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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The United States (US) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), has prepared this draft resource management plan (RMP) and environmental impact statement (EIS). This RMP provides direction for managing public lands under the jurisdiction of the BLM's Cottonwood Field Office (CFO) in north-central Idaho, and the EIS analyzes the environmental effects that could result from implementing the alternatives addressed in this RMP. The affected lands are currently being managed per direction in the Chief Joseph Planning Unit Management Framework Plan (MFP) (BLM 1981a) and amendments to the MFP.

The land use planning process is the key tool the BLM uses to manage resources and to designate uses on public lands in coordination with federal, tribal, state, and local government, land users, and interested members of the public. Generally, an RMP does not result in a wholesale change of management direction. Accordingly, this RMP incorporates new information and regulatory guidance that have come about since the MFP and amendments. The focus of the RMP also is on providing management direction where it may be lacking or requiring clarification to resolve land use issues or conflicts. Current management direction that has proven effective and requires no change will be carried forward into this RMP, as well as through the analysis process.

The RMP is being prepared using BLM planning regulations and guidance issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 US Code [USC] 1701 et seq.) and the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1 (BLM 2005a). An EIS is incorporated into this document to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) (CEQ 1978), and requirements of the BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1 (BLM 1988a).

1.2 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Cottonwood RMP is needed because regulatory and resource conditions have changed, as well as public demands, which warrant revisiting decisions in the 1981 MFP and its amendments. Many new laws, regulations, and policies have created additional public land management considerations. As a result, some of the decisions in the MFP and amendments are no longer valid or have been superseded by requirements that did not exist when they were prepared. Likewise, user demands and impacts have evolved, requiring new management direction.

The purpose of the RMP is to respond to resource conditions that have changed, to respond to new issues, and to provide a comprehensive framework to guide management of public lands and interests administered by the CFO with a focus on maintaining or restoring resource conditions and helping provide community stability through resource use and enjoyment. The RMP provides objectives, land use allocations, and management direction to maintain, improve, or restore resource conditions over the long term. The RMP incorporates new data, addresses land use issues and conflicts, and specifies where and under what circumstances particular activities will be allowed on BLM-administered public lands. Public lands addressed in the RMP will be managed on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with the FLPMA. The RMP generally does not

include a description of how particular programs or projects would be implemented or prioritized; those decisions are deferred to implementation-level planning.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The CFO boundary defines the planning area assessed in this RMP. The planning area encompasses over 8.8 million acres in Latah, Clearwater, Nez Perce, Lewis, Idaho, and Adams Counties of north-central Idaho (**Figure 1**, Planning Area Land Status [see Volume IV]). The BLM administers about 1.6 percent, or 143,830 acres, of lands in the planning area. The BLM manages the surface and subsurface of federal lands under its jurisdiction and, in some cases, has administrative duties for mineral activities on lands managed by other federal agencies or on split-estate lands.

Land ownership in the planning area is intermingled with other lands administered by the federal government, Nez Perce tribal lands, State of Idaho lands, and private property. Approximately 65 percent of the planning area is administered by the federal government, including the BLM; US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service); National Park Service; and US Army Corps of Engineers. **Table 1-1** highlights the ownership pattern of the planning area.

Table 1-1
Land Status within the Planning Area

Land Status	Acres	Percentage of Planning Area
BLM	143,830	1.6
Forest Service	5,528,167	62.5
US Army Corps of Engineers	46,134	0.5
National Park Service	1,885	0.02
Nez Perce tribal lands	94,705	1.1
State of Idaho	444,791	5.0
Private	2,581,685	29.2
Total	8,841,197	100

Source: BLM 2004a

Acreage figures are approximate projections; readers should not infer that they reflect exact measurements or precise calculations. Acreages were calculated using GIS technology, and there may be slight variations in total acres between resources and chapters.

Management direction and actions outlined in the RMP apply only to BLM-managed public lands in the planning area and to federal mineral estate lands under BLM jurisdiction that may lie beneath other surface ownership (split estate). The CFO manages numerous blocks of BLM land, ranging in size from less than 40 acres to over 12,000 acres. No specific management measures have been developed in this RMP for private, state, and other federal lands. However, given that private and state lands are interspersed with BLM-managed public lands, these lands could be influenced or could be indirectly affected by BLM management actions.

