



Baker County Natural Resources Plan



Forest Resources

Wildfire

Watersheds

Agriculture

Livestock Grazing

Mining

Wildlife

Recreation & Tourism



**Threatened & Endangered
Species**

Access & Travel Management

Letter of Promulgation


The Natural Resources Plan for Baker County is hereby promulgated under Baker County Ordinance 2001-1, an Ordinance Establishing a Process for Baker County Input to State and Federal Plans, Programs and Projects Affecting Land and Natural Resources in Baker County.

This plan provides a framework for Baker County to plan and coordinate all natural resource related decisions in the County, and to provide meaningful input into state or federal agency decisions that impact the natural resources of the County. The plan may need to be updated or amended as the need arises. This plan shall supplement, and be in conjunction with, all other Baker County plans.

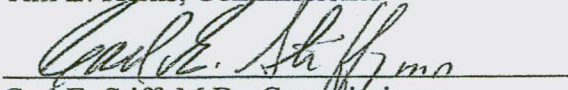
Baker County Board of Commissioners:


Fred Warner, Jr., Chair

12/22/10
Date


Tim L. Kerns, Commissioner

Date


Carl E. Stiff, M.D., Commissioner

12/22/10
Date

Natural Resources Plan

Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION	
	(1) Purpose & Need	2
	(2) Land Composition and Economic Base	4
	(3) Custom & Culture	9
II.	COORDINATION	
	(1) Coordination	11
III.	NATURAL RESOURCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	
	(1) Forest Resources	16
	(2) Wildfire	19
	(3) Watersheds	21
	(4) Agriculture	26
	(5) Livestock & Grazing	32
	(6) Mining	34
	(7) Wildlife	37
	(8) Threatened & Endangered Species	39
	(9) Recreation & Tourism	40
	(10) Access & Travel Management	43
IV.	APPENDIX	45

Purpose & Need

The Baker County Board of Commissioners (Board) recognize the inherent natural beauty and the quality of life afforded to the citizens and visitors to Baker County. The Board recognizes the importance of private property rights, access rights of way, water rights, multiple uses for all public lands within Baker County, and the quality of the natural resources, and that these uses are critical to the economic stability and well being of our citizens.

The Board is charged with governing Baker County in the best interest of all citizens, its economic base and the natural environment. The Baker County Natural Resources Plan along with all other plans and planning processes within the County will serve as a framework to enable all people and agencies to understand what is important to the citizens of Baker County.

The Board recognizes the need for a local government plan that clearly states the goals and objectives of the County in regards to management of natural resources in the County.

The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management manages approximately 51.5% of the land in Baker County, and the State of Oregon manages another 0.5%. The County's economic base is affected by changes in use on federal lands. Federal agencies are charged with governing federally managed lands inside the County's political boundary in the best interest of all citizens. Planning decisions by state and federal agencies have the potential to impact Baker County's fiscal, social and environmental costs to the detriment of our local economy. It is a County priority to foster and promote public-private collaboration and partnerships to optimize social and economic benefits of its natural resources for its citizens.

Thus, to address the use and management of natural resources within the political jurisdiction of Baker County in all of its planning efforts, the Board of Commissioners will exercise its legal right to full participation in the planning processes utilized by state and federal agencies for determining and implementing land use plans or actions within the County. The Board's interests extend to land use plans or action formulation, development and implementation, which include monitoring and evaluation. Baker County expects all decisions to be based on current, relevant, peer reviewed science and data, which take into account the multiple uses within all plans or actions.

The Board recognizes that it is its duty and obligation to enter into official resource planning activities and that federal and state agencies must fulfill their requirement to coordinate with the County's plan to assure consistency between plans as required by federal and state laws.

In accordance with federal and state laws regarding public land use planning and protection of private property interests, the Board seeks to maintain and to revitalize the various multiple

uses of federally managed lands. To that end, the Board has adopted this plan, which includes goals and objectives regarding the various multiple uses on publicly managed lands in Baker County.

The Board believes that resource and land use management decisions made in coordination, cooperation and collaboration between federal and state agencies and County officials will not only maintain and enhance multiple uses on all lands in the County, but will enhance environmental quality of all lands. This Plan serves to assure the County's elected officials have meaningful public involvement in the development of land use programs, land use regulations, and land use decisions for public lands in recognition of the significant impact these actions can have on private lands.

The Board commits to the following principles to guide decision making governing natural resources within the County:

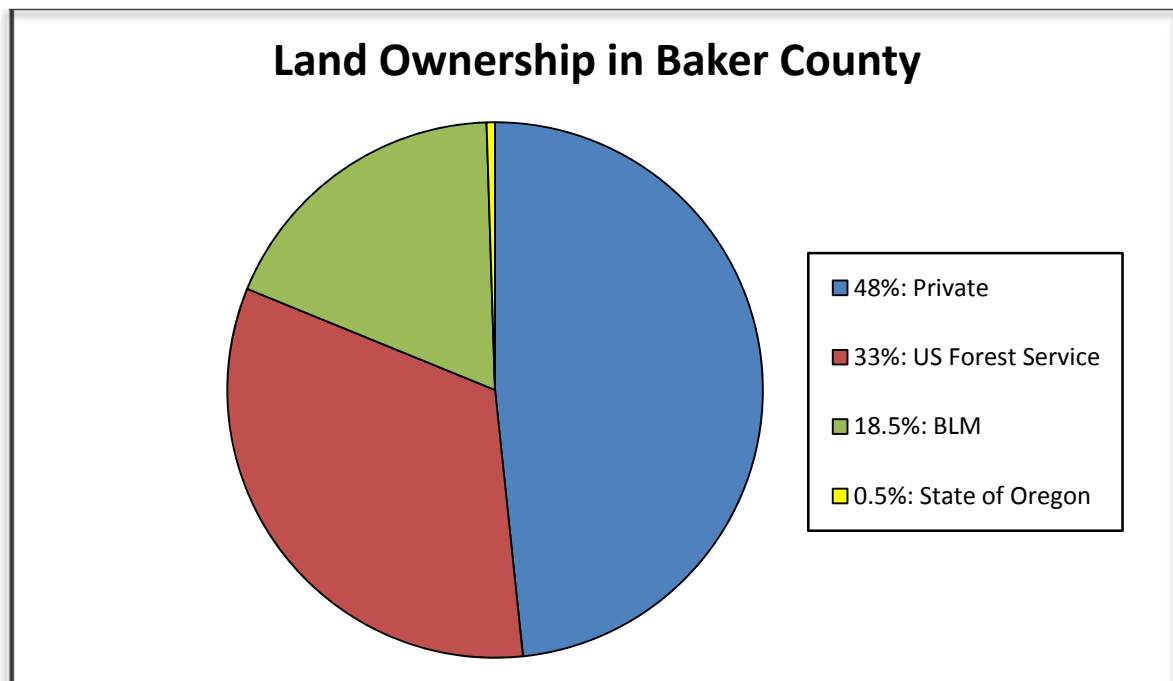
1. Revitalization and maintenance of multiple uses on all public lands in Baker County
2. Multiple use shall be inclusive rather than exclusive, thereby avoiding pitting one use against the other.
3. All plans should mitigate based on multiple use rather than by a resource by resource issue.
4. Maintain flexibility in all plans to allow for extraction of natural resources from public lands and to continue to use existing resources in accordance with all laws.
5. Protect and preserve the following rights of all County's citizens, including:
 - a. Private property interests, such as water rights and access to lands, which have ties to public lands,
 - b. Traditional economic structures in the county that form the base for economic stability,
 - c. Historical custom, culture and values of the local people, and
 - d. Enjoyment of the natural resources of the County.

This plan has been prepared by the Baker County Natural Resources Advisory Committee and subsequently reviewed and adopted by the Baker County Board of Commissioners with input from the citizens of Baker County. It is intended to be a base line plan and designed to be supplemented and amended as better information becomes available, unforeseen problems arise or issues become apparent which need to be addressed.

Land Composition & Economy

Land Ownership

Baker County spans 3,089 square miles¹ (1,976,960 acres), making Baker County larger than Rhode Island or Delaware. Federal agencies manage approximately 51.5% of the land in Baker County, comprising a total of 1,016,511 acres. Approximately 33% of the County is managed by the US Forest Service² (USFS), 18.5% is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)³, and an additional 10,067 acres⁴, or 0.5% of Baker County, is managed by the State of Oregon. The remaining 48% of the land in the county, approximately 950,382 acres, is privately owned. The citizens of Baker County rely on *both* public and private land for natural resources, recreation, and the ability to continue our way of life- especially agriculture and livestock grazing, mining, and timber harvest (discussed in later sections); therefore, all decisions affecting public lands could potentially affect Baker County's economy, customs, culture, and enjoyment of the land.



