



**JAMES KENT ASSOCIATES**  
*Global Cultural Analysts*

# Community Reports and Scoping Support Document for the BLM Planning Effort in the John Day River Basin



Prepared by  
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Kevin Preister  
Dave Schultz  
Joan Resnick

Prepared for  
Tina Welch, Field Manager  
Bureau of Land Management  
Central Oregon Resource Area  
Prineville, Oregon

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*Enhancing Productive Harmony between Human and Natural Environments*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Report One: Community Reports

Executive Summary	v
Chapter One: Introduction	1
➤ Background	1
➤ Objectives	1
➤ Methods	2
➤ Organization of the Reports	3
➤ Acronyms Used	4
Chapter Two: The Human Geography of Central and Northern Oregon and Key Findings	5
➤ The Human Geography of Northeast Oregon	5
➤ Key Findings	11
Chapter Three: The Grant Human Resource Unit	19
➤ Community Description	19
➤ Community Themes and Issues	30
➤ Natural Resource Themes and Issues	33
➤ Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response	42
➤ Possible Community-Based Planning Elements	42
➤ Communication Strategy	44
➤ The North Fork Community Resource Unit	46
Chapter Four: The Wheeler Human Resource Unit	55
➤ The Mitchell Community Resource Unit	58
○ Community Description	58
○ Community Themes and Issues	59
○ Natural Resource Themes and Issues	59
○ Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response	66
○ Possible Community-Based Planning Elements	67
○ Communication Strategy	67
➤ The Fossil Spray Community Resource Area	68
○ Community Description	68
○ Community Themes and Issues	71
○ Natural Resource Themes and Issues	72
○ Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response	77
○ Possible Community-Based Planning Elements	77
○ Communication Strategy	78
Chapter Five: The Sherman Area of The Dalles Human Resource Unit	81
➤ Community Description	81
➤ Community Themes and Issues	84
➤ Natural Resource Themes and Issues	86
➤ Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response	90
➤ Possible Community-Based Planning Elements	90
➤ Communication Strategy	91
Chapter Six: The Gilliam Area of the Gilliam/Morrow Human Resource Unit	93
➤ Community Description	93
➤ Community Themes and Issues	96
➤ Natural Resource Themes and Issues	97
➤ Resolve as you Go Candidates for Early Response	99
➤ Possible Community-Based Planning Elements	100
➤ Communication Strategy	100

Chapter Seven: The Morrow Area of the Gilliam/Morrow Human Resource Unit	101
➤ Community Description	101
➤ Natural Resource Themes and Issues	104
➤ Possible Community-Based Planning Elements	106
➤ Communication Strategy	106

References Cited	107
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Appendix A: Mailing List of Individuals and Groups with Interest in the BLM Planning Process	109
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Appendix B: Seven Cultural Descriptors Used in the Discovery Process™ for Community Assessment	119
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**Figures:**

Figure One: The Four Social Resource Units (SRUs) of the John Day River Basin	8
Figure Two: Population Change, North Central Oregon Counties, 1990-2005	11
Figure Three: Per Capita Income, North Central Oregon Counties, 1970-2000	12
Figure Four: The Grant Human Resource Unit (HRU) With Its Community Resource Units	20
Figure Five: Mural on John Day Store	23
Figure Six: The Thomas Condon Paleontology Center	29
Figure Seven: The Wheeler Human Resource Unit (HRU) With Its Community Resource Units	56
Figure Eight: The John Day River Near Highway 19 With Elk in Background	60
Figure Nine: The Mastodon as an Art Form, Fossil, Oregon	70
Figure Ten: The Dalles Human Resource Unit With Its Community Resource Units	82
Figure 11: The Front Entrance to the Sherman County School District Office in Wasco	85
Figure 12: The Goose Pit Saloon in Wasco, Sherman County	92
Figure 13: The Gilliam/Morrow Human Resource Unit With Its Community Resource Units	94
Figure 14: The Condon Hotel	97
Figure 15: The John Day River on Highway 206, Gilliam County	99
Figure 16: Willow Creek Reservoir Near Heppner, Oregon	102
Figure 17: Morrow OHV Park	105

**Tables:**

Table One: A Comparison of Poverty Rates Among Five North Central Oregon Counties	13
Table Two: Number and Percent of Persons of Hispanic Origin of Any Race in Five North Central Oregon Counties	13
Table Three: Enrollment Trends for School Districts in the CORA Area	14
Table Four: Population in Grant County and Its Communities	21
Table Five: Population in Wheeler County and Its Communities	57
Table Six: Population of Sherman County and Its Communities	83
Table Seven: Population of Gilliam County and Its Communities	95
Table Eight: Population of Morrow County and Its Communities	103

## Report Two: Scoping Support Document

Social and Economic Criteria for Evaluating Planning Alternatives	129
Planning Questions from a Social and Economic Perspective	131
Environmental Justice	133
Figures:	
Figure One: The Productive Harmony Model of Bio-Social Ecosystem Management	130

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## Executive Summary

### Community Reports and Scoping Support Document for the BLM Planning Effort in the John Day River Basin

James Kent Associates (JKA) was asked to engage in community fieldwork in Grant, Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam, and Morrow Counties in order to support the land use planning process of the Central Oregon Resource Area (CORA) of the Prineville District Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). CORA is revising and updating its Resource Management Plan for the John Day River Basin for which it needs to document citizen concerns about public land management, current social and economic conditions, and opportunities for greater community dialogue about alternatives for future management.

The key findings (Chapter Two) from community fieldwork and research that relate to community life are numbered as follows:

1. Population in four of the five counties declined or was flat over the last fifteen years, while Morrow County, by virtue of its Columbia River location, increased population substantially. No clear trend was identified with rates of poverty, although per capita incomes have dropped in real terms throughout most of the region. The population is older than the state or national average, although its proportion has remained stable. Hispanics have notably increased in Morrow County, while they have only modestly increased in other areas.
2. The traditional economic sectors in these counties of timber, ranching, farming and mining, have slowly declined over the last 30 years in terms of income and employment generated. Like other areas of the state and nation, the economic growth has occurred in trades and services, particularly professional and business services, reflecting the retirement and recreation basis of these sectors.
3. County and local leadership has been active in fostering efforts at economic diversification with some successes, notably, wind energy development in Sherman County, Painted Hills beef and the development of paleontological resources in Wheeler County, an OHV Park in Morrow County, and a broadening of service and recreation oriented businesses in Grant County.
4. Settlement patterns are changing, as long-time ranches are bought by wealthier urbanites, who often purchase for recreation purposes, and who are seen by other residents as improving environmental conditions but not adding much to community life. Residents report that new settlement is from the “Bend spillover,” from California, and from the coast. A short supply of housing reported by residents is seen to be leading to higher housing prices.

With regard to natural resource management, these conclusions can be drawn:

1. Although the community theme is widespread throughout the region that government cannot be trusted, personal relationships between BLM personnel and residents tend to be

very good, particularly with BLM's "traditional publics" of ranchers, farmers, and the timber industry.

2. Communication between BLM and community members is generally perceived to be low. Most people simply do not know what BLM is doing and many expressed appreciation of BLM's outreach effort through James Kent Associates.
3. Awareness of BLM lands tends to be high among the traditional sectors and elected officials, but low among the general public. Related to this is a general, widespread confusion of people about whose land one might be on at any given moment. The desire for accurate maps and better information was one of the most widespread citizen issues in the John Day River Basin.
4. The most widespread citizen issue was the loss of access to public lands. People want the new plan to anticipate the locations of future access loss and work with them to preserve access in the future, or to re-acquire access to areas recently lost. High interest was expressed in partnering with local counties to undertake joint transportation planning and working together to foster greater access to public lands in the future.
5. The process by which individual BLM parcels are purchased or Recreation and Public Purpose leases are obtained is not well understood and is of key interest. There is a strong perception of agency inertia on this issue.
6. Residents want to be part of the management planning process for the newly acquired lands on the North Fork of the John Day River. They generally favor multiple uses, and are interested in fishing and hunting, fire and forest management, fencing, access, roads, gates, noxious weeds, "wild and scenic" designations, business development, and maps.
7. Although people remain skeptical that a recreation economy can ever replace a ranching and timber economy, new recreation-related businesses and their promotion are of central interest. Shooting ranges, OHV riding areas, winter recreation, and managing hunting effects are some of the interests.
8. Residents in Sherman and Gilliam Counties are most interested in the recreation management of the John Day River, specifically, the management of floaters, optimizing the economic benefits of river recreation, stewardship contracting for management of recreation opportunities, as well as promoting continued access to BLM lands near the river.
9. Other specific issues related to public land management that were less widespread and more relegated to particular publics include grazing, the timber programs, fire suppression programs (Sherman and Gilliam Counties), and support for youth.

10. Residents believe there is a trend toward hunting only for the rich. They respect the right of ranchers to diversify their income sources through fee hunting, but lament the loss of hunting opportunities through lack of traditional access to private lands. Observers expect the demand for hunting on public lands to increase.

From discussions with residents and elected officials, JKA concludes that the following citizen interests could lend themselves to a community-based process for completion of BLM's Resource Management Plan (RMP):

1. Access. Although many residents couched their concerns about access as if it was BLM's responsibility, many indicated a willingness to contribute to solutions and felt that a community-based planning process could widen the resources available to address the problem and accomplish more than if BLM addressed the issue only "in house."
2. Little Canyon Mountain. The success of the Little Canyon Mountain clean up generated ample "social capital" with which to undertake the next step in management planning for this area that could accommodate multiple uses. The nearby communities in this area appear to have capacity to contribute in positive ways to the ongoing management of this area.
3. John Day River Management. Many people believe that permitting of floaters on the John Day River is inevitable in order to manage the impacts, and want to participate to minimize necessary regulation and optimize community benefits.
4. Economic development. The role of BLM lands and their management in fostering needed economic development has been appreciated by residents and many advised that an even more concerted focus on this topic in the new land use plan is warranted, particularly related to the promotion of paleontological resources and recreation-oriented business, including the provision of BLM maps and information that would help in orienting visitors to the attractions of the area.

The report also recommends communication strategies for each geographic area based on coaching by local residents about the best time and place for meetings, key people to involve, and appropriate methods of local communication. Generally speaking, residents appreciate personal connection and want a planning process that builds off of local interests and includes national interests in a positive manner. Residents generally favor an approach that eschews the radical fringes of thought and builds a practical, moderate course of action for future BLM management.

The scoping support document (Report Two) recommends planning questions and social and economic criteria by which to evaluate planning alternatives based on citizen input provided in this report.



# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## **Background**

The Central Oregon Resource Area (CORA) of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), located in Prineville, is responsible for revising its land use plan, the Resource Management Plan (RMP), by which it guides its management practices in the future. It has requirements for the gathering and analysis of social and economic information regarding communities in which public land management is important. This information is to be integrated with biophysical data in understanding the current situation in an area. It is then incorporated into the formation of alternatives, and included in the analysis of the alternatives for any future course of action.

James Kent Associates (JKA) has specialized in community-based approaches to public land use management and planning for over three decades. JKA uses a social ecology approach that accesses the informal levels of community in order to identify local concerns related to public land management, social and economic trends affected by land use decisions, and opportunities for further communication and dialogue between community residents and BLM.

## **Objectives**

The objectives for JKA related to work in central and north central Oregon were three:

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

The Scope of Work related to these objectives included:

1. Community fieldwork (The Discovery Process™)<sup>1</sup> in Grant, Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam, and Morrow Counties of central and north-central Oregon. The Discovery Process is a way to describe communities, including tribal communities, from social and economic perspectives as they relate to land use planning, particularly the social and economic trends identified by residents.
2. Identification of the range of citizen issues and opportunities residents identify related to public land use planning.
3. Human geographic mapping at three scales in order to recommend communication strategies that appropriately target agency resources for community dialogue and public participation activities.
4. “Resolve as you go.” Involve appropriate staff in key network contact regarding citizen issues that can be resolved outside the planning process. Though not technically required by law, this step is designed to create early success and to build a base of support for the planning process. For those citizen issues more directly related to planning, staff/citizen contact begins dialogue and an understanding of “civic protocol”—how people want to be communicated with and the opportunities for broader dialogue with more diverse voices as the process develops.
5. Recommend for CORA planning criteria from a social and economic perspective based on key values and direction from communities.
6. Develop communication strategies in each geographic area that will allow BLM to sustain formal and informal citizen contact throughout the planning process.

It is important to note that the level of effort varied from county to county, based on BLM direction relative to the amount and importance of BLM lands involved.

## **Methods**

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

A “snowball” method was used whereby people talked with were asked of others with whom we could talk. We frequented the gathering places of a community such as cafes,

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

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

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

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

1. Publics
2. Networks
3. Settlement Patterns
4. Work Routines
5. Support Services
6. Recreation Activities
7. Geographic Features<sup>2</sup>

## **Organization of the Reports**

Report One contains the Community Reports required by the Central Oregon Resource Area of the Prineville BLM. The next chapter of this report summarizes the Human Geography of central Oregon, and key findings from the community research. The subsequent chapters deal with each of the major human geographic units involving the counties of Grant, Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam, and Morrow. Each chapter contains:

1. Community Description

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

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

Report Two contains the support elements for the scoping process required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the BLM Planning Guidelines, specifically, the planning criteria by which to evaluate alternatives from a social and economic perspective, planning questions that are appropriate from a social and economic perspective, and an assessment of Environmental Justice requirements.