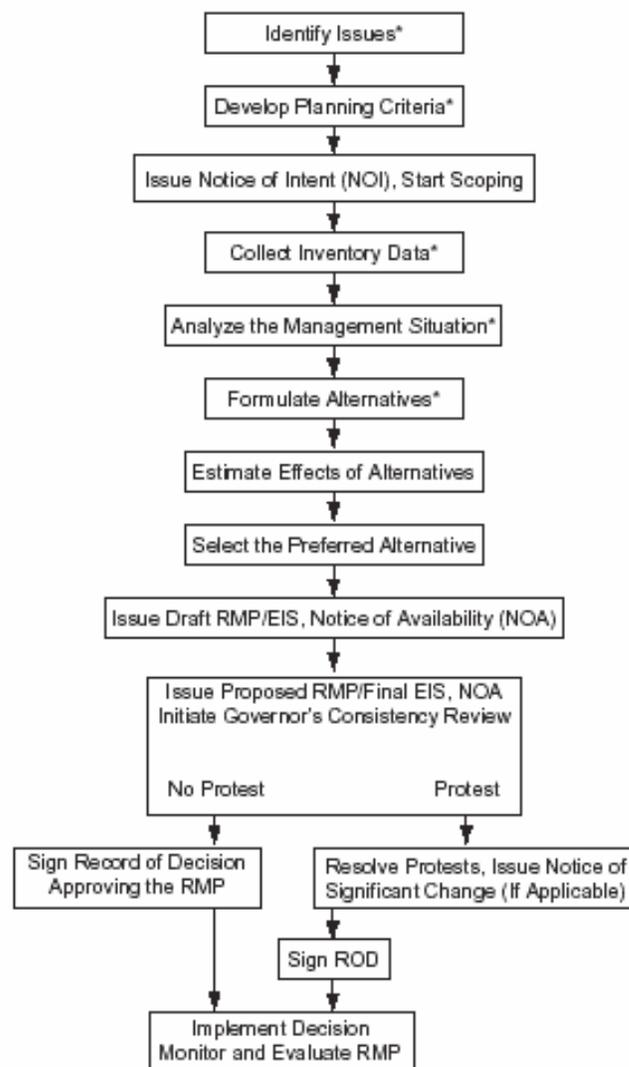
1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

An RMP guides the management of public lands in a particular area or administrative unit. RMPs are usually prepared to cover the lands administered by a certain BLM field office. An approved RMP with the record of decision (ROD) describes the following:

- Resource conditions goals and objectives;
- Allowable resource uses and related levels of production or use to be maintained;
- Land areas to be managed for limited, restricted, or exclusive resource uses or for transfer from BLM administration;
- Program constraints and general management practices and protocols;
- General implementation schedule or sequences; and
- Intervals and standards for monitoring the RMP.

Preparation of an RMP involves interrelated steps, as illustrated below and described in **Table 1-2**.

BLM Planning Process



* These steps may be revisited throughout the planning process.

**Table 1-2
BLM Planning Process**

BLM Planning Process Step	Description	Timeframe
Step 1—Identify planning issues	Issues and concerns are identified through a scoping process that includes the public, Indian tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local governments.	September to November 2004
Step 2—Develop planning criteria	Planning criteria are created to ensure decisions are made to address the issues pertinent to the planning effort. Planning criteria are derived from a variety of sources, including applicable laws and regulations, from existing management plans, from coordinating other agencies' programs, and from the results of public and agency scoping. The planning criteria may be updated and changed as planning proceeds.	September to November 2004
Step 3—Collect data and information	Data and information for the resources in the planning area are collected based on the planning criteria.	Ongoing
Step 4—Analyze management situation	The current management of resources in the planning area is assessed.	September 2004 to January 2005
Step 5—Formulate alternatives	A range of reasonable management alternatives is developed to address issues identified during scoping.	February to August 2005
Step 6—Assess alternatives	The effects of each alternative are estimated.	September 2005 to February 2006
Step 7—Select preferred alternative	The alternative that best resolves planning issues is identified as the preferred alternative.	February 2006
Step 8—Select RMP	First, a draft RMP/EIS is issued and is made available to the public for a review period of 90 days. After comments to the draft document have been received and analyzed, it is modified as necessary, and the proposed RMP/Final EIS is published and made available for public review for 30 days. A ROD is signed to approve the RMP/EIS.	Draft RMP/EIS: Summer 2006 Proposed RMP/Final EIS: estimated Winter 2006-2007 Approved RMP/ROD: estimated Summer 2007
Step 9—Implementation Monitoring	Management measures outlined in the approved plan are implemented on the ground, and future monitoring is conducted to test their effectiveness. Changes are made as necessary to achieve desired results.	Ongoing after RMP approval

