the new middle school. A new wind generation farm is beginning construction this summer near Telocaset. These developments may foster opportunities for BLM.



Residents also talked about the need for urban renewal efforts for some sections of town to address old, substandard houses.

A community issue discussed widely in Baker City, particularly in light of JKA's BLM - related mission, involves the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. Following a five -year community-led effort to capitalize on the historic Oregon Trail as an economic development asset, the Center opened in 1992. Managed and operated by BLM, it is also supported by two nonprofit organizations, the Trail Tenders, a volunteer group which staffs the gift shops, undertakes some visitor education efforts, writes grants, and provides for a portion of the general budget, and the Oregon Trail Preservation Trust, dedicated to education and cultural enrichment as well as, and primarily, fundraising. BLM also has an Advisory Board made up of local leadership to guide Center development.

The success of the project created tremendous goodwill.

“In terms of tourism and recreation, BLM has done an excellent job with the Interpretive Center.”

“The BLM manager at the time, Jack Albright, was really good to work with and understood the potential and benefit to the community and they helped locate a spot on BLM land.”

“The community drove this thing, it was from an economic development standpoint.”

“It [The Center] spurred the development of cottage industries. One woman made bonnets, another tops. There were school dolls. There were bigger dolls dressed in pioneer clothes.”

“I think they are all great people [at the Center]. The Center is a jewel, probably the best attraction in all of Baker County.”

The concerns expressed by residents about the Center included the drop in visitation and the lack of local participation in Center activities. The latter issue is particularly grating to some residents who point out that it was citizen energy that got the Center going in the first place. Some residents believe that, because it's an Interior Department facility, that advertising and marketing are prohibited. Others complained that the Baker BLM office is not “connected” to “the Hill” (Flagstaff Hill where the Center is located), while BLM staff and some residents pointed out the natural division of labor between the Baker office and Center staff. These folks feel that the Baker staff can concentrate on more traditional matters of range and resource issues, while the Center staff can focus on historical interpretation, cultural resources, and interface with the community about the operation of the Center.

“When it first opened, it had 340,000 visitors the first year and it rapidly dropped to 65,000. There are 10,000 cars a day going by on Interstate 84, so clearly the Board needs to do something. We’ve gotten several grants to set up self-guided loop vehicle tours, which tie historic sites around the region together. We’re thinking of giving out CDs that will direct and educate the visitor.”

“The hill has more natural pathways (Trail Tenders, student interns, the community members on the advisory board) into working on community projects than the BLM Resource Area Office has, so it’s a more natural fit for us to take the lead on helping facilitate projects like the scenic byway.” [Center BLM staff person]

“We collaborated with the Historic Museum on the Sumpter Dredge. We share with Historic Baker, use the Crossroads Art Center. We use contract interpreters.” [Center BLM staff person]

When a few residents talked about “the Hill,” residents used language like “shut out” and “condescending” to describe the lack of connection.

“You know, the big mistake we made was letting BLM take the place over. We were told that we could not get congressional money unless a government agency ran it. When BLM got it built and started management, they shut out the locals. All they want us for now is fundraising. Our input is not allowed.”

“We were told so often that our ideas ‘were against policy, you have to do it our way.’”

“It would be hard now to get community ownership. Everyone has moved on. It was spontaneous.”

“Locals now ignore the center unless relatives are in town.”

“The Center didn’t translate into more partnerships or work with BLM.”

“We would greet and orient visitors, sometimes we ran the whole place for a day, but after awhile they didn’t want us doing the greeting. We could not promote specific restaurants only where to go in general.”

“We came to learn it was never going to be self sufficient.”

“They treat us as servants.”

“The Trail Tenders numbers have decreased.”

The new BLM manager of the Interpretive Center stated that she wants to improve community access to the facility by opening it up to local events, like Cowboy Poetry and others. Residents had their own ideas on how to improve BLM/community relations as well as the functioning of the Center. They want locals to be more involved in the planning, the area to be promoted more, and perhaps an information kiosk put up (“like at Haines”). A number of people said that the Interpretive Center should make an all out effort to have functions for local people, for example, “This week is Baker City Week,” free admission for Baker City people, or some sort of key chain tag that gives 50% off for local residents. Specific items of interest, like displays of quilts from Baker County, should be displayed.

“The new manager is much better at allowing local events. She has our respect and confidence.”

“We need to energize the businesses and community again in relation to the Center.”

“Let us put in brochures for local businesses. In the past, there was a real rub for BLM in promoting profit stuff, but apparently now it’s easier to do.”

“Have the Center staff volunteer in the community, maybe even get comp time. It’s not a big thing but people notice. This is a town of volunteers and for them not to feel off, somehow. Trail Tenders volunteer at two yearly basketball tournaments and I never see center staff there. You just don’t see them around.”

“Make volunteering easier. The paperwork is very intrusive in the information they want, social security number, police check. I know a lady who moved from McCall specifically to volunteer at the Center. She tells me now she doesn’t know what to do, she is offended by the paperwork and may not want to do it.”

“How will Measure 37 affect the viewshed of Center? I think the answer would be in reaching out to whoever owns the property and make them a part of the process.”

## NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

Themes, again widespread, shared attitudes or perceptions, that residents talked about in relation to natural resource management are these:

### **1. “Environmentalists cause all sorts of problems.”**

When asking residents about natural resource interests, many people would often cite “environmentalists” as the bad guys—that those people were the ones “shutting everything down.” The language implied that these were local people.

“There are two types of people here, pragmatic and those that want to keep us out, shut us out.”

“I never met a miner or rancher who didn’t think of themselves as environmentalists. But the radicals make it impossible.”

“These groups are dedicated to getting ranchers off the land, they want all the cattle off the land.”

“Environmentalists are shutting everything down.”

However, when the JKA team asked who these people were, folks generally could not come up with names or groups. In addition, as stated elsewhere, the hotter issues that people described turned out to be older issues of at least 10 years. It became evident that many people were responding to conditions that applied ten or twenty years ago, but not today. While it was easy to find people avidly interested in the quality of the environment, and in stewardship activities that might improve it, no local person claimed the title of “environmentalist.” Of course, in this area, the term is pejorative but more than that, it seemed to be locus of general, theme language that reflected particular values but not real issues. Instead people described a couple regional environmental groups, focused more on the Forest Service, the perception goes, and not on BLM.

“Your better ranchers are the best environmentalists there are, because the land is their livelihood.”

## **2. “I really appreciate them sending someone out.”**

A number of residents were quite explicit in their appreciation for BLM’s effort to ask people what they thought.

“I really appreciate them [BLM] sending someone out.”

“This is really exciting that BLM sent someone out here to talk to us. It’s definitely a step in the right direction.”

## **3. “What’s the use?”**

A far more predominant attitude expressed by residents was a deep-seated suspicion and lack of confidence in government. Although the attitude was voiced for any government, the stronger feelings were reserved for the federal government. People simply believed the government does not have the capacity to do its job well, or that it is motivated primarily by its own interests and not the interests of local residents .

“It seems like they [Forest Service and BLM] don’t want anyone to come to their meetings. They just put little ads in the paper.”

“I have often sent my comments to the Forest Service but they are just a bunch of environmentalists. They aren’t pragmatic about folks trying to make a living.”

“The Forest Service and BLM won’t stand up and protect us. A lot of ranchers can see the writing on the wall. It’s the government. The government doesn’t listen to people like us.”

“I used to go to them Forest Service public meetings, and I’d go in there to talk and they would just nod, and say, ‘Thank you.’ They didn’t even take notes, they had their mind made up and they did what they wanted to anyway.”

“I went to two meetings and they felt like the agency decision was already made and they go through the meetings just to show that they are listening.”

#### 4. “Awareness of BLM is low.”

“I don’t know where BLM land is.” [Hunter]

“Most people don’t know about BLM. There is very little contact.”

“They move these people around all the time. When my dad was around, the guys used to stay put and they knew each tree and if there were problems on my dad’s range, the guy would come up and tell him, ‘The range is getting worked to hard, you gotta cut back.’ They had a relationship. This was from the 1930s to the 1950s.”

“BLM shouldn’t barricade themselves behind their desk. They just keep to themselves. But \_\_\_\_\_ works at it, he tries.”

The **natural resource issues** that people described are listed below by topic. Again, issues are statements people make that can be acted upon and indicate opportunities for community-based collaboration. Topics covered below are:

1. General
2. Grazing
3. Weeds
4. Fire Management
5. Mining
6. Coordinated Recreation Management
7. Four Wheeler Use
8. Access
9. Hunters
10. Mountain Bike and Walking Trails
11. Coordination and Management

## **1. General**

“Mostly, BLM does a good job.” [Common]

“The priorities for BLM should be water, water quality, boat ramps and recreation.”

“The feds never talk about the cost of litigation and they should. Collaboration works and should be promoted for its value and because it saves money.”

“We are worried if the sage grouse is listed. Wildlife habitat is critical. It requires ‘leks’ breeding areas. If BLM has lots of these areas, private land will not be affected, and it’s better for us. We have to take BLM into account.” [Planning Commission member]

“I didn’t even know BLM had a map.”

“I voted for Bush twice, but now because he needs money for other things, they are cutting the ‘in lieu of payments’, which are needed for schools and roads. Those funds should not be cut.”

## **2. Grazing**

Ranchers discussed general grazing issues of lowering AUMs (Animal Unit Months), making no money, and too many regulations, while many were clear in saying that they get along fine with BLM staff. Some expressed a general concern that BLM favored environmentalists and that the new range standards will be set unfairly.

“This year the BLM has issued a grazing plan for my lease that doesn’t make practical sense, given the amount of snow in high country. I don’t know who to contact.”

“The cross fencing that is prescribed in the new range standards will not be adequately funded by BLM for the long term, adding to our costs.”

“There is still some resource damage on grazing allotments, but they are improving.”

“Fire suppression has allowed juniper to take over rangelands and crowd out grasses. Let those fires burn.”

“I’d like to burn juniper trees on my land but I’m afraid of the fire getting out of control. I’d appreciate assistance from the BLM, since they are next door. I know several other ranchers in the same situation.”

“I have no problem whatsoever with BLM. I’ve always gotten along with them real well. About a year ago I worked with BLM to change the user permits to be more ‘user friendly’ and that was really helpful. I have cattle in the Keating area, and we have a bunch of White Top, but there’s not a doggone thing they [BLM] can do to help with that.”

### **3. Weeds**

Rural residents and others voiced high concern about weeds in Baker County. Some areas are worse than others, and ranchers have appreciated the more active weed program in Baker County in recent years.

“Union County has done a really good job. If you see weeds on land you can call weed control and they will come out and give the rancher a certain amount of time to get rid of it. I’ve had to call a couple people in. Baker County weed control is developing but they haven’t been good—they’ve become a lot more aggressive in the last two years, and they have started a cost share program where they will share half the cost of spraying.”

“I won’t buy any hay from Keating because White Top is such an issue there, and Elgin has a lot of Knapweed. Any time I purchase feed I check out where it comes from. I like Grand Ronde, Union County feed.”

“You can spend 3 or 4 thousand dollars on spraying. The BLM is trying biological stuff, like getting bugs that eat a certain weed at the right time, but that stuff takes time, and there is too much area that’s covered in weeds.”

I got Star thistle up in there by Pelter Creek, but someone brought it along with the hay they hauled in, like if they were hunters bringing it in with their horses.”

“I have to spray along the county road every spring because it’s a high use recreation area and people could be bringing it in. It’s a very costly thing to keep it clean, but if I don’t it will get worse—in spring its really apparent what the weed looks like.”

“Private land owners often feel like their land is clear, but they are fenced next to BLM land whose land isn’t free from weeds.”

“ATV, hunting, and weed control are all important on BLM land. The biggest problem is Scotch Thistle.”

### **4. Fire Management**

“The forest should not be allowed to burn. The Strawberries will never be the same for my kids. They watched that area burn and did nothing.”

“BLM should take steps to clean woody debris off the forest floor. It used to be thought beneficial to leave it there but now the thinking is different. Clean it up more. Bug kill is left alone. You get bad fires from not cleaning up.”

“BLM did a great job on the fire plan. We appreciated their leadership and their persistence.”

## **5. Mining**

Eastern Oregon Mining Association reports that it has about 250-300 members and there is about an equal number of non-member miners in the area. Their motto regarding mining sites is, “Leave it as good or better.” Its members report efforts to level old tailings, plant vegetation and so on. The general perception of miners is that mining is the world’s most important industry, every job needs minerals, either directly or indirectly and that in the zeal to protect the environment, our society has seriously damaged the mining industry. The regulations for mining have increased to the point that mining has been “chased” out of the country. The association wants to educate the public on these issues because people don’t realize the need for basic industries like mining.

The organization reportedly has had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the three local National Forests since the early 1980s that it would like to see duplicated with BLM. The MOU allows miners to pay their bond to the association and the association guarantees compliance. The group serves as the “muscle” for the “outlaws” that don’t conform. In return, miners rely on the Eastern Oregon Mining Association to work on behalf of their interests with the Forest Service and BLM.

“We go over and see them and tell them they better get in line if they want to continue. We’ll pull their bond if they don’t get into compliance.”

Association leadership, and other miners, believes that the local BLM office is not responsive to mining interests. They report that a decision was made to get future permits from Baker taken care of by the state of Nevada since Nevada BLM has more experience in mining. Apparently, that decision is supposed to take effect in about a month.

“BLM wanted \$10,000 for a test hole. It’s exorbitant. They said I had to bring in a licensed surveyor. There is nothing in the law or even the regs about this.”

“It used to be good with BLM. We did tours with dignitaries and so on.”

“I know miners who have waited 4 or 5 years to get a response from BLM on their mining operations and then denied.”

“We have had claim jumpers take over our claims on BLM land we couldn’t get BLM to intercede and help validate original claim. We need help understanding the conflicting regulations between the State of Oregon and BLM.”



“We let our mining claim lapse a few years ago because it was so much hassle to get an operation plan.”

“BLM is overzealous is the 3890 permitting/forms they do for mining, they go beyond the law because this BLM office is filled with ‘Clintonite’ hold outs.”

## **6. Coordinated Recreation Development**

The tourism and recreation leadership has the current goal of marketing the blending of recreation resources so that Hells Canyon, the scenic byways, the Sumpter State Park Dredge and others will promote weeklong visits. The Chamber of Commerce is hoping to create kiosks or information centers along different parts of the scenic drive, and hope that BLM could be a partner in that.

“BLM could maybe work with the museum in Haines and the dredge and old railroad up in Sumpter, to capitalize on the rich history in this area and connect all these little small towns to support the economic development of all involved.”

“Baker could develop a ‘continuation of experience’ so people go one day to see something in Sumpter, the next day to the attraction to Haines, maybe go out for a hike the next day, and all the while they could be staying in Baker and getting dinner in the restaurants.”

“Groups of bicyclers go from Heppner to Anthony Lakes to Hells Canyon and around. We could do more to encourage and capitalize on this activity.”

“BLM can promote scenic drives by looking at the areas it owns, and putting out brochures of what happened at different sites, to share about the history, and maybe they could work with the historical society or some old timers who know the area, like where old miners dredged and stuff. There is a place up at Sparta where settlers build a fort to protect themselves from Indians, for example, and they could put a sign up. There is also an old stagecoach up by Sparta, and they could do more about up at Eagle Creek where the movie Paint Your Wagon was made—the museum sells more copies than anywhere in the world, and last summer \_\_\_\_ had to order about 6 a week they sold so fast.”

## **7. Four Wheeler Use**

Residents did not seem to relate to the term “OHV” in describing off highway vehicle use in the area, nor “ATV”, all terrain vehicles. The most common term seemed to be “four wheeler,” and residents stated that there was no four-wheeler organization currently in the County. One person related that fact to trail closures and pointed to areas in the Elkhorn that had been closed in recent years. Many said that they practice their sport locally but also take frequent trips to more distant areas, notably Idaho.

“I ride all over the county with a bunch of different people. We’re concerned that the trails stay open on Forest Service and BLM. I also ride with Sumpter people who call themselves the ‘over the hill gang.’”

“I’m a bit frustrated with local citizens in trying to get them to be ahead of the growing number of OHVers in the state and region, especially from Bend and Boise. These people are coming and we won’t be ready. The county tried to buy a ranch south of Phillips reservoir for an OHV park, at a logical junction of FS trail system and Burnt River and John Day/Morrow County networks. They had the grant money in hand, held meetings with locals – neighboring ranchers shot it down and the support for it wasn’t visible. The OHV community has no visible constituency – only 1 or 2 OHV people showed up at meetings, usually the same guy. The commissioners couldn’t find support enough to go ahead.”

“If you don’t have a 4-wheeler you’re nobody in this town.”

“Maybe BLM can make a park where you could 4 wheel and bring your RV, to camp for a while.”

“We want all areas of public lands to be available for OHV use. If you leave them open, the use will be minimal. If use is restricted to some areas, those areas will get damaged. You get ‘outlaw’ trails when the area has closures. We did many clean ups but it didn’t prevent closures. They closed the North Fork John Day wilderness when that was made a wilderness. We lost trails in the Elkhorns, including Rock Creek Lake, Summit Lake, and others. In the Elkhorns, I truly believe it was one recreation planner who favored non -motorized uses, who arbitrarily and without due process, shut down our use.”

“There were more motorcycles on public lands when I was younger.”

“People don’t want ‘canned trails’. They want to go where ever they want.”

“There is less OHV here than years past. Now I go to Idaho, [Grandview, Murphy, mentions other places]. There they have 100 -mile loops that are valued, plus there is an accepting attitude. Idaho is tolerant that way and Oregon is not. Also users get along, there is more tolerant of other uses.”

“The FS will never be successful in their policy of trail closure unless the trails are signed. It is impossible. Who will do the signs? They will get torn down and moved to other place. It should be that any road or trail is open. Cross country travel is still legal and should be supported.”

“I used to be on the Planning Commission for the County. I’m concerned about how OHV affects sage grouse leks -- there’s an adverse affect, but we can probably co-exist if BLM can keep an eye on things. We need an educational program to give people an opportunity to know what’s expected, try to get OHV

to self govern with an understanding of what the impacts are, etc. I'm not against a law enforcement approach as a hammer when needed."

Virtue Flat is an area managed by BLM that is located southeast of the Interpretive Center on Highway 86. It is an area that is valued for OHV use because it is close to town, but its use presents management problems.

"There are many vandalism and trash issues with ATV use at Virtue Flat and in the Ruckles Creek area near Virtue Flat." [Neighbor]

"People like to go to Virtue Flat, but they don't think it's a good idea to have BLM make a park there because they'd charge a fee, and they'd rather find a place they can ride where they don't have to."

"Virtue Flat is so hot in the summer."

"Off roaders running off Virtue Flat leave trash, cause erosion, shoot guns, make noise."

"Virtue Flat is an OK area, but it's not very interesting compared to Morrow County OHV park." [Hermiston couple]

Figure Three:  
Motorcycle Use at Virtue Flat



(Source: Photo courtesy of BLM)

There appears to be very little organization within the OHV user community. A number of observers wished that an OHV organization would emerge to lead the area in the development and maintenance of OHV trails, both to forestall more regulation on the part of BLM and other land use agencies, and to promote the economic value that OHV use

represents. BLM staff reported that OHV support for trail maintenance comes from groups outside the local area.

## **8. Access**

Residents throughout the County mentioned generally the loss of access to BLM and Forest Service lands. The perception is that new landowners are closing off roads to public lands and that the Forest Service itself is closing a lot of roads. Many residents cited the loss of access created by Three Valleys Ranch as an example of access loss. County officials stated that they were aware of losing access and stated that the County does not have resources to research all the possible access opportunities, but will act on lost access issues on a case-by-case basis. It recently won in court on the Connor Creek Road near the Snake River, now being taken to appeal. A County resident has been researching old roads in the county for a history book and offered to work with Baker County and the BLM.

“The Three Valleys Ranch shut off a short section of road between Robinson Gulch and Skunk Gulch leading to a BLM parcel causing lots of soil erosion because people try to go around roadblock on steep ground.”

“A BLM road serving patented mining claims is cabled shut in Miller Gulch off Burnt River Canyon Rd [Sec 1, T12S, R41E].”

“BLM is trying to limit road use. They sent a letter a couple years ago to our gem society in Caldwell, asking us to identify the roads we want open. The whole point of rock hounding is to explore! We don’t want any roads closed.”

“The Forest Service keeps closing roads, so now you can’t go anywhere, you cant even go huckleberrying because they say they are protecting the elk by keeping you out, but it’s just the environmentalists.”

## **9. Hunters**

The Oregon Cattleman’s Association passed a resolution in 2005 in support of ranchers closing off their lands to hunters and anglers to protest the Oregon Department of Fish Wildlife’s wolf management plan. Spearheaded by ranchers in Baker County, ranchers said the plan had no provision for compensation for loss of cattle to wolves and prohibited shooting of wolves unless they were caught predateding cattle.

“The only problem I run into is hunters who are disrespectful and leave gates open and cut fences.”

“Some of these hunters don’t even know where private land and BLM land begins and ends, but it’s their responsibility to know, not BLM’s or the rancher’s.”

“When ODFW [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife] began to manage for their budget rather than for the animal, they started issuing too many tags and the quality of the herds declined. You don’t get big antlers anymore. We used to rent a convention room at the Sunridge [Motel], and hunters would bring their trophies in, we’d measure them. It was a contest for biggest rack. We did it for years. We haven’t done that for about 8 years now.”

## **10. Mountain Bike and Walking Trails**

“I am vitally interested in working with BLM to develop some mountain bike trails. I think most of the public land in this area is Forest Service, because BLM has more isolated parcels. The type of trail I’d want would be more in the timberline. A few years ago Boise Cascade did massive clearcuts and ruined the trails, but the riders went up themselves and restored them and continue to use the trails.”

There is a road race in Baker every year that is a three day staged event, and in April there is a mountain bike race held out at Virtue Flat. It’s pretty good even though they are ATV trails.”

“I’d love to be able to work with someone from BLM or Forest Service, or whoever owns the land, to establish some good mountain bike trails, some single track primo stuff. That could really draw people to Baker if that was developed.”

“People pay for trail use but the money is not used for trail maintenance. That doesn’t seem fair.”

## **11. Coordination and Communication**

“There’s been no representation at all by BLM for past 3-4 years with the watershed council. We have written watershed assessments for Pine Creek, Upper Powder River, and Powder River/Powder Valley watersheds, and BLM has not been part, even though public lands are major component of lands. We’d like to coordinate with them.” [Watershed Coordinator]

“I would like it if BLM folks got personally involved in [Soil and Water Conservation] District programs. BLM could better coordinate its programs for weed control, grazing practices, and range improvements.”

“BLM needs to include the Daly Creek Ranch in its planning effort. It’s a big ranch bought by Idaho Power for dam mitigation, located south of Richland and north of Swedes Landing, to be managed for wildlife/fisheries by ODFW [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife]. It will be open for hunting and fishing.”

“I didn’t like that BLM tore down the old mine on Balm Creek without any public process. They just showed up with equipment and did it.”

“We want to be notified of BLM’s planning schedule and events. Include us on the mailing list.” [Common]

“A lot of time, the only people BLM hears from are the lobby interest groups, and so it’s important for them to find stories about the regular folks or things they’ve done for the public so the public can hear about it. This would help level the playing field between the attention different groups get.”

“BLM should bring these different people to the table more and say, ‘Look, we can expect the usage of each one of these activities to go up x amount in so many years. If you are interested in sitting down to talk about how we’ll manage that growth, lets talk.’ BLM needs to have the foresight to come together with different groups that have different interests to try and find common ground.”

### “RESOLVE AS YOU GO” CANDIDATES FOR EARLY RESPONSE

Courtesy calls could be made to the following individuals:

1. Mike Larson, Flagstaff Sports, about expanding recreation opportunities on public land.
2. Polly Gribskov could call Amy Dunkak at the Chamber of Commerce and arrange a conversation about recreation and tourism in the area, and the coordination opportunities between public and private interests.
3. Gordon Kasemeyer, Halfway Mayor, on Bishop Springs development.
4. Debbie Gregg, Burnt River High School on dump issues and OHV park interest.
5. If a few of the very early activists for the Interpretive Center could be publicly honored in some way, it would help resolve the rancor that some people feel about subsequent BLM management.

### POTENTIAL COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

Coordinated and regional recreation planning is the next phase of tourism development in the Baker County area, for which BLM should determine its capacity and interest. The agency can play a facilitative and supportive role for efforts currently underway.

Residents throughout the County mentioned generally the loss of access to BLM and Forest Service lands. Sometimes specific areas of importance have been lost. Baker County also addresses access through its road department and has interest in promoting access. BLM could develop a joint transportation and access plan through its land use planning process. It may be possible that a broader set of partners can do more than one acting unilaterally. For example, the Tahoe office of BLM coordinated with Washoe County, which passed an ordinance to control OHV use that BLM could not. Such synergy could be very useful in the context of limited staff and budgets.

JKA also believes that there are rich opportunities to re-connect the community with the Interpretive Center. While it is very clear that many things have been done right, and that the new Manager is re-directing the Center to be more inclusive of the community, the citizen issues related to the Center is troubling and should be given attention. The fact that so many residents had ideas for making things better indicates that the situation would lend itself very well to a community-based planning effort. Honoring some of the original citizen champions of the Center could begin this effort.

Develop a community-based OHV organization to support OHV interests. Search for broader funding, perhaps through the Blue Ribbon Coalition or others. Propose grass roots organizing and coalition building to identify common interests, goals, process, structure, stewardship responsibilities. Link the efforts to economic development interests.

In the Environmental Impact Statement of the new land use plan, include planning criteria from a social and economic perspective based on key values and direction from communities. Assure the planning questions have explicit links to the social and economic health of the communities. EIS alternatives and analysis should reflect citizen language and direction. Ongoing dialogue through the EIS process can prevent surprise and disruption.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The new BLM Area Manager could host a “Business After Hours.” Businesses take turns providing light refreshments and showing their business to folks, showing what’s available. This could be coordinated through the Chamber of Commerce.

The new manager may be interested in having JKA take her around to meet key network contacts, in order to familiarize her with local issues and to begin building relationships necessary for successful collaboration in the future.

Key gathering places are the places in which positions get developed regarding current public initiatives. The active use of gathering places is helpful for dealing with misinformation and rumors, as well as providing accurate information and building support for public initiatives. Some key gathering places in Baker City are:

- Inland Café is an active local gathering spot, with lots of cross-table talk, name recognition, and information sharing.
- Oregon Trail Restaurant has older, working people with a friendly climate.
- Main Street Eatery
- Mad Matildas Coffee Shop. The physical arrangement of the tables in this gathering place lends itself to small group meetings. Several meetings and informal gatherings occur each week there and it is a place where divergent social interests overlap in a comfortable environment. BLM staff should have their coffee and small-scale staff meetings in this gathering place. People

would eventually know that they are approachable. Also meet with community people here. Word will get out that BLM can be contacted here on certain days, on certain hours.

York's General Store is a communication node for hunters, fishers and other visitors as they learn of the area's attractions and are directed to places to go. Fishing people, especially, get directed about where to go depending on the kind of fishing desired. BLM maps could be stocked here and its staff could be provided with current BLM information of interest to visitors.

The best way to communicate with Baker County ranchers is through the Soil and Water Conservation District meetings and notices. The SWCD contact would be happy to help BLM network messages back and forth.

Residents advised that BLM staff could start hanging out with clubs in town, the Lions, the Elks, the Rotary, the Soroptomist, and the AAUW. As one person said, "I know those guys are busy, but so is every single person in that service club."

Many times in our conversations, our team had to ask questions repeatedly before getting past themes and into issues. However, it seemed promising to the JKA team that taking time with people and empathizing with them seemed to bring about a change —once people had vented and felt safe they could begin to talk more constructively about their concerns.

The following groups in the area could be expected to have some interest in BLM planning and management:

- Baker County Association of Conservation Districts
- Baker County Cattlewomen
- Baker County Economic Development Council
- Baker Industrial Development Commission, not in book
- Baker County Weed Board
- Baker Valley Soil and Water Conservation District
- Burnt River Soil and Water Conservation District
- Eagle Valley Soil and Water Conservation District
- Eastern Oregon Theater Arts
- Eastern Oregon Mining Association
- Friends of Brownlee
- Halfway snowmobile club
- Historic Baker City
- Idaho Power Company
- Keating Soil and Water Conservation District
- Natural Resource Advisory Board
- Northeast Oregon Economic Development
- Oregon Hunters Association
- Oregon Trail Preservation Trust



- Panhandle Snowmobile Club
- Pine Valley Fair Association
- Powder Basin Watershed Council
- Powder River Sportsmen's Club
- The Trail Tenders
- The Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Association

## **The Hells Canyon Area**

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The Hells Canyon Community Resource Unit (CRU) includes the communities of Keating, Richland, New Bridge, Cornucopia, Halfway and Oxbow. This area of the County is the gateway to the Hells Canyon area, so residents are quite used to the tourism activity that has occurred over the years.