### **Acronyms Used**

BLM	The Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior
CORA	Central Oregon Resource Area, Prineville District, BLM
DOI	Department of the Interior
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FSA	Farm Services Agency
JKA	James Kent Associates
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
OHV	Off Highway Vehicle
OYCC	Oregon Youth Conservation Corps
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
WSA	Wilderness Study Area



## CHAPTER TWO: THE HUMAN GEOGRAPHY OF CENTRAL AND NORTHERN OREGON AND KEY FINDINGS

This chapter provides an orientation to the human geography of central and north-central Oregon in terms of the lifestyle routines and social/cultural practices of residents who live there. A geographic orientation provides a framework with which to understand human society in this region and for displaying the information in the report. The chapter also summarizes the key findings that are further elucidated in the chapters that follow. Some comparisons between the five counties are thus useful and will be described as appropriate.

### ***The Human Geography of Central and Northern Oregon***

#### The Concept of Human Geography

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

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

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

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

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

geographic mapping, as well as information on the other scales of geography from neighborhood to global.

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

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

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

It can be seen from Figure One that the John Day River Basin Planning Area of BLM encompasses 4 SRUs, namely:

- Blue Mountains SRU (Grant County)
- High Desert SRU (Wheeler County)
- Willamette SRU (Sherman County)
- Columbia SRU (Gilliam and Morrow Counties)

What this means is that listening to people's stories about their community and their lifestyle routines, Grant County, by virtue of being part of the Blue Mountains, relates more to Baker and La Grande than to Bend for regional affiliation. Grant County residents consider themselves part of "Eastern" Oregon. Residents in Wheeler County relate more to Prineville and Bend than to the Columbia River or Baker. Wheeler County residents consider themselves "Central" Oregon, or "High Desert." Moreover, once north of Wheeler County, past the Umatilla Range into Condon and beyond, the grain elevators and lack of trees indicate another cultural area, the Columbia SRU. Gilliam and Morrow County residents are part of the Columbia Plateau and generally relate to Pendleton, Hermiston and Tri-Cities for regional affiliation. Finally, farther west, Sherman County relates to The Dalles HRU and the Willamette SRU, that is, more to the Portland metropolitan area than to eastern Oregon.

Embedded within SRUs are Human Resource Units (HRUs), shown in Figure One in **pink**. HRUs are the functioning social and economic units within which most day-to-day and week-to-week activities take place. People's daily activities occur primarily within their HRU including work, school, shopping, social activities and recreation. Health,

education, welfare and other public service activities are highly organized at this level with a town or community almost always as its focal point.

As Figure One shows, the Blue Mountains SRU contains the four HRUs of Grant, Baker, La Grande and Wallowa, with a focus here on the Grant HRU. The High Desert SRU contains the HRUs of Wheeler, Madras, Confederated Warm Springs, Deschutes, Ochoco and Christmas, of which this report focuses on the Wheeler HRU. The Willamette HRU contains 11 HRUs, with a focus here on the Sherman County area of The Dalles HRU. The Columbia SRU contains the 6 HRUs of Gilliam/Morrow, Tri-Cities, Moses Lake, Walla Walla, Umatilla and Umatilla Indian Reservation, with a focus in this report on the Gilliam/Morrow HRU.

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

This territorial level is characterized by a sense of place; a sense of identity with the land and the people; a sense of a common understanding of how the resources of their Unit should be managed; and a common understanding of how things are normally done. The regularity of interaction within an HRU reinforces a recognition and identification by the residents of natural and man-made features as “home.” Because of this familiarity, boundaries between Human Resource Units are clearly defined in the minds of those living within them.

Within the HRUs are embedded the Community Resource Units (CRUs), shown in **black** in Figure One, by which local residents define one community from another. CRUs show the “catchment” area of a community, or its zone of influence, beyond which people relate to another community. Geographic features and settlement patterns often determine these boundaries. In rural areas, it captures the perception of local residents that certain areas outside of town are part of the town. In urban areas, it reflects the perception that there are sections of the city with unique identities and patterns that can be distinguished from each other.

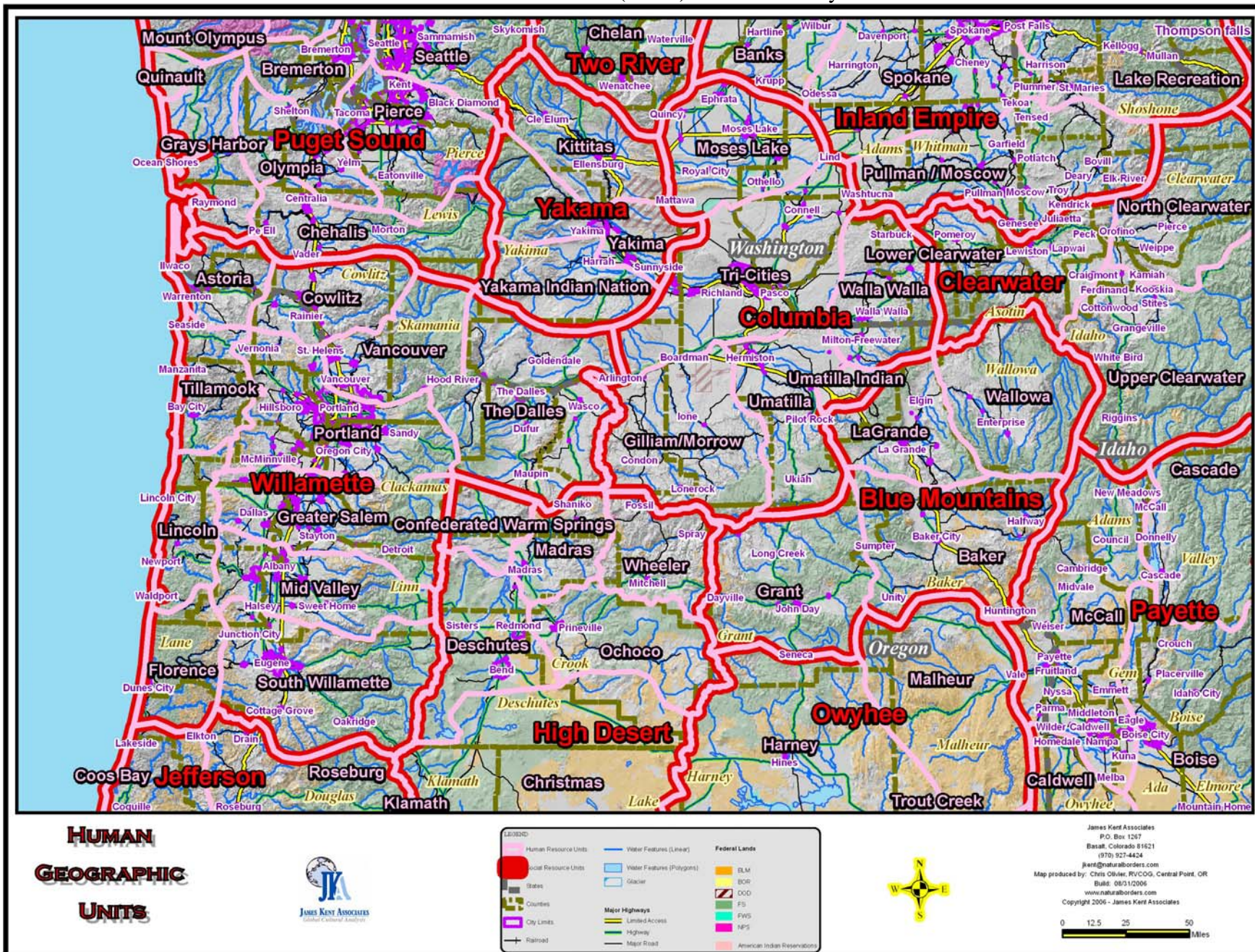
In the Grant HRU, for example, the CRUs are Prairie City, John Day, Dayville and the North Fork. It is within the CRUs that face-to-face recognition and informal caretaking systems are at their strongest, creating a sense of community and a history of supporting relationships. The chapters in this report and their maps provide greater detail about the HRUs and the CRUs in the John Day River Basin planning area.

## Management Implications

Given the differences in these areas produced by the physical, biological, social, cultural and economic systems, it can be expected that public land management will be, and



Figure One:  
The Four Social Resource Units (SRUs) of the John Day River Basin



should be, different as well. Not only are the ecological attributes of BLM land variable, but the social, economic and cultural attributes in these areas are variable as well. The understanding and integration of both natural and human elements should produce a plan that is sensitive to the differences, responsive to the survival issues of the area's residents, and sustainable in the long term.

A look at the human geography provides a first broad brush understanding of management differences. Residents in Grant and Wheeler Counties are much more interested in timber, forestry and grazing issues than residents in Sherman, Gilliam and Morrow Counties. The people in these latter counties are much more oriented to farming and the Columbia River, with interests in river management and fire suppression. Unifying issues across the five county area include access, recreation, economic development, and land disposal. Similarly, BLM staff operating in John Day should not portray themselves as "central Oregon" but "eastern Oregon."

In addition, human geographic maps indicate strategies for effective citizen involvement. Generally speaking, meetings at the CRU level are more effective in creating broader participation, while often in the latter phases of a public involvement program, meetings at the HRU level are sufficient. An SRU level focus is more effective for dealing with issues that are widespread throughout the region, such as access.

## What Does the John Day River Basin Mean to You?

The attachment that residents feel toward the land and toward each other is embodied in statements people made about the length of time they or their family have lived in the area, by stories people relate about why they were attracted to the area in the first place and stay, and by stewardship stories about taking care of the land or each other. Some comments that people made during this contact period are:

### **Reasons we stay**

"He's a fourth generation guy, his wife is the postmistress. They have a big heart for this town." [Wheeler]

"It's a tight knit community – everyone knows everybody's business. No one wants to rock the boat or wants anyone else to rock the boat too much either." [Wheeler]

"This is a proud community, still dependent on public lands." [John Day]

"I can get to the mountains in 5 minutes. Friendly people, no traffic, slow pace." [John Day]

"But for Hurricane Katrina, this county of 7000 people raised \$30,000. Not every place could do that." [Grant]



“I have lived here all my life. I was married for 25 years and lived on a ranch about 30 miles from town. When that fell apart, I moved into town, remarried and between us we have 5 kids. So, we bought this old house and began remodeling it to raise our family.” [Grant]

“I’m addicted to ranching. The agricultural lifestyle promotes values and a moral code that kids need. Nations without an agricultural base are not strong.” [Young man in Grant County]

“My family is a fourth generation family. We have always worked hard, taken care of the land, and taken care of our kids.” [Grant]

### **Reasons we came (New settlement)**

“We looked for two years before we chose this community. I’m from Bend and it was growing so fast, I couldn’t even recognize my own town anymore. Our kids are doing well in school which was one of our major goals.” [New Fossil resident]

“I’ve lived here 3 years and I like everything about this area. I like to fish and hunt and so this is so great.” [Monument]

I was looking for a retirement place. Grants Pass was too expensive.” [Wheeler]

“My family and I moved here five years ago after searching for a place to live that would work for their income and child raising goals. We chose John Day for cost of living and the school system and small town life.” [Grant]

### **Trends**

“People are moving in and staying. They don’t need the land to make a living.” [Gilliam resident]

“Twenty years ago, you could hunt anywhere.” [Monument]

“People buy ranches just for hunting and then kick off the cows.” [Monument]

“There were 20 kids around here years ago. Now there are 2—mine.” [Monument]

“Fee hunting has become common.” [Fossil]

“We get a lot of Bend refugees.” [Grant]

“New westerners want building sites, buffer around them, privacy. They have money, take care of land, and they don’t need immediate cash flow.” [Wheeler]

“There is nothing to keep younger people here – no jobs or homesites.” [Wheeler]

“Ninety percent of the hunters come from the Westside [of Oregon].” [Grant]

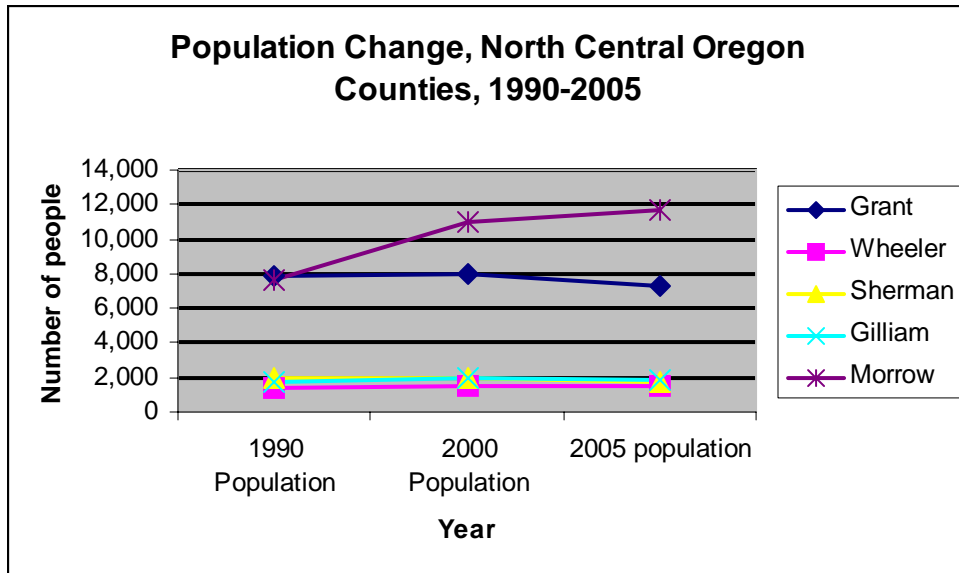
## **Key Findings**

This section provides an overview of pertinent information about the five county area and summarizes the key natural resource findings contained in the subsequent chapters.