1.5 SCOPING AND PLANNING ISSUES

The policy of the CFO is to provide opportunities for the public, various groups, other federal agencies, Native American tribal members, and state and local governments to participate meaningfully and substantively and to give input and comments to the BLM during the preparation of the RMP/EIS. Early in the planning process, the public was invited to help the BLM identify

planning issues and concerns relating to the management of BLM-administered lands and resources/uses in the planning area.

1.5.1 Scoping Process

The formal scoping period began with the publication of the notice of intent in the *Federal Register* on September 3, 2004. In September 2004, the BLM launched a Cottonwood RMP/EIS Web site to serve as a clearinghouse of project information while the planning effort is underway (www.cottonwoodrmp.com).

The BLM sent a newsletter to interested parties on October 15, 2004, to inform them of the Cottonwood RMP planning effort, the location of three scoping open houses in November 2004, and the opportunity to comment. The newsletter was mailed to over 1,200 individuals on the distribution list compiled by the CFO. Newspaper advertisements and news releases also were published to notify the public of the project, to announce the three scoping open houses, to request public comments, and to provide contact information. Scoping open houses were held in Riggins, Grangeville, and Lewiston, Idaho, on November 1, 3, and 4, 2004, respectively. These open houses provided an opportunity for the public to receive information, to ask questions, and to provide input (Chapter 5 further discusses scoping and public collaboration).

A Community Economic Profile Workshop was held in Grangeville, Idaho, on November 9, 2004. Twenty-five members of the public and other agencies attended the workshop and offered feedback into the economic vision of each region within the Cottonwood RMP planning area, specifically Idaho County, and how the BLM management of public lands could support the desired future of economic development.

The scoping period for receipt of public comments ended November 15, 2004. Analysis of the comments was completed and a scoping summary report was finalized in February 2005 (BLM 2005b).

1.5.2 Issue Identification

Issue identification is the first step of the nine-step BLM planning process. A planning issue is a major controversy or dispute regarding management of resources or uses on the public lands that can be addressed in a variety of ways. After considering public scoping comments, the BLM identified nine major planning issues, as follows:

1. How will the problem of invasive plant species be addressed?
2. How will forest vegetation be managed to attain desired stand structure and/or meet the range of natural variability?
3. How will special status species and their habitats be managed?
4. How will priority watersheds or areas be determined for conservation and/or restoration strategies?
5. How will motorized and nonmotorized travel be managed to provide access, while minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources?

6. At what levels will commercial uses (minerals, forest products, livestock grazing, and recreation) be authorized?
7. Where and what types of fuels reduction will be implemented to reduce risk to the public, firefighters, property, and natural and cultural resources?
8. How will public land resources be managed in scattered or isolated parcels, given varied resource values and priorities?
9. How will future demands for recreation on public lands be addressed?

The criteria used to identify issues included identifying if the effects of actions designed to respond to the issues would: 1) approach or exceed standards or a threshold, 2) substantially change a resource, 3) be controversial, 4) offer a wide range of opportunities, or 5) cause disagreement regarding their environmental impact. These issues drove the formulation of the RMP alternatives, and addressing them has resulted in a range of management options presented in four alternatives (Chapter 2). Each fully developed alternative represents a different land use plan that addresses or resolves the identified planning issues in different ways. While other concerns are addressed in the RMP, management related to them may or may not change by alternative.