**Keating** is described as a “real nice” community. Like other rural areas, they are losing young people. The community has an “outstanding” K -6 country schools with well-regarded teachers—so good that 4 of the 22 kids there are carpoled from “town” (that is, Baker City). A local high school girl also teaches music class every morning before heading into “town” – she writes a musical and choreographs it twice a year for the kids to perform for the community. One performance was even invited to the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. Presently, the school has a grant that allows it to keep going with small numbers. The townsite of Sparta has great old school buildings and old houses being reclaimed by newcomers.

A nearby hunting preserve was opened a few years ago in which game birds are released for fee hunters—chukars and pheasants. Most of the hunters come from Idaho. They don't have a lot of free time so they want to know they will see birds to shoot. Although neighbors were worried about this development, it is surrounded on three sides by BLM and so has not impacted them much.

**Richland** is a resource-based economy—hunting, fishing, boating, camping, touring. It needs some new homes to accommodate an increased number of retirees coming in. In the late '60s the high school moved from Richland to Halfway. Richland is the current envy of Pine Valley because of the new streetlights being installed. The Richland City Council focuses a lot on Economic Development and believes that the Brownlee Reservoir, with its 58 miles of waterfront, is “all we've got.”

“The Lake is the whole key about whether this community stays.”

**Halfway** is the population center (about 345) for this part of the County. The high school moved there from Richland in the late 1960s, so it represents the social hub of the area. Distinctive networks of newcomers, Forest Service and Idaho Power workers, older hippies, old time farmers and ranchers comprise the social fabric.

Residents described factions in Halfway related to the fairgrounds and to community direction. Nevertheless, the overall picture presented was people cooperating to accomplish community development. Recent successes in obtaining grants, furthering community goals, and rejuvenating the Chamber of Commerce has led to a sense of accomplishment and anticipation of the future.

**Oxbow** is a very small community situated on the Snake River where Pine Creek enters the Snake River, at the base of Oxbow Dam. Residents called it a company town since most of the housing stock is comprised of a fenced area containing Idaho Power Company homes for employees. There are a couple stores, bed and breakfast establishments, and a café. The RV Park at Oxbow has the only full hookups in the canyon. There are a couple cabins for vacation rental and mobile homes can be purchased as vacation homes. Many residents are full time. It gets hot in the summer, water gets low, and some residents have water misters on their decks to stay cool.

Residents in this part of the County talked a lot about the economic struggles of survival. People said that you can't make a living in the area, young people are leaving, and the water-based recreation is unreliable for an economic base.

“In the ‘90s, I had five full time workers, now I have one part-timer. In those days, there were 91 kids here, now there are 12. There is only one dairy left. Logging is down.”

“The population is steady but there are fewer kids.”

“The number of kids is down. There are only 70 left in the high school, which serves Richland thru Oxbow.”

“The elementary school only has 7 -10 kids left, I didn't go to the school board meeting, so I don't know what happened.”

The changes in recent years are that retired and “semi-retired” people are moving into the area. Sometimes, it is people returning home to retire after an adult life elsewhere to take care of parents, a ranch or a store. Many incoming retired people are also new to the area, and have a reputation of not mingling much or adding to community life. Locals see that newcomers are not well versed in neighboring, with some stories about new neighbors not respecting boundaries. There are notable exceptions however. A number of stories described how newcomers with good attitudes and money have created valued changes in the community.

“\_\_\_\_\_ and his wife bought the bowling alley so that youth in the area would have something to do.”

“I came back to take care of the ranch.”

The older ranches are being sold and some consolidation of ranchlands is occurring. The Pine Valley Ranch apparently was recently purchased with some consolidation and residents are anxiously waiting to see how it will be used. Nostalgia is expressed about the loss of the old ways, but also concern about what the new arrangement will bring, including issues about loss of access.

“The old long-time ranchers are nearly gone.”

“Other ranches are being broken up. My theory is that ranches hold up through 3 generations – then break up and sell off.”

“Pine Valley people do a lot for this town. They make a lot of donations, like to the fairgrounds of about \$100,000. They offer good wage jobs, too.”

An owner of a local bed and breakfast establishment reported on her process of starting a new business:

“A friend of mine from one of the boat tour groups asked me if I could house her clients and that’s how I got into it. Last year was the first year I made a profit in 6 years and it’s going well. I have lots of repeat business. We’re really busy from about May to September.”

### COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

This area has a vibrancy about it, related to the outdoor lifestyle, the beauty, and the quality of life. People understand that they often do with less financially in order to live here, so the element of choice seems to bring energy to the community. However, the concerns expressed about the future of their communities are real and strongly felt. People want a community with kids in it, they want jobs and businesses with predictability, and they want a quality natural environment.

### NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

These **themes** were expressed widely in the community:

“BLM does a pretty good job.”

“We like working with \_\_\_\_\_ [the BLM range con] but he doesn’t get support in his office.”

“We feel we’re being locked out of our national forests and BLM lands.”

“In BLM’s eyes Hell’s Canyon is huge, but to me, it’s from my fence to the canyon.”

The **citizen issues** related to natural resource management are organized around the topics of:

1. Communication and education
2. Recreation and development
3. Access
4. Land tenure
5. Relations with Idaho Power
6. Grazing.

## **1. Communication and Education**

“I don’t really know anything about BLM and don’t have much to do with them. I never hear anything about them.” [Mayor of Halfway]

“I honestly don’t remember BLM ever having a meeting in this town, but I don’t know.”

“I’d like to see BLM do a field trip to explain fauna and flora of the area and why it is we ought to take care of it. Maybe another field trip about wilderness, vegetation, and wildflowers. Make sure we have the people to attend before BLM shows up. Put word out in the local paper and ask if anyone is interested to call a number. Then combine it with a potluck.”

## **2. Recreation and Development**

“\_\_\_\_\_ [the BLM recreation planner] did a really good job in figuring out whether to develop a camping site or keep it primitive. However, they didn’t put the tables in level.”

“Just go away. Because of development, there are more fees, more taxes, more people. Development means higher impacts. It gets too commercial. There’s too much government control. Pittsburg Landing has too many jet boats.”

“Ranchers don’t like OHVs because the hunters tear up the grass. I don’t see damage but they drive off game and they ruin the experience for others.”

“The low water is killing us.” Many residents talked about the unpredictability of water levels and its effects on their recreation economy.

“If BLM can help the town with economic development like the Forest Service does with grants, etc, I’d like to know about that.”

“I’m concerned about potential flooding. If we suddenly get warm weather, as projected, water would break through ditch. We can’t get any help on it—there are too many jurisdictions.”

“Don’t keep getting more and more people into smaller areas. It causes too much trouble.”

“There are too many deputies. It’s law enforcement overkill. The sheriff is going into camps at 2 am, rousing people, looking for booze.”

“In ‘93, we were trying to improve the launch at Swede’s Landing; we got \$10,000 from ODFW, needed gravel, etc. The BLM person did not show up and when I went over his head to Vale, he would never come out again. He finally retired.”

“We have begun to lose our hunting tradition in the area. Fish and Wildlife changed the process for awarding tags to a random process. Now, you can’t know when your tag will come up. It became irregular so the tradition of introducing your kids to hunting got messed up. You might want a tag when you’re 14 but may not get one till your 18. The pattern broke up.”

“‘Bird guzzlers’ are corrugated tin pieces set at angle up on the hills where smaller birds and game do not have access to water. Water condenses on the tin and rolls down to a receptacle. They are in disarray and ODFW [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife] refuses to fix them up, saying they don’t work or they’re not important, but I regularly find chukars and other small wildlife nearby.”

A number of residents expressed issues related to the recent campground development. Some were not sure if it was a BLM or an Idaho Power campground.

“It’s there but not taken care of. It’s a weed patch. Lots of big rocks were put out to restrict access, blocking off some of the area. But the main thing is that it is not cared for.”

“They blocked off too much.”

Another issue was the loss of access to eagle habitat areas on BLM lands west of the Snake River.

“BLM is shutting others out. There is one gate behind the offices of Idaho Power. You hike up in there and there are lots of golden and bald eagles. The gate was shut without notice. You used to be able to walk, ride and hunt up there. When I bought my house, my goal was to get access to public lands.”

An additional issue that deserves further scoping is the loss of business attributed to erratic water levels and to a perception that recreation developers are favoring the day user and not the overnight camper.

“We used to have real campers [people who would bring their kids and stay a few days]. Now it all seems to be day use so I don’t get any business. People catch their two fish and go home. Idaho Power closed off the canyon.”

“We are scratching for a living here. I’ve lived here for 5 years. I’ve owned my business for 3 years. The first year, my business income was \$350,000 and last year it was \$96,000.”

“BLM and Idaho Power went to court and BLM won by which they declared the houseboats as squatting and shut them down. There were only about 12, but I liked them because they would spend money. They weren’t really houseboats, more like floats with shacks. They’d come out all stocked up but after 3 days they’d run out of food and come and buy it here. Houseboats were good habitat for crappies, too.”

A number of residents are organizing to further develop the Bishop Springs Rest Area on the Scenic Byway. They were able to get together and get some restrooms up there and now they would like to beautify it. There will be lots of partners. They want to develop it with trees, etc. It is believed that BLM owns the water rights to Bishop Springs, and shut it off somehow because they were worried about the liability if people got sick from drinking the water.

“Could we work with BLM to drip irrigate the new trees? Who do I talk to?”

### **3. Access**

“Hunting and fishing used to bring a lot of revenue into this town. Now, more and more of it is private access.”

“We’re concerned about losing access to BLM land next to the old Holcomb private land that is now owned by Pine Valley Ranch. It has a locked gate on it. We started a sportsmen’s club in 1998 to get dues and deal with trash but the owner was worried about liability. We’ve used that road as long as I can remember.”

“We want to maintain access off Sag Road due to Pine Valley Ranch. Where the low hills are off Sag Road, before the locked gate, people like to walk. A group of us go out once a week on Friday, about 6-8 of us.”

“The owners of Pine Valley Ranch have done good things for this town. They have donated generously, they have hired local workers at a good wage.”

“Many people are terrified of what’s going to happen. What is drawing people here is leading to the land being locked up. They don’t want to see another Bend or Sisters.”

“I’d like to see BLM open more lands to camping near Brownlee Reservoir off Snake River Road, 9 miles South of Swedes Landing [Secs: 1, 12, 11, 15, T12S, R45E]. There is very little access to the river here. If you’re in Richland, you have to drive around to the Idaho side.”

“Swedes Landing, on the west side of the river, could stand to have some more BLM signs up. There isn’t any access on the Oregon side to the lake. The water level is too low to launch a boat.”

#### **4. Land Tenure**

“Most private land has some BLM land nearby, 40 and 80 acre parcels. BLM should consider getting rid of them. Sometimes a private person nearby gets the entire benefit from public land because they cut off access by others. One guy near Durkee has exclusive access to 3 -5,000 acres of BLM land, but only owns a small piece of his own.”

#### **5. Local Relations with Idaho Power**

Residents made it clear that they view BLM as a means of support in dealing with Idaho Power, that BLM is more accessible than Idaho Power, and that BLM should intercede on behalf of community residents.

“BLM has extensive holdings at the river and that they play an important role for keeping dialogue open with Idaho Power and the re-licensing. BLM has to help us get what we need. Are we asking for enough? Maybe we should look at other areas to know that. BLM is the only way the public can get something out of that, except for Law Enforcement. Idaho Power will provide 1 Deputy, plus that have one deputy already.”

“Idaho Power just bought Daly Creek Ranch last month. It was required to provide habitat. BLM should be a part of what happens there.”

#### **6. Grazing**

“BLM made me take ‘non-use’ on our allotment, so we have to keep our cattle on our hay pasture. It costs me an extra \$3,000 for every month I’m in non-use, I have a loss from not being able to grow hay in that area, and I pay \$1,000 for fertilizer to get anything out of the pasture. If I could, I’d sell that permit back to BLM. There was legislation to buy back permits, but with the war, it’s gone away.”

“BLM got the cattle off this area because they wanted to plant trees to make a more attractive camping site. They put metal tents over the trees because they didn’t want the cattle to eat them. Meanwhile, the deer have been eating them because their noses are smaller. Lots of four-wheelers tear up the land, even though my cattle aren’t allowed on. Recreation people complain about high grass and snakes, which were not problems when cattle were around. The trees can’t get water and BLM even put signs up saying ‘Please water me.’ If they planted on the reservoir, they’d get water.”

“Grazing land is changing to recreation land.”

“We need a more comprehensive weed program in the County. We’ve got White Top, Skeleton weed, Scotch thistle, Knapweed.”

“None of us supports the proposed sale of Forest Service lands to support schools.”

“BLM ground needs to be utilized for multiple use. It keeps the fire hazards down, too. Stop thinking one year at a time and manage it for the long run. Most cattlemen here know that it’s important to keep grass going. ”

### “RESOLVE AS YOU GO” CANDIDATES FOR EARLY RESPONSE

One candidate for early resolution is the future management of the Daly Creek Ranch.

“Idaho Power owns 15’ above high water. They bought Daly Creek Ranch and I want to know if this will affect access? Is it going to be a game reserve?”

Another candidate for early resolution is to assist the Mayor and other citizens go the next step in the improvement of the Bishop Springs rest area.

### POTENTIAL COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

Access is a widespread citizen issue that would lend itself to community -based, collaborative land use planning.

### COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

A few key individuals would be willing to take the new BLM manager around, to show her land use conditions and to meet people in the area.

The Lion’s Club is an acceptable location for meetings in the evening. It holds about 100 people. The local newspaper, the Hells Canyon Journal, is valued and used for announcements. The Grange, the fire district hall and the schools are good locations for flyers and for spreading the word.

The Halfway area has a high percentage of people with Internet connection. BLM could use the newspaper for press releases about what is happening, and the background material can be posted on the Internet so people can get to it in their own time. It gives people more to understand and react to.



Use smaller, more intimate meetings. Prior to any public initiative, BLM staff should become known among key informal networks. Sit down with a smaller group and have a discussion. Or have a community representative from BLM show up at community meetings.

## **The Huntington Area**

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Huntington, settled in 1862, is located on the Oregon Trail in the far southeastern corner of Baker County. It was named for the Huntington Brothers who later bought the Miller Station tavern there. Huntington was the “division point” for the railroad and therefore an important common terminal for two railroads. The town grew as it became a rail outlet for cattle, lumber, ore, and fruit from Baker County. A short line down the Snake River to Homestead was flooded out when Brownlee Reservoir was filled.

According to the 2000 census, Huntington claimed 515 residents. The median household income was \$25,132. Thirty-one percent of residents were younger than 18 and ten percent of those over 65 lived below the poverty line.

### COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

Huntington residents are highly concerned that their community is dying. As a reservoir driven economy, they believe that their existence will always be precarious and look to government to address their issues.

Several community leaders said that they believe Huntington is low priority for County government economic programs. They also agree that the County has a responsibility to help Huntington survive and fight its battles.

“All the road improvement along the Snake and the boat ramp extensions are happening in Richland first. How’s that fair?”

”The County is like our parent – when the child is hurting, the parent should help.”

### NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

Spring Recreation Site (Figure Four), located on the Oregon/Idaho border north of Ontario, offers a desert canyon experience on the banks of the Snake River’s Brownlee Reservoir. Brownlee Reservoir is known for its large channel catfish, abundant crappie, and good bass fishing. Spring Recreation Site offers one of the best boat launches on the Oregon side of Brownlee Reservoir. A dock has been installed to assist boaters. Families and large groups are attracted to the large sites and easy access to the water (BLM

website, Vale District). At Spring Recreation Site, BLM plans to expand the boat launches from one to two ([Baker City Herald](#), 3/21/06, Figure Four).

Figure Four:  
BLM's Spring Recreation Site



(Source: Photo by the authors)

Over the years Huntington community leaders have developed an active schedule of fishing derbies and other small town weekend celebrations as a way to bring in tourists. Fishing on Brownlee is the central attractor. Fishers from all over the Northwest come to the town, which calls itself the Catfish Capital of Oregon. Many of the visitors are regulars and are treated “like family” by some residents. The town’s businesses make the majority of their annual income during a half -dozen big weekends each spring. The past year has been economically disastrous to Huntington businesses. Last August, after a rapid drawdown on Brownlee, thousands of catfish died and decomposed in the mud flats. This March, the reservoir was unexpectedly drawn down to levels which forced cancellation of early fishing derbies in Huntington.

“Last year at this time, we sold \$3400 in fishing licenses. Because of the rapid drawdown this year, we sold \$600. I bought \$5000 worth of tackle that won’t be sold this spring.”

“One motel owner had 41 cancellations of reservations in 1 day, due to unannounced rapid drawdown, a \$12,000 loss. Other business owners have similar losses.”

“We had a meeting and only one official from the Parks Department attended. Idaho Power, BLM, the Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife, County Commission, Senator Wyden, all were no -shows.” [Huntington official]

Residents and business owners talked about questions and issues they had last summer with BLM, regarding management of Spring Campground and grazing permits. This spring they still have questions. They don't know whom in BLM to call to get answers.

“There was a problem with the campground host. I called the number on the BLM poster and never got a response. Who can I call?”

”We heard that Spring Campground is going to be decommissioned by BLM. Is that true?”

### “RESOLVE AS YOU GO” CANDIDATES FOR EARLY RESPONSE

BLM can develop a regular and valued presence in Huntington by establishing a routine visit schedule with a local community/business leader. This does not need to take much time and could help avoid false rumors about BLM operations, provide names of other BLM employees that residents could call for information, and could provide important information about emerging issues.

### POTENTIAL COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

BLM should recognize that people in the reservoir communities (Huntington, Halfway, Richland) look to BLM as the most accessible of the agencies dealing with water -based recreation issues, and particularly, that BLM is respected as the most open avenue to Idaho Power decisions.

Huntington needs a lot more support in addressing the physical, social, economic, biological enhance ments necessary for sustainability.

Residents and business owners regard Spring Campground as an important economic asset to the community. Several citizens offered to help construct improvements and were interested in grants that might be forthcoming. There seems to be an opportunity to partner with Baker County and City of Huntington to leverage funds for future improvements of the campground and boat ramp.

### COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Howell's Café is a community -gathering place, adjoining the Streamline r Lounge. The town is small and tight-knit. Communicating with one of the active community business owners will ensure that most people get the news.

## *The Unity Area*

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The Unity area of Baker County includes the settlements of Unity, Hereford, Bridgeport, and Iron Valley in the Burnt River Valley south of Baker City. The town of Unity had 115 people in 1980 and 130 people in 2001. Ranchers settled the area in the 1860s, and ranching is still the primary economic activity. Apparently, most ranchers have Forest Service allotments. Residents stated that ranches are being bought up by corporations, which run cattle, while the smaller ranches are being sold to people without kids. There are many abandoned and decaying homes in the area, and a reliance among current residents on mobile homes. The area struggles to maintain an economic base and an adequate population to fund basic services.

“The mill went out in about ’73, logging went down, and the Forest Service has been leaving.”

“Ellison was the big log operation and all the small mills went out.”

Geographic isolation has been a central feature of community life from the beginning of settlement.

“We are so isolated. To get to John Day you have to go over the Blues. To get to Baker you have to go over Dooley.”

The town of Unity has two bars/restaurants, a gas station, a motel, community hall, a park apparently created through a Forest Service grant, an RV park, and a high school. Currently, there are 73 students at Burnt River High School, a decline from 250 students in the 1970s. The elementary school is reportedly “dying.” The Burnt River School District has about 23 employees, the leading employer in the area.

The school area is Ironside, Bridgeport, Hereford and Unit. It used to be Brogan but there are no kids there anymore.”

“When prospective teachers come in with their spouses they look around and say no thanks, even though we have nice teacher housing.”

Many residents enjoy horseback riding and ATV riding on a regular and casual basis, riding in the immediate area of Unity and also on the surrounding trails.

### COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

The current community themes in the Unity area are:

“There is so much fighting [in Unity] that nothing gets agreed on.”

“The town is split. We can’t agree on anything.”

“We’ve done ordinances for clean up but everybody ignores them.”

“Our town doesn’t do much to invite people to stop.”

The major community issues relate to jobs and housing.

”There is no work or housing.”

“There is not enough housing stock remaining in the area to attract new residents.”

“We have a DSL line and T1 line. Can we use that to stimulate jobs?”

“We can’t pay the loans on our sewer and water system.” [Unity town council person]

## NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

The Forest Service has been cutting staff in the Unity area for some time, and recently it has given up the office in Unity, transferring remaining staff to Baker City. At one time, there were 25 Forest Service employees located at the Unity office. Summer staff will remain located in Unity at the Forest Service housing. It is likely they will close their remaining facilities, including some houses that are now empty. This loss has been tremendous for the community since there is so little infrastructure and employment left.

In recent years, outdoor recreation has brought modest amenities and economic activity to the area. The nearby State RV Park is apparently getting pretty good use. In addition, the Forest Service trails are bringing in modest activity and revenue.

“We tried recreation. Trails are going in, but will it be enough to keep this area alive?”

In the last couple years, there was a proposal for a private major OHV park at the nearby Kings Ranch. The idea was developed and promoted by local residents, and it received active support by Baker County. Preliminary studies showed favorable promise. However, the nearby neighbors voiced strong concerns that were never successfully addressed and the city of Unity was concerned about liability if the facility failed ([http://www.bakercounty.org/Commissioners/OHV\\_Study.pdf](http://www.bakercounty.org/Commissioners/OHV_Study.pdf)).

Residents expressed interest in creating an OHV park on BLM lands at Denny Flats.

“Denny Flats could work as ATV site, about a mile north of here.”

“The Flats, where the dump is, gets lots of ATV use.” [Referring to Denny Flats]

“BLM came out and looked at Denny flats for ATV and said there were too many cultural sites and sensitive plants. They said t hat they didn’t want to mess with them.”

“The Forest Service has 60 miles of trail to Granite and will add 20 more. What about Denny Flats? Could we connect there, do a loop?”

Residents, and town officials, also talked about the need for a new dumpsite. The story is that a Forest Service ranger pushed for the transfer station but that it has cost the city and residents much more than expected.

“Can we get the BLM dump site back? It still has the fence.”

“We used to have a dump site. Can it get reopened?”

Other issues related to natural resource management are:

“Can I board my horses in the old BLM dump site since it is still fenced? Only for a month or two till the summer forage opens up.”

“I’d like to get a shooting range open near here. What would we have to do to use BLM for this?”

#### “RESOLVE AS YOU GO” CANDIDATES FOR EARLY RESPONSE

BLM could immediately respond to the interest around a dumpsite and facilitate successful progress even if the old site is not appropriate.

#### POTENTIAL COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

The interest surrounding a possible OHV site on BLM land could be more systematically determined, as well as the internal concerns within BLM. If the project shows initial feasibility, BLM could facilitate a community -based approach to this idea in its land use planning process.

A central question for the planning process could be, “How can BLM achieve its management objectives in the Unity area in a way that supports community and economic development?”

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The school, store and community hall are appropriate ways through which to communicate with the local community. The town of Unity could be an active partner in land use planning. Burnt River Irrigation District and the Soil and Water Conservation office are good for communicating with ranchers. The snowmobile club in the area could be expected to have interest as well.

## ***The North Powder/Haines Area***

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The North Powder/Haines area does not contain much BLM ground and the JKA team did not spend very much time in this area. It is a very agricultural area. The farming is mostly potatoes. One farmer is farming mint for mint oil, which can be lucrative but is also subject to disease.

“Most agriculture is subsidized here one way or another, like having wives be in the business.”

Land use trends in this area are toward the creation of small (5-10 acre tracts) on private lands west of North Powder by people moving into the area. These newer residents have the reputation for taking good care of their acreages. A number of observers in Baker County felt like the North Powder area would see significantly more development because of cheaper land costs.

### COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

Ranching is a marginal business and a huge commitment.

“Mostly it’s ranching country around here.”

“We tried to keep ranching but it got too tough. There’s no money in it.”

“No one can do it but the big money people. You have to have money to start with.”

“Ranchers buy everything retail, sell everything wholesale, and pay freight both ways. Love is the only way to hang on. It’s an awesome way to make a living and to raise a family.”

“My boys want to come home but there’s not enough land for all of them to make it.”

“The laws were changed, and now kids can’t work anymore on the ranches, and we need immigrants.”

## NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

Residents, particularly ranchers, were critical of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The perception is that Fish and Wildlife takes away rights but doesn’t give back, and that the agency wants too much control.

“They [Fish and Wildlife] want to make criminals out of us.”

BLM, although not a large landowner in this area, received good reviews.

“We get along really well with BLM.” [Rancher, common]

“It’s so loud in there [at BLM] that when you call in you can barely hear the person you’re talking to.”

“What kinds of activities can you do on BLM lands?”

Citizen issues related to range management and access.

### Range Management

“White Top is a continuing and growing weed problem.”

“I hunt BLM ground out toward Keating and notice there is a lot more grass left on grazing allotments in recent years. It makes better bird habitat. Cattlemen have done a helluva lot better job. There’s more grass left.”

“There are exclosure policies where if there’s a burn, you have to keep cattle off an area for three years for the grass to grow back. We have to keep the fences in good shape during this time, even though we are not earning from that land.”

“BLM put in wells and wants us to pay a higher AUM amount in return. We’d like to maintain the wells for a lower fee.”

### Loss of Access

“New landowners are closing off roads to public lands, plus the Forest Service is closing a lot of roads.”



“There are so many isolated BLM parcels. People want access through ranches to get to these isolated parcels, and people from out of the area leave gates open. New guys are coming in, lock everything up, and put up ‘No trespassing’ signs.”

### POTENTIAL COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

Residents in this area could be drawn into a larger planning effort to create community-based solutions to the loss of access. By recognizing that current conditions are no one’s “fault” and that many resources exist for mutually resolving many of these issues, Baker County, residents, and local, state and federal agencies, including BLM, could make progress here.

### COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

North Powder Café is a central gathering place, with local active use and a bulletin board.

The Cattlemen’s Association is active in the North Powder area and communicates widely.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE UMATILLA HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT

### *Introduction*

Figure Five shows the Umatilla Human Resource Unit (HRU). It contains four Community Resource Units (CRUs)—Hermiston, Pilot Rock, Ukiah, and Pendleton. The Pilot Rock and the Ukiah areas are forest oriented with low population levels. The Pendleton area houses the county seat and so is the government center for the region. Its population has been stable for some time and is said to be oriented to “basketball and Roundup.” The Hermiston area, called “West County” by some, contains the towns of Hermiston and Umatilla. It has sandy soils that are famous for blowing and for the last 30 years has had a “circle irrigation economy” that has propelled it beyond Pendleton in population. It is also an area that has embraced growth and actively seeks business enterprises and new settlement. The social and economic boundary between Pendleton and Hermiston is based on geography, climate, rainfall, and settlement patterns.

“Hermiston is a working town and people are used to saying ‘Yes’ to new opportunity.”

“People here grew up poor, so they like the growth.” [Hermiston]

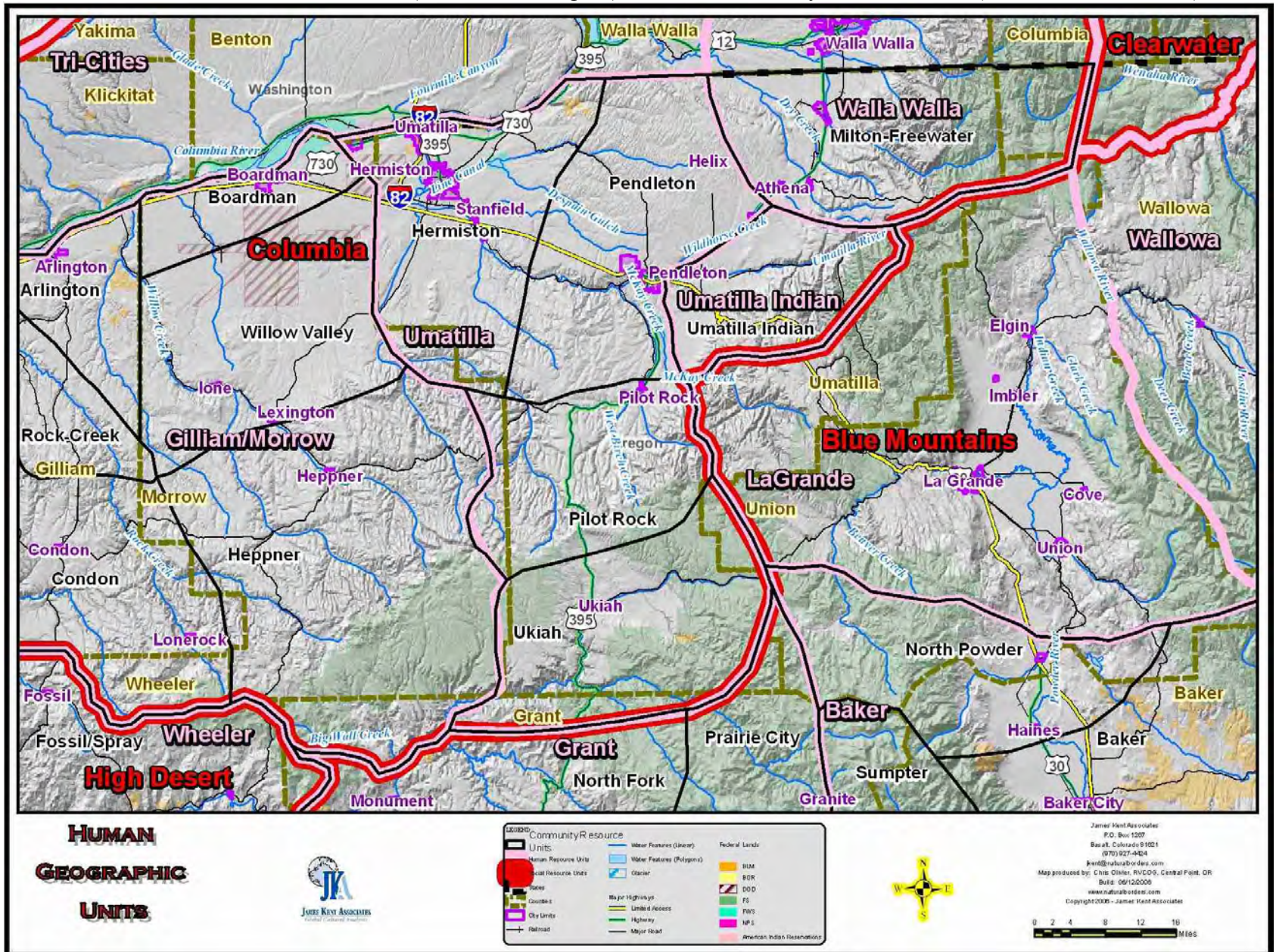
The Umatilla Indian Reservation is shown on the map as well, which is treated as an HRU, a social and economic unit in which most day-to-day and week-to-week activities occur. The Umatilla tribal interests are described in Chapter Five.