### Demographics and Statistics

Figure Two below shows the population change in the five-county area. Morrow County’s population grew by 53% during this time period (Chapter 7), while Grant County, starting from the same base point, suffered a 7% population loss (Chapter Three). The populations of Wheeler, Sherman and Gilliam Counties remained flat just below 2,000 people, although Wheeler County gained 4% (Chapter Four), Gilliam gained 4.5% (Chapter Six) and Sherman County lost nearly 9% (Chapter Five).

Figure Two:



(Source: U.S. Census)

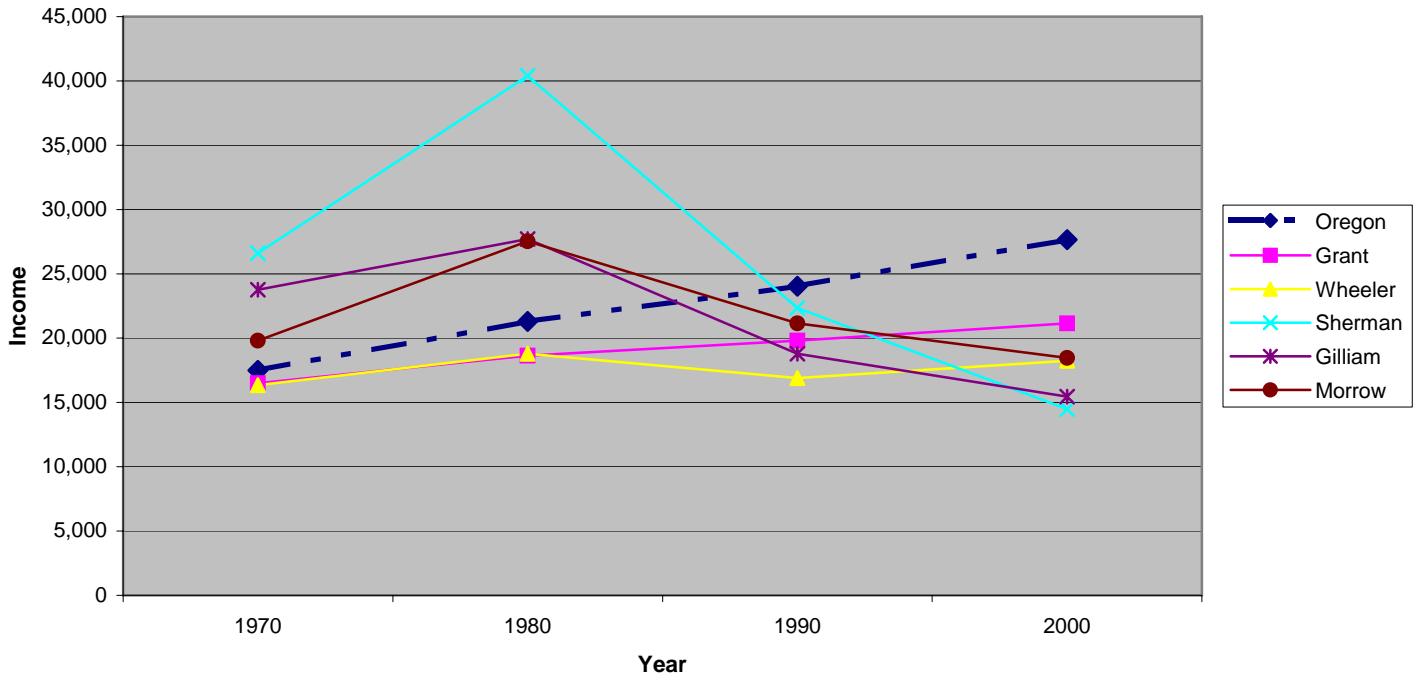
These counties have older populations than other Oregon counties, or the state and nation as a whole. The retirement population is generally stable throughout this region at about 18-20% of the population, while state-wide the proportion is about 12%. Morrow County is the exception with a lower average age and fewer retired people.

Per capita incomes have dropped in real terms throughout most of the region. A careful reading of Figure Three shows that the Columbia River Counties experienced spikes in

per capita incomes around 1980, and then by 2000, their workers were earning substantially less than in 1970. The central Oregon counties of Grant and Wheeler, by contrast, began the period with much lower per capita income, but they have slowly increased and are higher in 2000 than the northern counties.

Figure Three:

**Per Capita Income, North Central Oregon Counties, 1970-2000**



(Source: U.S. Census)

Table One compares poverty rates between the five county areas and shows that the poverty rates in Grant and Morrow Counties remained stable, even though the population has grown substantially in Morrow County. The Wheeler County poverty rate declined by 5% while Sherman County's increased by 5%, and Gilliam County's poverty rate dropped by almost 3%.

Table Two shows that people of Hispanic origin have increased in numbers in north and central Oregon and also that their proportion in the general population has increased as well. It is worth noting that the population in Morrow County increased by 3370 between 1990 and 2000 (Chapter Seven), meaning that 80% of its population increase was comprised of Hispanic people. However, the Census Bureau notes that its calculation of Hispanic ethnicity changed between the 1990 and 2000 census so that caution must be used in interpreting changes in ethnicity.



Table One:  
A Comparison of Poverty Rates Among Five North Central Oregon Counties

Geographic Area	1990		2000	
	Number of Persons	Percent	Number	Percent
Grant County	983	12.5	1069	12.4
Wheeler County	291	20.9	239	15.6
Sherman County	190	9.9	280	14.6
Gilliam County	204	11.9	173	9.1
Morrow County	931	15.0	1,617	14.8
State of Oregon	267,000	9.2	371,000	10.9

(Source: U.S. Census)

Table Two:  
Number and Percent of Persons of Hispanic Origin of Any Race in  
Five North Central Oregon Counties

County	1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%
Grant	41	0.5	163	2.1
Wheeler	6	0.4	79	5.1
Sherman	10	0.5	94	4.9
Gilliam	7	0.4	35	1.8
Morrow	197	2.6	2686	24.4

(Source: U.S. Census)

Table Three below confirms what many residents in the CORA area know, that school enrollments in the very rural areas are declining. This is emphatically true in the Counties of Gilliam, Grant, Sherman and Wheeler Counties with their economic downturn, partial recovery, and changing demographics. It is not true at all in Morrow County where economic growth has led to increased enrollments.

Table Three:  
Enrollment Trends for School Districts in the CORA Area

<b>October 1 Enrollment for Oregon School Districts</b>							
County	District	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91	1995-96	2000-01	2005-06
GILLIAM	Arlington 3	161	131	138	148	161	124
GILLIAM	Condon 25J	234	183	203	243	192	151
GRANT	Dayville 16J	82	74	59	92	59	58
GRANT	John Day 3	1,003	986	1,027	1,035	929	785
GRANT	Long Creek 17	127	109	118	106	75	50
GRANT	Monument 8	91	108	86	105	65	56
GRANT	Prairie City 4	257	260	285	292	224	157
MORROW	Ione SD R2	na	na	na	na	na	174
MORROW	Morrow 1	1,698	1,820	1,779	2,089	2,250	2,193
SHERMAN	Sherman 1	446	380	390	424	364	270
WHEELER	Fossil 21J	137	135	95	98	98	90
WHEELER	Mitchell 55	93	84	70	98	70	64
WHEELER	Spray 1	66	62	61	84	87	66

## Economic and Land Use Changes

The traditional economic sectors in these counties have slowly declined over the last 30 years in terms of income and employment generated. These include timber and forestry, ranching, farming, and mining. Like other areas of the state and nation, the economic growth has occurred in trades and services, particularly professional and business services, reflecting the retirement and recreation basis of these sectors.

County and local leadership has been active in fostering efforts at economic diversification with some successes, notably, wind energy development in Sherman County, Painted Hills beef and the development of paleontological resources in Wheeler County, an OHV Park in Morrow County, and a broadening of service and recreation oriented businesses in Grant.

The changes in land uses observed by residents include these:

- Ranches are changing hands, becoming “play toys” for wealthier urbanites.
- Newcomers are buying property for recreation purposes.
- Many newly retired people are in the area, remaining generally unconnected, with the stereotype that they want to be left alone.
- There is a housing shortage and an increase in housing prices.
- Settlement is from the “Bend spillover,” from California, and from the coast.
- Loss of access, for a variety of reasons, has been experienced throughout the region.
- There is a loss of “neighboring” norms, that is, locals say that newcomers do not know how to behave as a local, as shown by the isolation of newcomers, and especially through the closing off of access into areas that were traditionally open to all.

## Public Land Management

One widespread theme related to natural resource management is a familiar one that government cannot be trusted. People generally believe that at best, the government is too big and too regulatory to be very effective, and at worst, that it has intention to do harm to local communities. At the same time, however, people throughout the basin expressed personal trust and even affection for particular government personnel. The theme underscores the overriding importance of building relationships, what JKA calls “staffing the culture.”

“I don’t trust the government, but I like working with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.”

Despite general skepticism of public land management, residents related a number of positive outcomes of public land management. The Little Canyon Mountain cleanup near John Day sponsored by BLM in 2002 and 2003 involved large numbers of diverse interests in the community, creating citizen ownership and pride in the outcome.

BLM works well with its traditional publics, ranchers, timber and forestry people, and miners. While people representing each of these publics have numerous changes they would like to see, as documented under the Issues sections of this document, overall the communication and personal relationships are positive with these publics.

## Key Public Land Management Issues

This listing of key public land management issues leads naturally to planning questions that will address them. Report Two contains the planning questions that address each of these key issues.

Communication between BLM and community members is generally perceived to be low. Most people simply do not know what BLM is doing and expressed appreciation of BLM's outreach effort through James Kent Associates.

Awareness of BLM lands tends to be high among the traditional sectors and elected officials, but low among the general public. Related to this is a general, widespread confusion of people about whose land they might be on at any given moment. The desire for accurate maps and better information was one of the most widespread citizen issues in the John Day River Basin.

Access: Probably the most widespread citizen issue, the loss of access to public lands for a variety of reasons concerned people the most. People want the new plan to anticipate the locations of future access loss and work with them to preserve access in the future. High interest was expressed in partnering with local counties to undertake joint transportation planning and working together to foster greater access to public lands in the future.

Land Tenure: the process by which individual BLM parcels are purchased or Recreation and Public Purpose leases are obtained is not well understood and the perception of agency inertia on these issues is high. Many people reported having phone calls unreturned and no action forthcoming on these interests. The interests and issues related to land tenure are widespread and at the existing stage of development.

Grazing: specifically, the effects of Wild and Scenic designations, the newly-acquired lands on the North Fork of the John Day River, weeds, and individual allotments.

Forestry and Timber: Interests are promoting appropriate harvest levels, supporting local industry and jobs, dealing with "outside" environmental groups who are seen not to have appreciation or knowledge of the local area, ability to deliver when dealing with higher levels of organization, over-regulation, and creating a restoration forestry economy.

Recreation: Although people remain skeptical that a recreation economy can ever replace a ranching and timber economy, new recreation-related businesses and their promotion

are of central interest. Shooting ranges, OHV riding areas, winter recreation, and managing hunting effects are some of the interests.

Youth: Residents of the John Day River Basin are passionate about their kids. They are worried about kids leaving and not coming back because there are no jobs. They want greater positive activities for youth, which will give them alternatives to drugs and alcohol. Currently, public land management agencies support youth in a variety of ways and any additional opportunities for youth to participate in natural resource management would be actively supported.

Newly-Acquired Lands on the North Fork of the John Day River: Residents want to be part of the management planning process, they generally favor multiple uses, and are interested in fishing and hunting, fire and forest management, fencing, access, roads, gates, noxious weeds, “wild and scenic” designations, business development, and maps.

Mutual Aid for Fire Safety and Suppression is especially important in Sherman and Gilliam Counties.

John Day River Recreation Management: Management of floaters, optimizing the economic benefits of river recreation, stewardship contracting for management of recreation opportunities, as well as promoting continued access to BLM lands near the river are major concerns.

Finally, residents reported their beliefs about hunting trends and their effects in the local area. Residents believe there is a trend toward hunting only for the rich. They see urban people buying property for recreational and hunting purposes and also that large ranches are purchased not for cattle grazing but for wildlife improvement and, ultimately, hunting for profit. Residents do not express resentment with their neighbors for undertaking fee hunting, and see it as consistent with the need for multiple income streams to survive in a rural setting. At the same time, as local residents feel shut out from the casual private land arrangements for hunting that has characterized the last hundred years, they are relying increasingly on public lands to satisfy their hunting interests.

The Oregonian newspaper (January 8, 2006) recently reported a dramatic decline in hunting (lowest number of hunting licenses since 1958) and fishing (lowest number of fishing licenses since 1969) despite steadily growing population. Among the reasons cited are lack of time and an increasingly urbanized population. In addition, the article stated that it is harder to find places to go because private land is being closed or converted to fee hunting only. Given the predominance of citizen comments in central and northern Oregon related to this topic, it is logical to believe that the trend described by the Oregonian is more pronounced in this area of the state.