1.5.3 Issues Considered but Not Further Analyzed

During scoping, several concerns were raised that are beyond the scope of this planning effort or represented questions on how the BLM would go about the planning process and implementation. There are several issues raised in scoping that are clearly of concern to the public but that are governed by existing laws and regulations (for example, water quality). Where certain management is already dictated by law or regulation, alternatives have not been developed, but management will instead be applied as management common to all alternatives. The Cottonwood RMP Scoping Report (BLM 2005b) provides a comprehensive list of issues outside the scope of the RMP.

1.6 PLANNING CRITERIA AND LEGISLATIVE CONSTRAINTS

The FLPMA is the primary authority for the BLM's management of public lands. This law provides the overarching policy by which public lands will be managed and establishes provisions for land use planning, land acquisition and disposition, administration, range management, rights-of-way, designated management areas, and the repeal of certain laws and statutes. The NEPA provides the basic national charter for environmental responsibility and requires the consideration and public availability of information regarding the environmental impacts of major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. In concert, these two laws provide the guidance for administration of all BLM activities.

Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and guidelines that help to guide data collection, alternative formulation, and alternative selection in the RMP-development process. In conjunction with the planning issues, planning criteria assure the planning process is focused. The criteria also help guide the final plan selection and provide a basis for judging the responsiveness of the planning options.

Preliminary planning criteria were developed prior to public scoping meetings to set the focus for planning the Cottonwood RMP and to guide decision making by topic. These preliminary criteria were introduced to the public for review in September 2004 on the project Web site, in October 2004 in the project newsletter, and in November 2004 at scoping meetings. The public was

encouraged to comment on and to suggest additions to these criteria at the meetings and through correspondence and at the Cottonwood RMP Web site. No comments were received on the preliminary planning criteria during the scoping period (through November 15, 2004).

1. The plan will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and current policies. This includes local, state, tribal, and federal air quality standards; as well as water quality standards from the Idaho Nonpoint Source Management Program Plans.
2. The RMP planning effort will be collaborative and multijurisdictional in nature. The BLM will strive to ensure that its management decisions are complimentary to other planning jurisdictions and adjoining properties, within the boundaries described by law and federal regulations.
3. The planning process will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely to manage public lands within the planning area.
4. The planning area is defined as the CFO.
5. All previously established Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) will continue to be managed for wilderness values and character until Congress designates them as wilderness areas, or releases them for multiple use management.
6. The RMP will recognize all valid existing rights.
7. As part of this RMP process, the BLM will analyze areas for potential designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in accordance with 43 CFR 1610-7-2, and river corridors for recommendation and designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSR Act).

1.6.1 Relationship to BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs

Since the development and approval of the MFP (BLM 1981a), it has been amended to provide additional land management direction. As the land use plan guidance is put into practice on the ground, implementation-level planning is directed by BLM policy and program-specific guidance. **Table 1-3** identifies approved MFP amendments incorporated into the existing land use plan and other BLM guidance considered at the implementation level planning stages. These plan amendments and guidance documents provide a perspective of the many management considerations pertinent to the planning area.

Table 1-3
Identification of Chief Joseph MFP Amendments and Other Documents
Considered for Implementation-level Planning

Amendments to the Chief Joseph MFP

Land Tenure Adjustment MFP Amendment (BLM 1984a)

Land Tenure Adjustment Plan Amendment for the Emerald Empire and Chief Joseph MFPs (BLM 1989a)

Plan Amendment for the Emerald Empire and Chief Joseph MFPs to Designate 12 Areas as Research Natural Areas (RNA) and/or ACECs (BLM 1989b)

Table 1-3
Identification of Chief Joseph MFP Amendments and Other Documents
Considered for Implementation-level Planning *(continued)*

BLM Policy and Program Guidance Documents Considered During Implementation-level Planning

Northern Idaho Grazing Management EIS (BLM 1981b)

North Idaho Timber Management Program EIS (BLM 1981c)

North Idaho Range Management Program Summary Report (BLM 1982a)

Lower Salmon River Cultural Resource Management Plan (BLM 1983a)

Lower Salmon River (Scenic) Recreation Management Plan (BLM 1983b)

Clearwater River Recreation Area Management Plan (BLM 1984b)

Lower Salmon River (Recreational) Recreation Area Management Plan (BLM 1988b)

MacFarlane’s Four-o’clock – Long Gulch Habitat Management Plan (HMP) (BLM 1981d)