The map further shows that the Umatilla HRU has much in common with the Gilliam/Morrow area by virtue of being part of the Columbia Plateau (the Columbia SRU, shown in red, see also Figure One), with its emphasis on intensive farming, wind and the Columbia River. In contrast, Umatilla has less relationship with the more forested and mountainous areas to the south and east. Figure Five also shows that Milton-Freewater, although politically part of Umatilla County, is associated socially and economically with Walla Walla. The social boundary, indeed, is also the boundary of the Walla Walla Watershed Basin, occurring between Athena and Westin. This boundary separates the service areas of the Umatilla Watershed Council on the west, and the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council on the east.

“Milton-Freewater is agriculture and really more connected to Walla Walla. They complain they are ignored.”

BLM owns and manages 23,000 acres in Umatilla County, primarily situated in the northern and western part of the county. One county official called them “island parcels.” This chapter focuses on the towns of Hermiston and Umatilla and the areas in between, what locals call “West County.” West County includes the BLM lands between

Figure Five:  
The Umatilla Human Resource Unit (HRU, shown in pink) With Its Community Resource Units (CRUs, shown in black)





Hermiston and Umatilla, as well as the Juniper Canyon lands, northeast of Hermiston. The scattered parcels lead to urban interface issues for BLM, with many Recreation and Public Purpose (R&PP) leases and patents, as well as growing demand because the area is growing. BLM lands generally experience dumping issues, methamphetamine labs, shooting, and OHV concerns. In addition, BLM has lands on the South Fork of the Walla Walla River in the Milton -Freewater area. Tribal areas of concern apply to almost any public land management decision described in this chapter.

The chapter will first explore the Hermiston CRU, along with a detailed discussion of key BLM parcels. It then describes the management situation on the South Fork of the Walla Walla River and briefly summarizes citizen interests in the Meacham area.

### **The Hermiston CRU: The “West County” Area of Umatilla County**

The Hermiston CRU is described along the following dimensions:

1. Social Conditions and Trends
2. Community Themes and Issues
3. Natural Resource Themes and Issues
4. Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response
5. Possible Community -Based Planning Elements
6. Communication Strategy

#### **SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS**

The arrival of the railroad in 1871 and the development of dryland wheat farming stimulated permanent settlement in Umatilla County. The Umatilla Ordnance Depot, dating from the 1940s, helped create the town of Hermiston and led to substantial growth. When irrigated agriculture began to thrive in the Hermiston area 30 years ago, it stimulated further population growth, immigration of farmworkers, and commercial and residential growth. In recent years, the growth has accelerated due to a number of reasons cited by local residents:

1. In 1997, the demilitarization of the Umatilla Ordnance Depot brought in additional revenues. Apparently, these lands once belonged to BLM, which relinquished them through congressional direction. There is currently a “local re-use authority” composed of Umatilla County, Morrow County, 3 ports and the Confederated Tribes to determine the future of these lands. It will be 2013-2015 before the land is turned over, so any connection of these lands to BLM land use planning seems remote.
2. The Hinkle Railyard is considered by Union Pacific to be a major classification yard, and contains a new major diesel locomotive maintenance shop completed in

1998. It has more than 235 employees  
(<http://www.uprr.com/aboutup/history/hinkle/index.shtml>).

3. The WalMart distribution center is located in the County, with one million square feet of warehouse space.
4. The approval of the Oregon International NASCAR Speedway in Boardman will encourage further settlement in the Hermiston area according to local residents.

A county official stated that these developments have brought 3000 jobs to the area. In addition, the area has the ports, and two freeways coming together. Some local people believe the reason methamphetamine abuse is such a problem in Hermiston is that the area is isolated enough to attract drug production activity but tied to urban areas necessary for drug traffic.

“We have grown from 3500 when I came 10 years ago to 16,000. We are isolated. We are desert, with not much rain. We are mobile. We travel 1 ½ hours in any direction to recreate. Families are coming here. We now have a regional presence. Baby Boomers are coming in. We have neighborhood parks. It’s cold, mid -20s, but not much rain or snow. We have sandy soil that likes to blow. No big landowners are happening but some consolidation of farms is occurring.” [City of Hermiston official]

In addition to its strong agriculture, the area also boasts a strong industrial base, represented by the two mile strip between Punkin Center Road (the northern UGB of Hermiston) and Bensel Lane (the southern UGB of Umatilla) on Highway 395. This area is well known for its industrial capacity, total square footage, and number of workers. In addition, this area has been experiencing steady and even rapid subdivision of residential land, especially near the Umatilla River, which is expected to continue in the future. Several BLM parcels are located in this area, as described further below.

BLM-owned land within this industrial area evidently played a role in the county’s recent successful fight with the State Department of Land Conservation and Development. The story is that to preserve farmland, DLCDD wanted to down zone the area from retail commercial back to rural zoning, and would have capped the square footage allowed for a building. Apparently, BLM lands were considered as county lands, thus skewing calculations of cost and benefit. A highly effective local campaign put the idea to rest. This network of community members, called the “Corridors Committee,” could easily be mobilized to assist BLM with its land use planning process.

“There are about 500 jobs north of the UGB [Urban Growth Boundary]. We did our research, paid out money to get a legislative remedy. We did all this in two years.”

The “circle irrigation” economy has made possible the production of over 40 crops and has been accompanied by the immigration of Hispanic farm workers, some of whom are

now “settling out” of the agricultural lifestyle and setting up their own businesses and so on.

There are signs that agriculture is not as strong as it was in previous decades. About 84% of the members of the Hermiston Irrigation District have 10 acres or less. One to five acre parcels are common. As the land is chopped up, flood irrigation doesn’t work very well, leading the district to engage in ongoing education of urban people about the practice of rural living. In the future, more grants to put water in pipelines rather than the ditches is the trend, with the likely outcomes being the loss of groundwater but increased water efficiency.

“Some want flooding while their neighbors don’t. City people expect their ideal country living but want their urban amenities. They have no understanding of irrigation. We have an annual meeting to try and educate but those that need it the most don’t come. Small acreage irrigators are the most wasteful.” [Hermiston Irrigation District Director]

The newly completed upgrade to the mill at Pilot Rock by Kinzua Resources allows an output of 132 million board feet annually. Its proposed new facility will employ more than 100 workers (Fridley 2005).

Three wind-turbine companies own property in Umatilla County with a total value of about \$124 million. A study by Oregon State University Extension Service estimated that wind generation in Umatilla County could grow into a \$40 million business. The value of the business is greater if it is resident owned, because more spending occurs locally, the study concluded (Torgerson, Sorte and Nam 2006).

Table Four below shows the population trends in Umatilla County and its communities. It shows clearly that the growth in Umatilla County over the last 15 years has been in the “West County” communities of Umatilla and Hermiston, while Pendleton population has remained steady.

Table Four:  
Population Trends for Umatilla County and Towns

Location	1990	2000	2005	% Annual Change
Umatilla County	59,249	70,548	73,878	1.6
Hermiston	10,040	13,154	14,657	3.1
Pendleton	15,126	16,354	16,636	0.7
Umatilla	3,046	4,978	6,306	7.1
Milton Freewater	5,533	6,470	6,445	1.1
Pilot Rock	1,478	1,532	1,525	0.2
Ukiah	250	255	255	0.1

(Source: U.S. Census)

## COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

Residents, local officials and law enforcement personnel commonly talked about vacant property, both private and public, and the property management issues that result from it. Problems associated with vacant lands include trash and appliance dumping, methamphetamine production, and OHV use and abuse. The next section will deal with property management issues that affect BLM lands.

“West County has to get its solid waste under control.”

“We get complaints about dead cars, or drugs, or meth labs, or dumping, and we look up the property and it’s BLM. We are told we have the most meth labs in the state. It’s because fertilizer ingredients are easy to steal, plus it is a crossroads, equidistant from many urban areas. It’s a distribution center, like WalMart. Older RV units are meth labs, they blend in.” [Umatilla County official]

“They’ve had meth on Reclamation property, they do river clean ups on a regular basis, the Umatilla Basin Watershed Council is active and helpful.”

“State Goal One calls for protection of natural resources, including water. If the land is private, though, you have the right to drill. It causes many problems.” [County Commissioner]

“The land is just not being managed. All these problems, the dumping and sometimes the meth labs, goes against what the City of Hermiston and the County are trying to achieve.” [County official]

“Below McNary, we had a big dump site.”

Abandoned cars have been a major code enforcement headache. Apparently, a new state law states that, for cars on private lands, you can get a “junk slip”, so that if an appraiser (for a fee) or law enforcement officer verifies the vehicle is worth less than \$500, you can have it towed and make money through the sale of the scrap metal.

“Before, you’d have to pay \$150 to have it pulled out.”

Other County government concerns had to do with taxation, future planning, and a need for a GIS system. The County is currently working with the 1987 Amended County Plan, which is considered out of date. The County Commission and the Planning Commission are currently prioritizing areas they want to review. Appropriate zoning is a key concern. The current review is what triggered interest in a review of BLM lands, an inventory of which was completed during the week that the JKA team visited the community. County officials responded eagerly to discussions about the land tenure process of BLM (see below).

“Umatilla County has more non taxable land than taxable.” [Umatilla County Commissioner]

“We need to complete our GIS system. If BLM could write a letter to support grant applications or somehow share resources for this, it would be very helpful.”

It is important to note that the City of Hermiston is rapidly moving beyond its working town image and shifting to a quality of life focus. This shift was talked about numerous times. For many years, the town focus was on survival, jobs, and more jobs. A “pole shed metal building was just fine for business,” one person said. With recent growth spurts, there is more focus on beauty of local businesses, clean streetscapes, and quality of life amenities, such as walking trails, river enhancement, and recreation programs.

## NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

Themes are widespread perceptions or attitudes, while issues are statements which can be acted upon. A focus on emerging issues allows an organization to create proactive and responsive management practices and policies.

The citizen issues related to BLM lands that are described below include these topics:

1. Land Tenure
2. Property Management Problems
3. Off Highway Vehicles
4. Recreation
5. A Review of Key BLM Parcels
6. Juniper Canyon Lands

### **1. Land Tenure**

Residents and officials alike were confused about the process by which BLM determines lands to retain or dispose of, as well as whether lands to be disposed are earmarked for a public purpose or for sale on the market. However, because of County concerns about property management problems on BLM ground, County officials prepared a spreadsheet of BLM parcels that coincided with the County meeting with JKA. This spreadsheet was forwarded to the Baker BLM office. The review was also conducted specifically because of the perception that the “nuisance” factor is greater with BLM lands than other lands of the County (see “Property Management Problems” below).

Commissioner Dennis Doherty expressed leadership in suggesting that the County convene a small task force to review appropriate BLM land uses. Such a task force could review BLM parcels for valued criteria. A possible suggested typology might be: 1) Those parcels that have high resource value and should be retained in public ownership by BLM; 2) Those parcels that have high public value for local communities, such as a site for a fire station, school, or swimming pool, and are appropriate for an R&PP lease;



and 3) Those parcels which do not serve a public purpose and can be sold on the market. Part of the County expectation is that strategies to deal with problems like junk dumping will be developed for lands that will stay in BLM ownership. JKA can assist in developing a list of likely candidates for the task force when appropriate.

Commissioner Doherty also pointed out that West County just completed a Critical Groundwater Area designation, and is developing County policy on water management.

BLM concerns about land tenure include the importance of appropriate zoning being in place to avoid windfall profits for buyers of BLM land. BLM generally prefers the idea of land disposal of BLM land in Umatilla County, given adequate public support and low resource value for the parcels.

“Make sure there would be a net gain for the County, we don’t want to take on your [BLM] headaches.” [County official]

“We need a realty person to educate us on the process of land disposal [used by BLM]. [County agency head]

“It’s not just OHVs that are the worry, but noxious weeds are a problem. Most of the lands are really a liability and they are not being managed. There’s a real problem with code enforcement.”

## **2. Property Management Problems**

The Hermiston area is growing, landfill costs have reportedly increased, and dumping, parties, and law enforcement issues related to vacant lands are a recurring problem. Some problems like drugs, litter and trespass, are considered criminal matters and can involve jail and fines. Another set of problems, like abandoned vehicles, and solid waste dumping like appliances, are considered land use issues involving code enforcement. Code enforcement issues are not considered criminal and may involve fines, but not jail. Code enforcement and law enforcement jurisdictions overlap, so typically there are “letters of partnership” or other mechanisms outlining protocols for cooperation.

“We get complaints about dead cars, or drugs, or meth labs, or dumping, and we look up the property and it’s BLM. To their credit, they respond immediately.”

“The BLM law enforcement person here is Tom Averett. He has to patrol a huge area. On another site, BLM recently got a dumpster out there to do a clean up day. That was really helpful.”

Law enforcement and code enforcement personnel stated that there are not more problems with BLM lands than with other lands, contrary to the perception of the County Commissioner. Rather, these professionals stated that the problems related to any lands that were not getting much attention—vacant, unmanaged lands.

“BLM has been great. Last year there was an abandoned van and several junk tires. I called BLM and the stuff disappeared, so it seems to be working.” [Code enforcement officer, Umatilla County]

“BLM lands are not really targeted, but it’s more that any land left vacant without attention invites those problems. BLM parcels with roads through it are especially bad, then we don’t know until someone stumbles on the dump.”

“If BLM could post their properties it would help. The less absentee, the better. People are sophisticated now. They don’t leave bills in trash that would allow tracing to themselves.” [Law enforcement personnel]

### **3. Off Highway Vehicles (OHV)**

Like other areas of the region, off highway vehicle (OHV) use appears to be increasing and accompanied by social and ecological problems.

OHV enthusiasts spoke with pride about their work over the last several years in working with the Forest Service to create the “Winom-Frazier Trail Complex” for OHV use on the Umatilla National Forest west of Ukiah. The area includes campground, restrooms and shelters. They also talked about the Juniper Forest OHV area in the Tri Cities area near Pasco, which is apparently BLM, as a popular spot.

“We believe in the Tread Lightly approach. If you don’t have a Forest Service-approved spark arrestor, we will turn you in.”

Hermiston residents commonly pointed out problems with OHV use.

“You do three trips and you have a permanent scar. This soil, the sands blow, tumbleweeds come in.”

“When my kids were raised, I moved to an area north of town for beauty and quiet and then the noise of the ATVs started. It has ruined my experience, the constant noise. No one will do anything about it. The City can’t, the County won’t. You can’t call OSP [Oregon State Police] for noisy motorcycles.”  
[Hermiston area resident]

“The OHVs, particularly motorcycles, are unmanaged and just scarring up the land.”

“We are really bothered by the motorcycles and dumping. More than anything, it’s the motorcycles that are the problem. They’re so noisy. There are also a lot of noxious weeds and fire hazards.”

“I’d like to see something happen with the BLM lands, but I’m not sure which lands are BLM or BOR [Bureau of Reclamation]. Maybe BLM is getting blamed for everything, but it’s actually Hermiston Irrigation District or BOR!”

#### **4. Recreation**

The population growth in the Hermiston area has led to the development of a seemingly robust city government, of which the city’s Parks and Recreation Department figures very highly. The department’s first priority is for open space, parks, and recreation for inside the city, and for this mission, BLM lands have played an important role. The swimming pool, for example, was apparently built on BLM land through a Recreation and Public Purpose (R&PP) lease. Many of the park and recreation buildings were built in the late 1960s and 1970s using Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) of the Department of Interior. These monies created most of the City’s parks.

“Our match was always business contractors who would volunteer to build things, but as we have gotten bigger, the volunteerism has dropped and people rely on tax money to get things done.” [Hermiston Parks and Recreation Department Staff]

In a City-wide survey completed in 1998, undeveloped walking trails rated highly.

It is significant to note that 35% of the city’s fee program in recreation is from people outside the city, lending a regional focus to the City’s Parks and Recreation Department. The second priority of the city’s Recreation Department is the regional recreation interests expressed by citizens. The three major regional recreation interests are horses, OHV and shooting. To get state support of recreation programs through the State Department of Parks and Recreation, local and regional recreation interests must be identified as priorities in a planning process. The City of Hermiston was active in inserting its interests into the state planning process, and has established the basis for future state support. Thus in the state document, “Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan,” the local recreational priorities of Hermiston and the surrounding area are included and thus available for funding. It is currently updating the Park Master Plan, including desired improvements for deteriorating buildings and infrastructure. No BLM parcels within Urban Growth Boundary were identified.

County parks and recreation are not well developed. The County had leased Steelhead Park from ODFW but they have evidently abandoned it. Harris Park, in northeast Umatilla County on the South Fork of the Walla Walla River, is currently the only county park. It has a 48 mile mountain bike loop, and is supported by some Washington State money, evidently.

City officials proudly outlined their vision of what they would like to see for river development in the next decade. There is a 3.5 mile stretch of the Umatilla River west of Hermiston (see Point G on the map in Figure Seven, page 71). This stretch, going from south to north has, or will have, the following:

- a) River Front Park, containing .8 miles of trail and dedicated in April, 2006;
- b) Steelhead Park;
- c) The 240-acre site of the Bureau of Reclamation, currently undergoing planning by a “Roundtable.” It is an old farm that has high ecological value. The goal is to preserve it in its natural state with walking trails and a focus on education. Tribal people are involved who want salmon habitat, as well as The Nature Conservancy.
- d) A 13 acre city park that was a dump and serves passive uses currently;
- e) An Amphitheatre site, not planned yet, but the topography is ideal;

To the east of this area is Hermiston Butte, the hospital, which used to be the Hermiston gun club in the 1970s, and the City of Hermiston. The photo in Figure Six shows the view from River Front Park to the west side of Hermiston Butte. This area is urbanized to the north, east, and south and represents a crucial area of open space for the city. Residents want trails interconnecting these areas.

“The City could use help from a BLM fish biologist, so that we can work with the Bureau of Reclamation Roundtable and get the kind of riverside area we want.” [City of Hermiston official]

Figure Six:  
View from River Front Park to the West Side of Hermiston Butte



(Source: Photo by the authors)

The recreation question is “What contribution could BLM lands and resources make to further the recreation and quality of life interests of Hermiston area residents?” It is currently unclear if any BLM parcels are significant in this endeavor, or if lands could be traded in order to create a resource opportunity for local communities. Moreover, it is not clear whether there is local capacity to take on an R&PP lease on lands devoted to recreation. Officials had explored the idea of a regional park and recreation district, but determined that the City of Hermiston would be a loser in that proposition in terms of dollars in versus services out. Such special districts have property tax limitations, so it would be one more entity competing for limited tax dollars.

“We want to connect the Riverfront property with a trail system for bikes and pedestrians. We got grants from ODOT for the County to get trails at the Dam and at Umatilla.” [Community activist]

Finally, comments were made about maps:

“I went to Umatilla National Forest, State Forestry, County Courthouse planning department, and Rite-Aid [drug store]. There is just no easy way to get a map of BLM parcels in Umatilla County.”

## **5. A Review of Key BLM Parcels in the Hermiston Area**

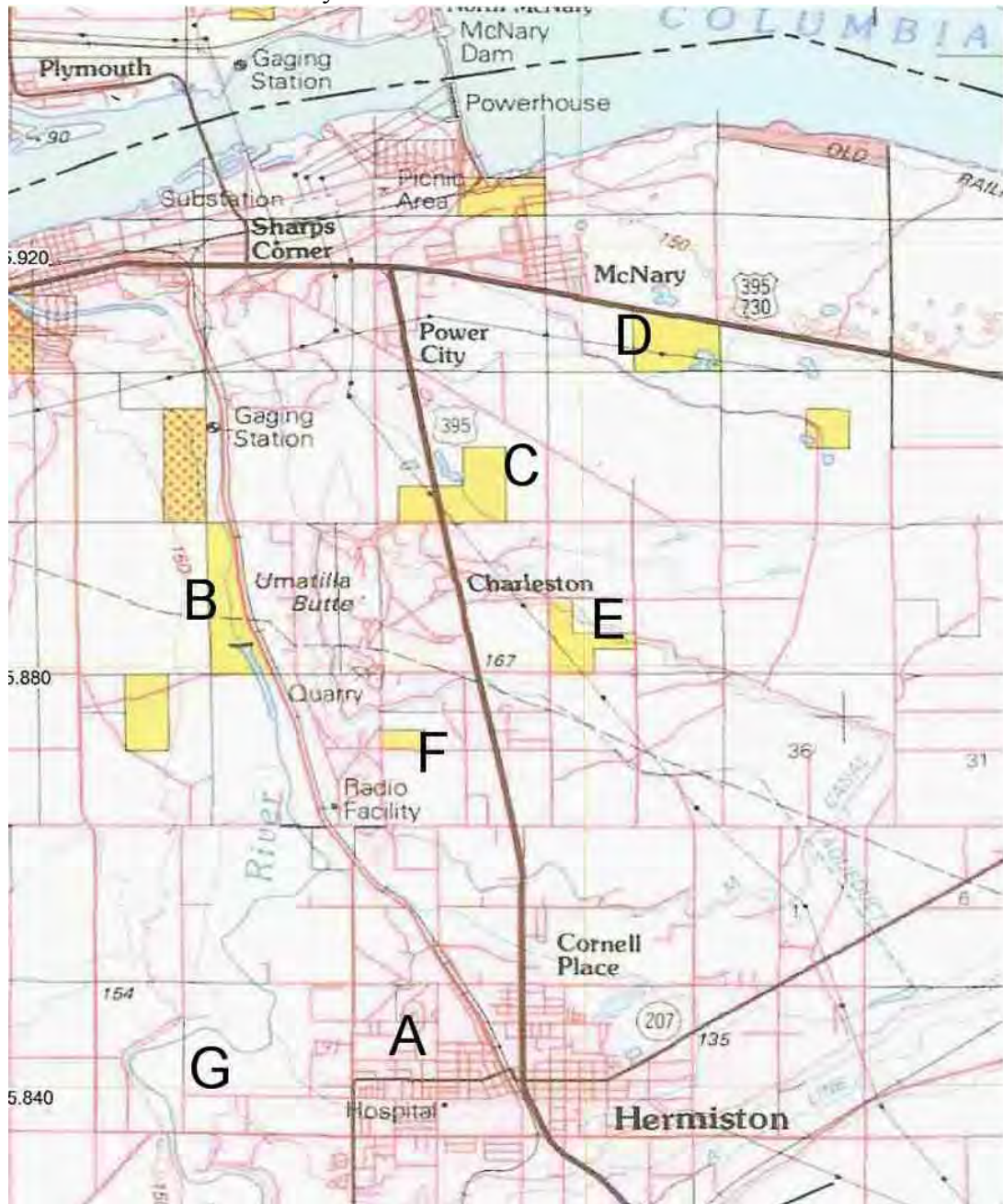
This section reviews some of the key BLM parcels in Umatilla County, describing some of the citizen issues or local goals associated with the parcel, and including photos as appropriate. Figure Seven below shows key BLM parcels north of Hermiston, for which local residents had interest and sometimes issues about management.

### **Point A. Hermiston Butte**

Hermiston Butte is shown as Point A in Figure Seven. BLM owns the top of the butte for which the City obtained a patent. The sides are privately owned. The butte is surrounded by residential development, the hospital, and numerous public amenities such as the aquatic center of the City. The City considers the area at build out, except for trail restoration activities on the butte, and connecting trails to River Front Park and others areas. A water reservoir on top of the butte is still a possibility. Figure Eight is a photo of the Butte.

A story repeated around town is that a couple owners of the south part of Hermiston Butte wanted to donate to the city on the conditions that the Christian cross up there would remain. Afraid of church/state issues that plagued Eugene and other places, city officials approached “one of the oldest churches in town,” the Baptist church, which dates from the 1890s. The church agreed to receive the lands the cross was on and the City received the rest.

Figure Seven:  
Key BLM Parcels North of Hermiston



(Source: Map Trails Oregon BLM Explorer 3.5; accuracy cannot be guaranteed)

“We’d like to see Hermiston Butte get some grassy areas near the pool so that people who aren’t swimming, like the grandmothers, have someplace to sit, maybe some picnic tables.”



Figure Eight:  
Hermiston Butte from the East, Site of City Swimming Pool



(Source: Photo by the authors)

### **Point B. Umatilla Butte**

Umatilla Butte is shown as Point B in Figure Seven. Like Hermiston Butte, Umatilla Butte has a long history in the settlement of the area, but is currently in a degraded state from neglect and abuse. Cooley lane is access to this area. The butte has an Oregon State Police tower, as well as an old dumpsite. Apparently, the County was leasing the dumpsite. It stopped taking material in 1994 and it was closed in 1997. A private contractor currently monitors the site for environmental complains for the State Department of Environmental Quality. The contractor evidently has a temporary access permit from BLM for easement to the site. The state Oregon Department of Transportation has Rights of Way there for mineral acquisition. Verizon tried to get a tower on the butte and the tribe successfully fought them.

The area has generated management challenges for many years. Residents pointed out issues of interminable OHV use, shooting, trash and appliance dumping, fires, meth waste, youth parties, and abandoned vehicles. Blowing dust and a degraded landscape have been the results. Local residents spent three years closing t his area off, with the assistance of BLM's law enforcement officer and the Oregon Department of Transportation. Figure Nine below shows a collage of photos of Umatilla Butte.

Figure Nine:  
Photo Collage of Umatilla Butte



(Source: photos by the authors. Clockwise from upper left, the entrance to the area from near Highway 495, one of several examples of appliance dumping, ATV use, reportedly very common, and “The Bowl,” said to be a popular teenage party spot.)

Residents debated the future uses of Umatilla Butte. An OHV club would like to develop the site as a day use area, and believe that with trails and self-policing, ecological restoration of the area could be achieved. They believe that younger people on motorcycles are the most irresponsible and damaging and that most OHV users are responsible.

However, most people when asked, “What would you do?” said to leave it alone, and no matter what else, don’t let the OHV people have it. It is too dry for a park, a few people said, the tribe says it’s sacred and will be involved in any planning, and it is likely to require monitoring for many years because of the dumpsite. Even when members of the OHV club called nearby property owners to gain support for an OHV park, they got nothing but “negative vibes.”



“If that is an OHV area, we will have nothing but dust and noise.”

“Leave it like it is.”

“Once it was fenced, it got green. They had to plant three times to get the grass to take.”

“The area needs to be cleaned up.”

“Nature trails would be nice.”

“Make it controlled recreation or shut it down.” 148

“Leave it alone because it’s a dump.”

Despite the closure of the area, OHV users continue to enter and use the area. Many residents on the west side of the butte have erected concrete barriers to keep OHV users out. Figure Ten shows a view from Umatilla Butte looking west toward the Umatilla River. Residents in this area stated that the area is dominated by 40 -acre parcels which are steadily becoming subdivided into 5 -acre parcels for residential development. This is

Figure Ten:  
View from Umatilla Butte Looking West Toward the Umatilla River



(Source: Photo by the authors)

part of the area west of Highway 395 and between Hermiston and the town of Umatilla which is experiencing higher density residential development, particularly along the Umatilla River. This residential and population growth is likely to influence any planning for the future of Umatilla Butte.