¹ Oregon Blue Book, Baker County

² 652,265 acres. USFS Northeast Oregon Land Zone Realty Specialist

³ 364,246 acres. BLM Vale District, Baker Resource Area

⁴ Baker County Assessors Office

Land Use

Agriculture and Timber

Agriculture and forest production are the predominant land uses in Baker County. According to Baker County Assessor's records, there are approximately 146,386 irrigated acres and 1,129,662 non-irrigated acres that are, or could be, used for agricultural production. Of those acres, 377 irrigated acres and 399,097 non-irrigated acres are publicly owned.⁵ There are an additional 673,681 acres of timber, 628,681 acres of which are publicly owned.

Mining

Mining is an important resource in Baker County. According to the Northwest Mining Association, the State of Oregon is home to over 300 medium to large-scale mining operations. Approximately 20 operations in Baker County are large enough that they are administered by the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI). Currently, there are over 1,200 mining claims filed in Baker County on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands, and these claims are owned by both local and out of area miners. In addition, there are many patented mining properties and other lands that are mineral in character where small-scale mining takes place.

Wilderness and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

A total of 76,310 federally managed acres in the County are restricted under these special programs, totaling approximately 8% of the public land and approximately 3.8% of the total land in Baker County. Specifically, the U.S. Forest Service administers two Wilderness Areas totaling over 37,650 acres in Baker County. The Monument Rock Wilderness Area covers approximately 18,650 acres, while the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area covers approximately 19,000 acres.

The Bureau of Land Management does not currently manage any Wilderness Areas in Baker County, but does manage 14,846 acres designated as a Wilderness Study Area.⁶ The Federal Land Policy and Management and Act (FLPMA) requires the Department of the Interior to manage lands that are being studied for their suitability for wilderness in a manner that does not impair the suitability of the area for "preservation as wilderness, subject, however, to the continuation of existing mining and grazing uses and mineral leasing in the manner and degree in which the same was being conducted on October 21, 1976." (FLPMA pg. 45)

The Bureau of Land Management is also responsible for managing 23,817 acres of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in Baker County⁶. The ACEC program also came from the

⁵ The Baker County Assessor's Office used soil class, market class, and water factors to make these approximations.

⁶ BLM Vale District, Baker Resource Area

1976 Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The FLPMA directs the BLM to protect important riparian corridors, threatened and endangered species habitats, cultural and archeological resources and unique scenic landscapes that the agency assesses as being in need of special management attention.

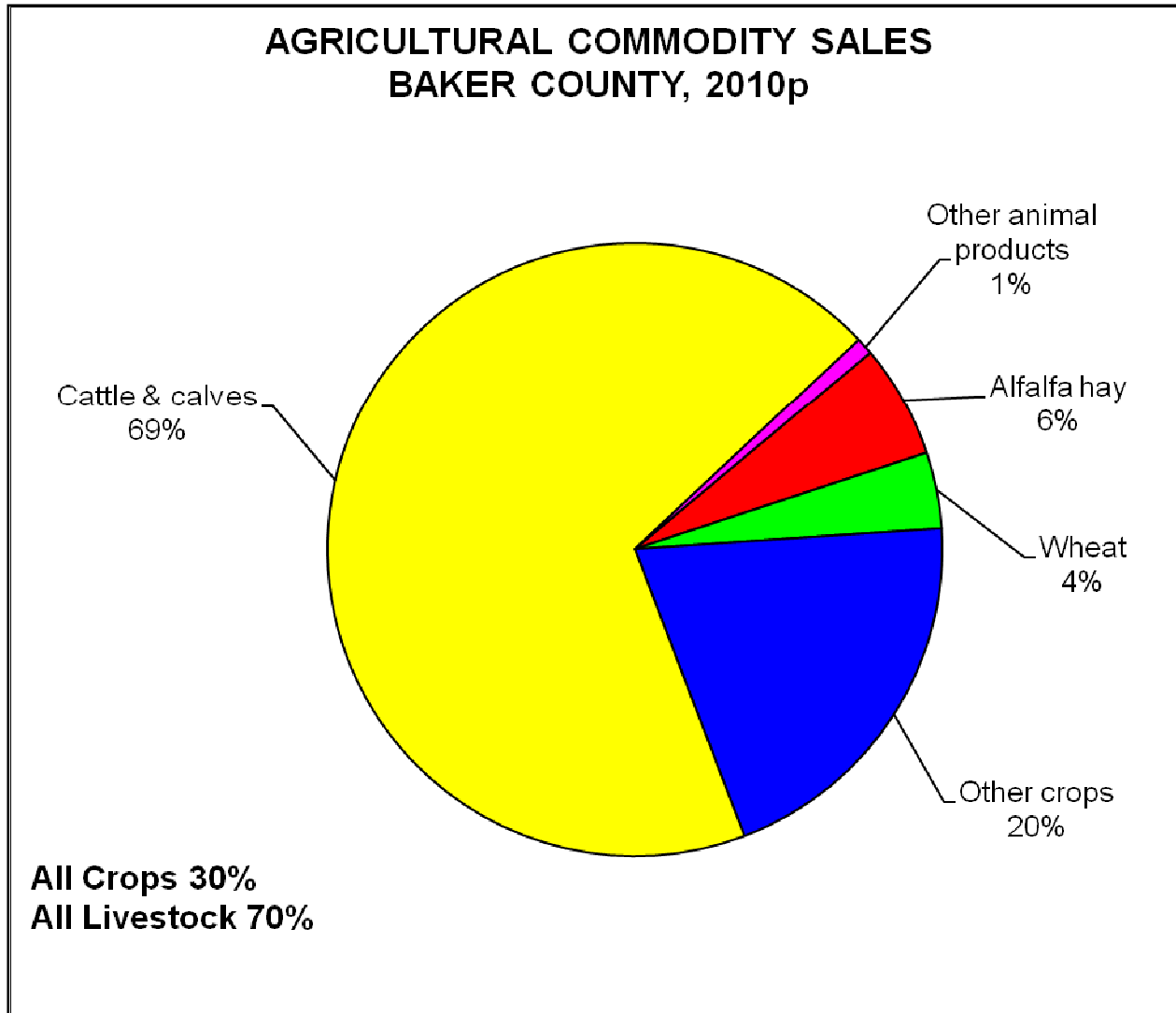
Economy

Baker County's economy is based on diverse sectors - manufacturing and retail trade, health care and social assistance, tourism and recreation, and natural resources; primarily agriculture and commodities⁷, but also timber and mineral sales. Of these, the capacity of the agricultural sector is an integral component of the County's natural resource base. The 668⁸ farms in the County produced an estimated \$61,540,000 gross farm income in 2010. Sixty-nine% (\$42,886,000 in gross income) of that total comes from livestock, primarily cattle and calves, 6% comes from alfalfa hay, and 4% comes from wheat. Other major contributors include potatoes, hay other than alfalfa (primarily grass/meadow hay), forest products, and sheep and lambs, as well as a number of other crops or livestock produced on a smaller scale.

Ashgrove Cement is Baker County's largest mining employer, employing 120 people. In addition, there are 10-20 medium scale mines, and an additional 20 large-scale mines, providing family wage jobs, and producing gold, rock, sand, gravel, building stone and perlite. Jobs in the Oregon mining industry are high paying- 21% higher than the average wage in the state. Mining creates new wealth, which expands when resources are processed and manufactured into useful products. Indirect jobs created by mining range between 3:1 and 6:1. In 2010, about 200 small-scale mines will be producing gold in Baker County. If each of the small mines only recovered ½ ounce of gold per day, that value of \$100,000 per day would provide purchasing power for fuel, oil, tires, parts, equipment, labor and materials. The total business impact will be significant, if through coordination, Baker County is able to work with the USFS and BLM, and these agencies approve the 100 or more mining Plans of Operation that have been backlogged for so many years.