Clearwater River Islands Goose Nesting HMP (BLM 1981e)

Chaney Goose Nesting HMP (BLM 1981f)

Little Pine Bar Goose Nesting HMP (BLM 1981g)

Little Salmon River Goose Nesting HMP (BLM 1981h)

Elk City Aquatic Zone HMP (BLM 1982b)

MacFarlane’s Four-o’clock – Skookumchuck HMP (BLM 1983c)

Craig Mountain HMP (BLM 1983d)

Lower Salmon River Aquatic Zone III HMP (BLM 1984c)

Brushy Ridge HMP (BLM 1984d)

Lower Salmon River Aquatic Zone I HMP (BLM 1985a)

Lucile Caves HMP (BLM 1985b)

Whiskey Creek HMP (BLM 1986a)

Rattlesnake Ridge HMP (BLM 1986b)

John Day Creek Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale (BLM 1999a)

Memorandum of Agreement, ESA Section 7 Programmatic Consultation and Coordination (BLM et al. 2000)

Lower Salmon River Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale (BLM 2002a)

Lower Snake River Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale (BLM 2002b)

Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Final EIS (BLM 1985c)

Rattlesnake Ridge HMP (BLM 1986c)

Table 1-3
Identification of Chief Joseph MFP Amendments and Other Documents
Considered for Implementation-level Planning *(continued)*

BLM Policy and Program Guidance Documents Considered During Implementation-level Planning

Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Final EIS (BLM 1987)

Idaho Record of Decision to the Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States Final EIS (BLM 1991a)

Idaho Record of Decision, Recommendation for 67 WSAs in Idaho (BLM 1991b)

Update to MFPs to include Land Acquisition Management Guidelines (BLM 1993)

Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact, Coeur d'Alene District Programmatic Noxious Weed Control (BLM 1994)

Decision Notice/Decision Record, Finding of No Significant Impact, Environmental Assessment for the Interim Strategies for Managing Anadromous Fish-producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and Portions of California (PACFISH) (BLM and Forest Service 1995)

National Fire Plan: Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (US Department of Interior et al. 2001)

National Fire Plan: Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (US Department of Interior and US Department of Agriculture 1995)

Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1997a) (Appendix A)

National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Use on Public Lands (BLM 2001a)

National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan (BLM 2002c)

Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services (BLM 2003)

BLM Manual 6500, Wildlife and Fisheries Management (BLM 1988d)

BLM Manual 6840, Special Status Species Management (BLM 2001b)

Executive Order 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds (January 10, 2001)

CFO Fire Management Plan (FMP) (BLM 2004b)

BLM North Zone FMP, CFO and Coeur d'Alene Field Office (BLM 2005c)

Montana/Idaho Airshed Group Operating Guide (2005)

Framework for Incorporating the Aquatic and Riparian Component of the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) into BLM and Forest Service Plan Revisions (Forest Service et al. 2004)

Cooperative Management Plan for the Clearwater River and the Craig Mountains (BLM 1997b/1997c)

1.7 COLLABORATION

1.7.1 Intergovernmental and Interagency Collaboration

The benefits of enhanced collaboration among agencies in the preparation of NEPA analyses include disclosing relevant information early in the analytical process, applying available technical expertise and staff support, avoiding duplication with other federal, state, tribal, and local procedures, and establishing a mechanism for addressing intergovernmental issues.

On August 26, 2004, the BLM mailed letters to 12 local, state, and tribal representatives inviting them to participate as cooperating agencies for the Cottonwood RMP. Letters were sent to the Commissioners from Adams, Clearwater, Latah, Lewis, Nez Perce, and Idaho Counties; representatives from the Idaho Departments of Commerce/Tourism Division, Fish and Game, Lands, Parks and Recreation, and Environmental Quality; and representatives from the Nez Perce Tribe. These agency representatives declined the offer of a formal relationship as a cooperating agency, but several agency representatives expressed interest in developing a collaborative partnership with the BLM. That is, these agencies committed to working with the BLM and sharing knowledge and resources to achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks (BLM 2005a).