The implications for public land management are very clear. Lower and middle-income hunters and fishers will increasingly rely on public lands to meet their interests, while private lands will be used to meet the interests of wealthier citizens.



## CHAPTER THREE: THE GRANT HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT (HRU)

Figure Four shows the Grant HRU with its embedded CRUs of John Day/Canyon City, Prairie City, Dayville, and the North Fork. In this case, the HRU line corresponds fairly well to the County line. The HRU is demarcated on the east by the county line at Blue Mountain Summit, on the south just south of Seneca, on the west along the county boundary, and on the north by the North Fork of the John Day River.

This chapter explores the Grant HRU along the following dimensions:

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

Because of the importance of the Monument/Long Creek area in planning for the newly acquired BLM lands of the North Fork of the John Day River, this chapter also includes a special discussion of this area, with similar headings.

### **Community Description**

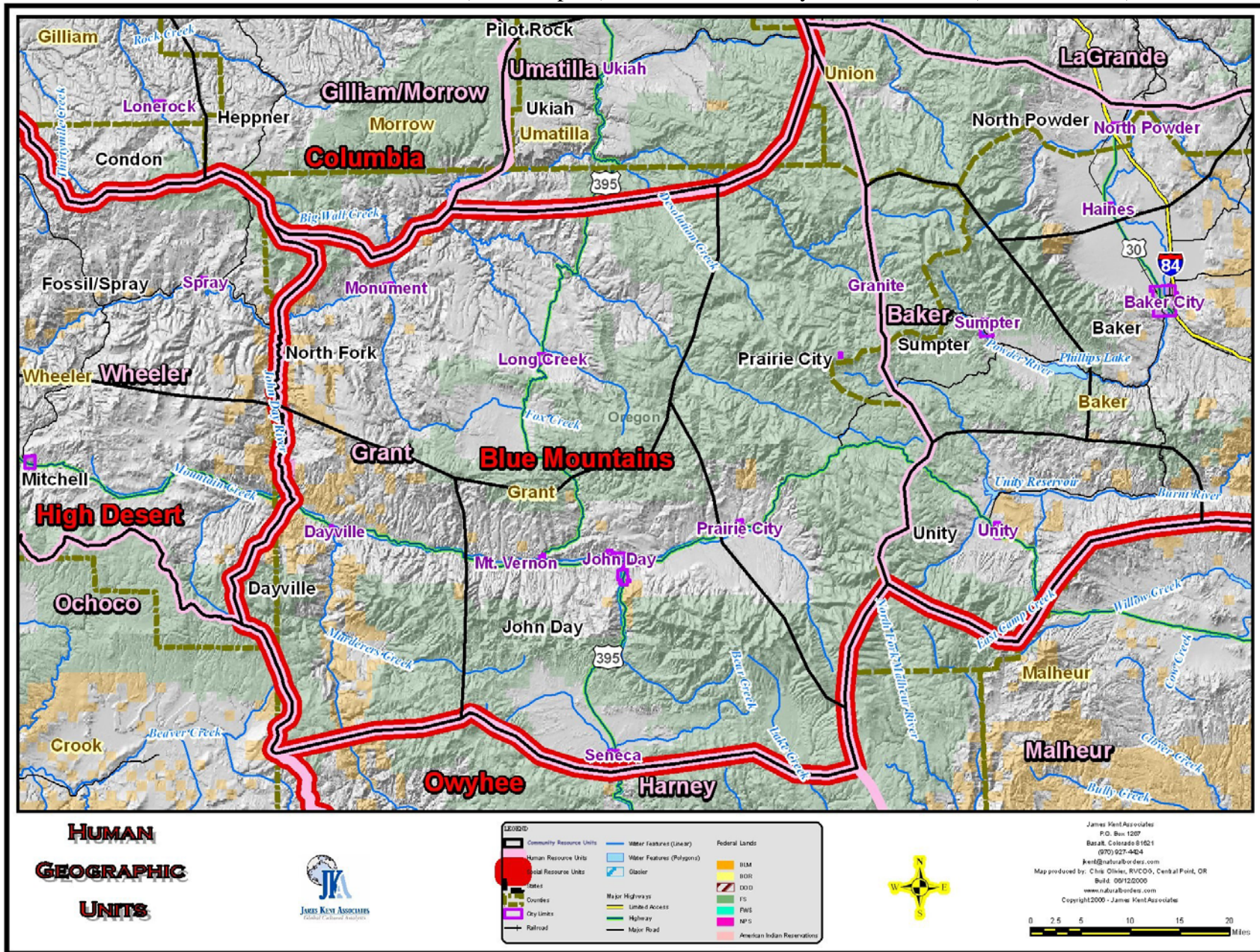
#### **Settlement Patterns**

Grant County remains one of the most rural counties in Oregon, with a population of 7,800 and an economy based on forest products, agriculture, hunting, livestock and recreation. The County was created in 1864 from Wasco and Umatilla Counties. Named for Ulysses S. Grant, the County shares boundaries with eight other counties in Oregon. It is drained primarily by the four forks of the John Day River, which eventually flows north into the Columbia River. The river has more miles of Wild and Scenic designation than any other river in the United States. More than 60% of the land in the County is in public ownership ([www.sos.state.or.us/bbook](http://www.sos.state.or.us/bbook)).

White settlement began in earnest in Grant County with the discovery of gold in 1862 near the present sites of Canyon City and John Day. Hundreds of Chinese people worked in the gold fields. The 1879 Census identified 960 whites and 2,468 Chinese in Eastern Oregon. Many Chinese were shunned but a few were accepted, among them “Doc” Ing Hay and Lung On, owners of the Kam Wah Chung and Company in John Day. These men played an important part of the early settlement history and the company building is now the Kam Wah Chung museum, which has recently become a State Park and is a major tourist attraction in the area.



Figure Four:  
The Grant Human Resource Unit (HRU, in pink) With Its Community Resource Units (CRUs, in black)





Gold was also discovered in 1862 in Dixie Creek east of John Day, leading to a town called Dixie about 3 ½ miles from the present site of Prairie City. Eventually, Prairie City, built on the open valley floor, became the dominant town in the area. Today, residents of Prairie City, 13 miles east of John Day, joke that they are not in a bowl like John Day but out in the sunshine.

The mining boom faded by 1870, by which time pioneer settlement had already taken hold throughout the area. Farming, ranching, and timbering became the mainstay of the local economy at this time and were dominant until very recently.

Harney County was created out of the southern half of Grant County in 1889. The Edward Hines Lumber Company of Chicago built a mill in Harney County and provided the first major outlet for the ponderosa pine logs from Grant County. The town of Seneca was built as a Hines company town south of John Day in Bear Valley. The railroad from Seneca to Burns was built to ship logs and lumber to Burns from the huge forests south of John Day ([www.grantcounty.cc](http://www.grantcounty.cc)).

Table 2 show the current and past population of Grant County and its communities. The 2000 census summarizes the following demographic information about Grant County:

- From 1970 to 2000 Grant County, OR grew by 798 people, an 11% increase in population.
- The percentage of people over 65 years of age increased from 15% in 1990 to 17% in 2000, reflecting more retired people in the population.
- The median age in the County was 41.7 years in 2000, compared to 36.3 in Oregon and 35.3 in the nation (Sonoran Institute 2006).

Table Four:  
Population in Grant County and Its Communities

Geographic Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	2004 Population	% Change, 1990-2004
Grant County	7,853	7,935	7,297 (2005)	-7.1 (2005)
John Day	1,836	1,821	1,629	-11.3
Prairie City	1,117	1,080	980	-12.3
Dayville	144	138	124	-13.9
Seneca	191	223	201	5.2
Monument	162	151	136	-16.0

(Source: U.S. Census, 2000)

Highway 26 bifurcates the town of John Day, with settlement extending north of the highway into the foothills, and south of the highway into Canyon City. The houses are mostly small and modest with newer homes being larger, more expensive, on larger lots

at higher elevations. In Canyon City, the downtown is parallel to the highway with many historic stone buildings still present and in use. The homes are very small generally, many with metal roofs, with mobile homes scattered throughout. Once on the bench above and east of downtown, the lots are larger with acreages, with a mix of manufactured and conventional homes. Most homes here have outbuildings like big sheds, large shops, or garages with large doors for bigger rigs. The picture is one of an outdoor-oriented population. Prairie City is a quiet little town, with a number of empty storefronts on both sides of street, but signs of other stores being fixed up. Long Creek is very small, with quite a few “for sale” signs, lots of trailers and mobile homes, a small general store/mini-mart, a small café, school, RV Park, several small churches, and a post office. Seneca is an old timber mill town, south of John Day toward Burns. It has about 210 people, with homes laid out in a grid pattern.

When residents talked about settlement patterns, these are the conditions they talked about:

1. Long-term economic depression has meant that families have left. School enrollments are declining, attributed by school officials to the drop of Forest Service employment over the last couple decades and the loss of timber-based employment.
2. Low-income families are coming in, attracted to services and a lower cost of living.
3. Ranches are changing hands, becoming “play toys” for wealthier urbanites.
4. Many newly retired people are in the area, remaining generally unconnected, with the stereotype that they want to be left alone.
5. There is a housing shortage and an increase in housing prices.
6. Settlement is from the “Bend spillover,” from California, and from the coast.
7. The area is hard on women.
8. Many newcomers don’t stay long.
9. Absentee owners, second homeowners, and part time residents are increasing.
10. There is a loss of “neighboring” norms, that is, locals say that newcomers do not know how to behave as a local, as shown by the isolation of newcomers, and especially through the closing off of access into areas that were traditionally open to all.

A sample of quotes provides context for many of these observations:

“My kids left after they got out of school. My son would like to come back but can’t find a job.”

“We chose John Day for the cost of living, the school system and small town life. We miss the cultural events of Eugene though.”

“There are high income people moving in, hobby ranchers.”

“There is a new thing of people moving in from the metro areas into low cost housing, and then not looking for work. They are basically just getting social services.”

“Low income people are moving here because it’s easy to get services.”

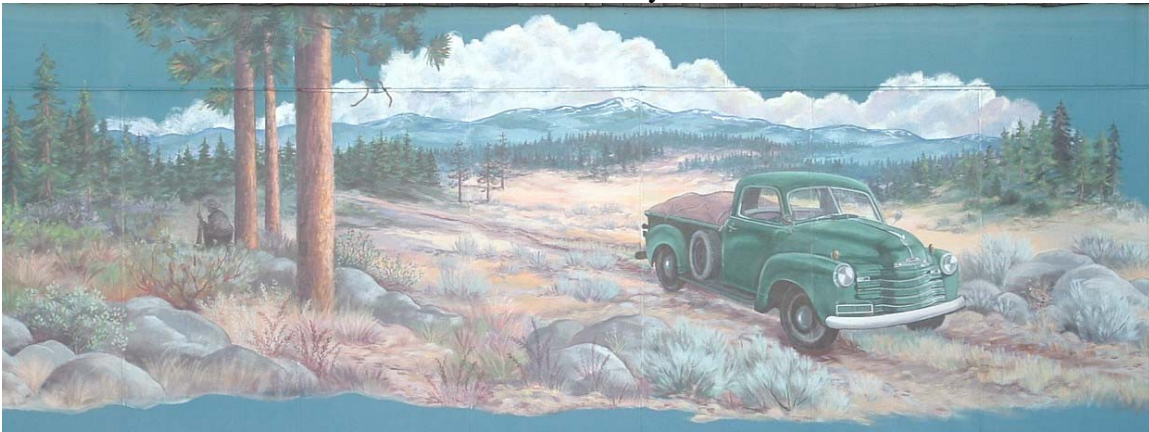
“Young families move out, retired people move in and want to be left alone. They don’t get involved in local stuff.”

“Now they interview doctors’ wives, too because they know if they wives don’t adjust, the doctors won’t stay.”

“About 52% of the population is over the age of 50. The age segment between 20 and 30 is half of what it is in the rest of the state. The older folks coming in are not bringing jobs and they don’t spend locally.”

It is clear from the changes that residents describe that new and different kinds of people are populating the County. In addition to the “traditional” people associated with timber, agriculture and the business community, there are many newcomers who do not have these ties to the land. Older, retired people are moving in, and part-time residents are now common. Visitors are not just hunters, but snowmobilers and weekend visitors.

Figure Five:  
Mural on John Day Store



(Source: authors)

In its report to the City of John Day and Grant County, Gardner Johnson LLC estimated likely demographic changes in the coming years. Their analysis shows a loss of 3.1% of the population from 2000 to 2004 in John Day, and an expected greater loss of population of 9.9% by 2009. During the same time period, households earning less than \$75,000 are expected to decrease by 13%, while those households with incomes more than \$75,000 are expected to increase dramatically. Grant County as a whole exhibits a similar pattern, while for the State of Oregon, the pattern is the opposite—6% growth.

“What this indicates is that lower and middle income wage earners and their families in Grant County are being replaced by far fewer but wealthier residents. Having said that, persistently high unemployment rates along with a faltering economy are signs that these new community members are not employers or commercial/industrial developers. Therefore as a group they cannot be considered in any long-term economic solution” (Gardner Johnson LLC 2005: 2).