### **Point C. Bensel Lane Site**

Point C in Figure Seven shows a BLM parcel whose south flank is Bensel Lane, the northern boundary of it is bifurcated by Highway 395 and by BPA powerlines, which reportedly have 250 foot setbacks. Part of this land serves as Power City Wildlife Area, with management responsibility from both BLM and USFWS. Evidently, the southern border of the town of Umatilla's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is Bensel Lane. If the BLM parcel is within the UGB, and apparently it is, it would have important implications for future growth in the area.

“I like the area flooded for birds, but there are trouble with rodents and mosquitoes.”

“Would the BPA 250' setback restrict future housing development?”

Figure 11:  
The Bensel Lane BLM Site West of Highway 395



(Source: Photo by the authors)

“The Fish and Wildlife Service is interested in getting more wetlands. I own wetlands next to the Wildlife area. I’d like to sell this land to them or trade it with BLM for the parcel west of Highway 395.”

Figure 11 above shows the portion of the site that is west of Highway 395 and may have commercial development potential. One nearby landowners is interested in a land trade for this parcel with wetlands areas he owns contiguous to BLM on the east side of Highway 395.

#### **Point D. The McNary Site**

Figure 12 shows the McNary BLM site, which is shown as Point D in Figure Seven. This site is along Highway 730 east of McNary where residents have appreciated the trails and recreation amenities with the Corps of Engineer lands. The town of Umatilla, nearby, has been experiencing steady growth, although the immediate area has little development.

Figure 12:  
The McNary BLM Site



(Source: Photo by the authors)

#### **Point E. The Baggett Lane BLM Site**

Point E on the map in Figure Seven shows the BLM parcel at Baggett Lane, east of Highway 395, north of Hermiston. The Umatilla County code enforcement officer said it was the worst site he’s got for trash and appliance dumping. This area has more dispersed residential development (2 -5 acre parcels) which is widespread but does not seem to be experiencing the more rapid residential growth to the west of Highway 395.

“The biggest thorn in my side is the BLM parcel at sagebrush between Joy and Baggett Lanes, where the BPA towers go through. Old cars are dumped there frequently, one time there were several dead cows. If we can find an ID, a vin number and find the owner, we will cite them, but normally, we don’t have that luck. The tags are old or there is no current address.” [Code enforcement officer, Umatilla County]

“This is a popular place for dirt bikes, garbage dumping, and fires.” [Fire Chief]

Figure 13:  
The Baggett Lane BLM Site



(Source: Photo by the authors)

#### **Point F. Joy Lane BLM Site**

The map in Figure Seven shows the location at Point F of a BLM parcel that the fire department hopes to use for a fire station. It is located at the corner of Joy and Sunshine Lanes. The area is surrounded by rural and suburban residential development, which has been experiencing steady subdivision and infill, according to local residents. Apparently, communication has fallen off between the City of Hermiston Fire Department and BLM regarding the disposition of this parcel.



Figure 14:  
BLM Parcel at Joy Lane and Sunshine Road



(Source: Photo by the authors)

## **6. Juniper Canyon Lands**

Figure 15 shows the BLM lands in the Juniper Canyon area (shown in orange), plus Highway 37 to Holdman which is the main entry point for the area. The area just north of these lands now contains a wind farm, and the McNary Wildlife Refuge of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is located to the west of these lands as the drainage empties into the Columbia River.

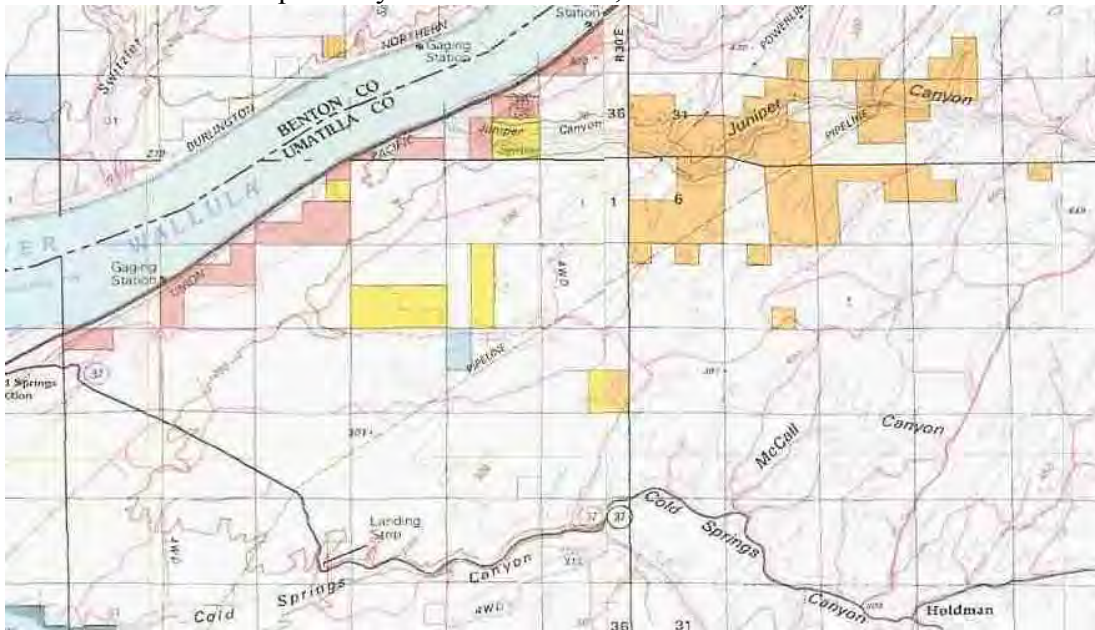
To hear local stories, Juniper Canyon was a popular area years ago:

“I used to go into the Juniper Canyon area as a kid and liked it. Now it’s all closed up. Whitman College used to have some business in Juniper Canyon.”

“I used to hike up there as a boy. It’s been closed off for years.” [Fisherman on the Columbia River]

“I’d like access to BLM lands at Juniper Canyon. Up in the mountains, too. They closed off access to Mt. Emily. Some closures for wildlife habitat are OK, but not all of them.”

Figure 15:  
The Juniper Canyon Lands of BLM, Northeast of Hermiston



(Source: Map Trails Oregon BLM Explorer 3.5; accuracy cannot be guaranteed)

There are two major landowners affected by and interested in BLM land tenure decisions, both of whom live south of Juniper Canyon near Holden. Both are part of long-standing farming/ranching families in the area. One landowner has been trying to buy a 40-acre parcel of BLM land within his windfarms on the Columbia River, in the northern part of Umatilla County. Another 40-acre BLM parcel south of the Juniper Canyon block of lands is totally surrounded by his farm. His perception is that BLM for years has indicated that it would like to sell the scattered parcels. All the necessary studies have been done, including a cultural resources inventory, but BLM has not been able to act during this time.

“Ten years of all the work has gone down the drain. You can imagine my frustration. They are all polite, they sympathize, but no one picks up the ball.”  
[Local landowner upon recently being informed that the BLM land exchange program had ended]

“They have a quick return on leases, but not sales.” [Land owner]

From this landowners’ perspective, BLM should initiate small informal discussions with neighboring owners. If the parcel is totally landlocked, the adjacent landowners should get first priority. If the parcel is not landlocked, its sale could be offered on the general market. If the parcel has public access, different considerations would apply.

It may be that BLM could consider trading isolated parcels near the Juniper Canyon block for parcels along the Columbia River and then get them to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for habitat purposes.

A few residents commented on the possibility that the Umatilla tribe would acquire management of Juniper Canyon.

“Speaking as a citizen, if the tribe gets a hold of Juniper Canyon they will shut it down. Their plan may say open but it won’t be. An example is Highway 730, east of Umatilla. Two parcels went to the tribe, it’s posted as open, but if you are caught, you will be cited.”

### RESOLVE AS YOU GO CANDIDATES FOR EARLY RESPONSE

Two Hermiston City Councilors, Jackie Meyers and Rod Hardin, invited BLM for a tour of the community to learn about natural resource interests. They would be happy to meet the new Baker Field Area Manager.

Call Fire Chief Jim Stearns, City of Hermiston, 541 -567-8822, to explore their interest in the BLM parcel at Joy Lane and Sunshine for a possible fire station. He seemed very informed about all BLM parcels in the area.

IRZ Consulting (505 E Main, 567-0252; [www.irz.com](http://www.irz.com)) does “geo-reference” aerial photos so that they can be manipulated by GIS. They can thus produce site maps, showing true features, and integrated in scale to other maps. This firm is well liked and its use would demonstrate a commitment to local level interests in the plan.

Resolve land tenure interests with the two landowners south of Juniper Canyon.

BLM’s fish biologist could assist the City of Hermiston with “best practices” approach to riparian restoration.

Explore the prospects for starting the land use review process early in the West County area. There may be reasons why success will require a longer time than the BLM land use planning process. To develop necessary funding for public purpose land uses, for example, could take some time for local communities. The driving impetus should be generating community benefit from the planning and management process. On the other hand, if the lands are already marked for disposal in the current plan, the process could be streamlined and immediate.

The County Assessor would like to seek a cooperative intergovernmental agreement with BLM and County, along with other government entities, to become grant partners and support the county goal of having a GIS environment. County staff want to have GIS capacity, and they would like BLM to support grant applications, and ultimately, even use County GIS services.

## POSSIBLE COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

If the land use review process cannot be resolved before the planning process begins, then its treatment as a community-based planning element is highly appropriate. For all the reasons laid out above, the community interest in reviewing land tenure adjustments is high, the timing is excellent, and the chances of success very good. Officials and residents made it clear that the community would bring resources to the process, and any BLM claim to “no money” is an insufficient obstacle to joint planning. “Let’s solve this together,” one person said.

The City of Hermiston would be willing to be a convener/facilitator to explore the ways that BLM lands could serve the purposes of regional recreation opportunities, increased livability, and destination type recreation.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Both Umatilla County and the City of Hermiston could be expected to be active participants in the BLM’s land use planning process. The County is interested in sustaining tax revenues and reviewing land tenure adjustments. The City is a regional leader in promoting recreation interests. The City is just now beginning to look at natural resources and restoration from a “quality of life” perspective and sees amenities’ development as crucial for future development. As one person said, “We’ve gone from an agribusiness to livability expectation.”

Other communities like the towns of Umatilla and Irrigon will be interested in consultation as well.

Potential partners, especially local government units, should be informed about the process **before** the “kick off” with the public. Officials want to be able to understand the process ahead of time, away from public settings which tend to polarize discussion.

Networks of local residents mobilized to protect the commercial and retail centers of the county from being downzoned by a state agency. Collectively known as the “Corridors Committee,” they could easily be mobilized to assist BLM with its land use planning process. They are people who know their community, and know how to get things done. This is a set of people also who would be very interested in addressing regional economic development that benefits locals as well, including BLM’s role.



## **The South Fork of the Walla Walla River**

Figure 16 below shows the BLM lands (shown in orange) along the South Fork of the Walla Walla River. The main access to these lands is from Milton -Freewater to the northwest. The Umatilla National Forest borders these lands to the east while other parts of the Forest and the North Fork Umatilla Wilderness are a few miles south. To the southwest, the tip of the Umatilla Indian Reservation can be seen on the map. As shown in Figure Five, this area is part of the Milton-Freewater CRU and is oriented to Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities as its urban areas.

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

This area seems to be stable in terms of land ownership. Residents stated that not much property was changing hands. Ranching is the predominant economic activity and the area has experienced some loss of apple orchards due to competition from Chinese growers. The local ranching families are aging. Succession of ranch properties is sometimes in question, particularly given the marginal economics of current ranching operations. Subdivision below 80 acres is not legal, negating much break-up of property. In recent years a couple of new vineyards have developed in the area.

The managers of Harris Park reported frequent problems with the BLM trailhead, including parties, underage drinking, illegal camping and campfires, and car break-ins. Apparently these problems are frequent and occur mostly on weekend evenings. Portable meth labs and suspected drug dealings were reported. The managers reported delays and lack of response from BLM.

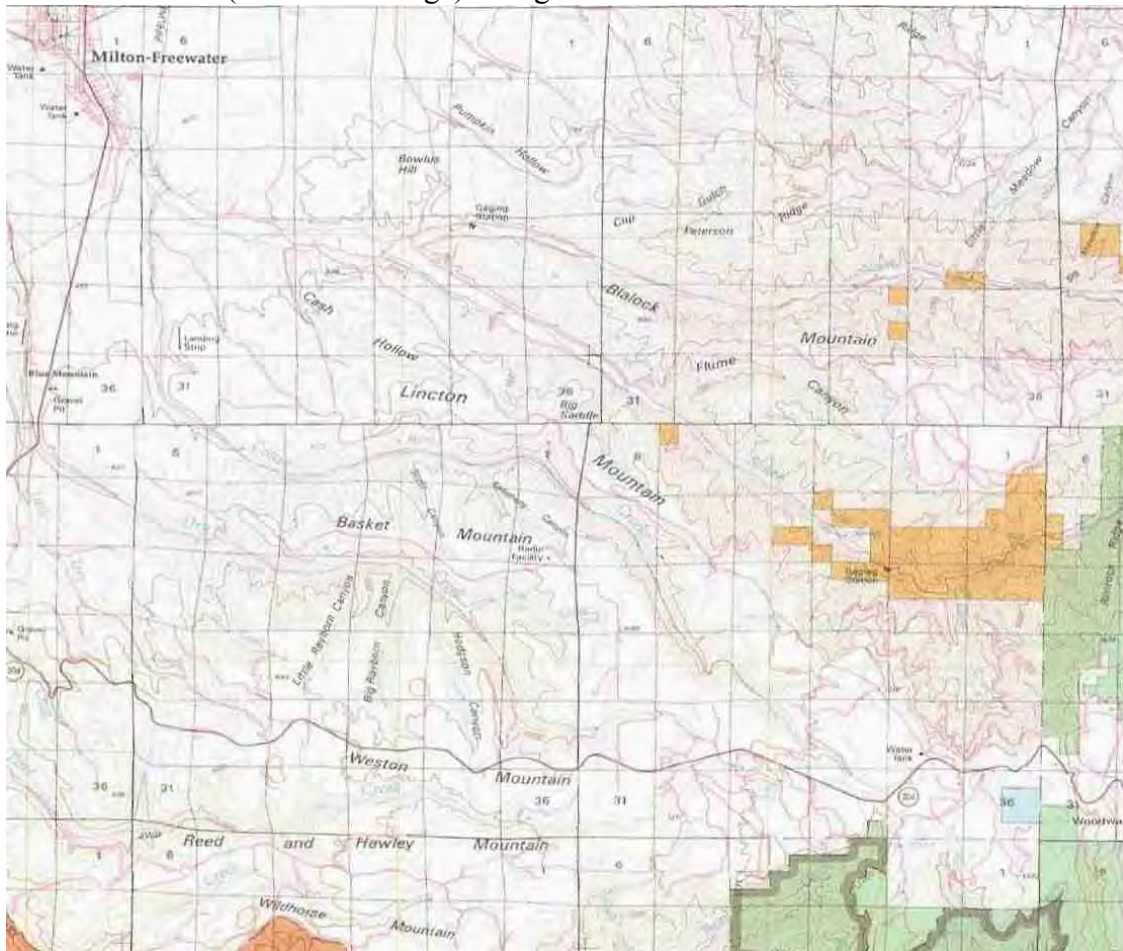
“Sometimes it’s two weeks later before they get here.”

“We almost never get a follow up call.”

They reported that they have a key for the ten months that the gate is locked in case of emergency, but they would like a key year-round because “people have accidents up above the gate.”

About 4 miles below Harris Park is one of six holding facilities for adult Chinook operated by the Umatilla Tribe in conjunction with the Umatilla hatchery. There is some uncertainty as to how the reintroduction of Chinook into the Southfork was authorized

Figure 16:  
BLM Lands (Shown in Orange) Along the South Fork of the Walla Walla River



(Source: Map Trails Oregon BLM Explorer 3.5; accuracy cannot be guaranteed)

## NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

BLM has newly acquired lands on the South Fork in which some private land, serving about 8 people, is wedged in between BLM lands on the west and Umatilla National Forest Lands on the west. A trail along the river served as a road part of the year to create access to the private land. The trail/road crosses the water over ten times. When BLM purchased the land, its engineers condemned three bridges and they were removed. The listing of steelhead and bull trout under the Endangered Species Act in 1996 reduced the window of access to six weeks, from July 1 to August 15. Although BLM determined that access until December would not impact spawning, the re-introduction of Chinook salmon by the Umatilla Tribe created additional spawning requirements. BLM is currently under pressure to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) to authorize the extended access, but the tribe or others may challenge any decision.

Although the homeowners, through their association, have participated in negotiations for over 14 years, a decision still has not been reached, leading to high levels of frustration.

“We are contemplating trespassing this fall just to bring the case to a head. That will be expensive and more disruptive to all parties.” [Local homeowner]

The users of the area who were contacted—mountain bikers, motorcyclers, hikers, and horseriders, stated their appreciation for the trail and that little resource damage or user conflict was apparent. “*Everybody is careful,*” one mountain biker said. A horse enthusiast said that a motorcycle rider had apologized for the behavior of his partner earlier in the day and that he had ridden in the area ever since he was a boy. He appreciated that it was still available.

JKA observations of the trailhead, the trail and parking area revealed some evidence of small fires, but no trash anywhere or any evidence of rough behavior, and no heavy camping activities such as trees chopped, damaged brush, glass fragments, tire tracks, or graffiti. Large commercial trash containers were prominently present.

Residents of the area are very aware of the long-standing access challenges related to the South Fork. The perception of homeowners, Senator Smith’s aide Larry Bartee, and nearby residents was that a decision was expected at the last meeting with BLM. Landowners were frustrated about what they felt was a waste of time and lack of decision after all the years of discussion.

Larry Bartee, aide to Senator Gordon Smith, recommended that BLM build an ATV-capable trail up to cabin sites on same side of stream as current trail, permitting only homeowners to use it, not the public. He feels like that is the only permanent and practical solution. The tribe and homeowners should be asked to help pay for it since they would benefit from getting the traffic permanently out of the stream. He thinks both parties would be willing to help. He wonders if the Walla Walla Corps of Engineers could help with the technical solutions. Larry also said,

“Make sure Ted Davis [BLM] knows I’m not trying to go around him by talking to you [JKA] guys.”

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The BLM needs to lead on this—no one else can. It sounds like all the technical information needed is available, so additional study is unnecessary. According to Larry Bartee, the tribe and Senator Smith believe the long term solution is one that keeps vehicles out of the stream. That leaves solutions like replacing bridges, widening the trail, limiting access to foot/motorcycles, or buying out homeowners.

If a long-term solution can be agreed upon, that would make a short term temporary solution more acceptable, such as continuing the fording, provided there is action toward the long term solution.

Further inaction or delay is not appropriate. BLM has been put on notice informally that homeowners will not stand still any longer. All the parties are aware that the situation will be brought to a head soon by the homeowners, and that could cost everybody money, time and hard-earned trust and respect. If BLM doesn't think they have time to work on this now, they should anticipate spending even more time dealing with the disruption later.

It is important to note that people involved in the situation have respectful relationships with the individual BLM professionals they have worked with over the years, particularly Ted Davis and Jackie Dougan. Their frustration is with the lack of resolution, starts and stops, bureaucracy, and the lack of closure for over 14 years.

Possible steps are these:

1. Decide internally to complete an EA with a proposed decision by a given date. Be prepared to personally share that date with the key players and make it a priority. Given the amount of available data, this should be relatively low cost and low level of effort.
2. Arrange to personally visit John Ehart, Antone Minthorn (Tribal Chairman), and if possible Larry Bartee, so that the new Field Manager gets to know the players and can deliver the message that the EA will be completed by the announced date. Relationally, it is important to show a smooth transition and partnership between Ted and Nancy. People have seen a lot of BLM professionals come and go over the past 14 years in which this issue has been active, so they are apt to feel that are "at square one" without Ted and Jackie along. In addition, relationships with tribal staff should be sustained.
3. Mr. Minthorn should be called to see if he would be like to meet with Nancy and Ted just to get to know each other and learn of each other's concerns for the tribal interests and public lands. We were told that an acceptable option is to call the Executive Director (Don Sampson, or his assistant Peggy Harris, 966-2026) and ask that a personal meeting be arranged at Wildhorse, which is considered "the Tribes' place of business," at Mr. Minthorn's earliest convenience. Ask if BLM could attend a Board of Trustees meeting to hear about Tribal interests and to share information about upcoming BLM processes.

This attempt should begin soon since it may take several months for a reply. If there is an existing MOU with the tribe, acknowledge this and ask how well that has been working, how they feel about it.

4. Keep the conversations going with all parties and focus on the interests - a healthy, vibrant fishery; safe reasonable access for homeowners; safe environmentally acceptable access for the public; effective and efficient management situation for the BLM. Talk in terms of short term and long term solutions and find out what they would be willing to support and help implement and how the EA can reflect these ideas.
5. Don't let BLM's budget restrictions limit choices, but rather leverage what's available to gather partners in creating a viable fishery and healthy watershed. Let the tribe, the homeowners, and the senator help. Significant state and federal funds are anticipated in the near future to improve the Walla Walla River fishery.
6. Hire a facilitator if BLM feels it may need some help for a joint meeting or for the public involvement for the EA. If BLM takes action as outlined above, a facilitator may not be needed.
7. Ultimately, there is a lot of consensus amongst agencies, landowners, and other users about the best-case scenario for the South Fork Walla Walla. It appears that the Tribe may be the only opposing party, yet it's unknown as to whether they would protest an actual decision. Even if they do, it's worth pushing towards conclusion because there's no clear indication of how far they would be willing to take their protest. If the proposed action goes to court, that may be a better outcome than letting the decision languish any further.

If things continue without closure, the issue will become more volatile, disruptive and potentially irresolvable, especially if the landowners proceed with their intention to invite national media attention to their plight. BLM has worked very hard and has come up with some creative ideas over the years. It undermines BLM's credibility to have this issue erupt into a poster child for the government interfering with private property rights, and it's clear that landowners have no real desire to move in this direction but are committed to do so absent an agreement.

Potential solutions are close at hand if the BLM can make this issue a priority and work towards resolution within the first few months of the new manager's tenure. The availability of a win-win agreement with all parties is reachable, but not with further delays in decision-making. BLM's leadership in pursuing issue resolution will serve to initiate whatever responses by concerned parties are necessary to bring all interests into full view and successful closure.

### **The Meacham Area of Umatilla County**

BLM owns several land parcels near the Meacham area of Umatilla County, just south of the Umatilla Indian Reservation on Interstate 84. Emigrant Springs State Park is located here and serves to bring many visitors to the area. In addition, Boise Cascade owns land in the area, the State Department of Transportation has a gravel pit and maintenance yard,

and there is a railroad servicing yard that employs a few people. It is an area that is oriented to the summer visitors, as well as to snowmobilers and cross-country skiers in the winter. The only café has a post office outlet with 50 boxes. Kids are bussed to Pendleton for school, a one-hour ride each way.

“People come up here for mushroom picking and huckleberries. No ATV use is allowed in the park but most campers bring them for around here.”

In recent years, the Meacham Volunteer Fire Department began the Poker Run ATV run, not as a race but as a fundraiser for the fire department. Pendleton and La Grande businesses donate prizes. It’s a 50-mile loop that attracts up to 500 participants.

“State Parks brings their ATV mobile station up and teaches kids about OHV use.”

“We make sure there is no damage [from the event]. People must stay on the trail.”

“ATV people are very thoughtful as a group.”

The Blue Mountain Nordic Club built and manages the cross-country skiing area, depending on volunteers to operate and finance it.

Two other concerns were voiced by local residents:

“The big thing up here is fire. There has been much clean up in recent years.”

“There are some problems with abandoned vehicles. We have to call a wrecking yard in Hermiston.”

“There is some BLM land around here that is landlocked and we cannot get access. There’s good elk hunting in there, too. Cunningham Sheep has it locked up.”



## CHAPTER FIVE: THE TRIBAL INTERESTS OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE UMATILLA INDIAN RESERVATION (CTUIR)

### *Introduction*

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) is situated between Pendleton and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. CTUIR member tribes are the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla tribes. There are also other officially unrecognized tribes and tribal bands that live on the reservation, such as the Palouse, Joseph Band Nez Perce, Colvilles, and Yakamas. CTUIR looks after their interests for hunting, gathering, burial, traditional cultural properties (TCP) and other uses in the general area. The Palouse were split and sent to several official reservations and not recognized or given a reservation of their own. The Treaty of 1855 established that the “usual and accustomed” area of the three tribes was around the confluence of the Yakama, Snake, and Walla Walla Rivers with the Columbia River. The Walla Walla and Umatilla are Columbia River people, while the Cayuse lived along the tributary river valleys in the Blue Mountains (<http://www.umatilla.nsn.us/hist1.html>). Traditional areas for gathering, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies are mostly within the “usual and accustomed area.” There is an overlap with the Nez Perce tribe, called a “joint use area,” west of Snake River Canyon.

The formal structure of the tribes, developed through the constitution of 1949, is described on the tribes’ very excellent web page, [www.umatilla.nsn.us](http://www.umatilla.nsn.us). It has three levels:

- Board of Trustees; the Chairman of the Board has final say on everything; membership can change every 2 years by election or by recall;
- General Council consists of all voting members of the tribe, has elected officers, meets once a month, and is a general meeting where anyone can speak about a topic.
- Committees, Commissions, Boards are appointed by Board of Trustees. These bodies are very powerful and highly political. The regulatory commissions get very involved with operational decisions for important tribal activities. These bodies have the most influence in the tribal system.

Informally, the society works on the basis of family units. Members of extended families really stick together, socially, politically, and economically. Some families specialize in particular traditional practices which are not shown readily to other families or outsiders. A family’s traditional gathering areas aren’t divulged to other families either. This was compared to not wanting to show your cousin your favorite fishing hole.

The Reservation has a senior citizen network, the longhouse ladies who guide the gathering activities, a group of elders working with the Department of Education teaching



language, customs, and root gathering, and many other support activities. The people are actively trying to preserve some of the “old ways” – language, traditional foods and crafts. BLM could support the tribe in this effort, for example, by actively finding ways for the tribe to get access for activities on BLM lands.

The CTUIR has a high priority for actively acquiring lands. Much of the land inside reservation boundaries is private. It has been a high priority to buy internal land, land with access to traditional hunting/fishing/water, and access corridors for roads and energy transmission lines. Ranchers often offer sale to tribe first because the tribe usually pays over-market price.

The tribal government of the CTUIR became well-developed in the 1970s and 1980s as a strategy for survival in a changing world. Its self-sufficiency and increased effectiveness have created a number of successes for CTUIR, not the least of which is the success of its Natural Resource program which has helped foster the return of salmon to the Umatilla River, 70 years after extinction.

### **Tribal Interests**

Tribal interests pertain to both public and private lands within the Umatillas’ “usual and accustomed areas.”

### **Fisheries**

The Program Manager of the Fisheries program, Gary James, stated that the tribe is co-manager with all major land management agencies to preserve all treaty-protected fishing rights on reservation land and in the “usual and accustomed areas.” “Inherent in the right to fish is the protection of fishery habitat.”

CTUIR is involved with habitat enhancement in all 4 major sub-basins – John Day, Grande Ronde, Umatilla, Walla Walla. The tribe has projects for in-stream restoration, usually on private lands, which are coordinated with BLM and the Forest Service. The Fisheries office interest in RMP planning relates to stream enhancement and protection, grazing management policies which might affect anadromous fish, and water quality. They take a watershed wide and long range approach to protecting habitat. The South Fork Walla Walla has some of the best water in northeast Oregon for cold and clean fisheries. The long range plan is to reestablish spring Chinook runs where native stock went extinct in the early 1900s.

CTUIR is currently working on a program with BPA, the Corps of Engineers, and several other agencies to develop a system which ensures year round flows in the Walla Walla. They did the same with the Umatilla River system, pumping water from the Columbia to farmers to offset irrigation not used.

The tribe opposes a long-term solution which allows homeowners to drive vehicles through a prime fish habitat, a reference to the conflict on the South Fork of the Walla

Walla River, described in the previous chapter. “*The fish are actually attracted to the crossings because the vehicles loosen the gravel and make great nesting areas*,” according to Mr. James. The eggs are laid in September and incubate well into the winter month, so damage can occur over several months. Mr. James favors building a narrow route on one side of the river.

### **Gathering and Cultural Sites**

A major concern of the tribe is gathering areas, plants, foods, and medicinals. In addition, cultural sites that may be affected by BLM planning are of major interest.

“We have a pretty good working relationship with the Forest Service and BLM. Mary Oman is good to work with. We trust her judgment and give her a lot of latitude to recommend protection measures for BLM projects.” [Tribal staff people]

“Do you have an accurate map that would show the location of BLM owned lands?” [Tribal staff person]

### **Communication**

Tribal staff talked about how communication could be improved between CTUIR and BLM.

“We often find out about projects second-hand and after projects are underway, rather than being consulted in advance. Often the lack of communication is within the agency. Project people don’t let their cultural resource people know about upcoming projects. Specialists communicate pretty well at the local level, but at the agency formal level, not so well – just lip service.”