To initiate the collaborative planning process, on October 15, 2004, the BLM mailed letters, accompanied by the BLM newsletter, inviting the aforementioned federal, state, local, and tribal organizations to the three scoping open houses held during the first week of November 2004. The BLM then met with the following collaborators about the Cottonwood RMP: Nez Perce Tribe Natural Resources Subcommittee (August 3, 2004); Clearwater County Commissioners (September 27, 2004); Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) (October 6, 2004); Nez Perce Tribe natural resources specialists (December 10, 2004); Nez Perce Tribe cultural resources specialists (January 11, 2005); Idaho Fish and Game Department, Clearwater Region (January 25, 2005); and Nez Perce Tribe Natural Resources Subcommittee (July 19, 2005).

The Coeur d'Alene District Resource Advisory Council is a 15-member advisory panel that provides advice and recommendations to the BLM on resource and land management issues for approximately 241,162 acres of federal public lands within 11 counties in northern Idaho. Membership may include a cross section of Idahoans representing energy, tourism, and commercial recreation interests, environmental, archaeological, and historic interests, and elected officials, Indian tribes, and the public at large. The Coeur d'Alene District Resource Advisory Council was updated on the purpose and status of the Cottonwood RMP at Resource Advisory Council meetings on December 3, 2004, and May 18, 2005. Detailed information regarding collaboration with the Resource Advisory Council is provided in Chapter 5.

1.7.2 Tribal Relationships and Indian Trust Assets

The unique political relationship between the US government and federally recognized Indian tribes is defined by treaties, statutes, executive orders, judicial decisions, and agreements. This relationship has created a special federal trust responsibility, involving the legal commitments and obligations of the US toward Indian tribes, Indian lands, tribal trust resources, and the exercise of tribal rights.

Indian trust resources are legal interests in assets held in trust by the federal government for federally recognized Indian tribes or nations or for individual Indians. These assets can be real property, physical assets, or intangible property rights. Examples include lands, minerals, water rights, hunting and fishing rights, other natural resources, money, or claims. The federally recognized Nez Perce Tribe has long used natural resources and conducted its social and religious activities in the planning area. Between 1855 and 1863, the Nez Perce Tribe and the US signed various treaties and agreements that relinquished ownership of millions of acres of land to the US, established and modified the Nez Perce Reservation to guarantee a permanent homeland for the tribe, and maintained the tribe's rights to fish, hunt, and gather (Sisson 2004).

As a federal agency, the BLM has a trust responsibility to provide the conditions necessary for Nez Perce tribal members to satisfy their treaty rights. Although there are no lands in the planning area formally held in trust, the BLM manages portions of the ceded lands that are within the traditional use areas of the Tribe. Tribal members continue their traditional and cultural uses, exercise their hunting, fishing, and gathering rights, and maintain an active interest the health and sustainable management of land and water resources. Land management decision makers need to recognize these rights and trust responsibilities. Government-to-government consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe is required on land management activities and land allocations that could affect these rights.

As part of the resolution of the Nez Perce Tribe's water right claims in the Snake River Basin Water Rights Adjudication, Public Law 108-792, Title X, Section 6 authorizes the transfer of administration of approximately 11,297 acres from the CFO to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be managed in trust for the benefit of the Nez Perce Tribe. This administrative transfer can occur upon a finding by the Secretary of the Interior that certain requirements specified in the legislation have been satisfied. At that time, the CFO would make the appropriate changes necessary to reflect the revised CFO acreage.

1.7.3 Cooperative Process with National Marine Fisheries Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service for Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Consultation

To facilitate a joint planning effort for the RMP and Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation, the CFO has entered into a Consultation Agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Snake River Office and National Marine Fisheries Service (BLM et al. 2005). This agreement establishes a cooperative process upon which ESA Section 7 consultation for preparation of the RMP may be conducted by the BLM, USFWS, and National Marine Fisheries Service. This agreement tiers to and builds on responsibilities and commitments for each agency as outlined in the national *Memorandum of Understanding, Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Programmatic Consultations and Coordination among Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service* of August 2000, and the May 31, 1995 interagency agreement for streamlining Section 7 consultation in the Pacific Northwest. This agreement also incorporates by reference the June 4, 2004 *BLM/FS/FWS/NMFS Fisheries Memorandum on Interagency Options for Streamlining Section 7 Consultation Through Sharing/Contracting Staff and Efficient Development of Consultation Documents*.