⁷ 2002 Oregon Economic Census

⁸ 2008 Oregon Economic Census provided the most recent data available at the time of plan writing

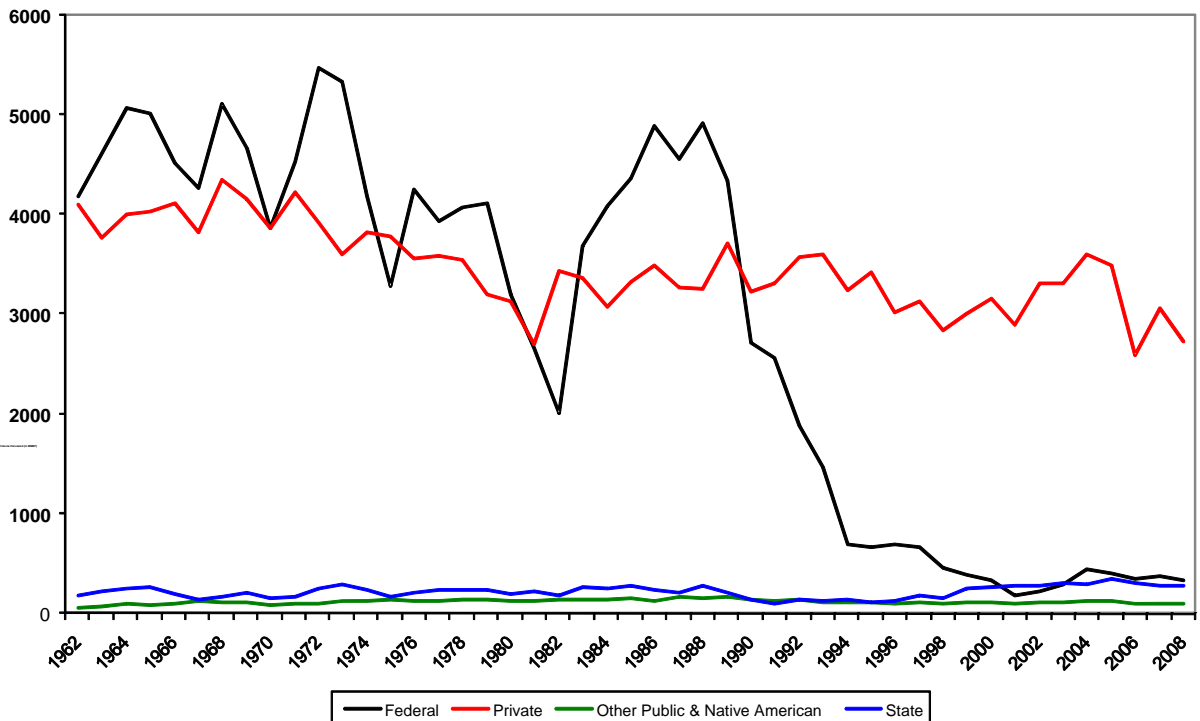


Forest products have historically been a mainstay of Baker County's economy, and they continue to play an important but changing role. The value of timber sales in the County fluctuates from year to year with the market, and the role that forest products play and the type of forest products sold have changed over the past 25 years in Baker County, as is the case across the Pacific Northwest. Between 1986-2008, timber harvest peaked at a high of 97,197,000 board feet in 1988, and had a low of 11,726,000 board feet in 2007. Baker County is similar to the statewide trend shown in the graph below, where the majority of timber harvested is now coming from private land, whereas in the past the vast majority used to be from public land. The change is shown in the difference between peak harvest at 83,803,000

⁹ Chart courtesy of Extension Oregon Ag Information Network (OAIN), Economic Information Office, OSU

board feet in 1987, and the smallest harvest in 2005 of 213,600 board feet. Harvest on private land has also been reduced, but the fluctuation isn't as dramatic as the change on public land. On private land, harvest peaked in 1993 with 33,950,000 board feet, and hit a low in 2007 with 7,108,000 board feet. As the railroad made transport possible, Baker County's first sawmill opened in 1889. As major changes swept the industry, Baker County's last lumber mill closed in 1996, but there are still several wood products mills in operation.

Oregon Timber Harvest by Ownership Class
1962-2008



10

The historic roots of Baker County—mining, ranching, farming, and timber harvest—are still the lifeblood of Baker County's economy. The County's customs and culture are steeped in a land stewardship ethic stemming from the people's dependence on the land to provide a livelihood for those who directly work on the land, and those whose businesses serve the natural resource industries and people. It is Baker County's intent to protect those values through coordination with those who implement policy on both private and public lands.

¹⁰ Oregon Department of Forestry

Custom & Culture

Baker County is steeped in the traditions of the Oregon Trail and the settlement of the western United States. By 1811, explorers, trappers and hardy mountain men probed the mountains, hills and valleys looking for furs, game and gold. The first wagon trains along the Oregon Trail started in 1843 and passed through the area that would become Baker County on their long trek to the Willamette Valley.

By the early 1860's, mining was a familiar activity in the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon. Gold discoveries in areas such as Griffin Gulch and Blue Canyon prompted an influx of eager miners and shop keepers to this area. As a result, settlements were organized to provide necessary supplies and services for miners working the streams and hills of Baker County. The town of Auburn was the first established city in the Blue Mountains, touting a population of 5,000 people in 1862, which exceeded Portland, Oregon's population by nearly 2,000 people during the same time period. While gold was a lucrative commodity, many mines such as the Iron Dyke mine near Homestead and the Mother Lode mine near Keating, produced significant amounts of copper, gold and silver as well as lead and zinc as minor by-products of the industry. The extension of the railroad to Baker City in 1884, and the completion of the Sumpter Valley Railroad in 1896, accelerated the mining boom in Baker County. Mining in northeastern Oregon yielded nearly 3,500,000 ounces of gold and an equal amount of silver, comprising nearly 60 percent of all the gold and silver produced in the state of Oregon.

On October 24, 1866, the state legislature named Baker City the county seat, and by 1900, Baker City was a regional trade center with a population that exceeded 6,000 people. By the end of the 19th century cattle, sheep and farming operations dominated the area and local settlements grew. Logging and the lumber business soon followed and the Baker County area thrived due to the abundance of Natural Resources in the area.

After 1900, Agriculture, Mining and the Lumber business were mainstays of the local economy. Water was a vital commodity and the early settlers stored and moved water throughout the County.

Shortly after the onset of World War II, an order from the War Production Board declared men and materials could be better used elsewhere in the war effort. After the war, mining labor and material costs increased, few mines were reactivated and the price of gold remained fixed for more than 40 years. The result was a rapid decrease in the mining industry.

As the large mining operations began to close, logging and agriculture continued to thrive in the County. Baker Livestock Auction brought people from all over Eastern Oregon to market their livestock and the retail businesses were strong and vital.

Forest policy changed in the 1980's and 90's and the forest product industries began to disappear. The loss of the forest products industry and the jobs in the woods were devastating to the local economy. In addition, the livestock auction closed in 1985, which dealt another blow to the County.

Baker County citizens worked hard to weather this economic disaster. Though the natural resource industries had been dealt a mortal blow, the County moved forward. Agriculture remained the mainstay of the economy, but a focus on tourism helped to stabilize the impact of the loss of mining and lumber.

The demographics of the County changed dramatically. Young people left the County because of lack of jobs. The population has grown older. The citizens remain committed to our heritage, the natural beauty of our surroundings and an independent spirit which our ancestors possessed and passed down to us.

Baker County is rich in natural resources. Our forests are a great source of renewable products. Our water resources are pristine and the lifeblood of our agricultural industry. Minerals are still abundant throughout the County and can be a significant economic generator. The natural beauty of the landscape, the abundance of wildlife and the clear skies make Baker County a great place to live and a better place to visit.

Baker County citizens and businesses understand the importance of our natural resources and the concept of multiple uses of all resources. We have seen the rise and fall of the industries which our County was founded upon. We believe that economic opportunities and new industries will be achieved through sound stewardship of the county's natural resources and the use of common sense, collaboration and innovative thinking.

The Baker County Natural Resource Plan provides a blue print for Baker County. Our intent is to understand the past and learn from it. The reality of the present will allow us to plan for the future. Our goals of protecting our natural environment while remaining economically sound are within reach. The citizens of Baker County are independent, hard working and steeped in tradition. These are tools which will enable us to succeed.

Coordination

Public lands dominate the landscape in Baker County, with approximately 52% of the land in the County managed by a public agency. Therefore, decisions made by the agencies managing our public lands directly affect Baker County's residents, custom and culture, economy, and valued way of life. Baker County citizens and elected officials have an in-depth knowledge and vested interest in the land, the economy, and the customs and culture of the County. In recognition of this, many federal and state acts or mandates require agencies to coordinate their proposals to be consistent with local plans, including this Natural Resource Plan, and policies. Baker County will use these acts, plus others as applicable, to ensure that the County's perspectives and best interests are considered.

[Federal Land Policy and Management Act \(FLPMA\) 43 U.S.C. 1712](#)

TITLE 43--PUBLIC LANDS

CHAPTER 35--FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

SUBCHAPTER II--LAND USE PLANNING AND LAND ACQUISITION AND DISPOSITION

Sec. 1712. Land use plans

(c) Criteria for development and revision

In the development and revision of land use plans, the Secretary shall--

(9) to the extent consistent with the laws governing the administration of the public lands, coordinate the land use inventory, planning, and management activities of or for such lands with the land use planning and management programs of other Federal departments and agencies and of the States and local governments within which the lands are located, including, but not limited to, the statewide outdoor recreation plans developed under the Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 897), as amended [16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.], and of or for Indian tribes by, among other things, considering the policies of approved State and tribal land resource management programs. In implementing this directive, the Secretary shall, to the extent he finds practical, keep apprised of State, local, and tribal land use plans; assure that consideration is given to those State, local, and tribal plans that are germane in the development of land use plans for public lands; assist in resolving, to the extent practical, inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal Government plans, and shall provide for meaningful public involvement of State and local government officials, both elected and appointed, in the development of land use programs, land use regulations, and land use decisions for public lands, including early public notice of proposed decisions which may have a

significant impact on non-Federal lands. Such officials in each State are authorized to furnish advice to the Secretary with respect to the development and revision of land use plans, land use guidelines, land use rules, and land use regulations for the public lands within such State and with respect to such other land use matters as may be referred to them by him. Land use plans of the Secretary under this section shall be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent he finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of this Act.