“The Irrigon dump on BLM land with Oregon Trail going thru it was a real success in consultation with the tribe. We felt treated like real partners.”

Staff had questions for BLM, to which they were referred to Mary Oman:

- Has Virtue Flat OHV area been cleared for cultural resources?
- Does the 1872 mining regulations call for protection of cultural resources on areas disturbed by mining activities?
- Does the BLM have an “Inadvertent Discovery Process” agreement with the CTUIR for graves or human remains discovered during earth disturbance projects? It would be similar to the one the Corps of Engineers has.

One frustration expressed was that newly issued BLM national grazing policy was issued without CTUIR getting a chance to consult or comment.

## **Tribal Communication**

Communication protocols with the tribe are conducted on a “government to government” basis. When the plan begins, a formal letter should be sent to the Tribal Chairman, suggesting that the BLM Field Manager meet with the Chairman to discuss the scope of planning, the area covered, the schedule, and how the tribes would like to be involved. Then follow up with a phone call to the Chairman to schedule a meeting.

BLM leadership should get on the agenda for the Board of Trustees meeting, explain that planning is beginning, the schedule, the geographic area, and what BLM’s hopes are in terms of successful plan and a successful outcome with tribe. In other words, how can the plan serve the interests of the tribe? Ask the Board for its recommendations and advice, as well as who to work with in the tribe. Do this well in advance, because it may take several months for a reply. If there is an existing MOU with the tribe, acknowledge that and ask how well that has been working, how they feel about it.

Tribal Chairman Minthorn is a well-regarded leader, “even though he’s a Democrat,” respected inside and outside the tribe and at state and national levels. He is known to be a competent, well-trained environmental planner, thoughtful, even-handed and visionary. As an example, when the tribe was going to negotiate with farmers and state/federal stakeholders on irrigation/water rights for the Umatilla River a few years ago, the tribal hardliners wanted him to simply assert tribal water rights and go to court if someone didn’t like it. The Chairman said they have to live with their neighbors a long time and have to try to make an agreement that works for farmers, too. As a result, everybody gave in a little and now farmers in other drainages are more willing to work with the tribe.

For the Resource Management Planning (RMP) process, they want to be consulted, through the Director of the Department of Natural Resources office, early in the process so they can plan their program of work for their fiscal year (January through December). They have budget issues that require them to anticipate workloads several months out. They want to see the set of alternatives being considered for a particular area and have enough time to consult within the tribe with families and other tribes with whom they share the traditionally used areas. Different families and tribes gather foods and herbs in very different ways.

CTUIR is willing to contract with agencies to do the cultural survey/clearing work if the agencies can’t do it or don’t have the specialists needed.

If BLM wants to keep abreast of what’s going on with the tribe, one good way is to subscribe to the tribe’s monthly newspaper the Confederated Umatilla Journal (CUJ).

The provision of current maps is a “resolve as you go” candidate, since accuracy would be so valued during the planning process. Staff to staff relationships could develop in ways helpful to the plan.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE LA GRANDE HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT

Figure 17 shows the La Grande Human Resource Unit (HRU), which contains the Community Resource Units (CRUs) of Elgin, Imbler, Union, La Grande, and Meacham. The HRU is bordered on the east by the Wallowa and Minam Rivers, on the south by the Powder River Basin and the Blue Mountains, on the west by the Blue Mountains and the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and on the north by the Wenaha -Tucannon Wilderness. The populated areas of Union County are nestled in between the Umatilla and the Wallowa - Whitman National Forests. The City of La Grande is the county seat of Union County and serves as the gateway community to the rugged and isolated lands that surround it, particularly those in Wallowa County and the Grande Ronde River corridor.

Wallowa and Union Counties have many things in common, including history, outdoor environment, economic strategies, and lifestyles. Many of the loggers who live in Wallowa County drive to Union County to work. The local geography in Wallowa County favors association with La Grande.

“For people in Enterprise, it’s a real grunt to get to Clarkston through Rattlesnake Grade as it goes down to the Grande Ronde River and back up again. Sometimes Wallowa people cross over the mountains at Elgin into Milton -Freewater, but that’s not such an easy drive either. Most people are heading to La Grande and points beyond from there.”

“Wallowa County people like to think of themselves as independent but they are pretty tied to Union.”

Most people felt that the two counties have different identities, however. Union County has the freeway and the railroad and a more diverse economy. Wallowa County is much more isolated and rural. While there is a good degree of social affiliation between the two counties, they are considered separate human geographic units.

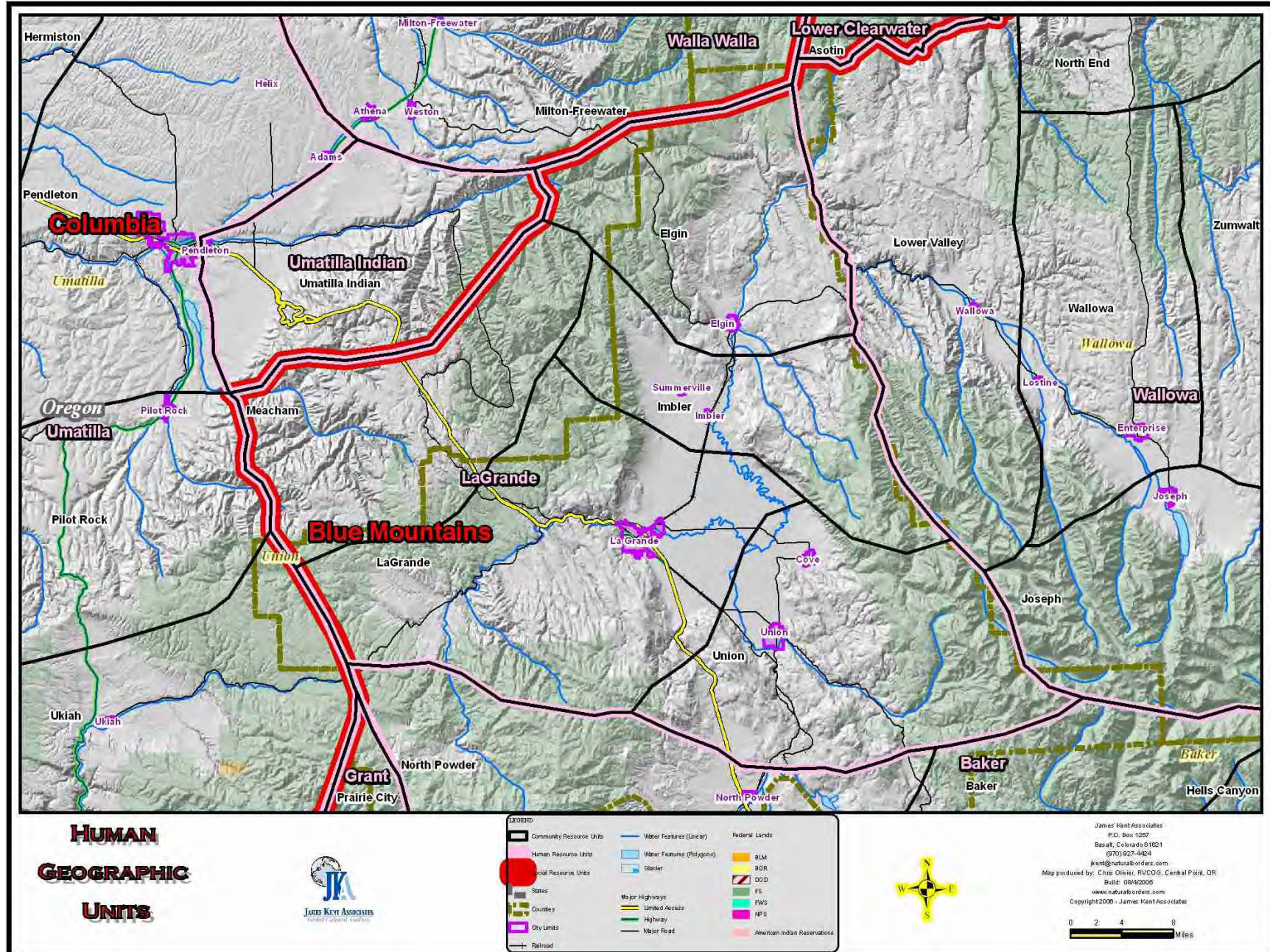
This chapter explores the La Grande HRU along the following dimensions:

1. Social Conditions and Trends
2. Community Themes and Issues
3. Natural Resource Themes and Issues
4. Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response
5. Possible Community -Based Planning Elements
6. Communication Strategy

BLM owns and manages about 6000 acres in Union County. It had a land exchange program underway which was cancelled. However, interest remains high, both within the agency and within Union County, to review and dispose of BLM lands in this area. BLM



Figure 17: The La Grande Human Resource Unit (HRU, shown in pink) With Its Community Resource Units (CRUs, shown in black)





influence in the County seems related to modest timber management activities on some lands and the costs and benefits of La Grande serving as a staging area for users of the Grande Ronde River in Wallowa County to the northeast, for which La Grande is a gateway community.

## SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Table Five shows the population trend for Union County and its communities. It shows very modest growth in population, with the larger communities attracting more people than very small towns.

Table Five:  
Population Trends for Union County and Towns

Location	1990	2000	2005	% Annual Change
Union County	23,598	24,530	24,540	0.3
La Grande	11,766	12,327	12,440	0.4
Island	696	916	910	2.0
Imbler	299	284	282	-0.4
Elgin	1,586	1,654	1,642	0.2
Union	1,847	1,926	1,945	0.4

(Source: U.S. Census)

Agriculture is a major component of the economic base of Union County. Crops such as wheat, oats, barley, grass seed, alfalfa hay, seed potatoes, cherries, peppermint, peas, garbanzo beans, sugar beets and evening primroses are grown. Cattle, sheep, horses, emus, and llamas are raised locally. Although timber production has declined in the last twenty years, forest employment is still one of the largest (Union County Tourism Brochure, The Grande Ronde Driving Tour).

The largest employers in Union County are the schools, Grande Ronde Hospital, the State of Oregon, Union Pacific Railroad, Eastern Oregon University, Boise Cascade, Fleetwood Travel Trailers, the federal government and Nash Industries.

Union County Economic Development Corporation estimated that 132,000 people lived in a 50-mile radius of Union County.

## COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

Union County people are oriented to tourism and recreation and are active in promoting its resources. At the same time, there is an attitude of not wanting too many visitors or too much growth that seems connected to a deep appreciation residents expressed for living where they do.

“Visit, but then go home. If you stay, don’t try and change us. I like my town the way it is.” [La Grande resident]

Law enforcement people described many problems in Union County with ATV use. Foxhill is an area close to town that has recurring problems, but that is Forest Service. Kids take trucks in the spring “out to mud,” and many times vehicles are taken into wilderness areas. Trash dumping on vacant land is a recurring problem but apparently does not involve BLM ground.

Recently, State Measure 37 as it relates to land use law has been a topic of local conversation. Evidently, people in Union County supported this measure which stated that land use decisions of local governments cannot lower property values without compensation to the owner. Apparently, a recent Measure 37 claim related to 1500-acre parcel whose owner wanted to subdivide into 5-acre parcels. The prospect horrified neighbors who made public comments that they didn’t realize they were voting for this kind of outcome when they voted for Measure 37.

“Let land use laws reflect where we want to go as a community. Let the commissioners indicate how much industrial land we are going to need and let’s go from there.”

Figure 18:  
Church of our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church, La Grande, Oregon



(Source: Photo by the authors)

## NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

When local people and officials were told that BLM owns 6,000 acres in Union County, invariably the first question was, “Where?” No BLM or other map was found showing these lands. Discussions then typically centered on the modest timberlands belonging to BLM and known by timber industry people, and on the Grande Ronde river recreation, for which La Grande is a major gateway community. The citizen issues discussed in Union County related to BLM lands related to these topics:

1. Timber Management
2. Tourism and Recreation
3. Land Tenure
4. Fire Management
5. Restoration Management

### **1. Timber Management**

BLM does not manage much timber land in northeast Oregon. In Union County, it has a stewardship project underway near the town of Cove, and it recently assisted in a Forest Service sale:

“Currently, BLM is doing timber harvest in conjunction with the Forest Service. BLM put in an 80-acre parcel in with the sale. That was an efficient use of government time.” [Boise Cascade official]

“Last year, BLM helped on private land harvest when a skyline operation needed a tail hold on BLM ground [that is, an anchor, usually a tree, cabled to heavy machinery]. BLM was good to work with. It was an example of good government collaboration.”

In the last few years, Boise Cascade retained its milling capacity but sold off its timberlands to Forest Capital Partners LLC, which now owns over 300,000 acres in Union County. Apparently, Forest Capital liquidated another 50,000 acres of the original 350,000 acres belonging to Boise Cascade. Forest Capital, along with the Forest Service, is one of the largest landowners in Union County. Forest Capital is a log supply company which sells to about 10 of the mills in the region, including mills in Clarkston, Pilot Rock, Umatilla, La Grande, Elgin, and Wallowa. The mills are oriented to smaller stock since that is what the area produces anyway and since fire suppression has fostered over-stocked smaller diameter trees. For the Boise mill in La Grande, for example, a 10-inch tree is ideal diameter. Forest Capital sells a lot of “ton wood,” smaller diameter material sold by weight.

Forest Capital officials are forest management oriented, with strong interest in sustainable harvest of growth and mortality.



“Forest Service lands are not in a healthy state, with high fire risk.”

“People around here have priced out an ethanol plant, but so far, it’s not feasible. The planners wanted wood for \$10/ton and our costs are closer to \$50/ton.”

Forest Capital keeps its lands open. The biggest problem is road damage. If they lock roads, they get lots of “irate people.” ATV damage is not too bad except a couple areas close to La Grande.

“Most people are not out when it’s wet. In the spring, we get mushroom people and firewood people and damage during wet season is the worst. This is the biggest problem.”

Forest Capital had one interest related to BLM. It owns land at the confluence of the Wallowa and Grand Ronde Rivers for which they have a road closure agreement with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to deal with hunting.

“Our company and the state would like to get BLM to buy into that agreement.”

Generally speaking, the people in Union County close to timber production and forest management interests understand that BLM is not a big player in their world. They want BLM to manage for forest health and to coordinate with other timber management activities as needed for the management of their timberlands.

## **2. Tourism and Recreation**

A few conversations around town, as well as discussions with officials in La Grande, indicated that local people feel the effects of the recreation visitors going through town to points north, including the BLM managed Grande Ronde River corridor. Additional traffic as well as local spending was commented on. At the same time, however, Union County lists one river guide/outfitter in the phone book and that company does not go to the Grande Ronde. No one had figures that would indicate the scale or benefit of recreation activity. Although the state tourism office has tourism expenditures by county, those data are not disaggregated enough to understand the effects of BLM recreation programs.

The Union County Chamber of Commerce and Union County Tourism are two groups which have promoted tourism and recreation in Union County. Although the chamber focuses mainly on sustaining existing businesses, and working the downtown association to fill vacant business buildings, it has also developed literature and Internet material that showcases the many tourist attractions. It has showcased local resources, such as the hot springs in Cove, and the Gilstrap Brothers Winery in Cove, but also regional attractions such as Anthony Lakes, the tram, Wallowa Lake, and the Wallowa Mountains generally.

“I think more guides are needed. I give out a list of the couple of guides I know but when we are busy, which often happens, there is no one else I know. Sometimes people just don’t connect with a guide.”

The Union County Tourism office has had a major project for the last three years—to get the Eagle Cap Excursion Train running again. Wallowa and Union Counties bought the railroad that runs between La Grande and Wallowa County for \$7million, got grants to pay for it, so it’s free and clear, and plan to use it for economic development. The train goes along the Wallowa River, past Minam, and up the Grande Ronde River almost to Rondawa. This area is otherwise roadless.

“One and a half years ago, we tried carrying rafter up to the river. I don’t know why that wasn’t done again.” [Union County Tourism official]

The County is currently meeting with the Forest Service, Forest Capital, and citizens to develop a recreation proposal for an OHV, horse riding, and archery facility on Mt. Emily. Forest Capital would provide a recreation easement and cede its development rights. A nonprofit group is developing to manage the site. The site is close to the freeway and to La Grande.

“We had 250 people at the meeting and there is enthusiasm.” [County Commissioner]

Union County officials did not believe there was much connection between BLM lands and recreation in their county.

“Recreation opportunities are limited, Minam a little. There are not big guide services, some shuttling going on.”

Oregon State Police (OSP) personnel in Union County work with the River Rangers of BLM and others to manage the Grande Ronde River corridor. Within OSP is a Fish and Wildlife Division that enforces angling and hunting regulations. Its focus is resource management. Voluntary compliance and ongoing education are two centerpieces of OSP’s approach in the area. OSP is paid for 100 hours of overtime a year by BLM to assist with law enforcement issues. Its reports go to the BLM law enforcement person for the region. One officer expressed gratitude to BLM for the program because it allows them to mingle with people they’d otherwise have no contact with.

Sometimes joint patrols are done, and other times, they are separate. Waste management is a continual challenge. They issue many “MIPs” (minor in possession of alcohol) each summer.

“We see tremendous user impact, hundreds a day, from Minam to Troy. A two day trip is typical, so there is overnight camping. It’s primitive, no development, but it’s a safe stretch of river, so there lots of family and less experienced floaters.

The river also allows many types of crafts, whereas later in the season, with lower water, fewer types of crafts can navigate.”

“By the end of the season, it used to be that they area was trashed. But it’s better now, people are using the portable toilets, it has a much better look. It’s not as trashed. Litter is getting packed out. Foliage is not getting cut. Some people make their own fire rings and they shouldn’t.”

“Education is a big part of what we do. If we see resource damage, we have to issue a citation but we do education whenever we can.”

### **3. Land Tenure**

The Union County Commission expressed interest in meeting with BLM to discuss disposal of scattered BLM land parcels.

“Around Starkey and Elgin are scattered parcels. I have thought for years that BLM should get rid of those lands.” [Union County Commissioner]

### **4. Fire Management**

A primary connection with BLM is for fire management. Local fire officials stated that they had agreements to protect BLM ground. One official noted that an unintended consequences of the Forest Service decommissioning of roads is crowding in the more available areas, leading to some resource degradation, management problems, and fire risk. No more specific issues were mentioned.

### **6. Restoration**

The Grande Ronde Model Watershed was started in 1992 by what is now known as the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. It is funded in large measure by the Bonneville Power Authority, in order to foster watershed restoration and fish recovery. Its board is comprised of county commissioners from Wallowa and Union Counties, representatives of both the Nez Perce tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), as well as landowners and industry representatives.

The Grande Ronde Model Watershed program funds, implements, and monitors habitat restoration projects on both public and private lands, including BLM. Over time, it has come to foster a coordinated, basin-wide approach to restoration work, with a process for establish priorities that has helped each county focus on most efficient use of funds.

The Watershed group has a reputation of focusing on “valley” projects, upstream from Minam, and are not very involved in the Troy area.

In addition, the Title II RAC (Resource Advisory Council) fosters coordination between 9 counties in northeast Oregon on priority restoration work.

“BLM should get credit in the Vale office for getting herbicides approved. It must have been a programmatic effort, because our partners can use it, so we piggy back on it.” [Grande Ronde Model Watershed official]

“The Forest Service should use grass banking more. It’s a valuable management tool. Many allotments go unused, so they have opportunities to move cattle to less sensitive or damaged areas, and let the other areas rest.”

Union County people talked about the problems posed by noxious weeds and support efforts to limit their spread. The Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Association (the “Weed Board”), with its office in Baker City, operates actively in Union County.

“Anytime you move dirt around here, you have noxious weeds.”

Although the land exchange program of BLM in this area is now defunct, and had presented problems in any case, key observers of natural resource issues in Union County still believe there is strong value in looking at coordinated needs between the large landowning interests in order to foster greater ecological, social, and economic health. Perhaps a recreation corridor can be created or added to.

One leader in particular, in a state natural resource agency, advocated a “big picture” approach of seeing if key players could get their interests met through land exchanges that would create an ecological benefit. For example, some Forest Capital land, given the lay of the land, is just not suited for the production of timber fiber, but might be promoted for other uses. On the other hand, as the Minam River goes into the Wallow River at Minam, Forest Capital owns 7-8,000 acres that border the wilderness. These lands have great winter range and a high ecological value. The Forest Service has land north of Elgin that has flatter ground of lower social and ecological value but good trees. That land is better suited for private timber production.

Similarly, the Forest Service has scattered 40-acre parcels just north of Eagle Cap Wilderness, south of Minam, with no long term value. East of Pendleton, Forest Capital owns scattered parcels and they are putting in “horrendous” roads at high cost to get low value timber. In this scenario, BLM land should be traded to create bigger blocks of ecological value.

### RESOLVE AS YOU GO CANDIDATES FOR EARLY RESPONSE

Several people invited the new Field Manager for a tour and visit of the resource base in Union County. Forest Capital and Boise Cascade officials offered to show her BLM ground and to see forest management operations. The director of Union County Tourism invited her for a ride on their Eagle Cap Excursion Train.

Forest Capital LLC has one interest related to BLM. It owns land at the confluence of the Wallowa and Grand Ronde Rivers for which they have a road closure agreement with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to deal with hunting. “Our company and the state would like to get BLM to buy into that agreement,” a Forest Capital official stated.

### POSSIBLE COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

The review of scattered BLM parcels in Union County would lend itself to a community - based land use planning process.

### COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

BLM’s contact for Forest Capital LLC, John Manwell, was killed in a car wreck over a year ago. John Warness (see mailing list, Appendix A) will be a useful BLM contact.

The two newspapers, and connection to key leadership in the natural resource area, seem to be adequate tools with which to communicate and coordinate regarding BLM programs and practices.

The formal groups likely to have an interest in the BLM land use planning process are:

- Hells Canyon Preservation Council. Their main concerns appear to be water quality and grazing effects.
- Union County Economic Development Corporation, mainly industrial and light industrial development, but has understanding of regional economics.
- Union County Chamber of Commerce
- Union County Tourism
- Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Association

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE WALLOWA HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT

Figure 19 shows the Wallowa Human Resource Unit (HRU) which contains the Community Resource Units (CRUs) of Lower Innaha, Upper Innaha, Joseph, Zumwalt, Enterprise, Lower Valley, and North End. The HRU is bordered on the north by the Grande Ronde River, which extends the unit into Washington State, on the east by the Snake River, on the south by the Wallowa Mountains and the Eagle Cap Wilderness, and on the west by the Minam and Wallowa Rivers. The four incorporated communities in the County—Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, and Joseph, are situated along Highway 82 on the valley floor and contain over half of the County population.

This area is mostly mountainous and forms the headwaters for several important tributaries of the Columbia and Snake Rivers. The Wallowa County fire plan reports that the County is about 60% publicly owned, primarily by the Wallowa -Whitman National Forest. About 48% of the total land base is forested. There are three wilderness areas and one national recreation area within Wallowa County ([http://www.odf.state.or.us/areas/eastern/northeast/wallowaco\\_cwpp.htm](http://www.odf.state.or.us/areas/eastern/northeast/wallowaco_cwpp.htm)).

Of the about 1.2 million acres of public land in Wallowa County, BLM manages about 14,000 acres (Table One, Chapter One), with the balance managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

While the town of Joseph is recreational in nature, much of Wallowa County is devoted to an agricultural and a rural lifestyle, with limited economic livelihood apparently being a perennial challenge, but having high quality of life considerations. It is an isolated area, cut off from surrounding areas by natural geographic features. The area has strong ties to La Grande and Union County, long-standing social ties to the Clarkston, Washington area, and ties with the Milton-Freewater area as well.

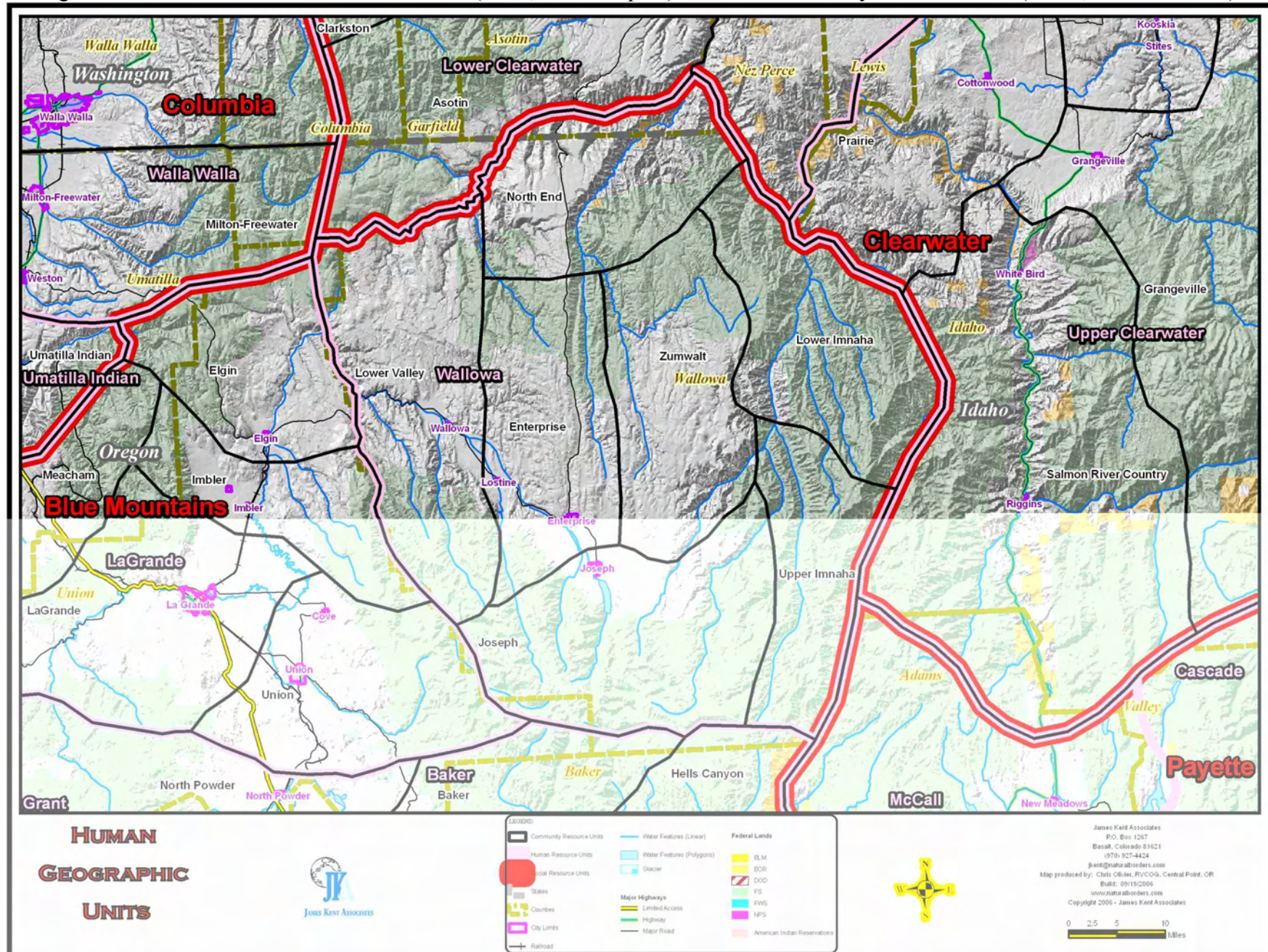
The North End and Lower Valley CRUs include the small settlements of Paradise, Day Ridge, Lost Prairie, Flora, Troy, Eden Bench, Grouse Flat, and Promise. Nowadays, these folks tend to meet at the Flora community center and the Troy school.

“I used to haul logs down Bartlett Grade into Troy and Wallowa off the Eden Bench. There used to be 300 people living in Paradise. Now, there are only a dozen or so part-time residents. When we were young, we’d drive down to Flora and to Troy for dances – the good old days when there were lot of people making their living in the hills by farming and ranching.”

Most of the lands in the North End are still in active agricultural use although the population is very reduced from earlier days. Much of the chapter is devoted to the North End because of the importance of the area for BLM management of the Grande Ronde River corridor.



Figure 19: The Wallowa Human Resource Unit (HRU, shown in pink) With Its Community Resource Units (CRUs, shown in black)



This chapter explores the Wallowa HRU along the following dimensions:

1. Social Conditions and Trends
2. Community Themes and Issues
3. Natural Resource Themes and Issues
4. Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response
5. Possible Community -Based Planning Elements
6. Communication Strategy

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

A very pronounced trend in Wallowa County discussed by residents is the purchase of long-standing properties, especially ranch properties, by newcomers. Many of the largest land parcels in the area are now owned by newcomers. The new buyers of Wallowa County land are said to be urbanite, wealthy, and green. They don't need the land to make their living. Their strong environmental ethic leads them to invest in improving natural resource conditions of their lands, their investments have supported the local economy, and they have often employed local agriculturalists who know and are good with the land.

“There is a new owner of the Dayridge Ranch, bought from \_\_\_\_\_. Guy from Wisconsin bought it. He at first wanted to build a new road, but got no support and he dropped the idea.”