## **Work Routines**

The Oregon Employment Department reported that Grant County had the longest employment downturn ever recorded in Oregon, from 1997 through 2002. By 2004, its job growth rate exceeded any other county in Eastern Oregon, spurred by professional and business services. Even so, Grant County recovery is “far from complete” since the added jobs were well short of the lost jobs of the prior six years. However, Strawberry Mountain Natural Beef opened for business in 2005. According to the Blue Mountain Eagle, the meat processing facility employs 12 people and expected 40-50 employees by the end of 2005 (Yohannan 2005).

The 2000 Census summarizes economic information about Grant County:

- The proportion of total income derived from wages and salary employment dropped from 73% in 1970 to 66% in 2000, while income derived from proprietorships increased from 28% to 34% in the same time period. About 56% of new jobs were in proprietorships during this time.
- Proprietor’s income shrank by 32% from 1990 to 2000, in real terms, while wage and salary income during those years shrank by 2%.
- Agricultural employment dropped from 18% to 13% of the total work force between 1970 and 2000.
- Services and professional employment grew from 33% to 42% of total jobs between 1970 and 2000, with the largest portion being in retail trade and health/legal/business services. About 77% of the new jobs created during this period were in the services and professional employment category.
- From 1970 to 2000, Grant County added \$50 million in personal income, in real terms.
- In 1970, non-wage labor income sources accounted for 24% of total personal income, while in 2000 the figure was 47%. Over the last 30 years, non-labor income sources have had a stabilizing effect in relation to the fluctuations of labor income sources.
- Average earnings per job in Grant County have fallen from \$26,522 in 1970 to \$20,449 in 2000, in real terms.

- In 1970, 80% of gross farm income was from livestock, while 6% was from crops. By 2000, 42% of gross income was from livestock and 11% from crops.
- Total net income from farming and ranching in Grant County, in real terms, dropped from \$11.5 million in 1970 to \$2.6 million in 1985, and then dropped to - \$7.6 million in 2000 (Sonoran Institute 2006).

A number of community efforts over the last several years has focused on economic diversification. Local leaders concluded that the barriers related to isolation and transportation meant that they should focus on “what we’ve got,” namely, ranching and timber. Community residents also talked about recreation as a mainstay of the economy, with many expressing doubts, also related to the geographic isolation of Grant County, that the contributions of recreation to the local economy could ever be significant.

Residents believe that the traditional sectors of timber production and agriculture are flat or declining. Even though these sectors remain important culturally and politically, the sense is that economically, the writing is on the wall. People expressed high degrees of uncertainty about the future of local woods products manufacturing. The health of the three larger mills was a frequent topic of conversation. Numerous comments were made like, “If one more mill goes, that’s it for us.” People believe the co-gen plant will lose its contract with the electric cooperative. In addition, residents talked about the number of smaller mills, post and pole operations, and value-added production facilities located throughout the County, and voiced their support of such businesses. For example, Prairie City hosts two small wood products companies that focus on post and pole and juniper operations, while Seneca has a post and pole facility that is fairly new. Prairie City also has a successful juniper/pine decorative furniture shop, which sells “all the furniture we can make”, much of it through catalog sales.

Ranching, similarly, is a highly important value in the County but is not a great moneymaker. Both ranchers and townspeople observed that ranches require full time work elsewhere, often by both spouses, so people find “outside” jobs or jobs “in town.” Moreover, new, wealthier urbanites are buying ranch land and either operating “hobby ranches” or focusing on conservation activities. The new effort of niche marketing local beef under the brand, “Strawberry Natural Beef,” is being used by local producers and may offer greater stability in the future.

“Most family ranches run 150-200 head and bankers say they need to run 350 head to break even, so most families need outside income to support ranching. I was a school teacher for years to help support our ranch.”

“You need at least one outside job to be able to afford to ranch.” [Rancher]

“Our school enrollment dropped from 350 to 160 over the last several years. The last three years have been stable but if the Forest Service office or the co-gen

plant closes, or the PWP mill shuts down, we'll be in trouble." [Prairie City School Superintendent]

"These days, people are buying smaller recreation parcels and they don't graze."

The economic development efforts in Grant County are managed by a board called the Grant County Resource Enhancement Action Team ("GREAT"), which has recently hired a new Economic Development Director. It is a nonprofit organization, which was instrumental in getting a doweling machine for the new woods company in Seneca. Current efforts are focused on supporting and strengthening existing businesses, the promotion of outdoor recreation, and the recruitment of small airplane designers, since rural airports like Bend are apparently attracting these kinds of entrepreneurs.

"If 1000 feet were added to the runway, it would get a higher economic class of visitor."

The City of John Day and Grant County commissioned a study by Gardner Johnson LLC of recent economic impacts and recommendations for future economic development. The report stated:

"Over the past several years, both the City of John Day and Grant County in general have lost a significant part of the work force population to employment elsewhere. The result is economic leakage in the form of employment and business revenues, particularly retail sales and services. In growing communities, commercial development eventually catches up with communities in the form of office, business park and industrial space for employment as well as retail development for more convenient shopping and amenities. The reverse is true here.

The eclectic mix of retailers that one might expect to see in such an area no longer exists. Several different types of businesses that contribute to an overall healthy retail environment have departed or closed without being replaced." (2005: 1).

The report goes on to recommend three strategies:

1. Support existing retailers, fostering the natural role of John Day as the retail and service center in the region;
2. Attract new residents by addressing current obstacles to new home construction; and,
3. Encourage new investment in the City and the County (Gardner Johnson LLC 2005: 3).

Despite the pessimism of this report, micro-changes reported by residents, particularly the growth of bed and breakfast establishments and specialty crafts companies, may indicate a trend of developing economic niches.

An increase of bed and breakfast establishments was noted, although it does not appear that these businesses coordinate much or are showcased in county tourism promotion efforts. A number of people reported an increase in specialty crafts businesses that are increasingly lucrative. Interestingly, these entrepreneurs do not appear interested in expanding their businesses because they like the “hands on” nature of the business, but they want business support services such as bookkeeping and marketing.

“Within an hour of putting up my sign, I had my first customers, a couple from Sweden. We’ve never advertised more than our sign and we have all the work I need. I’ve been packed all summer and we swarm on the weekends.” [Owner of bed and breakfast inn]

## **Support Services**

Grant School District #3 enrollments have dropped over the last several years, from 823 in 2002-03 to 757 in 2004-05 (personal communication, Linda Watson, Grant School District, 10/6/05).

Residents in John Day pointed out that the child abuse rate in Grant County was among the worst in the state. Children First of Oregon (2004) reported that 36 children per 1000 were abuse and neglect victims in 2004, which was 241% of the state figure. On the other hand, Grant County’s drop out rate was 96% better than the state average, and its infant mortality rate was 100% better.

Local observers pointed to a number of social problems which they attributed to the economic downturn of the last several years, including poverty, child and spousal abuse, child care, and transportation. Residents and agency officials reported a growing professionalization of social services. In particular, the Grant County Commission on Children and Families has been encouraging collaborative approaches between agencies and a comprehensive “continuum of care” in service delivery. Observers felt the quality and coordination of effort has improved significantly.

Residents also believe Grant County to be highly resilient, with strong traditions of self-sufficiency, community support for common action, and giving to the less fortunate. Residents were proud of the sports complex they developed and consider it remarkable for a town their size. Diverse community groups use the County Fairgrounds extensively throughout the year. The Little Canyon Mountain cleanup (below) was mentioned frequently with pride, as people discussed the ways in which the community came together to accomplish the cleanup. The giving of the community was cited in relation to fundraising after the 9/11 attacks, after the Katrina hurricane, and presently to support Baby Jade who needs a heart operation.

“You watch. This community will raise \$50,000 for Baby Jade.”

The County has a strong orientation to supporting its youth, particularly shown by popular 4-H and Future Farmers of American (FFA) clubs, the Training and Employment Consortium (TEC) and the Oregon Youth Employment Corps (OYCC).

The OYCC is a private organization that has been in Grant County for about 10 years. It expanded four years ago with “Title 3” monies which are timber receipt dollars allocated to certain counties in Oregon and Idaho which are designated for search and rescue work and for forestry education for youth, the basis of OYCC. OYCC has 30-40 kids in the summer. If the kids are also part of the Community Stewardship Corps, an alternative school, they get a stipend, expenses, credit and college scholarship money. OYCC youth participated in the BLM Little Canyon Mountain cleanup, as well as the cleanup of illegal sites after law enforcement action. They have occasionally put up allotment fences. Their projects have included trail construction and maintenance, wildlife enclosures, snowmobile trails, fuelwood clearing, campground maintenance, and tree planting. They usually run six-week crews, but they have one year-round crew of older kids. OYCC works mostly with at-risk kids from 14 to 18 years old. OYCC is well-supported by the County government, which recently donated a new vehicle to them, as well as by the Forest Service, BLM, the Juvenile Department, the Sheriff, SWCD, Families First and the Snowballers snowmobile club.

New owners of the land tend to be successful urban business people. Local stories indicated that the new owners tend to have the finances to undertake active stewardship of their lands.

“\_\_\_ \_\_\_ got rid of his juniper and offers some as supply to local craftsmen. He has a big appliance company in Portland.”

Residents in the Prairie City area have been active in renovating the DeWitt Museum at the old railroad depot. This effort requires \$175,000, of which \$80,000 has already been raised.

A number of people stated that health care is of high quality.

“There is good rural health care in this area. John Day hospital just passed a bond and is well-linked with Bend for specialist care.”

The airport industrial park got going a couple years ago, and is currently the site of what is seen as a highly successful business, a bowstring manufacturing facility.

Residents also said that the local churches are more numerous than in other towns (about 30) and they are active in the community.

The John Day Fossil Beds were designated a National Monument in 1974. The Fossil Beds comprise over 14,000 acres of bones, leaves, wood, nuts and seeds containing artifacts from the Age of Mammals—the time between the extinction of the dinosaurs and the beginning of the Ice Age. The Monument is comprised of three widely separated



units—the Sheep Rock Unit, the Painted Hills Unit, and the Clarno Unit. The Thomas Condon Paleontology Center (Figure Six), located at the Sheep Rock unit, is a visitors' center named after an early paleontologist. The Fossil Beds attract 130,000 visitors a year (personal communication, Jim Hammett, Superintendent, 11/17/05).

Figure Six:  
The Thomas Condon Paleontology Center



(Source: National Park Service)

## Recreational Activities

Grant County has been famous for decades for its high quality hunting, fishing, and scenic values of its waterways. These traditional activities are highly valued. Shooting is also a popular activity and several residents have been working to develop a new shooting range. At the same time, local leaders have wished to augment these forms of visitation with other activities that will bolster the busier summer months of visitation and the fall hunting influx.

Winter recreation is receiving a big push from community leaders. The Chamber of Commerce sent out 1500 postcards in October, 2005 that advertised 861 miles of groomed trails for snowmobilers and two heated shelters. BLM created a Snow Park. With the support of a “Winter Enhancement Grant” from the USFS, the Chamber has advertised in Snow West and Northwest Travel magazines. The Snowballers snowmobile club is strong and exerts leadership to attract visitor use and environmental stewardship. They recently purchased two “four track articulating snow cats,” which are grooming machines. BLM lands are not used for any of these trails because its lands are generally

lower elevation and the snow is not as good. The Snowballers encourage ATV [All Terrain Vehicle] clubs and stewardship among ATV users but officially they distinguish themselves as separate. The club would like snowmobiling to be called “OSV,” Over Snow Vehicles, because they believe that snowmobiles do not cause wildlife or erosion impacts.

“There is lots of volunteer energy here. If we ask for help on trails, we get it. A lot of them are newcomers.” [Chair, Snowballers Club]

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use appears to be more localized than in other areas, and used more as work tools in agricultural activities. The recreational aspects are not organized through existing clubs but informal arrangements of two or three families who will routinely go on outings. Some people want ATV clubs to organize in order to forestall closures because of environmental degradation through stewardship activities and training. Some residents believe that ATV groups could be courted. For example, a jamboree could be held that would attract ATV use to the county, stimulate local economic activity, and get out ahead of impacts or closures. “This is how we do it in our county” could be the theme of a campaign used for this purpose.

The other pillars of recreation in Grant County are considered to be the Kam Wah Chung Museum, recently taken over by State Parks and the new Condon Visitor Center at the Fossil Beds National Monument.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Little Canyon Mountain has frequent and multiple uses. Located as it is close to the urban area of the County, it is considered the “backyard” for locals—easily accessible and beautiful. The recent cleanup of this area was particularly appreciated because of the special quality of this area for local residents.

## **Community Themes and Issues**

Themes are widespread perceptions in a community about how things are, key values for living, or widely shared attitudes. Citizen issues, by contrast, are statements people make that can be acted upon. Because they are items people want action on, issues show potential partnership opportunities. Themes and issues are reported for both the community in general and related to natural resource management.

### **Community Themes**

1. Friendly people, easy access to the out-of-doors.

“It’s a friendly town but borders on being busybody.” [Recent newcomer]

“I love the hills around here and the views. You should visit Painted Hills Park.” [Newcomer]

2. “If you try to fit in, you will.” This is a key value expressed in the community.

“If you make an effort to fit in here, people will accept you.”

3. “Enough is enough.” (about extreme talk)

“The right wing thing is getting overplayed and people are getting tired of it. The UN Free Zone and the initiative giving rights to shoot wolves—they just make us look bad.”