[Emphasis Added]

[National Forest Management Act \(NFMA\) 16 U.S.C. 1604](#)

TITLE 16--CONSERVATION

CHAPTER 36--FOREST AND RANGELAND RENEWABLE RESOURCES PLANNING

SUBCHAPTER I--PLANNING

Sec. 1604. National Forest System land and resource management plans

(a) Development, maintenance, and revision by Secretary of Agriculture as part of program; coordination

As a part of the Program provided for by section 1602 of this title, the Secretary of Agriculture shall develop, maintain, and, as appropriate, revise land and resource management plans for units of the National Forest System, coordinated with the land and resource management planning processes of State and local governments and other Federal agencies.

[Emphasis Added]

[National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) 42 U.S.C. 4331](#)

TITLE 42--THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

CHAPTER 55--NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

SUBCHAPTER I--POLICIES AND GOALS

Sec. 4331. Congressional declaration of national environmental policy

(a) The Congress, recognizing the profound impact of man's activity on the interrelations of all components of the natural environment, particularly the profound influences of population growth, high-density urbanization, industrial expansion, resource exploitation, and new and expanding technological advances and recognizing further the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to the overall welfare and development of man, declares that it is the

continuing policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.

- (b) In order to carry out the policy set forth in this chapter, it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of national policy, to improve and coordinate Federal plans, functions, programs, and resources to the end that the Nation may--
- (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
 - (2) assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
 - (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
 - (4) preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
 - (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
 - (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

[Emphasis Added]

[Endangered Species Act \(ESA\) 16 U.S.C. 1533](#)

TITLE 16--CONSERVATION

CHAPTER 35--ENDANGERED SPECIES

Sec. 1533. Determination of endangered species and threatened species

(b) Basis for determinations

- (1)(A) The Secretary shall make determinations required by subsection (a)(1) of this section solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available to him after conducting a review of the status of the species and after taking into account those efforts, if any, being made by any State or foreign nation, or any political subdivision of a State or foreign nation, to protect such species, whether by predator control, protection of habitat and food supply, or other conservation practices, within any area under its jurisdiction; or on the high seas.

[Emphasis Added]

Clean Water Act 33 U.S.C. 1251

Sec. 1251. Congressional declaration of goals and policy

(g) Authority of States over water

It is the policy of Congress that the authority of each State to allocate quantities of water within its jurisdiction shall not be superseded, abrogated or otherwise impaired by this chapter. It is the further policy of Congress that nothing in this chapter shall be construed to supersede or abrogate rights to quantities of water which have been established by any State. **Federal agencies shall co-operate with State and local agencies to develop comprehensive solutions to prevent, reduce and eliminate pollution in concert with programs for managing water resources.**

Sec. 1252. Comprehensive programs for water pollution control

(a) Preparation and development

The Administrator shall, after careful investigation, and in cooperation with other Federal agencies, State water pollution control agencies, interstate agencies, and the municipalities and industries involved, prepare or develop comprehensive programs for preventing, reducing, or eliminating the pollution of the navigable waters and ground waters and improving the sanitary condition of surface and underground waters. In the development of such comprehensive programs due regard shall be given to the improvements which are necessary to conserve such waters for the protection and propagation of fish and aquatic life and wildlife, recreational purposes, and the withdrawal of such waters for public water supply, agricultural, industrial, and other purposes. For the purpose of this section, the Administrator is authorized to make joint investigations with any such agencies of the condition of any waters in any State or States, and of the discharges of any sewage, industrial wastes, or substance which may adversely affect such waters.

[Emphasis Added]

Clean Air Act 42 U.S.C. 7421

TITLE 42--THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

CHAPTER 85--AIR POLLUTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

SUBCHAPTER I--PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Part A--Air Quality and Emission Limitations

Sec. 7421. Consultation

In carrying out the requirements of this chapter requiring applicable implementation plans to contain--

- (1) any transportation controls, air quality maintenance plan requirements or preconstruction review of direct sources of air pollution, or
- (2) any measure referred to--
 - (A) in part D of this subchapter (pertaining to nonattainment requirements), or
 - (B) in part C of this subchapter (pertaining to prevention of significant deterioration),

and in carrying out the requirements of section 7413(d) \1\ of this title (relating to certain enforcement orders), **the State shall provide a satisfactory process of consultation with general purpose local governments, designated organizations of elected officials of local governments** and any Federal land manager having authority over Federal land to which the State plan applies, effective with respect to any such requirement which is adopted more than one year after August 7, 1977, as part of such plan. Such process shall be in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Administrator to assure adequate consultation. The Administrator shall update as necessary the original regulations required and promulgated under this section (as in effect immediately before November 15, 1990) to ensure adequate consultation. Only a general purpose unit of local government, regional agency, or council of governments adversely affected by action of the Administrator approving any portion of a plan referred to in this subsection may petition for judicial review of such action on the basis of a violation of the requirements of this section.

\1\ See References in Text note below.

References in Text

Section 7413(d) of this title, referred to in text, was amended generally by Pub. L. 101-549, title VII, Sec. 701, Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2672, and, as so amended, no longer relates to final compliance orders.

[Emphasis Added]

Forest Resources

Introduction

Sound science and common sense support the premise of active forest management on the public forested lands in Baker County. Forest management practices on public land shall include a stable timber-harvesting program which is essential to maintain healthy forest ecosystems and to provide employment and economic security to individuals and businesses in Baker County. Investment in equipment and technology cannot be made without a stable program.

Forest management shall follow the mandates of the 1897 Organic Act and adhere to the Multiple-Use/Sustained Yield Act of 1960 as well as the later acts: National Forest Management Act; National Environmental Policy Act; and the Endangered Species Act. The Baker County portions of the National Forest shall be managed and administered for outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, timber harvesting, watershed protection, public access and wildlife in the best interests of the American people and primarily the people of the County. These resources shall be managed for sustained multiple use in perpetuity so that future generations will have the opportunity to benefit from, use and enjoy them. The resource management depicted here shall foster permanent system roads and trails open to the public.

The use of wood products is important to our nation. On the average, estimates show the demand for wood products is increasing about one percent per year. Many individuals, businesses, communities, and local governments depend on a stable supply of this renewable resource.

A management policy of no action or arms-length management is unacceptable, irresponsible, and potentially disastrous. What is needed is a cooperative, hands-on, proactive approach to forest management that uses timber harvesting as a tool to accomplish overall forest health and to ensure a healthy and vibrant forest for current and future generations.

Over-mature, overstocked, stagnant conifer forests cover much of the public land in the County. Within the County are many stands of over-mature and stagnant trees that are stressed and subject to insects, disease and fire. Varying tree stands may have a different rotation age, stocking density, species diversity, access availability, or environmental and economic viability. However, all public lands provide products that may be suitable for harvest.

The beneficial use of forest natural resources has always been a large part of the county's economy, custom, and culture. The County's forest resources must be governed in the best interest of all the citizens because one of the duties of the county is to supervise and protect

the tax base of the County. Approximately two-thirds of the acres of forestland in Baker County are held in public trust under the authority of the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and State of Oregon. Federal and State planning decisions may create benefits for a great many citizens outside the County, but have the potential of transferring a disproportionate amount of fiscal and social costs and responsibilities to the County. In order for the county to provide needed schools, health care, police protection, and other services, the forest industry and the forest products commerce within the county must be encouraged and strengthened.

This component of the Baker County Natural Resources Management Plan focuses on forest-related activities and ecosystem services. It also addresses natural resource management and use sectors that may take place within forest-areas, such as mining, grazing and wind generated energy.

Goal 1:To manage the forest within Baker County for sustainable and continuous multiple use with emphasis on silviculture.

Objectives:

1. Promote balanced management and use all resources of the forests in Baker County.
2. Priority of management and use will be to manage and use forest renewable resources of timber, forage, carbon cycled in living organisms, and energy from biomass, water, wind and sunlight for the economic benefit of the citizens of Baker County.
3. Manage and protect, in a balanced way, the multiple-use resources of minerals and metals, wildlife and fishery, recreation, and watershed for the economic benefit of the citizens of Baker County and enjoyment of the citizens of the nation.

Goal 2:To enable the development and maintenance of infrastructure for the harvesting, transportation, utilization, processing, manufacturing, and marketing of forest products and other forestland renewable resources for the benefit of the economy and the citizens of Baker County.