“\_\_\_\_\_ is green but sees the use for agriculture. He is a good steward, doing a good job.”

“One guy bought up ranches, a plastic surgeon who made a ton of money on some dot com venture, and got 45,000 acres around here. He spent a lot locally buying expensive cattle.”

“In Wallowa County today, you cannot buy a ranch and pay the mortgage from ranching. Those larger buy offs have raised property values, which is good if you are wanting to sell, but bad for those wanting to stay.”

Hence, newcomers have created benefits but those benefits come with a cost. First, the existing landowners have shifted from owners of the land to managers of it. Second, the price of land has now reached such a point that local people and young families are prohibited from getting into agriculture, or even into housing in many cases. School age children are reportedly in decline in the population, a perception supported by school enrollment numbers (Table Two, Chapter Two). Many newcomers are not prepared for the isolation, and older people often experience emergency health care problems.

“One new settler from Utah wanted to construct a new landing strip for his Lear jet.”



Other demographic changes in Wallowa County include the influx of retirement people. Absentee owners are said to have increased, presenting additional problems because of the lack of active land management that often results from their absence. Residents actively questioned whether newcomers were getting absorbed into the community, whether they cared about the long-term health of the community.

Table Six below displays the population trends of Wallowa County and its towns. It shows a nearly negligible increase in population during the last fifteen years, with the town of Wallowa showing the greatest percentage increase of 1.1% per year.

Table Six:  
Population Trends in Wallowa County and Towns

Location	1990	2000	2005 (est.)	% Annual Change
County	6911	7226	7150	0.2
Enterprise	1905	1895	1940	0.1
Joseph	1073	1054	1080	0.04
Lostine	231	263	250	0.5
Wallowa	748	869	870	1.1
Unincorporated	2954	3145	3010	0.1

(Source: Oregon Employment Office)

The economy of Wallowa County is based on natural resources, both agricultural and recreational. Most people make their living from ranching, farming, timber harvest, or trading with these interests. In 1991, total employment in the County was 3,580 with about 37% in agriculture, 23 % in government, 11% in lumber and wood manufacturing, and the remaining 29% in infrastructure and associated services, arts, and tourism.

In contrast, in 1999, of total employment of 3,020, 28% was in agriculture, 26% in government, 14% in wholesale and retail trade, 11% in services (primarily tourism related) and 10% in manufacturing, including lumber, wood and other. Tourism employment has increased (Cited in the Wallowa County Salmon Plan).

A local state official stated that the self-employment rate in Wallowa County is 40%, the second highest rate in the state.

“It’s so hard to start a business in Wallowa. We bought this old building, retrofitted it and fixed it up for coffee and gift shop.”

Recreation and tourism factor heavily in the local economy. The Minam area and nearby State park forest trails experience an annual day-use recreation average of 780,279, according to the Wallowa Lake State Park and Management Area report from 1998-2000 County ([http://www.odf.state.or.us/areas/eastern/northeast/wallowaco\\_cwpp.htm](http://www.odf.state.or.us/areas/eastern/northeast/wallowaco_cwpp.htm)).

During the Wallowa County Economic Summit, held in 2003, no focus was given to river recreation or economic development of the North End as a unique area.

<http://www.wallowacountychamber.com/2003%20Economic%20Summit%20Report.pdf>.

The summit concluded that the cost of living is outpacing employment income, leading to a gradual decline of the standard of living. In 2000, transfer payments exceeded wage income for the first time, reflecting the increased importance of pensions and dividends in total income figures.

A report entitled, “Wallowa County’s Economic Structure: An Input-Output Analysis,” summarizes economic conditions in Wallowa County. It described the important economic sectors in the County related to agriculture, art, livestock, forest products and recreation. It is available at: <http://www.wallowaresources.org/pdf/pubInput-Output04.pdf>.

The Wallowa Resources website has this to say about the economy of Wallowa County:

“The county's population of roughly 7000 has remained virtually unchanged since white settlers inhabited the area in the late 1800's peaking at 9,778 in 1920. With just 2.3 people per square mile, humans are far outnumbered by the 378 species of wildlife, including elk, deer, bear, bighorn sheep, and bald eagles. Located 65 miles from McDonald's, four hours from a major airport and what any teenager might refer to as “the mall,” and lacking a single traffic light, Wallowa County is truly a unique place.

But there's a downside: Wallowa County's economy consistently ranks at or near the bottom in statewide assessments, having unemployment as high as 19% during winter months. In 1994, all three sawmills shut down, leaving hundreds out of work, and setting off an economic decline that the county has yet to recover from.

Due to the continued loss of family-wage jobs, young families are moving out of the County and school enrollments are declining dramatically. A focus on tourism to pick up some slack has sent land and housing prices skyward, making home prices out of reach for the average citizen and tempting ranching families —whose land has been theirs for generations—to sell.”

(<http://www.wallowaresources.org/aboutwc.htm>)

The Wallowa County Comprehensive Plan stated that personal farm income in the county in 1980 was \$11,131 and by 2000 it had dropped to a minus \$7,507, a decrease of 167%. The County currently has one operating lumber mill. Furthermore, timber production has declined by 89% between 1980 and 2000. The decline of timber harvest has led to an accumulation of fuel load in the nearby National Forests, presenting a “significant fire hazard” (Appendix 9-1, Comprehensive Plan).

The plan further describes the arts in the local economy. Wallowa County now has four active bronze foundries and many galleries, contributing to employment and the promotion of the County.

The plan summarizes the current status and needs of its economy:

“Overall, there is a pressing need for family wage jobs in the County. Although retirees bring needed skills into the County, a diverse healthy local economy cannot be achieved based solely on retirees and vacationers. Families drive the need for a diverse range of goods and services and for schools, hospitals and libraries. Over the last twenty years County unemployment has been as high as ~ 14.6 % and as low as 7.5 %, and has consistently exceeded the state level. Although the average County wage has about doubled over the last twenty years (\$11,589 in 1980 and \$22,562 in 2000), it has dropped to 2/3 of the state average wage. Also, although the median home value has increased by 135% over the last ten years, the median household income has increased only 51%. An economy made up of diverse small industry, including agriculture and forestry, would insulate the County economy from external influences, would attract families to the County, and would help reverse some of the other planning trends detailed here (Wallowa County Comprehensive Plan, Appendix 9 -1, p. 2).

## COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

This section addresses Wallowa County in general and devotes considerable attention to the North End with its river management challenges.

### Wallowa County

In 2004, the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District completed a study of 30 “Lone Eagles” who had located in Wallowa County. Lone Eagles are entrepreneurs who are tied to the global marketplace in some way, often through internet-based businesses, who have been part of what researchers have called “amenity migration” in the American West. These folks can live where they want and they tend to choose beautiful settings and other amenities. A number of people see the presence of Lone Eagles as a sign of a diversifying economy since these people import their income, and as an alternative to the loss of activities in other economic sectors.

“Two of my best friends are ‘modern cowboys’ who could live anywhere but want to live here.”

Wallowa County residents just turned down a bond initiative to establish park/recreation district. One of the people who promoted the district thinks it was rejected because of the taxes required. This person stated that friendships and business support were put at risk because of the campaign, saying:

“There are 3 basic groups of people in the county – the long time residents including old loggers and farmers and ranchers; the newly arrived younger professionals who are NIMBY types; and the early baby-boomer retirees who buy a house and a horse and don’t want to get involved with anything.”

## **North End**

The North End CRU refers to the several small settlements in the northern part of the county that are still devoted to agriculture and have experienced the growth of the recreation economy. The main settlements are Troy, Flora, Promise, Paradise, and Grouse Flat.

Troy is a small settlement on the Grande Ronde River near the Washington state line. Like many of the other nearby settlements, it once had a larger population and a “thriving” community. There was a flour mill in the 1930s on a bench above the town. Now there are just a few children in the school, many of the old time families have sold out, and residents actively wonder if their town will be there in 20 years. It is described as “mostly retired now.” The town also now has many part-time residents, typically wealthier people from the cities. Discussions in town are often peppered with references about who’s “in” and who’s “out.” Most of land surrounding Troy is owned by federal or state agencies, or a few big landowners that are agricultural and natural resource oriented. It is difficult to generate jobs to attract younger families with kids, to support schools and to have more diversity.

“There are 2 families in town this weekend.”

“A lot of the oldtimers have died. Others have sold out. Now you have a few newcomers who have bought most of the land.”

“The community needs some land to expand to for housing and jobs to attract young families with kids. Instead, newer residents tend to be retirees.”

“We just finished building a new barn and we want to have a community dance in it before it gets used by the horses.”

“We lost one resort that had about 14 beds, but I guess the new owners aren’t going to have guests.”

“We had 5 kids in the school last year. This year we will have 3. If they can find a new schoolteacher, maybe that will add another kid or two.”

“There’s nothing to do here. In 20 years, the community will not be here.”

“If the school closes, Troy will fold completely.”

“The Sheriff would never come out here unless there is a murder. I see Oregon State Police about once a month.”

The owner of a hotel chain purchased the town a few years back and currently owns much of the property in the settlement. He appears to take a “hands off” approach to management and many residents said his approach is hurting the community.

“Much of the town is now owned by one person who doesn’t seem to much care if the town survives or not.”

“Shiloh won’t stay open and run like a business, and that hurts the whole area. They closed before the end of hunting season. Guys came out and couldn’t even get a cup of coffee. I had to bring down some gas for one guy. Now Red is burned out and wants time off so they are going to Fridays thru Sundays to be open.”

A number of people in Troy are lone eagles. One couple makes a living consulting in agricultural pesticide research.

The Flora community is central to the communication in the North End.

“There’s a couple people in Flora that know the whole North End. If you want to know what’s going on, talk to them.”

“In the early 1900s, Flora had a bank, a blacksmith, and the school had 100 kids.”

“In the Willamette, you can get \$1500 acre for wheat and barley and here we’re lucky if we get \$300, but because we like the lifestyle, good for kids, it’s worth it.”

“In the North End, you have isolated natural resource dependent individuals here with no community. It’s a challenge to create a real community.”

Residents are active in conversation and action regarding the future of their community. They are actively recruiting a teacher, for example, preferably one with children to bolster the school population. Residents are also trying to get a cooperative agreement with nearby high school and install a T-1 Internet line down to Troy so that kids could stay.

In recent months, a series of workshops on the economic future of Wallowa County were held throughout the county, funded along with other partners by a Rural Community Assistance Grant of the U.S. Forest Service. The rallies in the North End attracted widespread attendance, some said nearly 100% attendance. The North End created a vision statement as the result of the community development rallies. Participants at the

Figure 20: The Flora School



(Source: Photo by the authors)

workshops identified their strengths as having community pride, excellent school support, self-reliance and support for local businesses. What they needed to improve, they judged, was investment in the future, local participation, innovative economic development strategies, and willingness to seek help from the outside.

The key learning from the community workshops is that Troy needs to define itself as a community again, have fun together, build trust and have a few successful events together. Troy is struggling with communication because many people do not have email and other means are not developed. The community workshops revealed high interest in value-added agriculture and a strength in holding successful community events. Follow up meetings have been held and community-based committees have been developed to carry these ideas forward.

The next section discusses the citizen issues in this area about river management along the Grande Ronde and ideas about making it better.

### NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

Themes are attitudes that are shared widely in a community and reinforced through routine conversations with neighbors so that common perceptions develop about the way things are. In Wallowa County, the themes that related to natural resource management were:

1. “As long as BLM does it’s job and protects the environment, everything is OK.”
2. “BLM has never sent someone out before.” [Landowner; the context was positive]
3. “In Wallowa County, we don’t want any more public land. It would be good to erase it.” [County official]
4. “We’ve been collaborating for 14 years and we’re still waiting for the payoff. A lot of good things happen, but our town is still declining.” [Wallowa County Commissioner]
5. “We’ve always learned not to give up without a fight.”
6. “We want more communication.”

“BLM just acts like they don’t have to do anything because they’re the government. They just do what they want without ever talking to us. “They act as if they can do anything.” “They talk to State Parks, but not to us, the neighbors living out here.”

7. “We want to help, but we need help too.” [a partnership theme]

**Citizen issues**, or statements people made which can be acted on, were described by local residents related to the topics below. Each is described in turn.

1. Community Capacity for Natural Resource Management
2. The Grande Ronde River Management Corridor
3. Noxious Weeds
4. Restoration and Management
5. Land Tenure
6. Maps and Information
7. Grazing
8. Access

## **1. Community Capacity for Natural Resource Management**

Wallowa County is remarkable in its efforts over the last twenty years to foster a collaborative and mutual problem-solving atmosphere to deal with its priority of natural resource management. Although some people say that it hasn’t yielded results, and others complain about how expensive and time consuming it is, the level of commitment to this approach, by a broad spectrum of local society, has created a high degree of community capacity to deal in a multi-jurisdictional, inter-governmental, and community-based fashion. This capacity speaks very well of the ability of Wallowa County to work with BLM on areas of mutual interest in the planning process. This section summarizes some of this capacity.



“There’s lots of history of collaboration here. We know you don’t always get what you want.”

“In all that time, we’ve never changed anyone’s mind. People still have the same positions that they started with.”

“There is LOTS of collaboration here but it’s expensive. Funders often don’t realize how much it costs. Sometimes outside groups come in and they can do stuff cheaper but they aren’t working off of collaboration. It takes time.”

Wallowa Resources is a nonprofit organization begun in 1997 to address the natural resource and community health issues simultaneously in the County. It operates a weed abatement program with BLM financial support, which has a very good local reputation. Although a few people said it was too “green,” its overall moderate and practical approach, and its commitment to community-based solutions, have earned it broad support. It has also attracted grants and other resources, and has generated employment in the County.

Wallowa Resources is associated with a project that they expect soon to be designated an Oregon Solutions project for their work with “Hands on Lands.” They are going to help people that have real barriers to employment to become forest technicians. It’s like Jobs in the Woods, the state job-training program of several years ago. They will work with the Forest Service and other partners.

“Does BLM have any projects where the collaborative between the County, Wallowa Resources, and the Forest Service could employ people that are going to be trained?”

Diane Snyder of Wallowa Resources talked about the social contract in the past for rural areas to provide food and the urban areas to provide manufactured products. She thinks there needs to be a new social contract between rural and urban areas, and believes that the new social contract might be for rural areas to address climate change, global warming, alternative energy, biomass reduction/utilization, and the restoration of lands/water/air.

One important way that capacity has developed is through working together to eradicate noxious weeds. BLM is given full and frequent credit for funding a weed abatement program that others have leveraged financially to create an effective, multi-stakeholder effort that has strong community support. Wallowa Resources has been the implementing organization for this effort and its work is highly prized by community members, not only because of its success, but also because of the way it has worked in the community. A section below deals with noxious weeds issues.

This success has propelled a number of community residents to ask how they can build upon the capacity to work across land boundaries to address the proper functioning condition of the riparian areas and the water quality of the Grande Ronde River.

“Nowadays, we have irrigation that brings in more wildlife. There’s more water, more food. So, we already have an infrastructure that would support management, with short-term use. We move cattle more, so we can manage the impacts and lower the impacts on private land and bring all the lands up to a higher standard instead of just concentrating the impact on the private.”

A primary means of fostering collaborative action around natural resource management in the County is through the County-initiated Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC). NRAC has 21 representative members, 21 alternates, and a 15-person technical committee. Private citizens run the committee and have shown strong commitment to its success. Its members say it is their best chance to have their voice heard and get things moving forward, even if it’s not perfect. NRAC is heavily involved in forest planning, and would like to be even more heavily involved. They want to be as involved as possible in BLM planning, too.

“When a project comes up, we ask who wants to be involved, then assign any others to make sure important interests are covered.”

“We operate on the principle that we move ahead together on those items we agree on; we keep talking about the ones we don’t agree on.”

“We have 7 listed animal species in the county. We must preserve the resource base in the county. Good economic conditions and good healthy environment go hand-in-hand. We don’t believe in passive resource management. To preserve resource health, we need to actively manage the resources.”

The Wallowa County-Nez Perce Salmon Habitat Recovery Plan was instigated by its respective partners after the Snake River Chinook salmon was listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1992. Fish runs had dropped to 10 - 15% of their historic levels. Article 36 of the County ordinances is devoted to salmon habitat restoration (<http://www.co.wallowa.or.us/salmonplan/>).

The Wallowa County Wildfire Protection Plan is a collaborative effort between Wallowa County, Wallowa Resources, Oregon State University, the Oregon Department of Forestry, local emergency services personnel, and citizens. This collaborative plan will be published in the summer of 2006.

BLM apparently coordinates with Oregon Department of Forestry and the Forest Service to acquire fire protection services in Wallowa County.

Another collaborative is the Watershed Management Council, which again has a broad cross section of local interests, including the Soil and Water Conservation District. It

works in partnership with the Nez Perce tribe, and is associated with a watershed management ordinance passed by Wallowa County in 1993. There are 15 Watersheds in the county that need watershed plans or assessment. The Council decides which watershed is ready for planning when they see that the private and public land managers are ready to work together. The group uses incentive-based measures and fosters voluntary coordination whenever possible. The Council wants to coordinate its work with the BLM planning effort if there are watersheds that both are interested in. The lawsuit described above will influence the operation of this group.

Wallowa County participates on the Regional Resource Advisory Committee (RAC), which distributes Title II monies for restoration projects in the region.

Environmental values of Wallowa County residents are evident in everyday conversation, but the presence of environmental groups has been muted. People affiliated with the Oregon Natural Resources Council and Eco-Trust are in the area but quiet. Environmentalists in the past have been largely Andy Kerr, Rick Bailey, and the Pacific Rivers Council. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is associated with the Zumwalt Prairie. The Zumwalt Prairie encompasses about 140,000 acres, and is North America's largest remaining native bunchgrass prairie. In September, 2000, TNC purchased 27,000 acres within this expanse to foster continued biological diversity and a balance with cattle grazing (Ashland Daily Tidings, 6/24/06). It wants the County and ranchers to support using Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) or the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies to buy more land and secure conservation easements.

“The main rub is the use of public money. It's about the only alternative the ranchers could stomach because they don't want to subdivide, but they don't want to use public monies.”

“I don't agree that OWEB money should be used to buy more land even though TNC pays voluntary taxes on those lands and allows some grazing.”

The Nez Perce are going to have 320 acres near Wallowa for “Homelands”, a place where they can have powwows, and other tribal and public events. When the tribes wanted to get support for the homelands they literally went door to door.

Officials reported that rural spending is down. The Forest Service Rural Community Assistance Grants are gone. The federal Economic Development Administration changed its priorities to manufacturing and large infrastructure investments.

“In the past, my office has relied on Rural Community Assistance Grants from the Forest Service, but they went away. These were great because they were incremental, \$5,000 to plan, then more to implement. We built capacity over time. Does BLM have an equivalent? Do they do community assistance grants?”  
[Northeast Oregon Economic District staff]

Finally, the Grande Ronde Model Watershed program has been operating in Wallowa County since 1992, operating with a local board and a commitment to community-based approaches.

“The Model Watershed program is something that works.”

## **2. The Grande Ronde River Management Corridor**

The Grande Ronde River corridor has been a prime steelhead and salmon fishing river for a long time. It is a world-class steelhead fishery that “gets a little crazy” on the Washington side during the fall peak season. In recent years, particularly with its designation as “Wild and Scenic” at both the state and federal levels, it is becoming a premier floating river as well. It is managed cooperatively between the BLM, the Forest Service, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

The Wallowa and Grande Ronde Rivers Final Management Plan (1993) was completed by BLM in coordination with the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests, The Washington State Shoreline Program, and the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department. The development of the plan was directed by the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988. The plan covers the 90 mile stretch of the Wallowa/Grande Ronde Rivers from Minam, Oregon to Heller Bar, Washington. The plan allows for the development of site-specific plans along the corridor. Currently, the Wild and Scenic designation applies to Oregon only, so the plan was written in three sections: to Troy, to the state line, and to Heller Bar. The new RMP will explore the appropriateness of designating the Washington portion as Wild and Scenic as well.

River use is regulated through self-issue permits that are available along the river. The permit requires a fire pan for fires, portable toilets, group size of 25 or less, no motorized equipment, life jackets, and no firearms within 150 feet of the river.

River guides and outfitters are also required to get a permit. The permitting process has changed as the River Management Plan was completed. The Forest Service issues permits for activity through its land, while BLM issues permits above and below the Forest Service. All of BLM lands along the Grande Ronde in Washington State are designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), requiring a permit if people use BLM land (that is, get out of the boat). A recent lawsuit requires the Forest Service to complete a study of “carrying capacity” of the river to determine an appropriate level of permits for outfitters, so the Forest Service currently has a limit to the number of permits it can issue, while the BLM does not.

One person believes there are 33 outfitters, but knows only three. He believes the bigger companies, which might employ 10-15 guides for seasonal work, reap about half of the business. Some of these are global companies, such as River Odyssey West in Clarkston, and OARS in Lewiston, that do river tours all over the world.

The permit required to be a river guide is a Special Use Permit. Apparently, the permits are non-transferable and must be renewed each year, so if an outfitter sells his business, he can't sell the permit. It is considered to have no value. In effect, a business owner will sell equipment, client list and reputation, and in practice, a new owner could expect to get the permit, but "no one will say so."

The main put in spot for the Grande Ronde is at Minam where there is a store that sells necessary equipment (like fire pans), supplies, and also offers parking and shuttle services. The main take out spot is at Powwatka Bridge, or Wildcat Bar, about 35 miles downriver. Most people take three days,

"You can do it in two days but you're on the water the whole time."

River users and guides say that signs along the river identify ownership for most stretches of the river, although a few private spots are not signed as well. Some people proceed beyond Powwatka and pull out at Troy, several miles farther north, at Boggan's Oasis, or even on into Washington State to Heller Bar where the Grande Ronde empties into the Snake River.

The citizen issues discovered about the Grande Ronde River corridor are enumerated below. The categories of issues are:

- a. BLM Management
- b. Compliance
- c. Trespass
- d. River Guides
- e. Minam Issues
- f. Economic Benefit
- g. Grazing
- h. Opportunities

#### **a. BLM Management**

The next chapter discusses issues related to possible BLM land acquisitions in Asotin County, Washington. In general, some people have said they don't want BLM to purchase more river land, attracting more users to the area, and increasing the regulations, without first improving the capacity to work with locals and enforce the rules.

"We never see BLM, only ranchers and weed control."

"What I've seen of BLM, they do a good job."

"BLM does a good job with its presence on the river in the summer. They support the State Police in doing patrols and it works very well, lots of education."

“We’re only slightly interested in BLM planning. We are more interested in seeing the communities along the river survive.”

“There are too many guides on the Washington side.”

“The Cougar Site for access is good on the Washington side of Grande Ronde. There needs to be more camping and access downstream.”

“The Culvert at the mouth of Grouse Creek was replaced in 1996 after the big flood. There may be a fish passage issue for steelhead. You need to keep an eye on it.”

“BLM bought land on Courtney Creek and we were glad because the riparian area will be better protected. It is a spawning tributary for salmon and steelhead. It was logged harshly 10 years ago.”

“Courtney Creek Canyon is a terrific game corridor—deer, cougar, bear, mule deer, elk, sometimes bighorns.”

## **b. Compliance**

Residents told the story that several years ago, the state campground above Troy was being abused. People were putting up permanent camps, leaving trash, and using old rundown toilets. Troy people complained so the state cleaned it up and began enforcing 14-day limits. This action forced users to use some long-term campsites in Troy and they used the restaurant more, and cleaned up their trash. It created a better situation and some economic spinoff for Troy. For local residents, the story exemplified the kind of cooperation and coordination they would like with responsible agencies.

There are left over feelings regarding the way that the number of guides on the river has been regulated, and not, over the years. One person felt he had lost several thousand dollars purchasing a permit just before the permit system was abolished. There also seems to be some confusion about the process by which the number of guides is established.

A report to the BLM from Oregon State Police in 2004 stated that 88% of the river users encountered by OSP were in compliance.

“The trash issues have gotten a lot better on the river. BLM management has been a good thing.”

“There is some camping and trash, but we post our land at key spots and don’t have much trouble.”

“There is so much dust. There are probably 50 cars a day that come off the hill in the peak season, in the early morning. I can wash my car one day and the next morning it will be covered with dust.”

Figure 21:  
Flora Road Down to Troy and the Grande Ronde River



(Source: Photo by the authors)

“There is yelling and hollering as boaters go by.”

“Trash has been noticeably better in the last few years, especially with the professional guides.”

“There is no scat machine in Troy. Even though pe ople are better in bringing out human waste, there is no place to put it.” [Common]

“Troy needs a couple of vault toilets and ½ mile downstream.”

“Compliance is getting better. Five years ago, you would see ‘TP flowers’ [toilet paper refuse] everywhere but now you don’t. BLM did two clean ups this year using volunteers. That worked well.”

“Fire rings are the worst. Many people do not comply.”



“My neighbors and myself have had almost no problems with river users. I think many are repeat floaters so they have good ethics.”

“There are no facilities locally to dump human waste, so people dump it along stream, in draws, in the brush rather than haul it back to Portland or Spokane.”

“BLM is seldom on the river checking permits, toilet facilities, checking where people dump their waste or camp. When they do come down, they breeze right on through and don’t stop to talk to landowners.”

“They are supposed to pack it out. They ‘pack it out’ to Troy and leave bags laying there for the town to clean up with no help from BLM.” [Troy has trash pickup once a week on Thursdays from 10 to 1.]

“I have been trying to get BLM to partner to build a good toilet, trash, and waste handling facility at Troy. Troy school has offered to furnish land, power, some construction equipment, water, and maintenance if BLM would build or help get grants to build the facility. That would help clean up a sanitation problem and maybe attract more floaters to stop there.”

“BLM says they don’t have any money to patrol river or handle waste caused by use they are promoting, then they turn around and spend money to buy more land on the river. What sense does that make? That leaves us literally holding the bag, taking the impacts.”

“There are not enough toilets and you can’t get a conversation with BLM about fixing the situation.”

“I fill out the special use permit for the Forest Service and it has nothing to do with floating. I call them and they say, ‘Yeah, it doesn’t make sense, do the best you can.’ It’s cumbersome, includes stuff on roads, transport of toxic material, stuff that’s not relevant.”

### **c. Trespass**

“Fishers are worse than floaters. They’ll drive right down over those rocks to get to the water. It’s been better since the new bridge went it.” [Troy resident]

“People trespass from the water even though it’s posted there. I run some cattle and post no trespassing sign on the corral. I’ll go in and catch people and chew on them for awhile and they will tell me that they thought the sign applied to the corral and not to other areas Do you believe that?”

“People come down the river and because there is public land in the area, they think all land is public and disregard private property.”

“Some citizens believe they have a right to go across private land to get to isolated Forest Service or BLM parcels. Blocking up small parcels would improve manageability.”

“There are too many floaters for the number of available camping sites. Future growth of use will only exacerbate the situation unless the program is managed for growth.”

“BLM boundaries are not consistently marked on the river so river users know where they are.”

Many ranchers don't actively run campers off their land, unless there is a problem or there are large numbers. They would rather people not camp on private land. People can legally access the river below average high water mark, wherever that is. During cold weather, fishers also build warming fires and leave fire rings on private ground. In one section of ranch land, one person found 10 different fire rings, although people are supposed to use fire pans.

“There would be fewer conflicts if river users could easily identify legal camping sites and there was a little more BLM presence on the river. Some outside outfitters put up a semi-permanent camp for as long as 6 weeks, even though there is a 14-day limit.”

#### **d. River Guides**

“The margin is tight for outfitters, cost of fuel, shuttling. I barely make it.”

“The guides like to get legal because they can register with us and we give them referrals.” [Wallowa Chamber of Commerce]

“There appears to be no limits on numbers of guides or fishers.”

“There are a few local guides and lots of outside guide services and ordinary bank fishers. There are some conflicts between fishing guides and camping areas. It's certain to get worse in the future.”

“I haven't seen [illegal guides]. It's probably more pronounced among the fishing guides, maybe fishing from Boggans to Heller is more of the problem. I run camp for some of the fishing guides so I get to know some of them.”

Many people believe that the majority of management problems on the river relate to the non-licensed rafters and those that float without a guide.

“The non-licensed rafters are not packing it all in and out.”

“All rafters need to pack it in and out. Right now only the professional guides do it.”

“I’m noticing some issues with the trash from the first time rafters and non-professionals, especially that they don’t use the potties. People are starting to post no-trespassing signs on their land.”

#### **e. Minam Issues**

“There’s a big spotlight at the BLM station that shines all year round. It bothers the neighbors and has been shot out a few times. They could at least turn it off in the winter when no one’s on the river. They [BLM] say they have it on for “security reasons,” but all it does is draw attention to the trailer. Then people are looking for a restroom and end up going in the middle of the road. Could the light be off in the winter and pointed downward?”

“BLM submitted plans to the County to build a full facility for caretakers, a house, on State Park Property. They never told any of us about it. Some people would just like to talk it over, make sure it won’t interfere with their views. Some people hope that it’s not two stories.”