“I think people are at the end of the grieving scale. The anger was 5 to 7 years ago. Now there is acceptance that things will never be the same.”

“The UN stuff is a reaction to frustration. People feel like they don’t have control over their lives.”

4. A tolerance for the “radical right.”

“The UN signs are a little much, but I wanted to support my friends.”

“The anti-UN resolution is silly. The extreme rhetoric is almost a form of entertainment.”

“Hey, the radicals might do their thing, but these are still the folks that still help you out in a pinch.”

5. Threats are easily seen.

“When we did the visioning for downtown, people became unglued when we announced that downtown lots would be 100% buildable instead of 75% because we feel that available parking is more than adequate. Even though we were adding to commercial value, people saw a threat. Then there was the talk that the city was ‘forcing’ \_\_\_\_\_ to redo the front of her building. At the meeting, she got up and said, ‘No, I am not being forced to redo my building and I was the one who suggested those changes to the artist.’ People have to go through their worry and then they’re all right.”

## **Community Issues**

### **Youth**

Residents were very concerned that youth did not have enough to occupy themselves, particularly jobs. Not only that, but when kids leave they tend not to come back because there is so little employment. Any activity which will change this dynamic is likely to be supported in the community.

“Kids have nothing to do.”

“Kids need to have jobs.”

“I like what the town did with its visioning process for downtown, but the next thing you know Radio Shack came in. They replaced a really cute gift store and put up a big gray, blah type of façade instead of something that fit in with the rest of the architecture.” [Newcomer]

“Kids don’t have anything to do here because there are so many restrictions on putting them to work. They can’t find jobs around mechanized equipment because of state law. They need to be busy and to learn to be responsible and respectful.”

“Kids aren’t coming back to Grant County. We need to take care of our kids. We need to employ high school kids.”

“Child abuse in Grant County is 241% of the state average.” [Social service professional]

“The low to moderate income range has nearly doubled from about 26% to 48% in ten years, while the median income has gone up because of the people with financial resources moving in. The state of the economy has impacted families with bar stools filling up, and the anger being brought home to kids.” [Economic development specialist]

### **Infrastructure**

“You can’t find housing here, especially temporary or rental housing. The summer help of the Forest Service, Grayback and BLM have trouble finding housing.”

“There is not enough water in the city system to properly irrigate lawns and athletic fields. The City needs a better water supply system.” [Prairie City official]

“We need good infrastructure if the economy is going to grow. This means high speed Internet access and cell phone coverage. People come into the airport, get out of their plane, flip open their cells, and there is no signal.” [Economic development planner]

### **Economy**

“Tourism isn’t very strong in the area, just about three months, July through September. It’s not enough to sustain jobs.”

“We need more local employment.” [Widespread]

“We need to import small business development classes from Ontario and La Grande.”

## **Natural Resource Themes and Issues**

### **Community Themes Related to Natural Resource Management**

1. “There is too much waste.”

Residents of Grant County see themselves as conservationists. A key symbol of the lack of conservation is the failure to harvest burned trees. From a local perspective, not harvesting burned trees is wasteful and shows agency ineptness and environmentalist wrong-mindedness. From this standpoint, people say that stewardship is not happening.

2. “If we lose the mill we’re done.”
3. “We’re a tough nut.”

“A lot of people have come in here studying this area. The Forest Service has done all the social and economic analyses. City and County politics are tough to deal with, with the usual cast of characters from ‘get the cut out’ to ‘no cutting.’”

“The area has seen a lot of consultants come and go but there doesn’t seem to be much action.”

4. Little Canyon Mountain Cleanup

“Little Canyon was such a positive thing for BLM to do.”

“Tina Welch [BLM Area Manager] showed good leadership to get that cleanup going. That whole effort was extremely positive for our community.”

“I have nothing but respect for BLM. They did a terrific job on Little Canyon community clean up. It took some doing to get the Prineville office to understand how important this was. It was a fantastic project that brought everyone together.”

“The only reason Little Canyon Mountain cleanup worked is because the appeal sent by an environmental group got sent to the wrong place.”

“The cleanup worked so well that afterwards, we started to see trash come back again and we were all worried. But \_\_\_\_ of Grayback had trucks idled one morning and went up there and filled them—I had to call and get the dump opened for them that day. Then a teenager lit a car on fire and pushed it into the Pit. When the kids that had done the cleanup heard about that they were mad.

They knew right away who did it and within 24 hours a state patrolman was at that kid's house, letting him know his options. The car was gone in no time."

"Where do we go after Little Canyon Mountain?" [Common]

"BLM leadership did a great job with Little Canyon Mountain cleanup. They listened and they learned."

5. "The Forest Service can't deliver, and BLM can."

"For some reason, BLM does not come under the scrutiny of urban environmental groups. BLM has less lawsuits and paperwork."

"There is no continuity at the Forest Service. They're people are always moving in and out too quickly, they are always stopping and starting. BLM is more stable."

"Canyon Mountain was done on an EA [Environmental Assessment]. I don't know why they don't get hammered more politically, compared to the Forest Service."

6. "Over regulation from higher levels of bureaucracy is doing it to us."

"The local Forest Service officials try to make timber product available, but the upper bureaucracy doesn't follow through."

"The ESA [Endangered Species Act] is killing us." [Cattle grower]

## **Citizen Issues Related to Natural Resource Management**

Citizen issues related to natural resource management are organized below into the topics of: general communication, awareness of BLM lands, forest management, grazing, land tenure, access, recreation, youth, neighboring, wild horse management, and easements.

### **General Communication**

"The language agencies use is so stilted the average person cannot understand it. They come in and do their meetings at the Senior Center and why should we show up?"

"Make an effort to go out and ask. People don't feel like they know you [BLM]. Employees are not well known. Find ways to give back. A good example, every business in town gets hit up by high school students and clubs several times a year for donations. We give \$25 or \$50, it doesn't matter, but the Forest Service and the BLM are never on the list. You have to have authority to participate!"

“So every couple years, they send someone like you to come in for a couple days. Do you go to the Elks for a drink? Do you go to the soccer games? Do you really get a feel for this community?”

“Make an effort to enlist, engage and educate. There is low awareness of BLM. How are the lands being managed? Where are the successes? How come I didn’t know about the new block of BLM lands on the North Fork? You have to make your case about community benefits.”

“These feel good meetings have to result in action at some point, or they will get old.”

“Resource decisions seem to be made by officials far away, with no local site information. It doesn’t seem to matter what the local citizens say they want, neither the BLM or Forest Service pay any attention to local wants. We need full disclosure of facts on proposals, not just propaganda.” [Avid local hiker]

“BLM is in a unique position because it owns all those interlocking land pieces. It must interact with a wide variety of people which positions them for a strong community base.”

“Land management practices are not well publicized.”

“Public agencies spawn the radical right. It’s ridiculous having resolutions against the UN but at least these folks feel they are striking back at things they can’t control.”

“There is a sense that there is no local control. Make them owners again.”

“It’ll never be the way it was with timber.”

“The agencies manage to the regulations, instead of managing to the land.”

### **Awareness of BLM Lands**

“We don’t know any BLM people or where BLM land is. When we’re out rockhounding, we don’t know if we’re on Forest Service or BLM or private lands.”

“A lot of people ripped the Forest Service at the Sonoran workshop but it was a BLM meeting.”

“The Forest Service and BLM should integrate their planning and their staff. Create a one stop process.”



## Forest Management

“The mills need supply. BLM should do all it can to create a flow of logs so that our mills stay open.” [Widespread interest]

“It’s too bad this area is a focus of outside environmentalists. They create ill feelings. Local see that they impact their lifestyles and economies, and that the agencies do not defend them. The perception is that the agencies ‘allow’ the lawsuits.”

“The Forest Service came to our meetings a couple years ago and agreed to get a number of timber sales out within six months, and they did it. It was helpful to learn of some of their limitations. But all the sales were appealed.”

“The forests are too thick and need thinning.”

“Salvage trees for the mills. I hate the waste. You go in and see those trees rotting, it breaks your heart.”

“I took my daughter up to Magone Lake a few years ago. She asked me how it could be that we left all those stands of dead trees there. We have a strong conservation ethic here, and when we see waste it makes us angry.”

“Strawberry Lake Creek is so dense you can’t even get to it. Clean up the streams. It shouldn’t be totally cleared off like a park but it shouldn’t be overgrown either.”

“No clearcutting should happen in this country. I believe in selective logging.”

“The husband of my secretary just got laid off at the mill. They don’t have product.”

“The National Forest is in the poorest condition I’ve ever seen it in my lifetime. Indian Creek now runs muddy since there was a big fire.”

“The forests are not being managed in good condition. Bug-killed and fire salvage timber is left to rot on the stump, going to waste, rather than harvesting it to provide economic benefits and healthier stands.” [Prairie City]

“The loss of timber revenue means that there is reduced tax support of schools and roads. That shifts a greater tax burden to residents.”

“The Easy Fire salvage was supposed to harvest 25 MMBF of timber and ended up selling only 4 MMBF, not even in the sale area. There is no follow through by the Forest Service.”

“They need to cut the mature trees in the Forest before they die and rot. There needs to be cleanup of fuels in the Forests. Kids need jobs. Don’t close roads. The public lands belong to the people.”

“The need to use chippers more to clear out heavy fuels, then chips could help fuel the co-gen plant and support local jobs and electricity.”

“I want to make sure the BLM keeps making materials available for my commercial needs—wood, obsidian, horns/antlers. It’s worked well so far.”  
[Business owner, value added wood products]

“Mike \_\_\_\_ got his company going in Seneca but the Forest Service could not deliver a supply. They invested all this money and they have had under 500 days of operation.”

The co-gen plant is at risk because their contract with the electric cooperative is up for renewal. Due to earlier legislation the price is artificially high, so they would save money by letting the contract expire.”

### Grazing

“I don’t interact much with BLM, and I’d like to.” [Common; Ranchers want someone “local” they can deal with on an informal basis.]

“There’s lots of cooperation with BLM around the intermingled lands.”

“I don’t like grazing on public lands because the lands get beat up. I don’t like open range either. Why should I have to fence my property from your cattle?”  
[Long-time resident]

“Grazing rights are important and should be handled carefully.”

“Allotments for late spring and summer are protested by ONRC and High Desert. Ranchers have to hire lawyers. There are fire issues, and stream banks are a problem with cattle.”

“I got burned by BLM. In all the land trades on the South Fork, I lost my forest allotment and 40 acres to a newcomer who had good habitat land elsewhere for the government. When I found out it was happening I called \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ at BLM who said he was surprised and would take care of it. When I heard about it next, it was a done deal and this guy’s response was, ‘Sorry.’”

“BLM has managed its lands pretty well. We were worried about the Wild and Scenic and we were told that grazing would not be affected but there was fear and pressure. Outside groups use Wild and Scenic as a pry bar to protest grazing. Over

time, grazing has changed radically and there have been many improvements. They've done a good job."

"We get along well with BLM, the State and the Forest Service on our leases. The BLM person [Colleen] is local and accessible."

"The Endangered Species Act is killing us. We have to consult with everyone on every aspect of our grazing program. Special interests keep putting up roadblocks. Congressman Walden is our hero." [Rancher]

"The noxious weed program is a good effort, but where do the cows go when that land has to rest for a couple of years?" [Rancher]

"There is a lack of grazing enforcement. Problems like trespass and fencing are not getting looked at." [Rancher]

"We need to augment the city's water supply and we'd like to explore sites on BLM lands." [Prairie City officials]

### **Land Tenure**

Many residents were aware of land trades and exchanges made between public agencies and other interests over the last several years. In particular, people mentioned the BLM land consolidation on the South Fork, and some consolidation of public lands just north of Little Canyon Mountain. Many people commented that land exchanges must be "fair and equitable" and that they should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, some believe that a few individuals personally gained in these transactions in ways that were not fair or visible to others. Residents in the John Day area were not aware of the newly acquired 30,000 acres by BLM on the North Fork.

"Look at the scattered parcels and see if any could be beneficial to the community. Check the level of interest."

"Land swaps are good if they are equitable."

"I bought a piece of ground from BLM and it took 10 years. There's got to be a better way."

"I'm in favor of selling scattered parcels as long as the process is equitable and open."

"The City's landfill is on a BLM parcel, which BLM offered to sell to city several years ago. We filled out the application and haven't heard anything yet. The BLM wanted to get rid of the parcel so it wouldn't be carrying the liability." [Prairie City Recorder Diane Clingman; the application is dated 2003]

“When BLM traded some land to a private company next to mine on Pine Creek, the new owner logged the land and left a mess – BLM should attach requirements to land they sell that loggers need to clean up messes and follow best management practices.” [Prairie City]

“I would be interested in buying the BLM land I now lease because I own the adjacent land.” [Mt. Vernon rancher]

“We think land exchanges are OK on a case by case basis. Some I support and some not.”

“We put in for an R&PP lease some years ago to deal with a landfill issue, and it’s been some time since we heard anything about it. What is the status of the lease application?” {Prairie City officials]

### Access

Access to public lands is a crucial local issue that was mentioned in a general way by a wide variety of people. Residents described access as part of their culture, that as a matter of course over the generations, residents have been able to easily and routinely get to public lands through accepted norms of access through private parcels. Problems associated with this activity have grown as people have vandalized, left gates open, and left trash. Even more importantly, newer residents that buy these parcels do not have the same norm of “neighborliness” by which they easily permit access by others through their property. The local perception is that it is the new owners of the land that are restricting access through private lands to public lands.