Objectives:

1. Manage Federal non-wilderness timberlands for sustained timber production to promote forest health and to protect and maintain sustained economic returns.
2. Harvest all forest fire and pest caused mortality before additional loss of economic value occurs as advised by the Baker County Natural Resources Advisory Committee or other representative designated by Baker County Board of Commissioners.

3. Maintain Federal payments in lieu of taxes to Baker County comparable to property tax payments from private forest property owners in Baker County.

Wildfire

Wildfires have the potential for catastrophic effects on the customs, culture and economic base of Baker County. Historic wildfire events in Baker County have severely damaged the county's watersheds, timber, grazing lands, wildlife habitat, and recreation activities that rely on a healthy growing forest. In addition, the loss of the resource has directly affected the revenue stream and fiscal stability of the county's residents.

A wildfire is defined as an unplanned, unwanted wildland fire, which includes unauthorized human-caused fire, escaped wildland fires being used as a management tool, escaped prescribed fire projects, and naturally occurring fire not designated as a management tool. Proactive planning for and effective response to wildland fire events is critical to the protection of Baker County citizen's safety, private property, and forest health.

Goal 1: Mitigate the potential for catastrophic wildfire through fuels treatment and access

Objectives:

1. Fine fuel treatment through grazing
2. Moderate fuels removal (ladder fuels) through bio-mass recovery
3. Heavy fuel removal through timber stand management

Goal 2: Preparedness to respond to all wildfire events

Objectives:

1. Maintenance of a transportation system that allows for timely vehicular access for initial attack of fires on all federally managed lands
2. Cooperative assistance agreements with rural fire agencies for initial attack when appropriate
3. Support for the Baker County Wildfire Management Team

Goal 3: Response to a wildfire event

Objectives:

1. Aggressive initial attack
2. Make every effort possible for the protection of private land and property
3. All WFSA (Wildland Fire Situation Analysis) decisions shall insure compliance with the Baker County Natural Resources Plan and specifically address the customs, culture and economic base of Baker County
4. Focus on ensuring the protection of water quality

Goal 4: Recovery from a wildfire event

Objectives:

1. Immediate activation of BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response Team) with Baker County representation
2. Ecosystem stabilization and restoration
3. Immediate removal of salvageable material

Watersheds

Baker County's watersheds provide water for urban and rural families and are essential for healthy and sustainable agriculture, livestock, industry, fish and wildlife. These watersheds provide recreation opportunities for residents and tourists, serve cultural needs, and provide habitat for native plants, wildlife, and fisheries. The health of the County's watersheds directly affects the current and future availability and quality of the water resources and water-dependent natural resources in the County, and the ability of watersheds to adapt to climate variability (i.e., periods of drought, periods of high rainfall, rain-on-snow events).

The County's watersheds are diverse and dynamic. They consist of forestlands, shrublands and grasslands, mountains, canyons and valleys, uplands, floodplains, wetlands, channels, streams, springs, lakes, reservoirs, and groundwater. They continue to evolve under the influence of climate, plants, animals, geology, floods, landslides, faults, uplift, volcanoes, erosion and sedimentation, and human land use. A successful management strategy for the County's watersheds must consider how the various watershed components and uses interrelate and influence each other both from ridgeline to stream and across adjacent watersheds.

Baker County lies primarily within the Snake River basin. The County is contained primarily within the Brownlee Reservoir, Burnt River, and Powder River HUC4¹¹ watersheds with portions within the Imnaha River, Upper Grande Ronde River, Upper Malheur River, and Willow Creek HUC4 watersheds. A list of the HUC4 watersheds in Baker County is provided in Table 1 in the attached Appendix I.

Baker County supports the development and pursuit of watershed improvement goals, objectives, programs and projects by County, State, and Federal Agencies and the many corporations and private landowners/managers in the County (Appendix I). The County supports these objectives because of the benefits residents of Baker County and of the State of Oregon receive from good watershed management. Further, the County supports the objectives of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds as they apply to Baker County and landowner-sponsored projects funded by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board that help implement that plan in Baker County.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives listed below are presented in three broad areas:

- 1) **Watershed management,**
- 2) **Infrastructure needs,** and

¹¹ USGS Hydrological Unit Code for watersheds.

3) **Other considerations.**

In pursuing the goals and objectives in each area, the County will scale their actions to the need and circumstances ranging from individual streams to HUC4 watershed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Watershed management

Goal 1: Encourage wise management and use of the County's surface and groundwater resources to sustain economic development and to maintain and improve stream, floodplain, wetland, and groundwater functions.

Objectives:

1. Encourage water right owners to protect their rights by managing them according to state law including restrictions governing that use.
2. Encourage consumptive water right owners to improve water-use efficiency to provide additional water for economic development and, where possible, to enhance instream flow.
3. Continue to evaluate how limited availability of water for appropriation, including surface water, groundwater and storage, will affect the natural resources and economic development in the County.
4. Continue to identify and evaluate new multiple-use storage opportunities in collaboration with other relevant organizations in Baker County.

Goal 2: Encourage good management of watersheds, including stream channels, floodplains, wetlands and uplands to retain and slowly release water for desired plant, animal and human uses, and to reduce the risk of flash floods.

Objectives:

1. Maintain site-appropriate ground and canopy cover in grasslands, shrublands and forestlands, including wetlands and riparian areas, to: a) dissipate rainfall energy and promote infiltration of rainfall and snowmelt; and b) minimize erosion, sedimentation and runoff that exceeds natural levels.
2. Improve water storage capacity of reservoirs that have been partially filled with sediment or have been breached.
3. Improve natural water storage capacity of degraded watersheds by improving ground cover of uplands, rehabilitating gullied slopes, and reconnecting entrenched perennial, intermittent and ephemeral stream channels with their floodplains.

4. In areas where beavers will have little or no conflict with irrigation systems and other human-related land uses, maintain their populations and encourage planting woody riparian species as a tool for storing water and sediment for stream channel, floodplain and riparian area rehabilitation.
5. Encourage the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, other relevant public agencies, private woodland owners/managers and private organizations to:
 - a. Manage watersheds, including the municipal watersheds, to:
 - i. Meet the multiple needs of residents; and
 - ii. Improve natural fire regime-associated functions and reduce the potential for large-scale high-intensity wildfires;
 - b. Cultivate awareness of the benefits of site-appropriate ground and canopy cover for rangelands, shrublands and forestlands;
 - c. Cultivate awareness of the benefits from restoring and maintaining native vegetation riparian areas along stream channels; and
 - d. Help land managers identify, plan, fund, implement, and monitor watershed improvement projects.

Infrastructure needs

Goal 1: Construct and manage roads, bridges, culverts, cutslopes, fillslopes, and artificial surfaces to minimize water concentration, erosion, and delivery of water and sediment to streams.

Objectives:

1. Reduce accelerated erosion of road surfaces, ditches, cutslopes and fillslopes where appropriate, by re-vegetating slopes, hardening road surfaces and stream crossings, installing or replacing culverts, and eliminating long entrenched road segments and long ditches.
2. Reduce erosion below and potential plugging of culverts and bridges located on perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams by ensuring that culverts and bridges are adequate to accommodate the range of conditions in these streams.
3. Improve cutbank and fillslope stability by using road maintenance techniques¹² that avoid undercutting soil deposits on cutslopes and when grading or depositing fresh soil material over vegetation on fillslopes after construction.

¹² Cutslope and fillslope angles should be no more than 80% (1.25:1). Vegetation ground cover should be at least sufficient (e.g., 60%) to control sheet and rill erosion.

Goal 2: Minimize the potential for new landslides and/or movement of existing landslides, in timberlands, along roads, and near dams and reservoirs.

Objectives:

1. Identify, map and monitor active and potentially active landslides that threaten to damage public and private facilities or threaten public safety.
2. Encourage land managers to properly manage water under, around and above mapped landslides to prevent/minimize new movement, especially where landslides could disrupt public transportation or threaten public safety.
3. Manage road-water interactions to divert water away from areas that would saturate portions of known or potential landslides.
4. Encourage reservoir owners/operators to evaluate and monitor effects of reservoir operations on hill slope stability along their shorelines and adjacent roads.

Other considerations

Goal 1: Contain, and where possible, eliminate populations of noxious weeds and other invasive plant and animal species that alter watershed functions, water flow, and reduce soil productivity and land values.

Objectives:

1. Identify and map areas in the County where invasive plant species, such as cheatgrass, Medusahead rye, and other noxious weeds have increased the risk for wildfire and indirect effects of wildfire (e.g., spread of noxious weeds, accelerated runoff and erosion, and increased peak stream flows).
2. Encourage land managers, through the media and educational tools, to contain, and where possible, eliminate invasive species and noxious weeds on their properties, in urban and rural areas.
3. To the extent practicable, ensure the County Weedmaster has the necessary resources to advise and assist in the elimination of invasive species and noxious weeds.
4. Identify how invasive plant and animal species that affect watershed functions are introduced to and spread around the County and take steps necessary to control and if possible eliminate them.