“BLM leaves the air conditioning on in the trailer during the winter. It seems wasteful. People pay attention because it’s federal money.”

#### **f. Economic Benefit**

Inquiries in Enterprise revealed that store owners notice the influx of visitor traffic and can sometimes distinguish river floaters and fishers from other kinds of visitors. Both grocery stores in Enterprise noted added business, and one store owner attributed 25% of his summer business to visitors. This same owner goes out of his way to cater to river guides and has long standing relationships with a few. He gives a case rate and will order special items.

“\_\_\_\_\_ will get me anything if I give him notice, even pita bread.”

A review of data sources on tourism shows that available data are not disaggregated smaller than a county level, nor are different types of users distinguished in the economic effects of their presence. The Oregon Office of Tourism has these data and provides them to counties throughout the state. At the local level, not a single organization in Union or Wallowa Counties was discovered that did any kind of quantitative assessment of the economic benefits of river recreation.

As for river guides, they are considered “self-employed” which means they are not counted in reporting measures. The regional economist at the Oregon Employment Office in La Grande suggested that federal government permitting is the best way to measure numbers and effects of river guide activity.

Residents had broadly shared concerns that economic benefits from river recreation were at best seasonal, and at worst not significant or unleveraged.

“\_\_\_\_\_ at the Minam Store makes more money than anybody on the river and he pays no use fees for the river. He runs a shuttle, rents rafts, and rents equipment. All the vehicles behind the cable by his store are vehicles that he will shuttle down river for \$60-70 a pop.”

“The river traffic brings in a few guides, the café does ok but floaters are notoriously cheap. You can have 20 people get off the water, use the restrooms at the restaurant, and never leave a dime.” [Troy resident]

“The economic opportunities from river recreation have not been fully examined. We need to capture the benefits from the River. The planning question is, ‘How can BLM planning be done in a way to optimize economic benefits of river recreation in the Troy area?’”

#### **g. Grazing**

“When BLM fences grazing out of an area, they hire a contractor to build the fence, without talking to the neighbors to verify the boundary. The landowner has no capacity to maintain the fence. So when a cow gets in, BLM issues a trespass citation and no one bothers to fix the fence. BLM seems to find out when cattle are trespassing, but can’t seem maintain their fence.”

### **3. Noxious Weeds**

Wallowa Resources has a successful weed treatment program run by Mark Porter who coordinates with private and public partners, educates others on weeds, and coordinates funding and treatment. Mr. Porter was commended numerous times during local conversations for the ways in which he works with others and the trust and cooperation he engenders. The weed collaboration has been a confidence building success and demonstrated that collaboration across all stakeholders could be successful. Because of this success, Wallowa County residents wondered actively how the model could be applied to other areas of natural resource management.

The critical weed species in Wallowa County are Rush Skeletonweed, Leafy Spurge, Meadow Hawkweed, Spotted Knapweed, Orange Hawkweed, and Whitetop.

Here are comments residents made about the program:

“If you had driven to Troy from Boggan’s landing, you would have literally seen forests of Scotch Thistle. Now you drive it and you don’t see that anymore.”

“I have 30 acres on the river surrounded by BLM which my wife’s family has worked since 1886. When BLM fenced off the riparian areas they didn’t do any management on them. So, eventually the Scotch Thistle on the BLM lands just took over. Here we were treating our own lands and BLM’s were totally infested. That really bothered my family. Later, thanks to Wallowa Resources, it’s not a problem.”

“It’s really important to keep the funding for weeds. Everyone supports the weeds program and Mark Porter. I’ve worked with Mike Woods at BLM in the past, but I haven’t seen him a year or so. I know he isn’t feeling good. Mike is working on grasshopper infestations. He’s done a good job.”

“Weeds, especially along the Grande Ronde River, were a real problem but the weed program led by Wallowa Resources has made great progress.”

“When we first moved here, there was serious Knapweed problems, especially on intermixed ownership areas where nobody felt responsible to address it. The past 10 years we’ve treated weeds across boundaries. Everybody sees that it works better to work together. Ranchers continue to contribute to the weed program and we are making great progress. It’s important to eradicate weeds. Need to keep working on it, BLM too.”

“Joseph Creek is untreated. There are some efforts on GR corridor but more needed.”

“If you had driven to Troy from Boggans landing, you would have literally seen forests of Scotch Thistle. Now you drive it and you don’t see that anymore.”

“There are not enough contractors for the weed work. The season is mid-April thru July; so it’s seasonal work. Some people do weeds 6-7 months and then do big game outfitting. You must be trained for this work, and some people get spooked by needing a license.” [Director, Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Association]

Without the financial support BLM gives to the comprehensive weed management contract (about \$45, 000, apparently), this program might not work. It’s also the mechanism they use for the contract that makes it work well and leverages at least \$200,000 in support or in-kind services from other partners.

The Wallowa Resources program has found that a voluntary, cooperative, and educational approach to weed abatement has been very successful. Residents often compared that approach to the perception of BLM’s approach:

“They [BLM] don’t work like neighbors do, trying to resolve things.”

“It’s not just about compliance. It’s about relationships.”

The JKA team heard three stories of contact with various BLM staff who, observing minor violations along the river, wanted to report it to law enforcement, rather than contact the person and figure out the problem. These stories were used to affirm the perception that BLM is not “neighborly” oriented but oriented to the rules and regulations.

#### **4. Restoration and Management**

Earlier discussion talked about the high capacity in Wallowa County for collaborative focus on natural resource management, particularly enhanced by BLM’s weed management program. It is worth repeating a quote that captures the local sentiment of how residents would like BLM to participate with them in the future:

“Nowadays, we have irrigation that brings in more wildlife. There’s more water, more food. So, we already have an infrastructure that would support management, with short-term use. We move cattle more, so we can manage the impacts and lower the impacts on private land and bring all the lands up to a higher standard instead of just concentrating the impact on the private.”

In other words, this speaker and others are suggesting some kind of rest-rotation system that works across land boundaries, similar to the weeds program, through which residents could improve water quality and proper functioning condition of the whole riparian system.

“It’s a mistake to not allow some limited grazing on high quality riparian areas.”

Clearly, residents and officials would like BLM to participate with them in restoration activities with which they are engaged.

“We pretty much rely on \_\_\_\_\_, a range con at the Forest Service, who used to be a ranch BLM range con, to figure out whatever we need from BLM. We have almost no connection to BLM, but I wish they would participate as part of the Watershed Assessment. The Joseph Creek Watershed Assessment is next.”

“I’d like BLM to come up during hunting season like they used to, to help us staff the hay station at Minam in the fall. We stop the hunters and check the hay for noxious weeds. We don’t catch a lot of weeds, but it’s a great educational opportunity. A real white-hat opportunity.”

“I manage two preserves. On one of them, we did a prescribed burn with some other partners. We had to stop at the BLM land because BLM wasn’t able to have the staff to do a fire plan or whatever was required to participate in the burn.”

“Is there a way for BLM to work with The Nature Conservancy on treatments that make sense for the landscape regardless of property ownership? Could we have

some sort of agreement to manage the BLM lands so we wouldn't have to stop at the fence lines? What are the lands within the preserve marked for?" [Nature Conservancy representative]

Other issues related to restoration and management are these:

"If The Nature Conservancy would let a few of the ranchers rent back from them, the ranchers would withdraw their protest about TNC trying to obtain 6000 more acres with OWEB [Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board] money. They've already taken off quite a few AUMs [Animal Unit Months] from the Zumwalt. Ranchers don't think TNC should be able to get OWEB public funding to buy land when the ranchers can't use public funding to buy land. TNC is our competitor but we could have a more symbiotic relationship." [Rancher]

"I wonder if the BLM riparian strategy will be effective. You know, they fenced the streambed at Trout Creek, between Enterprise and Flora. The trees got thicker, the grass wasn't eaten down, and then they had a fire. They couldn't get in there. It was pretty good damage."

"There are some Section 15 leases on some very steep ground."

"It is hard to witness the loss of funding and staffing at the Forest Service. Wallowa Resources got a grant to pay the Forest Service \$40,000 to provide a fisheries biologist so a project could get Forest Service approval. Other organizations will have to be able to pick up land management responsibilities that the Forest Service will not be able to perform."

"How could the BLM land use planning process affect fire suppression work and fire agreements in place in the area, especially if there are ownership changes?"

## **5. Land Tenure**

"BLM should block up the small isolated parcels, especially those of 40 acres or less. That would help everybody."

## **6. Maps and Information**

"All the maps I've ever seen call this area 'Horseshoe Bar.' Suddenly, without any explanation or warning, BLM started calling it 'Big Flats,' a name that doesn't mean anything to people. It's been Horseshoe Bar since that area was settled and it obscures the history of the area. It's really important to keep history accurate."

"Maps have not been updated since 1996. Maps are an issue. There have been times when private lands marked as BLM get sprayed but have actually been swapped."



“We looked at the maps of Wallowa County and a former ‘BLMer’ questioned some of the locations of BLM parcels due to exchanges and acquisitions. We all agreed that the first order of business for BLM would be to begin planning by getting a current map to use.”

“BLM in recent years acquired a bunch on land in the Courtney Creek drainage south of Troy. The maps don’t show it.”

## **7. Grazing**

A recent development that has people questioning the collaborative approach is a lawsuit brought by a new nonprofit organization against the Forest Services, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Commerce Department. Apparently the group has ties to the Nez Perce and is called Center for Indian Advocacy. The crux of the lawsuit is that the grazing allotments are coming up for their 10-year permit renewal and so they go through a new NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process and that’s where the Center protested.

“I’m pretty discouraged. We’ve been working with the Nez Perce all these years, and suddenly they take it to court. There have been lawsuits before from environmentalists or Indians, but this one has us scared because there are only about 11 ranchers left now.”

“There’s room to mediate these differences. You ought to do everything you can to stay out of court with your neighbor. If the gripe is legitimate, ranchers would be willing to address it just like they have all along.”

“We met every Wednesday afternoon for a year to work on the Salmon Plan. That’s why I don’t get why they’d take this approach. It’s just unnecessary. They want an injunction for immediate removal of cattle from the lands.”

“If the Nez Perce have needs, we want to address them.” [County leader]

“If BLM takes more grazing leases away, it needs to locate property boundaries, and there needs to be discussion about who builds and maintains fences. That hasn’t always been followed through on.”

“A new group, the Center for Water Quality, sued the Forest Service on grazing leases on Joseph Creek, saying grazing hurts water quality.”

## **8. Access**

“One issue is the loss of hunting access to the public, the hunting preserve in the Zumwalt area.” [County official]

## RESOLVE AS YOU GO CANDIDATES FOR EARLY RESPONSE

A waste station or vault toilet in Troy is needed immediately so that river users can dispose of human waste appropriately.

## POSSIBLE COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

### **Comprehensive Planning for River Corridor Opportunities**

BLM decisions figure prominently in the future of the North End. BLM may consider that the River Management Plan completed in 1993 is a comprehensive plan. From the perspective of local residents, however, the river management plan greatly improved compliance on the river but did not address the larger economic and community development issues described in this report. Residents would like BLM to work with them directly to develop strategies for using river activity to boost community development and economic livelihood.

Bring forward the question posed by a resident and use it formally in the land use planning process:

“The economic opportunities from river recreation have not been fully examined. We need to capture the benefits from the River. The planning question is, ‘How can BLM planning be done in a way to optimize economic benefits of river recreation in the Troy area?’”

Explore recreation-oriented stewardship contracting as a way to create economic benefit in Troy. Apparently, such contracting, while unusual, is not without precedent, as long as land management goals are met, such as road and trail maintenance, habitat improvement, watershed restoration, and weed control (P.L. 108-7, Sec.347). It appears that more and more contracting ideas are citizen-initiated (Personal communication, Jim Hallberg, BLM State Office, 8/30/06).

Use the planning process to initiate a good local-level economic study on the benefits of river recreation. The Northeast Oregon Economic District Office, located in Enterprise, as well as Wallowa Resources, could be good partners in this endeavor. Through their permitting process, the BLM and Forest Service have the best information on river guides, the starting point from which a good study could be undertaken.

“I believe you could get agreement with the majority of landowners for public use of the area – maybe some public-private arrangements.”

“We are especially looking for a long term plan, since future use will definitely grow. If we don’t get a comprehensive plan worked out with landowners and local community, problems will be huge.”

“Message to BLM: If you want to buy more land, work with local landowners.”

“Will BLM go to a lottery system for river use? The Lower Salmon is still unregulated but has a threshold where limits will be instituted. Ten of us have tried for 5 years to get a permit by lottery on the Middle Fork of the Salmon and we still have not had luck.”

“Get a few extra cfs [cubic feet a second] per stream from Starkey on down. Getting more water is a way to provide for more fish, and it will reduce user conflicts.”

A river guide had these suggestions to pass along to BLM:

1. On the lower Salmon River, BLM bought conservation easements on private ground along the river, preventing its development. It allows on-shore use by recreationists, pays up to 80% of land value, and the landowner can still farm. A BLM person who knows about this is LaVerne Grussing, a gentleman in the Cottonwood Idaho BLM office.
2. Mr. Grussing also sponsors an outfitters trip each year, though he didn’t do it this year for some reason. They split up who will do what meals, the toilets, and other tasks, and then they bring along local experts in geology, biology and cultural resources to teach outfitters about the river. It has been very successful for education and for meeting other outfitters.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

A “Get Acquainted Tour” for the new area manager would be appreciated by local residents and leaders. The Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) meets the fourth Tuesday of every month (9 to 12:00 a.m., typically) and the SWCD meets on the first Monday (7 p.m., Extension Service Conference Room). It was suggested that the area manager meet with the groups and the technical committees and then with key individuals who know the issues. To get on the agenda of the NRAC, call Bruce Dunn whose cell number is: 263 -0326.

BLM currently has a reputation for being compliance oriented in Wallowa County, and many believe this is understandable because of its limited staff. However, a compliance orientation does not fit well in the collaborative environment that has developed over the last twenty years. BLM’s compliance actions set a jarring tone that was noted by several people. These folks suggest that BLM take a relationship approach, that is, get to know people first and develop an education and voluntary approach, and to use their partners as

proxies when they are not able to establish an effective local presence. In this scenario, compliance is the strategy of last resort.

Several residents said in effect that BLM should clone Mark Porter of Wallowa Resources, and work in the communities as he does. What they mean is that BLM staff should devote the time to build relationships through which to meet management objectives and not rely on a compliance approach.

“Mark Porter works directly with ranchers and gets everybody on same page to fight weeds. Everybody pitches in and they see results. They have a face to talk to and a pair of boots on the ground – someone who understands their situation. That’s what we need for the river situation – someone like Mark.”

Start earlier before the planning process to make progress on key emerging issues.

The North End Area has key communicators with whom to foster further dialogue about citizen-based management opportunities on the Grande Ronde River, including “Red” at the local café in Troy, Kenneth Wulff of Flora, Andy White of the Oregon Department of Forestry, Dave Flynn, the informal “mayor” of Troy, and Jim Henson, who is the citizen lead in the North End revitalization effort and experienced in economic development related to recreation.

Do not rely on a meeting format to create a successful change process. Informal discussions with network caretakers, held in conjunction with meetings, is a stronger approach.

“They’ll tell you one on one, but they don’t want to raise their hand up at a public meeting.”

“Meetings work OK for getting information out. You’ve got to do a lot more leg work to make things work. Meetings have a lot of ‘noise.’”

The Troy school is useful as a meeting place .

“What impresses them [Troy area residents] is that you value their input and that you make the effort to show up and meet them.”

For Wallowa County generally, Lear’s restaurant in Enterprise is a key gathering place for sharing information and getting the word out about planning. Wallowa Senior Center is a good meeting place as is the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise.

A Wallowa County Commissioner stated that BLM may want to engage in a planning process similar to the Forest Service in which fifteen counties were co-conveners in the process and used a consultant as facilitator.

Commissioner Ben Boswell, president of the Association of Oregon Counties, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) calling for early and frequent communication with other agencies, such as the Forest Service and BLM.

Wallowa Resources will also make a good communicator ally. It has education programs for all ages in the community and a newsletters with over 50 partners and sponsors. It has a fine reputation and wide knowledge of people in the area.

The formal groups in Wallowa County which could be expected to have an interest in the BLM planning process are:

- Eagle Cap Shooters Association.
- Lions Club
- Natural Resource Advisory Committee
- North West Interpretive Association
- Rotary Club
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited
- Wallowa Chamber of Commerce
- Wallowa County Court
- Wallowa Resources
- Wallowa Soil and Water Conservation District
- Wallowa Stock Growers
- Wallowa Valley Trail Riders Association
- Community Connections of Wallowa County
- Enterprise Merchants Association
- Lower Valley Merchants Association
- TamKaLiks Celebration
- The Nature Conservancy
- Wallowa County Soil and Water Conservation District



## CHAPTER EIGHT: THE ASOTIN HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT

The Clearwater Social Resource Unit (SRU, Figure 22) is a regional human geographic unit that stretches from Asotin, Garfield, and Columbia Counties in Washington State, through Idaho to the Bitterroot Range at the Montana state line, draining the large Clearwater country of northern Idaho. The SRU is in the shape of a sideways figure “8” that narrows as the Snake and the Clearwater Rivers merge at the Washington/Idaho state line. The two communities at this juncture, Clarkston, Washington and Lewiston, Idaho, form sister cities that are the lynch communities uniting both halves of the figure “8.” These communities are the urban center for the Lewis and Clark Valley which is bordered by the Snake and Clearwater Rivers. The communities are a seaport city located 465 miles from the Pacific Ocean [Hells Canyon brochure].

The Lower Clearwater Human Resource Unit (HRU) contains two Community Resource Units (CRUs) on the Washington side, Clarkston and Asotin. It is part of the Palouse, a wide and rolling prairie-like region of the middle Columbia Basin. This area is the northern end of the Blue Mountains and contains portions of the Umatilla National Forest and the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. The Umatilla National Forest managers 53,797 acres out of a total of about 400,000 acres (636 sq. miles) in Asotin County. BLM manages about 8,000 acres in the southern portion of Asotin County. Some of the land is in scattered parcels, but the bulk of BLM ground is in the Grande Ronde River Canyon, along with significant portions of state land, in the southeast area of Asotin County where the Grande Ronde, Joseph Creek, and Cottonwood Creek converge with the Snake River.

This chapter explores the Asotin CRU along the following dimensions:

1. Social Conditions and Trends
2. Community Themes and Issues
3. Natural Resource Themes and Issues
4. Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response
5. Possible Community -Based Planning Elements
6. Communication Strategy

### SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Table Seven below shows the population trends for Asotin County and its principle towns. Population growth has been quite modest for the last fifteen years with more of the growth occurring in the County than either Clarkston or Asotin.



Figure 22: The Asotin Community Resource Unit (CRU) within the Lower Clearwater Human Resource (HRU)

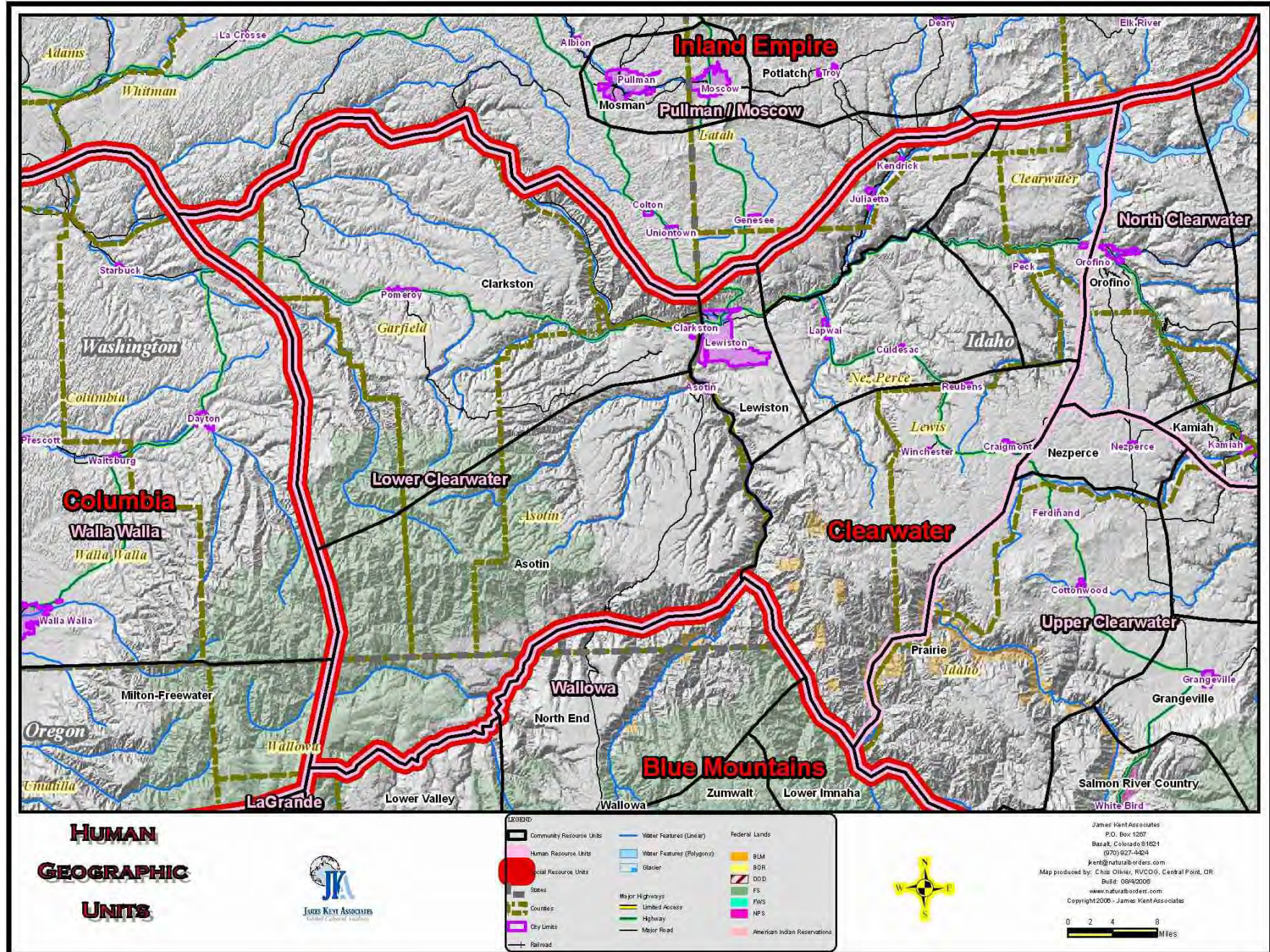




Table Seven:  
Population Trends for Asotin County and Towns

Location	1990	2000	2005	% Annual Change
Asotin County	17,605	20,551	21,178	1.4
Clarkston	6,753	7,337	7,304	0.5
Asotin	981	1,095	1,124	1.0

(Source: U.S. Census)

Clarkston is the urban center for the County and is the commercial and retail center, oriented to the many businesses that are related to the prolific river recreation represented by the Snake River. Asotin, a modestly prosperous looking town, is still an agricultural community and service center, and as the county seat is the site of local government offices. The name “Asotin” comes from the Nez Perce language and means “place of eel” or “eel creek” because of the abundance of eel caught in the area (Asotin County website). There is a routine, but small, connection between Asotin and Clarkson along Highway 3 to Enterprise in Wallowa County, Oregon, hampered by Rattlesnake Grade as the highway drops into the canyon to cross the Grande Ronde and climb back up again.

“The only reason to go to Asotin is the court house.”

“When landowners say they’re going to town, they mean Asotin, Clarkston, or Lewiston. It’s all one place.”

Residents said that the small town of Anatone does not get business from river use, but that cars just go on by.

Heller Bar is a small settlement south of Asotin at the juncture of the Grande Ronde and the Snake Rivers whose residents are oriented to river recreation and who are directly affected by BLM decisions about the Grande Ronde River corridor. Across the Grande Ronde River, but still in Washington State is a small settlement called Rogersburg (Figure 23), whose residents do not relate to Heller Bar much because there is no river crossing at this point. These folks are delighted because the dirt road leading to their town was recently re-surfaced, allowing easier access. Both settlements are witnessing significant growth, with larger suburban type homes being built on the nearby hillsides.

In the Asotin County economy, health care and social assistance counts for the most employment (17%), education services account for 13% of total employment, wholesale/retail trade 14%, construction 11% and manufacturing 10%. Agricultural employment accounts for 0.8% of the total employment (<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/county/asot.asp>).

The major employers of Asotin County by size are Clarkston School District, Tri-State Memorial Hospital, Asotin County, Costco, Albertsons, and the Asotin School District.

Figure 23:  
Rogersburg, Washington



(Source: Photo by the authors)

As noted in other areas, residents here pointed out that some large landholdings are changing hands, purchased by wealthy, outside residents who tend to invest in the land and hire local people, and even former owners, as managers of the land.

### COMMUNITY THEMES AND ISSUES

A number of residents commented on the growth of rural development that has been occurring over the last twenty years. Notable areas of development include Highway 129 from the state line to the Shumaker turn. People expect that rural development will continue and affect the ability of agriculture to remain viable. It will also lead to an increased demand for available recreation. Residents reported that taxes are going up because of the growth.

“I have to fight the assessor who claims my vertical lot, it’s practically a cliff, has the same value as a buildable lot.”

The growth in rural residential development has caused some conflicts:

“We have open range grazing and there are some conflicts with the new subdivisions bordering BLM land on the Snake [sections 12 and 7 downstream of

Heller Bar]. The developers and commissioners are trying to work out a cooperative fencing solution.”

The County has a comprehensive plan and some zoning regulations being put into place. Little interaction occurs with BLM at this level of government, according to local inquiries.

### NATURAL RESOURCE THEMES AND ISSUES

When BLM undertakes its land use planning, it will have to evaluate the current levels of recreation, the effectiveness of current management practices, and adjustments in management to make it more effective. BLM is interested in additional land acquisition from willing sellers along the Grande Ronde River which must figure into its planning as well.

This is an area for which recreation, river recreation and visitation is important in the local economy and for the continued good health of nearby communities. As a result, political decisions, economic development, and public policy in Asotin County are devoted to the topic.

Asotin County has some planning overlap with BLM. Its Shoreline Master Plan, required along major waterways like the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers, as well as Joseph and Asotin Creeks, deals with setbacks, subdivisions, and vegetation management. The County has had some coordination, but not too much contact with BLM. Someday the County will need to do a “critical areas” inventory and ordinance, which will include consultation with BLM. It’s not a high priority right now but its completion will be required by the State of Washington at some point.

The Dean Runyan study of 2005 (Washington State 2005) estimated that Asotin County tourism had generated \$23.5 million, which, while low compared to other counties in Washington State, nevertheless has shown a nearly 4% increase annually since 1999. This spending generated 8,130 jobs in Asotin County in 2004. The average visitor spends \$144/day, according to the study.

The goals of the Hells Canyon Visitor Association are to attract more visitors to Asotin County for economic vitality, create shoulder seasons in spring and fall to augment the summer season, provide hospitality training for tourism businesses, and create a tourism marketing plan useful for businesses (Peters 2006).

River recreation in Asotin County usually refers to the Snake River, but the growing importance of the Grande Ronde River should not be overlooked. Residents uniformly reported that Grande Ronde use is steadily increasing although no one had any numbers to verify the perception.

“It [the Grande Ronde River] is not really a backyard to Clarkston. It’s too remote.”

“I go with my family to the Grande Ronde all the time. It’s a great place for locals. I would like restrooms and picnic tables. There is no camping anywhere around there. Fields Spring State Park but that is it.”

“I just spent the weekend along the Grande Ronde.”

Historically, fishing the Grande Ronde has been the primary activity. Residents said that from October to November, the Grande Ronde is a noted steelhead fishery. Sometimes the season lasts until March and that is more of a local time. Some people referred to the steelhead season as a “zoo,” with people being “busy but polite.”

“There can be 35 or more overnight RV’ers from Boggans to Heller.”

In addition to fishing, the river has become a prime floating river. Because the drop is moderate and the water is flat, it is known as a family river and one used when other more popular rivers are not available, such as when the Snake River “blows out” with high water. The Shumaker Grade area is a popular recreation area near the River and accessible from the Clarkston urban area.

“Shumaker is a great place to swim. I take my family there all the time. It’s very popular.”

People stated that memories are long in Asotin County. Some of the issues residents and officials raised were admittedly old ones, which were almost reluctantly mentioned just to have something to say, it seemed. The datedness of the issues appeared to reflect the lack of BLM presence in the area. Examples of “old” issues are:

“There was a gate years ago on the Rogersburg side. BLM finally locked it.”

“A gravel pit was sold to BLM years ago, with agreement that locals would be able to continue to come in and get gravel loads. It was pretty handy. But when BLM took over, they closed off public access, put in a gate.”

“There is common agreement here that herbicides are the most effective weed control. For some reason, when BLM did a Scotch Thistle control project, they let the plants get to five feet and then used crews to chop it down instead of using herbicides. Locals did not get this strategy.”