Access is also frequently mentioned in reference to closed or de-commissioned roads on public lands. As these roads proliferated during the time of an active and widespread timber program, residents traditionally gained access to remote spots through these roads. As timber production declined, agency budgets declined likewise, limiting agency ability to maintain roads in an ecologically acceptable manner. Residents have voiced clear displeasure about roads closed because of these dynamics.

Grant County has hired what could be the first road historian in the nation to identify all roads and their available history in order to prepare for a road designation process. The County believes it has the right to name and designate all roads that were begun before the Forest Service in 1907. The County can decide to vacate any of these roads if they are determined to be no longer useful. The County has three possible classifications for road designation purposes:

1. County Road, must meet maintenance standards;
2. Public Road, all right to travel but no maintenance; costs are borne by adjacent landowners; and,
3. Private Road, many of these are contentious (are they public or private?).

BLM is directed to develop a management plan for the newly acquired lands on the North Fork. In addition to identifying management approaches for fish, wildlife, and recreation, it must also develop a road designation process, for which Grant County has some interest as well.

“There is a lot of concern about access here. People here identify with the forest as ‘ours.’”

“Too many areas are getting shut out. Some people can’t get out to hike like they used to and the roads provide access. There is a burn area off the Izee highway that is still closed. At Scotty Creek, near Izee Highway, the road was closed because of some reported ‘hazard’ but it was never addressed, nor was the road reopened.”

“Keep roads open unless specific resource damage is done. Also, manage the lands to harvest material and reduce fuel loads.” [Reedsport hunters]

“No more wilderness. Keep access open.” [Group of three hunters, one local]

“Some new ranch owners are posting land that people were accustomed to hunting on.” [Ukiah]

“A ranch was bought recently and access shut off to BLM land.” [Fire Department employee, Mt. Vernon]

“Our issue is access, access, access.” [Snowballers Club Chair]

### **Recreation**

The Grant County Shooting Sports Club is a nonprofit organization has dealt with practical, political, and regulatory aspects of shooting ranges for some time, dealing with ODFW (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife) and the Oregon’ Shooters’ Association for many years for environmental and legal advise. This club would like to spearhead the creation of a new shooting range in Grant County, using BLM land if possible.

“We have a range in Seneca where we have trap and skeet but we need more acreage for archery and 3-D. We want a range that can accommodate many different groups.”

“Get BLM land for a shooting range that would include long-range rifle, archery, black powder, short bore, long bore, shotgun, muzzle loader and skeet. If we can find the land, there are plenty of clubs and funding opportunities to steward the range. Right now, people just practice wherever they can all over the place. We need a safe, controlled place away from bothering other people.”

“For a shooting range, we need a flat top with a backdrop, access, and isolation. We’re interested in a certain parcel (T13S, R33E, Sec 4, w/2). There’s a road that needs improvement and other neighbors to talk to. D.R. Johnson has already indicated support.”

“We need an area designated for four wheel and motorcycle recreation that is close to town and for kids. There is no organized club yet but we could get one to help with the administration. They have one in Morrow County between Heppner and Spray. The County bought it and there is trailer parking, fees, like a campground.”

### **Youth**

“Students are very active in resources and agriculture. A biology class does water quality testing. Agricultural classes do soil, water, and forestry fieldwork. We have an active FFA [Future Farmers of America] club. Maybe the BLM could come in and do lectures and career days.” [Prairie City School Superintendent]

“We need projects from BLM, the Forest Service and other partners. Also, is all the red tape necessary? Like, ‘Does that worker have hard-toe boots on?’” (Training and Employment Consortium official)

“We want to create a 9/11 memorial and community trail system on Little Canyon Mountain. It could be a visitor attraction.” [TEC official]

“We could use more BLM projects.” [TEC official]

### **Neighboring**

Residents shared a number of stories, which indicate that neighboring is a key community value that relates to public land management. Some new landowners cut off access across their lands to public lands traditionally used by locals. The issue of public lands being locked up as a result of fencing out and less neighboring agreements is culturally and administratively important. If the land use plan developed by BLM could be done in a way to re-invigorate the value of neighboring in the community, a long-term benefit will be realized.

### **Wild Horse Management**

“I don’t like that my favorite horses were removed but I know the herds have to be thinned.”

## **Easements**

“I do not support easements. I don’t intend to govern my ranch from the grave. If my heirs want to sell the ranch they should be able to enjoy the money from it.”  
[Rancher]

## **Resolve as You Go Candidates for Early Response**

In looking at opportunities for BLM management to resolve emerging citizen issues early so that a base of support can be strengthened for the planning process, JKA has identified 4 candidates:

1. Prairie City R&PP lease opportunities. The city has a pending lease for a landfill, for which the current status is unknown. In addition, community leaders need to drill a well to augment water supplies and they are looking for an appropriate site, which could be on a nearby BLM parcel.
2. As described above, a number of people are planning for a long-range shooting range, and appear to have the expertise and experience to make it happen. If an appropriate BLM site can be found, a significant community contribution can be made (13S-35E-Sec 4 w/2).
3. Because community awareness of the newly acquired 30,000 acres on the North Fork by BLM is so low, it might be appropriate that BLM conduct a field tour of the area with selected community and network leaders.
4. The rancher who lost allotments with BLM through the process of land exchanges on the South Fork deserves acknowledgement and possible redress of his grievance, perhaps through an alternative allotment. JKA calls his issue an “embedded” issue because it happened in the past and can’t be undone, but it affects the present in terms of validation of anti-government sentiment that can then affect community relations in general.

## **Possible Community-Based Planning Elements**

There are three areas of community interest that could lend themselves to a community-based approach to the creation of “planning elements:”

1. Multi-use Little Canyon Mountain Community Plan;
2. Responsive Access through a Community-Based Transportation Plan; and,
3. Support for Youth.

Residents described a multitude of uses in the Little Canyon Mountain area—ATV recreation, shooting, and hiking. In addition, some roads apparently need to be closed.

Residents stated that they would be interested in working with BLM on a multiple use area managed by the community. Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) is a resource for accomplishing work on the ground that would be required, and others talked about local community groups that might undertake shared management of the area. In addition, Canyon City has 80 acres in the area, the city's watershed, and would be an active participant. The Training and Employment Consortium (TEC) could take the lead on a multi-use managed area on Little Canyon Mountain. Perhaps they could adopt 40 acres, for example. The interest of local residents to create a multi-use area at Little Canyon Mountain is consistent with the John Day Downtown Plan, which calls for pedestrian orientation, inter-connected trails, and visitor amenities (H. Lee & Associates 2005).

Interest in access was very widespread in Grant County, but often the comments were couched in general terms and specific referents were missing. However, when pressed many residents could point to favorite areas that were especially important in terms of preserving access. JKA began posing the question about whether or not progress could be made on the issue by understanding BLM priorities, determining which areas are the community's priorities, and then working to mutually identify resources capable of addressing the high priority areas.

Hence, the goal would be to develop a community-based Transportation element for the land use plan that identifies priorities from ecological and community perspectives and determines priority access areas, addresses agency concerns about ecological degradation of roads (not very well understood in the community), and results in an outcome where decisions about what areas maintained and which ones closed are mutually made. In addition, the responsibility to accomplish sustained access must be shared between community and agency by identifying funding and implementation resources.

Finally, there is strong community commitment and attention to youth. OYCC and TEC represent strong areas of experience and expertise in linking youth to natural resource activities. TEC could be a host for stewardship contracts and other BLM opportunities for youth to learn skills in restoration forestry. The County has \$1/4 million for Natural Resource Education for youth and could be a potential partner. According to local residents, BLM does not participate in the High School Forestry/Natural Resources class, nor the FFA (Future Farmers of America) club, which is very successful and popular. Moreover, vocational training and locally available classes in agriculture and natural resource management is distinctly lacking in Grant County. In a partnership context, it seems likely that numerous community resources, for example, Blue Mountain Community College and Eastern Oregon University, County Extension, and others, could be brought to bear to bring vocational training or at least some added level of support for youth in the County. BLM could use the planning effort as the vehicle by which to stimulate discussion and possible action on this item.



## **Communication Strategy for Grant HRU**

### **Communication Infrastructure**

Create an “Eastern Oregon” identity for BLM in Grant County. Prineville is considered “Central Oregon” and Grant County is “Eastern Oregon.” Staff language should reflect this distinction.

Tina Welch needs a local presence above GS9, twice a month, at some predictable location like the library or the Outpost.

BLM should be deliberate in expediting “Cooperator Agency” status with the several units of local government. Awareness of this opportunity on the part of these officials is low. Personal contact, invitations, and follow through are appropriate.

In addition, the formal groups and organizations in Grant County with potential interest in the land use plan are listed as follows:

- Friends of Rudio Mountain
- Northwest Steelheaders, Salem
- Snowballers Snowmobile Club
- Seneca Schools Foundation
- Grant County Public Forest Commission
- Greater Prairie City Community Association
- Training and Employment Consortium
- Eastern Oregon Regional Alliance
- Grant County Resource Enhancement Action Team
- Women for a Viable Community
- Grant County Conservationists
- Grant County Civil Liberties
- Town of Seneca
- Town of Prairie City
- Town of John Day
- Town of Canyon City
- Grant County Chamber of Commerce
- Oregon Cattlegrowers’ Association
- Dayville Grazing Association
- Grant County Shooting Sports Club

### **Communication Process**

BLM personnel staying the night in Grant County should not stay in motels but Bed and Breakfast Inns because they are important communication nodes in the communities. An example is the Fish House in Mt. Vernon, a location at which locals and return visitors mingle, share information, and discuss community health.

Get invited to “chat sessions,” or informal gatherings, in people’s homes to discuss issues once they are focused.

Start community-based planning elements early. The general steps are to discuss the issue with individuals and informal networks; see if residents would be interested in “chat sessions,” in which a network in a neighborhood setting comes together in their natural setting to go the next step in resolving a local issue; achieve initial or preliminary success prior to the Scoping Meeting. Consider hiring a local team capable of ongoing presence to guide the development of community-based planning elements. Eva Harris and Christy Rhen would be well suited to facilitate the community-based planning efforts because they are liked and respected.

Scoping meeting should be viewed not as the beginning but as the culmination of a community contact process. Scoping meetings held “cold” run the risk of immediate polarization around ideological differences, particularly in Grant County. The early work outlined in this section can go a long ways in demonstrating common ground before diverse interests are ever in the room together. In support of scoping meetings,

- a. Attend the meetings of others;
- b. Use others’ newsletters, e.g., city water bill, instead of generating a BLM newsletter; and,
- c. Add to the Trivia Facts sheet put out in John Day.

For the Scoping Meetings,

- a. Call key contact list two weeks prior;
- b. Location should be the Outpost Restaurant (seating: 60); other options include the Pavilion (Seating: 100-150) and the Senior Center. The Guernsey Conference Room in Canyon City seats 50-60 with no tables and is a familiar and used location as well. John Day Council Chambers are too formal and uncomfortable to be appropriate;
- c. Open House format;
- d. Wednesday or Thursday nights are best; Tuesdays should be avoided because of local government meetings.

Personal relationships are needed in the outlying rural areas, particularly with newer residents and newer business owners. This will allow BLM to stay ahead of the trends in recreation and new business development in the area.

Explore connections with NPS Planning for the Fossil Beds, currently underway.

Other communication opportunities:

- Use of local radio was reported to be effective in reaching residents;

- Bulletin boards are located in the Mount Vernon general store and the John Day Pharmacy (by Chester's Grocery);
- Important gathering places include the Elks Club, the Golf Course, the Outpost Restaurant, Chuck's Little Diner (Prairie City) and the Mini-Mart (Prairie City, Mayor Jim Hamsher is often there); and
- For Prairie City, local leaders will work through City Hall and the merchant group to post flyers and to spread word of upcoming meetings. Prairie City can also post notices in its water bill.

## The North Fork Community Resource Unit (CRU)

One part of the Grant HRU is the North Fork Community Resource Unit (CRU). Figure Four (page 20) depicts the natural boundaries described by residents of the Monument/Long Creek area in distinguishing "their" area from others. It includes lands south of the North Fork but north of Highway 26 and includes the communities of Monument, Long Creek and Ritter.

This area has special significance because of the newly acquired BLM lands in this area along the North Fork of the John Day River. The present effort by BLM to develop its RMP, of which this study is a contribution, is designed to determine the best and most appropriate land use practices in this area. This section describes some of the social conditions in the area, as well as the issues and opportunities identified by residents in this area regarding the BLM lands.

### *Community Description*

Monument is a small town of about 150 people, having lost 40 people since 1980 according to the statistics. Located in the northwest part of Grant County, it has a café, RV Park, motel, store, town hall and a school. The homes are mostly modest with interspersed mobile homes.

As in many rural areas, residents struggle to hang onto their school. Foreign students were tried for a while to increase enrollment and for cultural enrichment for local students. While enrollment in 2001 was 84, there are now 56 students currently in the school, with high schoolers comprising about ¼ of that number.

"People want enough growth to keep the school and the town going, but not enough to change the lifestyle."

"There used to be about 20 kids in this area [Ritter] and now there are two.