Goal 2: Encourage and support reclamation activities on mined-land that improve soil productivity and water quality and the function of streams channels, floodplains and wetlands.

Objective:

1. Support restoration of county-owned placer mined lands.

2. Support development of comprehensive mined-land reclamation plans in the County.

For additional information, see Appendix I

Agriculture

Production agriculture is the wheel that drives the Baker County economy. Water quantity and quality are an essential element in successful agricultural enterprises. The comparatively short growing season of the county dictates the rather narrow variety of cash crops that can be grown here – small grains, hay, potatoes, mint, and some grass seed. Livestock production and pastures compliment the agricultural crop production.

Many of the farms and ranches of the county are three or more generations of the same family operating and caring for the land. Agriculture is part of the culture of Baker County, as well as a way of life to the farming and ranching families.

Production Agriculture

Goal 1: To protect and preserve the family farm in Baker County as a sustainable economic sector of the Baker County economy.

Objectives:

1. Create a county Right to Farm Ordinance that protects normal farming activities from being considered a “nuisance”.
2. Encourage development of small parcel home sites on the less productive lands while retaining the autonomy of production lands for agricultural crop uses.

Goal 2: To recognize and protect the value of a sound farm economy, which provides the beauty of the landscape of the various farming communities as well as habitat for big game and other wildlife.

Objectives:

1. Encourage public sectors to be sustainable managers – healthy forests, rangelands that do not shelter noxious or invasive weeds and insects, and managed wildlife;
2. Encourage continued cooperation from wildlife managers to keep private property damage (land and livestock) to a minimum;
3. Encourage water, land and vegetation conservation practices which protect the farm resource base from environmental degradation.

Agricultural Water

Water rights in Baker County date back to the early 1860's. The dates on priorities (filing dates) trace the settlement of farms in the Baker Valley, with the better alluvial soils, and non-intermittent stream flows holding the oldest water rights.

Oregon water law is based on two legal principles – appurtenance to the land, and first-in-time, first-in-use priority.

1. Appurtenance – the legal right to use the water is affixed to the parcel of land upon which the water right was filed and is to be used. The right is a part of the land value. Its use may be transferred to another parcel, subject to some restrictions such as diversion points and non-injury to other users.
2. First-in-time, first-in-use priority – the legal system of determining which right may use water when flow volumes are restricted. The oldest date (senior) has the highest priority. Newer, younger rights are considered junior and are subject to having their use restricted when flow volumes decrease.

Water Quantity:

All irrigation water use is subject to the statutes and administrative rules of the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD). A network of local and regional watermasters is charged with assuring legal and appropriate use of the waters. The local watermasters determine which priorities will receive water, and regulate the delivery rate and distribution according to the priority date and stream flow. The OWRD controls water quantity.

Within Baker County there are two systems of delivering water – water control districts and individual water right usage. Water control districts manage the distribution, flow and availability for the lands that are within the districts. Individual right usage to distribution, rate and availability is determined by priority and is specific to the described lands in the permit. Flexibility for water control districts annual place-of-use of water is achieved through the annual water control district water-use plan. Flexibility of individual water rights owner/user is achieved via temporary or permanent water right transfers. Transfers are granted if no harm to other users is shown.

There are three primary sources of irrigation water in Baker County:

1. Free-running, un-impounded or restricted from rivers and creeks flowing from the mountains;
2. Impounded, or reservoirs, which collect water during a legally defined time, and is distributed to lands holding those permits. Although water from most reservoirs in Baker County is controlled by irrigation districts (owners of the reservoirs); there are

- five high lakes in the Elkhorns which were impounded by farmer landowners, and the water rights for those waters are specific to individual farm lands.
3. Groundwater pumped from the underlying aquifer(s).

Irrigation water rights are classified as either primary or supplemental. Supplemental water is not to be used when water from the primary source is available (i.e. – supplemental groundwater when primary surface water is available). A supplemental right will not be granted unless there is a primary right to be affixed to.

Water quality:

Water quality is under the jurisdiction of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) through the Water Quality program in the Natural Resources Department. They are charged with Oregon’s regulation and enforcement of the agricultural portion of the Federal Clean Water Act. (CWA).

In 2003, the 14 member Baker County Local Advisory Committee, in response to requirements of Senate Bill 1010 regulating water pollution from both point and non-point sources, adopted the Powder/Brownlee Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan. It has had two biennial reviews since adoption.

The purpose of the plan is to “address possible water quality limitations on private agricultural and rural land within the management area”. The goal is to “reduce identified water quality limitations on agricultural and rural lands if it is economically and technically feasible”.

The Water Quality Management Area Plan notes that a landowner is responsible for water quality problems caused by activities on land owned or managed by the landowner. (OAR 603-095-3640). Technical assistance is available by the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Natural Resource Conservation Service for correcting water quality problems.

Other source and non-source point pollution contributors are controlled by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), such as:

1. Improperly installed and/or maintained septic tanks;
2. Municipal discharges both of sewer treatment plants and storm drains;
3. Runoff from roads and streets;
4. Pesticide and fertilizer runoff from homes, parks, schools and golf courses;
5. Siltation from flash flooding events in fire-destroyed watersheds;
6. Runoff, erosion and siltation as a result of wildfire in the watershed;
7. Mining settling ponds.

There are numerous outside pressures on water quantity and water quality in Oregon. The focus on fish habitat is perhaps one of the biggest pressures on water quantity. This focus is restricting the placement of new storage containments, and other irrigation water developments such as the Oasis Project on the Columbia and the Umatilla aquifer re-charge project, which is similar to the re-charge project in the Baker City watershed.

In-stream water rights, to maintain water for fish flows, may at times restrict the availability of more junior rights to obtain irrigation water. Conservation easements on land and water in Baker County may have a deleterious impact on water quantity for agricultural irrigation due to transferring of water rights to in-stream status and use.

Wetlands

Wetlands are generally considered to be areas that are undrained or poorly drained, below field gradient (catch basin), bogs or trapped stream meanders. They are an important filtration element on the landscape for catch basins for sedimentation, as well as wildlife, songbird and waterfowl and other bird habitat and shelter.

Wetland jurisdiction is controlled by the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA) in land determinations for FSA, as well as the Division of State Lands, Army Corps of Engineers and the Clean Water Act. At the present time, wetlands are not considered to be navigable waters of the state, unless they drain into a stream or ditch. Pending federal legislation could alter that.

Public pressure on water:

Competing interests of fish, housing development expanding into farming areas, and increasing demands from cities for municipal uses are putting pressure on the available supply of water in Oregon. Water is the lifeblood of Baker County agriculture, and any diminution of that supply will have a great economic impact on the county.

At the present time, a water right is not needed for a domestic well. Irrigation from a domestic well is limited to one acre around the home site. There is movement to require home wells to yearly measure and report the water use, as well as restrict the amount of water for domestic use.

The proliferation of domestic wells in farming areas of Baker County could have a future impact on the groundwater aquifer, which could have an impact on groundwater availability for agriculture.

Doctrines and philosophies held by Baker County irrigators:

1. A water right has intrinsic value in and to the land;
2. A water right is a property right, and cannot be taken away nor diminished;

3. Good stewardship of water and water rights is essential to the economic engine of Baker County;
4. There are numerous other factors outside the control of agriculture that can be contributors of diminished water quality per DEQ 303(d) listings. Those non-agricultural contributors must also share responsibility for water quality improvement;
5. Big game, as well as all wild animals, are contributors of fecal coliform and e-coli bacteria. Livestock contributions will be considered as a contributing factor only in the stream segment through individual land ownerships. (ODA Water Quality rules)
6. The USFS must accept responsibility for federal forest watershed health. A healthy watershed produces clean water.
7. The USFS must accept responsibility for federal forest watershed water retention abilities. Forest fires diminish the ability of a watershed to store water, and create diminished water quality problems due to lack of vegetation, runoff from bare ground, sedimentation problems, and warming of surface water.
8. Present day landowners will not be held responsible for toxic pollution of legacy compounds (applications put on in previous years, by previous owners, under a different set of rules, regulations and registrations).
9. Baker County will continue to support good water and land management practices by the landowners, and will work to protect the concept of water rights being appurtenant to the land, and to support voluntary water quality/riparian areas/watershed enhancement work.

Goal 1: To maintain, improve and enhance water quantity in Baker County.

Objectives:

1. To protect the legal concept that water is appurtenant to the land, and to not allow any diminution of water quantity in water rights;
2. To encourage the improvement of upland herbaceous vegetation component to better capture and store snow melt runoff and rainfall both on public and private lands;
3. To continue to encourage the Baker Co. WASH (Watershed and Stream Health) committee, as well as private landowners, to explore and develop more storage through building new impoundments, and/to increase current capacities.