This agreement will serve to provide further definition (in addition to the August 2000 national Memorandum of Agreement to the process, products, actions, timeframe, and expectations of the BLM, USFWS, and National Marine Fisheries Service, while working together to complete Section 7

consultation and will serve as a guiding document for both agencies throughout the consultation process. Up-front coordination on biological assessments will result in a shortened timeframe for the appropriate consultation response once an agreed-to level one team biological assessment has been received by USFWS and/or National Marine Fisheries Service.

The BLM is committed to a joint planning effort resulting in a ROD for the EIS and associated RMP. The process outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding will provide ESA Section 7 programmatic coordination and consultation to complete the RMP biological assessment and biological opinion. The sharing of knowledge and awareness about the ESA and RMP framework among the three agencies will enhance future consultation efforts for resource management, protection, and recovery of endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species.

A critical element of the ESA Section 7 consultation process involves early coordination. Early coordination allows the BLM to make appropriate adjustments in proposed management strategies during the design phase, and enable the incorporation of candidate, proposed, and listed species habitat needs. Coordination between the BLM, National Marine Fisheries Service, and USFWS began in the initial stages of the planning process and will continue throughout the planning and consultation process. To facilitate Section 7 consultation, a draft biological assessment has been prepared for the Draft RMP/EIS. Upon completion of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the final biological assessment will be submitted to USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service, and a biological opinion will be prepared.

1.8 RELATED PLANS

The BLM planning regulations require that BLM RMPs be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans of other federal, state, local, and tribal governments to the extent those plans are consistent with federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands. Plans formulated by federal, state, local, and tribal governments that relate to management of lands and resources have been reviewed and considered as the RMP/EIS has been developed. These plans include the following:

- Recovery Plan for the Pacific Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) (USFWS 1986);
- Revised Recovery Plan for MacFarlane's Four-O'Clock (*Mirabilis macfarlanei*) (USFWS 2000);
- Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) Conservation Assessment and Strategy (Ruediger et al. 2000);
- Recovery Plan for the Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus brunneus brunneus*) (USFWS 2003);
- Draft Recovery Plan for *Silene spaldingii* (Spalding's Catchfly) (USFWS 2005a);
- Draft Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plans in progress (National Marine Fisheries Service 2006);
- Draft Bull Trout Recovery Plans in progress (USFWS 2002);
- Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2006a);
- 2001-2006 Fisheries Management Plan (Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2006b);

- National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (40 CFR 300);
- Best Management Practices for Mining in Idaho (Idaho Department of Lands 1992);
- IDEQ's Final Area-wide Risk Management Plan (IDEQ 2004);
- A View to the Future: A Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan for Idaho (Idaho State Historic Preservation Office 2002);
- Proposed Plan Amendments and EIS for Small WSAs, Statewide (BLM 1988c); and
- Idaho's 2003–2007 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (Idaho State Parks and Recreation 2003).
- Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (designation of West-wide energy corridors) is being implemented through the current development of an interagency Programmatic EIS. The Final Programmatic EIS will provide plan amendment decisions that will address numerous energy corridor related issues, including the utilization of existing corridors (enhancements and upgrades), identification of new corridors, supply and demand considerations, and compatibility with other corridor and project planning efforts. The approved Programmatic EIS would subsequently amend the Cottonwood RMP; however, it is not likely that the identification of corridors in the Programmatic EIS would affect the CFO planning area.

1.9 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Implementation of the RMP would begin when the Idaho BLM State Director signs the ROD for the RMP. Decisions in the RMP would be tied to the BLM budgeting process. An implementation schedule would be developed, providing for the systematic accomplishment of decisions in the approved RMP. During implementation of the RMP, additional documentation required to comply with NEPA would be required, such as environmental assessments. Environmental assessments can vary from a simple statement of conformance with the ROD to more-complex documents that analyze several alternatives. An environmental assessment documents NEPA requirements for site-specific actions.

Implementation of the RMP would be monitored, and the RMP would be evaluated periodically. Revisions or amendments to the RMP may be necessary to accommodate changes in resource needs, policies, or regulations. Other decisions would be issued in order to fully implement the RMP.