There are two important categories of citizen issues discovered which relate to natural resource management and BLM, river recreation and weeds, and less widespread issues as well. This section covers the following categories of issues:

1. River Recreation

2. Weeds
3. Maps
4. Land Purchase
5. Restoration
6. Access

## **1. River Recreation**

### **Guides**

The general perception in both Wallowa and Asotin Counties is that there are too many guides working the Grande Ronde River in Washington State.

“There’s only one drift boat guide in Clarkston that works the Grande Ronde.”

“There are too many guides on the rivers, the Snake especially, but also the Grande Ronde.”

“There are too many guides on the river [referring mainly to the Snake]. The fish really get hammered. Those guys work hard, they are out there at sunup and they work the river all day long. There are about 20 guides in steelhead.”

“The other thing about the guides, is that it forces locals who want to fish to have a boat too, and then you have to go ‘way up’ to get away from the traffic.”

### **Trash**

“This area needs a trash dump, although when a dumpster was there years ago, it was a problem because fish carcasses would be thrown in there and it would stink badly. It caused problems.”

“Floaters leave trash.”

“The assorted trash problems created a skunk problem. My neighbors and I did a killing spree and killed 58 skunks. It was so bad you couldn’t even go outside at times.” [Heller Bar resident]

### **Amenities**

The State of Washington owns about 2000 acres along the Shoemaker grade and also at Heller Bar. State Fish and Wildlife officials thought that cooperation with BLM around developed campsites and toilets would be a positive thing.

“BLM has the contract on the boat ramp from State Fish and Wildlife. They do a super job. They clean it regularly which the state would never have been able to afford to do.”

“I would like restrooms and picnic tables.”

“Fish and Wildlife has outhouses up the road on their land [south of Heller Bar]. If you stop to use the restroom, and you don’t have the yellow stickers on your car that shows you’ve paid some kind of fee, you can be cited. I’ve heard there is a new guy who goes by the book and has been citing locals right and left for one thing or another.”

“My son camps a lot nearby. He says that behind every bush is poop . Outhouses are really needed.”

“I know there are camping conflicts down there because there are only 2 or 3 small BLM parcels on the river for camping, and the outfitter use is much heavier there, especially during the six -week steelhead season.”

“There are not very many BLM camping spots downstream of Boggans crossing, so there are lots of opportunities for boaters to end up camping on private ranch land. This is especially true during heavy use fall steelhead season. We were tossed off private land one year. It wasn’t pretty.”

“During fall steelhead season, it gets crazy down there for about 6 weeks. I estimate that the steelhead traffic is 80% day trips and 20% overnight stays. Outfitters and guides come from all over the Northwest bringing clients do wn on the Grande Ronde. There are hundreds competing for the same water and camping spots. It can get a little tense.”

“A couple years ago, a guide from Tacoma dropped off a dozen clients at key spots on the river and basically took up most of the river that day. Camping spots are a premium and are set up semi-permanently, even on private land.”

## **Enforcement**

“The big issue with guides is the lack of enforcement about permitting. There has to be a budget to finance a series of busts so that people get the message.”

“In Washington, you don’t pay anything to Fish and Wildlife, so there is no money for enforcement.” [This person pointed out that Idaho is regulated by a board of outfitters and guides. Although they have budget problems too, the system works better because of an ongoing revenue stream.]

“Sometimes the illegal guys are just guys with a drift boat making a little extra money. Visitors don’t know a ‘legit’ one from not.”

“Couldn’t you take a portion of permit fee to fund enforcement?”



“Put in more signs and permit boxes, not everywhere, but at some of the favorite put-in spots.”

“A requirement to register before floating is good.”

“You don’t want to ask about sanitation.”

Figure 24:  
Floaters on the Grande Ronde River



(Source: Phøo by the authors)

## **2. Weeds**

Asotin County has an effective and supported weed abatement program in place through its Asotin County Noxious Weed Control Board. It is a program that has been operating since 1980 but whose budget doubled last year with voter approval. The program is funded out of property assessment with some adjustments for the larger landowners to make the program affordable to all. It is also funded by available grants, of which they currently have four. The program is managed by a five-member board, all of whom are landowners in the County. In recent years, the program has provided support to Wallowa Resources for weed abatement along the lower Grande Ronde River corridor. Sometimes river guides are employed to take equipment and teams to remote areas.

While Yellow Starthistle and Scotch Thistle are the most visible, they are not the biggest problem and are treated with cheaper biological controls (bugs), which limit their spread



but do not eradicate them. It is Leafy Spurge (coming down the Grande Ronde), Medusa Head, White Top, Spotted Knapweed, and Rush Skeletonweed that is getting the attention, while Wallowa Resources focuses on Sulphur Cinquefoil.

Program staff praised BLM for its financial support of the weed program of Wallowa Resources and for BLM staffing and attention to the problem.

“Better weed control is needed. There is a section of school land near me and State Fish and Wildlife bought a ranch nearby for habitat.”

“Mark has helped a ton.”

“The biggest problem around Shu maker is the lack of BLM management on weed control on their parcels. They need to run a 100 pair in there for a few months to get the grass back. Right now, it’s overgrown with bunchgrass.”

“Weeds are a continuing challenge. I know there is a good program and good coordination with BLM, and it’s a problem that is not going to go away soon.”

### **3. Maps**

“We need maps that show public ownership, so we know where we can get out. The restrictions change, depending on the ownership. It’s hard to know which office and which person to talk with.”

“We need one page maps that you can carry around.”

“Let’s do a coordinated map, Troy to Heller Bar.” [State agency official]

“It’s very difficult to tell where BLM lands are on the river.”

### **4. Land Purchase**

“Land purchase would be good. Fishers come from around the country to be here.” [Common]

“Purchase of land in Washington by BLM would be good. More camping is needed.”

“I am a strong advocate of public ownership of that corridor.”

“Consolidated ownership will give better management, especially from an angling perspective.”

“Land purchase in the Asotin area would be a good thing, although landowners may disagree. Our economy is fishing and recreation. If you can do it [land acquisition] without condemning, it will be fine.”

“I support it because I see that public access to hunting/fishing/boating is a key value for the future.”

While most people contacted felt that land acquisition by BLM along the Washington portion of the Grande Ronde River would be positive, the sentiment was by no means universal. Some people felt like BLM should improve its management record first before expanding its management scope.

“If you want to buy more land, work with local landowners.”

“Many people in the County don’t support any more land taken off tax rolls by government purchase.”

## **5. Restoration**

An official from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife described a successful effort to promote fall Chinook restoration. With two tribes, two states, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, hatchery fish are being released in the lower Grande Ronde. He felt the returns should be very good in a few years, anglers will see 30-40 pound fish, and there will be harassment and poaching.

This gentleman wants to work with BLM and other partners to educate the public that these fish are protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). People need to know how to avoid the spawning areas (reds). In particular, the state owns a very popular spot with anglers called Shadow Hole that is also a great spawning area. He wants signs and press releases distributed at Boggans and other places.

## **6. Access**

“There are beginning to be access issues. The public has to have access to get to river, and to know which lands are public versus private. We need to have more clearly marked areas and maps for people to stay out of trouble.”

“I want to make sure there is access to public lands for the future. I believe the general trend in the West is one of reducing access for the general public.”  
[Asotin County Commissioner]

## RESOLVE AS YOU GO CANDIDATES FOR EARLY RESPONSE

Accurate maps, integrated with other landowners and jurisdictions, would be a positive step in Asotin County. That would help with current trespass issues and help prepare for the land use planning process.

Local residents and officials want funding and staffing support for the continuation of the weed program.

## POSSIBLE COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING ELEMENTS

As in Wallowa County, a comprehensive plan for management of the Grande Ronde River corridor that is community-based and multi-jurisdictional would be appropriate and responsive to the explicit wishes expressed by a County Commissioner, several state officials, and many residents. The sentiment voiced was that greater public ownership of the corridor is desirable and that early, proactive steps to anticipate future impacts and deal with them now would be wise. BLM should pair its wish for more land ownership along the corridor to a community-based plan that assures residents of its commitment to address the impacts an expanded corridor would create.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Despite the urban center represented by Clarkston, Asotin County is still a rural county in outlook and communication styles. Face-to-face relations and personal contact are the best ways to get things done and to build support for a particular course of action. Word-of-mouth communication is relied upon and valued in building consensus for local direction.

For this reason, BLM should take the time ahead of the planning process to expand relationships, to probe further on the issues discovered so far, and to continue to identify emerging issues for early resolution. Success at this phase will make latter phases much more productive and prevent the dominance of the planning process by organized groups which promote their own positions.

A good place to meet with ranchers and agricultural people regarding BLM planning is the Anatone town hall. Not all comments will be complimentary to BLM, but the location will draw widely from these interests.

A meeting in Asotin will generate a greater cross-section of county residents including urban, rural, outfitters, and recreationists, although agriculturalists will be less likely to attend.

No local outfitters and guides association was discovered. Appendix A includes state or region-wide guide associations, which are likely to have interest in the BLM planning process. They are known not to be very organized or effective, however.

The formal groups and organizations, which could be expected to have interest in the planning process, are listed below. The addresses for most of them are included in Appendix A.

- Asotin County
- Asotin County Cooperative Extension Program
- Asotin County Noxious Weed Control Board
- City of Asotin
- Clarkston Chamber of Commerce
- Clearwater Economic Development Association
- Department of Natural Resources
- Eastern Oregon Guide Association
- Hells Canyon Visitors Association
- Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association
- Kelley Creek Flycasters
- Lewis Clark ATV Club
- Lewis Clark Saddle Club
- North Central Idaho Travel Association
- Northwest Independent Riders
- Northwest River Runners
- Oregon Guides & Packers Association
- Palouse Economic Development Council
- Palouse Flycasters
- Steelheaders Club
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington Outfitters and Guides Association



## CHAPTER NINE: THE NEZ PERCE TRIBAL INTERESTS AND PROTOCOL

### **Introduction**

The Nez Perce Tribe is administered by the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC), consisting of nine members elected by the Tribal General Council. The current chairperson is Rebecca Miles, whose term expires May, 2007. Tribal enrollment as of November, 2004 was 3,363 (<http://www.nezperce.org/NPTEC/Government.htm>). The Tribe hires member, non-members and contract employees.

The Tribe has 5 subcommittees:

1. Human Resources
2. Law & Order/Intergovernmental
3. Natural Resources
4. Budget & Finance/Credit
5. Land Enterprise Commission

Of these subcommittees, the Natural Resources Committee is most related to BLM management. Currently, Brooklyn D. Baptiste of the NPTEC, is the chair of this committee, which includes the following program areas:

1. Department of Fisheries Resource Management
  2. Department of Natural Resources Administration
  3. Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Committee
  4. Environmental Restoration and Waste management
  5. Forestry
  6. Waters Resources
  7. Wildlife
  8. Land Services
  9. Cultural Resources
- (<http://www.nezperce.org/NPTEC/NaturalResourcesSubcmt.htm>).

### **Tribal Interests**

As part of the 1855 treaty, it appears that there are three categories of land with which the Nez Perce have interests. First are the lands within the reservation. In addition, tribal members have access to “open and unclaimed lands” which courts have determined to mean BLM public lands. So BLM lands are very important to tribal members. The Tribe also has rights of use of “usual and accustomed areas” and traditional routes across public and private lands to the Columbia River and the Willamette Valley for fishing (salmon, eel) and trading.

Generally speaking, the Nez Perce Tribe is committed to long range sustainability of the Tribe, tribal members, tribal resources, and cultural practices. Specifically, they manage

tribal lands for wildlife habitat, especially big game, strong fisheries, cultural plants (food, healing, ceremonial uses), watershed health and water quality.

The staff personnel from tribal agencies clarified the interests of the Nez Perce with regard to the land use planning process of BLM.

The Nez Perce have become managers of what is known as the Precious Lands Area, 15,325 acres in Joseph Creek just south of Washington state line. Land is fee title lands managed by the tribe for wildlife habitat created as part of the mitigation for construction of Lower Snake Dam. The area contains small parcels of BLM land and adjoins other BLM lands. The Tribe also holds grazing lease with BLM, which are currently in conservation status because tribe doesn't graze domestic animals on mitigation lands. Unauthorized ORV and ATV travel is a large and growing issue in the Precious Lands management area, especially in the wet areas.

Figure 25:  
A View of the Joseph Creek Drainage



The Tribe is also interested in management of BLM lands in Lower Joseph Creek as well as property known as the Colson Ranch. The Tribe has wildlife and watershed interests in the Lower Joseph Creek drainage.

The Tribe is interested in continuing cooperation on fire fighting efforts.

The Tribe is interested in continuing noxious weed control and supports BLM weed eradication program, as well as other programs. Leafy Spurge, Knapweed, Starthistle, Whitetop, and Cheatgrass. Tribal staff asked that BLM continues its support of rangeland stewardship programs with Wallowa Resources in Enterprise, Oregon, especially “weed warrior,” Mark Porter. The programs allow proactive effective work on weed education and eradication on all ownerships.

Tribe is interested in opportunities in the plan to partner in fisheries and salmon recovery programs.

The Tribe wants to formalize the stewardship of the Precious Lands by some mechanism such as an ACEC (Area of Critical Environmental Concern) or MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with BLM, particularly because it fosters more effective management in an area of interspersed ownership. The Tribe is interested in continuing reasonable access of non-members to the area, as currently agreed to with BPA.

It’s important for the Tribe to maintain fishing rights, especially along the Grande Ronde River. Some of the newer landowners along the Grande Ronde hire patrols to keep people off the banks of the river.

It’s important to the Tribe that a harvestable population of big game animals be maintained by state and federal agencies on public and forest lands, as well as the habitat necessary to maintain those populations.

Any proposals for land exchanges need to be reviewed by Tribal representatives to make sure lands and access routes important to tribal interests are protected.

Tribal staff said the Tribe does not have a lot of information documented on sites on BLM land outside the tribe’s Ceded territory, the area determined by the 1967 Indian Claims Commission (ICC). The Tribe would like to be included in the information that BLM has and will develop concerning cultural sites in the Ceded territory. The Tribe’s traditional use area is pretty much defined by the ICC boundaries —13 million acres. Most of the cultural sites important to the tribe are located within the Ceded area. The tribe’s Cultural Resources office knows about most of them. There are also “usual & customary areas” outside the ICC which are mostly fishing spots along the Columbia and some trade routes. The Nez Perce roamed east and west, not so much north and south. There was no advantage going north and the Bannocks and Shoshones in the south were traditional enemies. The current reservation area (1863 treaty) is 770,000 acres.

The fisheries are managed mostly for steelhead and the resident fish. The Grande Ronde River is a key migration stream. The issues on the Grande Ronde are water quality because of sediment, and high summertime water temperatures.

The fisheries program is currently conducting an inventory of fish passages in Wallowa County streams that will be done this year. Next year, the Tribe will focus on recommending and funding work on highest priority fixes.



The Tribe has interests in the Oxbow area near the mouth of the Powder River in Baker County that they are identifying now in preparation for the RMP planning effort next year.

Tribal staff spoke highly of the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, describing it as a watershed council for Union and Wallowa Counties set up to manage block grant monies from Bonneville Power. They praised its simplified application process for soliciting projects, evaluating and awarding grants, and monitoring accomplishments.

### **Tribal Communication**

Tribal staff members offered to answer any questions regarding their interests and concerns regarding the upcoming BLM land use planning process. They expressed appreciation that BLM was getting prepared early and giving the Tribe advanced notice on the process. They would like further discussions with BLM about where the planning area is and what the planning schedule is.

Tribal staff members expressed real concerns about budget, and the timing of the workload associated with BLM planning. Because they have little travel money and their salaries are tied to a specific annual work plan, they want as much advance notice as possible about the BLM planning schedule, so that staff time can be budgeted accordingly.

“BLM needs to travel to Lapwai, since it’s their plan.”

Most coordination work with other agencies on plans takes place directly between a agency and tribal staff people. Normally there is not a lot of “community” review within the Tribe. The staff people at the Nez Perce tribal office seemed very relaxed about impromptu informal contacts.

Tribal officials stressed that the Tribe is not another “stakeholder” with which BLM must relate, but rather, the relationship between the Tribe and BLM is “government to government.”

The lead official from the Baker Resource Area (or maybe the Vale District) needs to come to the tribal council meeting before the formal planning process is officially begun. Tribal officials would like the BLM official to provide an overview of the planning goals, schedule, and process and ask for guidance on how the Tribe would be involved. Since the Tribe has regular employees and also contract employees, it would need some advance notice in order to allocate enough specialist work time to adequately represent tribal interests with BLM planning.

Program staff asked for involvement in parts of the Environmental Impact Statement, especially the Analysis of the Management Situation, which describes current policies and conditions, and the development of alternatives.

“We don’t want BLM to put alternatives together and then come out here to ask us what we think of it – we want a meaningful dialogue.”

Key staff which are likely to have a role in the BLM planning process are:

Aaron Miles, manager of Department of Natural Resources; 208-843-7400, ext2380; [2moon@nezperce.org](mailto:2moon@nezperce.org). Mr. Miles is a member of BLM’s RAC representing tribal interests.

Rick Christian, tribal fisheries in Oregon; Enterprise, Oregon; 541 -426-3198; [richardc@nezperce.org](mailto:richardc@nezperce.org); can also be reached by tribal number in Idaho: 208 -843-2253.

Paul Kraynak, tribal fisheries in Washington; 208 -843-7144.

Jack Bell, Director of Land Services; 208-843-7392.

Keith Lawrence, Wildlife Department; 208 -843-2162.

Cassandra Kipp, Economic Development Planning; 208 -843-7324.

Angela Sondenaar, Manager of Precious Lands Area; 208-843-7372.

Kevin Cannell, Cultural Resources; 208 -843-7400 ext 6.



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### State of Washington

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### Wallowa County

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APPENDIX A:

MAILING LIST OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH  
INTEREST IN THE  
LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS

BAKER COUNTY

A number of people stated that email correspondence is not or seldom used. Telephone and mailing is still the best.

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Powder Basin Watershed Council  
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weeds)

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Florence, OR 97439

Jeff George  
S&G Machinery Co.  
41216 Highway 30  
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541-523-6491

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541-523-2353

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Tri County Cooperative Weed  
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Parks and Recreation Department

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Steve Watkins  
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## UNION COUNTY

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La Grande, Oregon 97850  
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541-963-0926

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Oregon Guides & Packers Association  
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Northwest Independent Riders  
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208-743-1963

Lewis Clark ATV Club  
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Northwest River Runners  
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Steelheaders Club  
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North Central Idaho Travel Association  
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APPENDIX B:

SEVEN CULTURAL DESCRIPTORS USED IN THE DISCOVERY  
PROCESS™ FOR COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Appendix B:  
Seven Cultural Descriptors  
Used in the Discovery Process™ for  
Community Assessment

***ONE Describe the publics and their interests***

**DEFINITION**

A public is any segment of the population that can be grouped together because of some recognized demographic feature or common set of interests. A public may exist currently or at some future date; it may reside permanently in a geographic area, or may live elsewhere and have an interest in the management of natural resources. Sample publics include ranchers, loggers, tourists, small businesses, industries, miners, senior citizens, minorities, homemakers, youth, preservationists and governmental bodies.

By identifying publics and characterizing each public's interests, a resource manager can understand how segments of a population will be affected differently by resource decision making. Also, predictions can be made about how changing public interests will influence management in the future.

**Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- What publics are within the immediate sphere of influence of resource management and decision making activities? What are the ongoing interests of each identified public? Which of the publics have specific resource -related interests? Are there any public interests or activities that affect resource management activities?
- Is there any public that is directly affected by the resource decision making process? Which publics currently benefit from jobs generated by the resource outputs? Are there any individuals, businesses or industries that are dependent upon a specific output?
- Which publics could potentially benefit from resource use and development activities? Which publics could potentially be affected from a change in current management activities?
- What publics are outside the immediate sphere of influence of resource management activities, but use the resource or are involved in the decisionmaking process? Do these publics have a relationship to the resource because they affect or are affected by resource management activities?

## ***TWO***

## ***Describe the networks***

### **Definition**

A network is comprised of individuals who support each other in predictable ways and have a shared commitment to some common purpose (Figure Four). Networks may be informal arrangements of people tied together for cultural, survival, or caretaking reasons. Networks may also be formal arrangements of people who belong to an organization, club or association, which has a specific charter or organizational goals. Networks may function in a local geographic area or may influence resource management activities from regional or national levels. Examples of informal networks include ranchers who assist each other in times of need, miners who work on the same shift, grass-roots environmentalists, or families who recreate together. Examples of formal organizations include a cattlemen's association, coal mining union, preservationist or snowmobile club.

A knowledge of networks citizens form to express their interests is essential for identifying public issues relating to management activities and for monitoring the effectiveness of resource decisionmaking.

### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- What informal networks do each of the identified publics form to express their interests? What is the function of each network? When and where does each informal network gather to share information or services? How do the members of each network communicate with each other?
- Which networks function in an ongoing manner for cultural, caretaking or survival reasons? Which networks are temporarily involved around particular events or issues?
- What is the informal leadership in each network or who is respected and why? Are any networks more effective than others in addressing the issues that concern them?
- Which networks extend beyond the local level and function on a regional or national scale? Are there any regional or national networks that influence resource management activities?
- What formal organizations, associations or clubs do the identified publics form to express their interests? What is the purpose of each group? When and where does each formal organization meet to share information or provide



services? How do the members of each group communicate with each other? Which organizations operate in an ongoing manner and which operate temporarily?

- What is the formal and informal leadership in each organization or who is respected and why? Are any groups more effective than others in addressing the issues that concern them?
- Which organizations have a membership that extends beyond the local level and operates on a regional or national level? Are there any regional or national organizations that influence resource management activities?

### **THREE**                      *Describe the settlement pattern*

#### **Definition**

A settlement pattern is any distinguishable distribution of a population in a geographic area, including the historical cycles of settlement in an area. This cultural descriptor identifies where a population is located and the type of settlement categorized by its centralized/dispersed, permanent /temporary, and year-round/seasonal characteristics. It also describes the major historical growth/non-growth cycles and the reasons for each successive wave of settlement.

Knowledge of settlement patterns provides a resource manager with a basis for predicting the significance of probable population changes associated with resource management and development activities.

#### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- Where do people live and how is the population distributed in the immediate geographic area? Are the settlement areas dispersed throughout the countryside and/or centralized in towns and cities?
- What is the history of settlement? What types of people came with each successive wave of settlement? Why did people settle in the area? Are there any particular characteristics of the settlement pattern that make it unique?
- Have there been any significant increases or decreases in population in the past? What caused these? Is the current settlement stable or on the increase or decrease? What is causing this trend?

- What major changes have occurred during past settlement cycles? How rapidly have these changes occurred? How have people handled or accepted change in the past? Are these changes easily recalled by people?
- What new publics have settled in the area in recent years? How have long-term residents accepted newcomers? Is the area settled with diverse or homogenous publics? Which settlement areas are integrated with diverse publics and which are not and why?
- What future publics can you anticipate residing in the immediate geographic area? What will be the possible causes of the future settlement patterns? How rapidly will the settlement occur?

## **FOUR**                      *Describe the work routines*

### **Definition**

A work routine is a predictable way in which people earn a living, including where and how. The types of employment, the skills needed, the wage levels and the natural resources required in the process are used to generate a profile of an area's work routines. The opportunities for advancement, the business ownership patterns, and the stability of employment activities are also elements of the work routine descriptor.

A knowledge of work routines can be used to evaluate how alternative uses of natural resources will affect the ways people earn a living and how changes in work routines, in turn, will impact future natural resource uses.

### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- What are the ways in which the people in the immediate geographic area earn a living? Are people self-employed or employed by small business or large corporations? What are the primary employment activities and the approximate percentage of people involved in each sector?
- What kinds of skills are required of people in the various types of employment? What level of pay is received? Has there been any significant shift in employment activities or income levels in recent years? If so, has the shift influenced resource use or management activities?
- Are the majority of businesses owned locally or by corporations and people from outside the area? Are generational cycles of families in the same employment typical?

- Are there any work routines that are seasonal in nature? Are the seasonal jobs taken by residents of the area or from outside the area? Do many people work two jobs or is it common for families to have two wage earners? Is the unemployment significant? If so, among which publics?
- What is the average age of the labor force? Are youth able to find employment in the area? Are there adequate opportunities for advancement? Do people change jobs frequently or work in the same activities most of their lives? Which publics have a strong cultural identity associated with their work?
- Is there a compatible mix of employment activities? Which activities are aggravating each other? How do current resource management practices maintain the mix of activities? How could future changes in resource management stabilize or enhance the current employment mix?

## ***FIVE***                      ***Describe the supporting services***

### **Definition**

A supporting service is any arrangement people use for taking care of each other. Support services occur in an area in both formal and informal ways. Examples of formal support services include the areas of health, education, law enforcement, fire protection, transportation, environment and energy. Examples of informal support activities include the ways people manage on a day-to-day basis using family, neighborhood, friendship or any other support system.

A resource manager can use the supporting services descriptor to evaluate how alternative uses of resources will affect the ways people take care of each other and how changes in supporting services, in turn, will impact future natural resource management.

### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- Where are the formal support services such as the commercial, health, education, transportation, protective, energy facilities located? What is the geographic area that is serviced? Which services are used routinely by people in the area? Which services do people have to leave the area to obtain?
- How are the services operated? Are the facilities and services provided adequate for the area? Which are inadequate and for what reasons?

- What informal supporting activities occur in the area? How do people care for each other on a day-to-day basis and in times of crisis? Do families, friends, church or volunteer organizations provide support?
- How much do people take care of each other on an informal basis and how much do people rely on formal services? Do people still trade for services or almost always pay cash for services?
- How are the elderly, single parents, youth, poor and others taken care of? Are informal systems used such as neighborhoods, or are formal organizations used for assistance? To what degree do people take care of their own problems or rely on government agencies and formal services? Do all people have access to the supporting services and activities?
- Has the amount or type of supporting services changed in recent years? How has the provision of support services and activities changed? What has contributed to these changes?

## ***SIX***

### ***Describe the recreational activities***

#### **Definition**

A recreational activity is a predictable way in which people spend their leisure time. Recreational opportunities available, seasonality of activities, technologies involved, and money and time required are aspects of the recreational descriptor. The frequency of local/non-local uses of recreational resources, the preferences of local/non-local users, and the location of the activities are also included.

A manager can use this cultural descriptor to evaluate how alternative uses of resources will affect the ways people recreate and how changes in recreational activity, in turn, will impact future resource management.

#### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- What are the principal types of recreational activities of people in the area? Which activities, sites or facilities are most preferred? Are certain activities seasonal?
- What is the orientation of the leisure time activities? Are the activities of individual, family, team, church or school related? Are there significant recreational activities in which a wide range of individuals participate? How do groups like youth and senior citizens recreate?

- How much time is spent in recreational activities? How much money is spent on recreational activities? What kinds of recreational vehicles or equipment are used? Do the majority of activities occur on public or private lands and facilities?
- Are there recreational opportunities in the area that attract people on a regional or national scale? What activities, sites or facilities are most preferred? Are certain activities seasonal? Is there a significant number of businesses that rely on the income from these recreational activities? Which activities relate to natural resource uses and management?
- Have there been any major changes in recreational activities in recent years? What events caused the change? What types of sporting goods or recreational license sales have been on the increase? What recreational sites or facilities have experienced an increase or decrease in use and why? Do current recreational sites and facilities accommodate the demands? What changes in recreational activities are anticipated in the future and why?
- What written and unwritten rules do people use when recreating? Is there much of a difference between the recreational activities of residents in the area and those who temporarily visit the area? How does the type of recreation differ?

## ***SEVEN***

### ***Describe the geographic boundaries***

#### **Definition**

A geographic boundary is any unique physical feature with which people of an area identify. Physical features separate the activities of a population from those in other geographic areas such as a valley that people identify as being “theirs” or a river that divides two towns. Examples of geographic boundaries include topographic and climatic features, distances, or any unique characteristic that distinguishes one area from another. Geographic boundaries may be relatively permanent or short-lived; over time, boundaries may dissolve as new settlement patterns develop and as work routines and physical access to an area change.

By knowing the geographic boundaries of a population, a manager can identify and manage the effects of natural resource use and development that are unique to a particular geographic area.

### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- How do people relate to their surrounding environment? What geographic area do people consider to be a part of their home turf? Within what general boundaries do most of the daily activities of the area occur? How far do the networks people use in their routine activities extend throughout the area?
- What is the area people identify with as being “theirs”? Are there any particular characteristics, social or physical that people think are unique to the area? What features attracted people to the area or provide a reason to stay?
- Are there any physical barriers that separate the activities of a population from those in other geographic areas? Are there any evident social barriers?
- What are the predominant uses of the land and what topographic or climatic features support such activities? What percentage of the geographic area is in the private and public sector? Is most of the private land owned by year-round residents or by people from outside the area?

Have there been any significant changes in the use of the land and its resources in recent years? What has caused the changes? How have these short- or long-term changes affected people and their ways of life? How accessible is the area to external influences? What kind of influences? Are these beneficial or negative impacts on the area?