Goal 2: To improve and enhance water quality in Baker County.

Objectives:

1. To encourage healthy upland herbaceous vegetation components for water quality improvement through sedimentation and erosion control and cooling of return flows;
2. To encourage improved riparian components for capture and filtration of agricultural runoff;
3. To encourage the use of off-stream watering devices, water gaps and water impoundments for livestock and wildlife;
4. Acknowledge that not all water quality problems are caused by agriculture – natural events, municipal and road runoff as well as game animals are also contributors, as are watersheds that have poor vegetation covers.

Livestock & Grazing

Introduction

Livestock production has customarily been and continues to be a significant contributor to the economic stability of Baker County. With over \$40 million in annual sales, livestock production totals 63% of all agricultural sales in Baker County.

Livestock producers who graze on public land have been issued grazing permits based on ownership of private land. The ownership of private land involved in livestock production that is adjacent to public land gave that producer the right to obtain a grazing permit on those public lands. This right was defined in the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. In Baker County, many livestock producers rely on these grazing permits through the U.S. Forest Service. In 2009, the Whitman Ranger District of the Wallowa Whitman National Forest has 51 designated cattle allotments that total 749,946 acres. The carrying capacity of these allotments equals 31,810 AUMs (Animal Unit Months). The seasons of use vary on these allotments, but most extend from June 1-September 30, although some begin as early as April 15 and some end as late as October 31.¹³ The Baker District of the Bureau of Land Management had 281 allotments that total 368,689 public acres, which are tied to 312,969 private acres. The carrying capacity of these allotments equals 44,402 AUMs. The seasons of use vary by permit, but some begin as early as April 1 and some end as late as December 1. The preservation of these permits will continue to be an important factor in sustainable livestock production in Baker County.

Goal 1: Preserve and protect livestock production and practices as a significant contributor to the economic base of Baker County.

Objectives:

1. Use livestock grazing to improve the range conditions for livestock and wildlife.
2. Utilize livestock grazing as a primary tool to the benefit of healthy forests and to prevent the spread of wildfires.
3. Rangelands will be managed to maximize production
 - a. Noxious weeds will be controlled through grazing, herbicide applications and other measures on all lands in Baker County
 - b. Sagebrush and juniper control will be allowed and encouraged with herbicide applications, mechanical treatment or fire
 - c. Encourage the use of off stream watering devices and impoundments for livestock and wildlife

¹³ Range Management Specialist, Whitman District, Wallowa Whitman National Forest 11/17/2009

4. Public lands grazing decisions

- a. Grazing decisions will be based on sound science as supported by proper monitoring, reporting and data analysis
- b. Grazing decisions to conserve an endangered species will be made only if grazing can be proven to be detrimental to the species on that allotment
- c. Grazing decisions after a wildfire will be based on sound science on an individual allotment basis

Mining

Customs and Culture of Mining in Baker County

Baker County is one of the most mineralized counties in Oregon. Mineral production has provided an important contribution to the economy of not only Baker County but also the State. All lands not lawfully withdrawn from mineral exploration and/or development must remain available for such use. The mining industry makes up an important part of the property tax base of Baker County and the payrolls and expenditures for equipment, materials and supplies are important to the economic stability of the county. Mining is one of the historical uses of the federally managed lands within Baker County and predates the establishment of the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and maintenance of such use is statutorily compatible with multiple use principles.

General Policy Statement

It is the policy of Baker County, Oregon that all exploration, development and mining on lands in the county with mineral or energy potential shall be governed by scrupulous adherence to all laws which pertain to mining and energy development and production, beginning with the Congressional Act of July 26, 1866.

Mining Resource Goals

Goal 1: To ensure that exploration, development and production of mineral and energy resources are part of the county's management goals.

Objectives:

1. Assure that the directions and policies of Land Management Agencies do not interfere with citizens' rights of access, property and occupation while prospecting and developing mineral and energy resources.
2. Assure that State, Federal and County agencies protect the rights of access, occupation and property of anyone prospecting and/or developing minerals within Baker County.
3. Assure that all State, County and Federal management agencies understand the legal basis of current mining law (The Congressional Act of July 26, 1866 and the General Mining Law of 1872 granted all American Citizens the right to go into the public domain to prospect for and develop minerals located there). Every mining law or act enacted since then has contained a "savings clause" that guarantees that the originally granted rights have never been rescinded.

4. Facilitate the orderly exploration, development and production of mineral and energy resources within all lands in Baker County open to these activities, consistent with valid existing rights and in accordance with the National Mineral Policy Act of 1970.
5. Assure the integration of mineral resources programs and activities with the planning and management of renewable resources through the Land and Resource Management planning process.
6. Recognize that mineral development can occur concurrently or sequentially with other resources uses.

Goal 2: To assure that public and private lands are open for mineral access.

Objectives:

1. Recognize the continuing need for access for prospecting, development, processing, and mining of mineral resources.
2. Address the need for maintaining mineral and energy related access during the planning process for all activities in mineralized areas.
3. Prior to initiating the administrative withdrawal of Federal Lands from mineral entry, Ensure **(a)** the full consideration of the National interest in rural community development. **(b)** The economic value of the mineral resources foregone. **(c)** The economic value of the resources being protected and; **(d)** the risk that the renewable resources cannot be adequately protected pursuant to the application of the minerals surface use regulations.

Goal 3: To establish partnerships between the County, Mineral Industries and Federal Agencies to increase and share knowledge of the mineral estate and to develop and foster the trust levels among partners.

Objectives:

1. Work together to foster and encourage mineral and energy resource development.
2. Provide mediation through coordination when conflicts occur concerning Federal Policy and the legal development of mineral and energy resources.
3. Encourage the showcasing of excellence in mineral and energy development and production.

Goal 4: To assure mineral and energy development and production are not subjected to unreasonable regulations, taxes, fees and/or reclamation bonds.

Objectives:

1. Strive to make all concerned parties understand that Baker County suffers a loss of business revenue when Federal Agencies unnecessarily restrict or eliminate mining.
2. Challenge the use of excessive mitigation measures and excessive reclamation bonds.
3. Ensure that reclamation bonds are calculated based on the cost to government of hiring a third party contractor to perform the work.
4. Ensure that all reclamation bonds are calculated under the Service Contract Act when reclamation consists solely of removal of surface improvements, refilling, contouring, vegetating and landscaping the surface.
5. Encourage value added mineral and energy industries.

Wildlife

Introduction

The interrelationship between wildlife and humans in Baker County has been ongoing for over a hundred and fifty years. Hunting and fishing are significant economic drivers in our economy. They are also woven into the social fabric of our citizens and are a significant part of the culture and custom of Baker County. Our challenge as a County is to preserve and enhance our wildlife resources while maintaining historic and contemporary uses of these resources. Our goals reflect this attempt to manage our wildlife resources in the era we now live in.

Goal 1: Coordinate with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to develop specific management plans for all managed wildlife.

Objectives:

1. Involve local stakeholders in the development of ODFW wildlife plans.
2. Strive to maintain adequate hunting and fishing opportunities as a result of those management plans.
3. Encourage the maintenance and improvement of wildlife habitat on private and public lands.
4. Encourage the development of public/private partnerships to improve hunting, viewing and fishing access and opportunities.
5. Push for peer reviewed studies of relationships between humans, habitat and predators and their effect on given wildlife species.

Goal 2: Mitigate damage caused by wildlife on private ground.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the enhancement of habitat on public lands.
2. Allow emergency hunts to control wildlife caused damage on private lands.
3. Support of winter feeding programs as a part of overall wildlife plans and objectives.
4. Encourage just compensation for landowners who provide resources to sustain wildlife populations.

Goal 3: Develop comprehensive management plans for predatory species which utilize wildlife for food supply.

Objectives:

1. Include analysis of predator numbers when developing sustainable game management numbers.
2. Resist the introduction of new predator species on vulnerable wildlife populations.
3. Maintain quick response to predators near feeding operations.
4. Allow multiple actions for mitigation of problem predators (including but not limited to traps, hounds, additional tags).
5. Encourage peer reviewed studies to better understand the interrelationships between hunting, humans, predators and the management of wildlife species and domestic livestock.

Threatened & Endangered Species

The Natural Resources Advisory Committee and the Board will pay particular attention to any species designated in any category or classification for protection or consideration of protection under the Endangered Species Act and will act to require the agencies to comply with full procedural provisions of federal statutes.

Goal 1: Management of a threatened or endangered species in Baker County will be consistent with good environmental stewardship. The listed species will be managed in a way consistent with the customary use of the land and wildlife. Any proposed management plan of a listed species will require coordination with the County to ensure that it is consistent with the Natural Resources Plan.

Objectives:

1. Baker County requests:
 - a. a zone style management plan for any proposed conservation plan of an ESA listed species.
 - b. Assures that species in question are native to Baker County;
 - c. Identifies acceptable habitat where the species could be conserved and protected under the Act without substantial conflict to other natural resource users;
 - d. Establishes the maximum population of the species to be protected under the Act in the habitat identified.
2. Endorse establishment of a State funded/managed compensation program for property owners who suffer losses as a result of an ESA listed species.

Recreation & Tourism

Introduction

Baker County's landscape is a recreational haven for residents and visitors alike. With amenities such as a bounty of wildlife and breath-taking scenery, a pioneer history imbedded in the social backdrop of the county as deep as the ruts of the old Oregon Trail, and year-round outdoor recreational possibilities; recreation plays an essential part in the communal structure of Baker County. Recreation is also the a critical economic drawing point for Baker County, attracting visitors who come to view wildlife, fish, hunt, ski, snowmobile, hike, camp and generally enjoy the beauty of Baker County.

Historically, recreation has been an essential part in the social framework of the County. Families who live in Baker County, often times for generations, perceive recreation as a "right to enjoy" the surroundings of home. In a nutshell, *"it's why we live here."* One of the longest standing traditions for residents and visitors alike is hunting, angling and viewing Baker County's bounty of big game, birds, fish and other wildlife. It would be difficult to overstate the value of our abundant wildlife to Baker County, including the value of the tourism it brings to Baker County.

Tourism is one of the largest economic drivers in Baker County- in fact, only agriculture generates more dollars for this County. Direct travel spending is estimated to be over \$45 million per year, per Dean Runyan Associates for 2006. Tourism accounts for approximately 630 jobs throughout the County. Baker County has an adopted Tourism Development and Marketing strategy that focuses on outdoor recreational opportunities which will attract visitors to Baker County.

Baker County is proud of this exceptional scenic region and the nurturing environment it offers to the people that live and visit here. The management of federal lands for multiple use can positively impact recreational values, and promoting the use of and access to public lands encourages economic development that sustains businesses and provides jobs. The goals of the Baker County Natural Resource Plan for Recreation & Tourism seek to enhance the natural beauty of our area while continuing to build a tourism base for our economic well being as well as maintaining our custom, culture and heritage.

Goal 1: Maximize opportunities for recreational tourism

Objectives:

1. Protect the best interests of the recreationists and the recreational activities that take place within Baker County; Baker County shall not support unreasonable or

unsupportive land use fees and/or fee increases, or the creation of new and/or unnecessary fees for the use of public lands within the County. Any entity considering fee increases with the potential to impact recreation in the County must coordinate with the Board on the decision.

2. Balanced access for hiking, biking, Off Highway Vehicles and full sized vehicles required.
3. Adequate road system to allow tourist access to variety of landscapes and features.
4. Agency and County cooperative agreements for enhancement of recreational opportunities.

Goal 2: Access to public land throughout the County is paramount in the new tourism marketing strategy

Objectives:

1. Road closures on and affecting access to public lands in Baker County require an appropriate County and public review processes, noticing, appeal periods, and a genuine good faith effort to incorporate the suggestions and concerns put forth by the public.
2. Continue generating income to local business from recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and seasonal activities by protecting access to and on public lands in Baker County.
3. In order to protect Baker County's recreational interests and access to and on public lands, road closure proposals on public lands within Baker County, as well as the creation of Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas that would be managed as wilderness areas, National Monuments, Areas of "Critical Concern" or "Wild and Scenic", or any other labels that would no longer allow unrestricted use of public lands within Baker County, shall be coordinated with Baker County and the provisions and goals set forth in this Natural Resources Plan.

Goal 3: Attract visitors for multiple day stays to increase overall tourism spending.

Objectives:

1. Focus on strategies which enhance tourism development (i.e.; trail system, athletic tournament and contests, event enhancement, winter recreation, etc.)

2. Cooperate with various agencies for adequate signing of public lands for visitor information and increased awareness.
3. Assimilate custom, culture and heritage into Tourism development (i.e.; agri-tourism, cattle drive, mining displays, “Cowboys & Indians”, etc.)

Goal 4: Minimize actions which diminish the quantity or quality of outdoor recreational experiences available to visitors.

Objectives:

1. Enhance trail system for OHV use.
2. Ensure adequate access for those with limited mobility, who constitute a large segment of tourism dollars spent.
3. Identify and map areas which could be identified as quiet areas.

Access & Travel Management

Access to private and public lands in Baker County is an integral piece of the Baker County Natural Resource Plan (BCNRP). The intent of the BCNRP is to provide access for the multiple uses of land while respecting private property rights as well as protecting the resources on public lands.

The BCNRP is intended to be broad enough to allow for the management of road systems to deal with the changing uses of lands within Baker County. The use and enjoyment of the natural resources of Baker County dictate that we have a transportation system which is efficient, maintainable and balances the various resource values. Access and travel issues are critical to all resource goals encompassed in the BCNRP.

Goal 1: To ensure a transportation infrastructure which allows for access to public lands for the enjoyment of our citizens for recreation, economic and customs and cultural purposes.

Objectives:

1. Identify the multiple resource uses on public lands.
2. Identify conflicts associated with multiple resource uses on public lands.
3. Mitigate conflicts and uses on public lands in the following ways:
 - a. Recognize the importance of all resource values.
 - b. Mitigate conflicts holistically based on the concept of multiple uses of the natural resources.
 - c. Access issues should be coordinated with Baker County maximizing multiple uses while ensuring the protection of all resource values encompassed by the BCNRP.

Goal 2: Maintenance of public roads should assure safe travel, fire access and protection of sensitive areas.

Objectives:

1. Prioritization of important structures (fish friendly culverts, bridges, crossings).
2. Collaboration with public and private entities for road maintenance.
3. Adequate signage of the road system to assure public safety.

4. Maps that are user friendly.

Goal 3: Ensure that all lawful uses on public lands have access which allows for the full use of the road system.

Objectives:

1. Access plans should be based on common sense and should be flexible based on the permitted or regulated use.
2. Historic access should be maintained if no reasonable alternative is provided.
3. Provide mediation when conflicts arise over permitted and regulated use.

APPENDIX I

Table 1. HUC4 Watersheds of Baker County

HUC4 Watershed Code	HUC4 Watershed Name
17050116	Upper Malheur River
17050119	Willow Creek
17050201	Brownlee Reservoir
17050202	Powder River
17050203	Burnt River
17060102	Imnaha River
17060104	Upper Grande Ronde River

Source of Information: Oregon 8 Digit Hydrologic Unit Code Map at:

http://or.water.usgs.gov/lmgs/maps/or_huc_map.pdf

It is difficult to determine from the map at http://or.water.usgs.gov/lmgs/maps/or_huc_map.pdf that the Baker County line extends into the Middle Fork John Day River and Upper Grande Ronde River HUC4 watersheds.

Middle Fork John Day River -- According to the legal description of the Baker County boundary adjacent to the Middle Fork John Day River, the boundary is the watershed divide between the Burnt River and Middle Fork John Day River. However, while Tim Bliss was mapping the watershed boundary for the federal interagency watershed/subwatershed mapping project for the US Forest Service, he discovered that the actual watershed boundary does not match the official watershed boundary for Baker County as shown on USGS topographic maps. This information was conveyed to Baker County at that time. Therefore, small portions of the Middle Fork John Day River are in Baker County. A GIS overlay of the current county line and interagency HUC4 watershed boundary will show the affected areas.

Upper Grande Ronde River -- The Baker County line appears to enter a small part of the Catherine Creek drainage; a GIS overlay of the county line and interagency HUC4 watershed boundary is needed to evaluate this area.

Table 2. Watershed Planning and Management Entities in Baker County

<p>Watershed Improvement Planning Entities</p> <p>Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)</p> <p>Baker Valley SWCD</p> <p>Burnt River SWCD</p> <p>Eagle Valley SWCD</p> <p>Keating SWCD</p> <p>Malheur SWCD</p> <p>Wallowa SWCD</p> <p>Watershed Councils</p> <p>Grande Ronde Model Watershed</p> <p>Malheur Watershed Council</p> <p>Powder Basin Watershed Council</p> <p>Watersheds and Stream Health (WASH) Committee</p>
<p>Watershed Improvement Planning & Management Entities</p> <p>Baker County Departments</p> <p>Parks Department</p> <p>Roads Department</p> <p>State Watershed Management Agencies</p> <p>Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife</p> <p>Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation</p> <p>Oregon Department of State Lands</p> <p>Oregon Department of Transportation</p> <p>Federal Watershed Management Agencies</p>

Bureau of Land Management, Vale District

Bureau of Reclamation, Snake River Office

Malheur National Forest

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Corporations: Ash Grove Cement Company, Idaho Power Company, Union Pacific Railroad, corporate ranches and farms.

Private: landowners/managers