"Retired people come here and stay until they need doctors."

Residents reported stability of land ownership along Wall Creek in the Monument area. In the Ritter area, properties have been bought and sold at a healthy rate during the last several years but real estate transactions are reportedly stabilizing.

In recent years, newcomers are buying property for recreation purposes. The old Bentley ranch is reported by locals to be about 50,000 acres, the new owner of which has removed cattle and the game is said to be coming back. Other, smaller parcels have been purchased as well, primarily to maintain hunting opportunities for the landowner, or to create hunting opportunities for others.

“Guy named \_\_\_ \_\_\_ is on the hill. I haven’t met him though he’s been here 10 years. It was the Bentley Ranch, thousands of acres.”

“People are buying up land for the hunting. People come in, they want to keep their farm deferral tax status, otherwise taxes double, so they rent the land to us and we run cattle.”

“Absentee land ownership is getting common. The land is used for elk and deer, land is taken out of production, and the schools go down. There are few timber people left. Rich hunters get the elk. You can pay \$5000 for a trophy elk.”

Residents also observed more “lone eagles” or “modern cowboys” than in years past. These people make their money through their ties to the global economy and either use UPS and the airport and/or make occasional forays into the urban areas for concentrated work periods.

“There is an attorney couple near here who are doing more and more work from their home.”

### **Community Themes and Issues**

Community themes related to a wish for more economic activity and appreciation for the local lifestyle.

“I’ve been here three years and I like everything about this area. I like to fish and hunt. BLM getting the JV Ranch and opening it to fishing and hunting is a big plus.”

Residents described only two community issues.

“We need jobs.”

“Cavendar Park needs another toilet. The old one was vandalized by kids. I think that is or was BLM land the park sits on.”

## **Natural Resource Themes**

Residents described a rich and colorful history of settlement and community life, of which public land management has been important from the beginning. The themes expressed below indicate that past management has not always been successful, but has been sometime, and that, practically speaking, people want to focus on the positive and on next steps in land use management.

“We have to deal with the public and the government a lot [because our property is important for access]. I hope a ‘good neighbor’ policy will work.”

“We need to work together.” [On dealing with access, fencing, visitor impacts]

“We’re a little bitter about all this, but it’s good they [BLM] sent you out.”

“We’re waiting [for BLM attention to the newly-acquired property].”

## **Natural Resource Issues**

The economy of the Monument area is dependent on natural resources, both the cattle grazing and recreation, for which public lands are highly important. Residents commonly pointed out the increased visitation to the area in recent years, primarily from more intensive river use. A range of general comments include these:

“There are more and more floaters. They are mostly clean. They regularly have fires even though they are not supposed to. The fishermen are much worse. They throw their cans overboard, trash. They are locals.”

“I don’t like the four wheel park [the Morrow OHV Park] created off Top Road out by Sunflower Flats. It’s a big area that is now closed off to hunting.”

“BLM staff in John Day is great to work with, especially Colleen. More and more decisions are made higher up so local staff are less flexible than years past. I was recently cited for trespass because my cow got on BLM. We protested and got it off the record. I don’t mind getting the cow but I object to the ‘hurry up, do it now’ attitude.”

“They poisoned the river three times, apparently to get rid of the carp. We haven’t had trout in there for years.”

“In ten years, the river will explode. Business will come in from Service Creek down.”

Specific issues residents expressed about present and future BLM management related to the newly-acquired lands for which BLM will develop a management plan, fishing and

hunting, fire and forest management, access, roads, gates, noxious weeds, “wild and scenic” designations, and maps.

## **The Newly Acquired Lands (The JV Ranch)**

### **Management Plan**

“BLM has almost ruined this land by doing nothing all these years. What has it been, 6 or 8 years? The first phase was accomplished in 2000, then another portion in 2002. Where have they been?”

“Seven years of non-use is too long.”

“If there is to be camping, make it designated so that people are not everywhere.”

“I’ve thought about whether an Advisory Committee would be appropriate for the JV Ranch. I’d like to think that people would come forward but I’m not so sure. You go down this road and it fails, it’s worse than if you did nothing.”

“There is no plan yet and there needs to be one.”

“There is frustration that it’s taken so long to get going.”

“BLM should come and talk to us. Let us kick around some ideas.”

### **Grazing, Fire, and Fencing**

“To keep the brush down, that area needs 400-500 cattle. There is a fire danger with that tall grass.” [Common]

“We’ve talked with Dan Tippy and John Morris [BLM] about putting a screen of vegetation in along the river as a deterrent to cattle crossing, but Dan decided that span was too long and it was not feasible.”

“After the fire, there is 33 miles of fencing. In the old days, we’d put a strand of barbed wire across the river to deter the cattle but with floaters, that is no longer possible. So there is a new fence on one side and the river on the other, but the river is a problem. Could rafters go under a netting? I don’t know where that’s been tried. Might be expensive.”

“There is a fire risk with those lands. How about short term grazing to deal with that? People will lose their homes. There are frequent lightning fires.”

“Who is responsible for the fences? A lot of people can’t afford that extra cost. If you’re talking leased lands, the cost of the fencing should not belong to the permittee. It’s not fair.” [Common issue with contiguous landowners]

“My husband used to be the manager for the JV Ranch so he knew that country very well. You should lock it up and get the game back. Graze it to keep the fire hazard down. Do weed control in there. The game follows the cattle to get the tender shoots that are just coming in. There were between 400-500 elk up there at one time. Now, they’re gone.”

“Now that the area is BLM, who will do the fencing? It wasn’t needed before when it was all private.”

“It would be a great deal if BLM considered leasing some of that land for grazing. I might apply myself. If I leased it, there wouldn’t need to be a fence!”

“A lot of people are disappointed that grazing is off of there. The riparian areas are looking better. Ranchers would want to lease the land. I have 40-50 head and I’m always looking for summer pasture.”

### **Weeds**

“Weed control is a big issue on our property. We are aggressive against it and don’t want neighbors who won’t do the same.” [Ritter area rancher contiguous to the new BLM lands]

### **Wildlife**

“There’s not much game left on the JV Ranch, even though that was the reason it was acquired.”

### **Access**

“We have never given an easement on our road that leads into the JV Ranch. Anyone with property above has an easement, of course, as does BLM. Usually people ask and we say ‘Yes’ but it’s getting harder. There are more people and not everyone asks. We’ve talked about a gate but we are reluctant to do this. Gates are routinely vandalized.”

“When the four wheelers come in from the north [through the National Forest], they cut the fences. Snowmobilers do the same thing. There’s no way to stop this.”

“Snowmobiles and off road vehicles are not supposed to be in there, but they are tracks everywhere. There is no enforcement.”

“I do not like that roads are closed on the JV in the winter.”

“What I’d like to see up there are trails with proper trailheads. This could become a destination area.”

“We’d organize support to get the area cleaned up. It will take community effort to keep the area good for everyone. The main road needs improving.”

“I make extra money by shuttling people back and forth to Dale.”

## **Fishing and Hunting**

Residents described the major hunting activities affecting their area. They see most hunters as coming in from the Westside of Oregon, with ads for the area displayed in Oregon Hunters magazine and other places. Residents believe there is a trend toward hunting only for the rich. They see urban people buying property for recreational and hunting purposes and also that large ranches are purchased not for cattle grazing but for wildlife improvement and, ultimately, hunting for profit. As local residents feel shut out from the casual private land arrangements for hunting that has characterized the last hundred years, they are relying increasingly on public lands to satisfy their hunting interests.

“Hunters are frustrated by the gates.”

“There are too many elk and deer tags given out. Why do doe tags when deer numbers are down. There are not enough game animals.”

“Does BLM permit for trapping? It could add to my income.” [This man was referred to Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department.]

“Twenty years ago, you could hunt anywhere.”

“You have more and better game on private lands now.”

“People buy ranches just for the hunting and then kick off the cows. You can pay \$5,000-7,000 for a big buck.”

“Private guys lock off the land and lease it to hunters.”

## **Fire and Forest Management**

“Fire went through here. There are scattered trees throughout. Will it be logged? Can you give it away so that at least someone can earn livelihood from it? What are the rules?”

“We’ve done prescribed fires in Banson and Donny Creek, which includes private land and BLM. Are there opportunities to coordinate further in the future?”  
[SWCD Coordinator]



“The logging expertise is about gone around here. That’s going to be a real problem in the future.”

## **Access, Roads and Gates**

“The Forest Service has been trading land and BLM has a parcel [T9S, R28E, Section 29] that butts up to it. Has BLM traded that land or is it still available for hunting? There is another 40 acre parcel that is shown as BLM ownership and I want to know if they still do [T10S, R28E, Section 23].”

“There is a bridge at Skull Canyon that was condemned years ago but there is a place to ford the river at that point. Four wheelers use it to cross the river to the south at that point from BLM and enter my property. It’s not good.”

“This road [County Road 4] is locked in the winter. People tear out the gates.”

“Landowners are putting up signs about private property when I know it’s public land. Or, signs are put up [about ownership] that are taken down.”

“We’d like gates that kept out four wheelers but permitted horses, ATVs, and snowmobilers.”

“BLM lands are not marked. Holmes Creek has a lot of BLM but it’s blocked off.”

“Landowners will give me a ticket [for trespass]. They move signs or take them. They make like the land is private but it’s BLM. Get landowners to post their land.”

“We want roads open in the winter to four wheelers and snowmobiles.”

“You have to patrol your fences regularly to prevent problems.”

## **Noxious Weeds**

“Noxious weed removal is a key goal of the Monument SWCD. We should coordinated with BLM and other partners as much as possible in planning, mapping, and projects.” [SWCD Coordinator]

“We need to rest the lands that receive treatment for invasive weeds. Can the cattle graze on the JV Ranch for a couple years?” [SWCD Coordinator]

“Weeds are spread by cows and hunters. Fire scatters the seeds and the river carries them. The biggest property owners seem to let their places go.”

## **Wild and Scenic Designation**

“ \_\_\_\_\_ got 40 acres on Wrightman Creek and wanted to build within ½ mile of the river. Because it is ‘Wild and Scenic,’ they couldn’t do it is what we heard. We heard ‘Wild and Scenic’ also stipulates building color, types of roofs and other things.”

## **Maps and Information**

“I’ve told the BLM for years that their map was wrong. This is not County Road 31 like on the map but County Road 4, as it is labeled farther up on the map.”  
[This gentleman was referring to the 8 ½ X 11 map of the newly acquired lands that the BLM distributes.]

“With all the changes in ownership, there is a strong need for accurate maps.”

“Maps are not up to date.” [Common]

## **Resolve as You Go Candidates for Early Response**

Accurate maps

Information on land trades and acquisition

## **Possible Elements for Community-Based Planning**

Developing a management plan for the newly acquired lands that addresses possible land uses, access, and citizen stewardship responsibility.

## **Communication Strategy**

Boyer Market is a clear communication node in the community that is relied upon by residents. Jerry Boyer and his son Jeremy are willing and able to serve as an information source for the community, and in fact, do so now, with BLM and Oregon Department of Forestry maps on display. They freely share with their customers current information about conditions on public lands.

The Monument Soil and Water Conservation District and the North Fork John Day Watershed Council are well regarded in the community, managed by a husband/wife team. These organizations should be used as much as possible for community interface. They could participate in water quality monitoring with BLM, coordinated fire suppression and weed eradication programs, and developing community-based progress

on access and visitor impact issues. Both individuals have extensive contacts in the community and already serve as communicators between the local area and other agencies. It is possible that they could facilitate community-based approaches to address access and related issues.

Avoid Tuesday meetings because of meetings of the watershed council, town council, and EMT (emergency management technicians). The fire meeting is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday. Long Creek could be a more central location to include both Ritter and Monument people. The Senior Center is a good location for meetings and is run by Mr. Jack Sweek (541-934-2366).

The idea of chat sessions in localized areas was suggested to residents when it seemed appropriate and the notion was well received. One rancher near Ritter said he always got tongue-tied at meetings and forgot what he was going to say until later, but at the same time, he could name all his neighbors and their interests with BLM management. He could be involved in organizing his own neighborhood for in-depth discussion about management approaches. By contrast, larger scale meetings have to be centrally located and require driving for many, and the meetings cover many topics instead of focusing on a few.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE WHEELER HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT (HRU)

Figure Seven on the next page shows the Wheeler HRU as it is described in this chapter. On the north, its boundary is the Kinzua Road leading into the Umatilla National Forest from the west, while the western part of the northern boundary, just north of Fossil, follows the county line. In the northwest, the boundary is the John Day River, also serving as the county line with Sherman County, before swerving to capture part of Jefferson and Crook Counties, including some of the Ochoco National Forest in the south boundary. The eastern boundary is the county line with Grant County and Highway 19.

The Wheeler HRU has two Community Resource Units, Mitchell and Fossil/Spray. They are formed generally by an east/west line through Wheeler County that crosses Sutton Mountain, to which people in both CRUs relate. Each of these CRUs is described in turn later in the chapter along the following dimensions:

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

Wheeler County is as rugged and uneven as any Oregon county, with the terrain varying widely from sagebrush, juniper and rim rock to stands of pine and fir. Portions of two national forests lie within its boundaries with forestlands covering nearly one-third of the county. The area is probably best known as one of the most outstanding depositories of prehistoric fossils on the North American continent (<http://bluebook.state.or.us/local/counties/counties35.htm>).

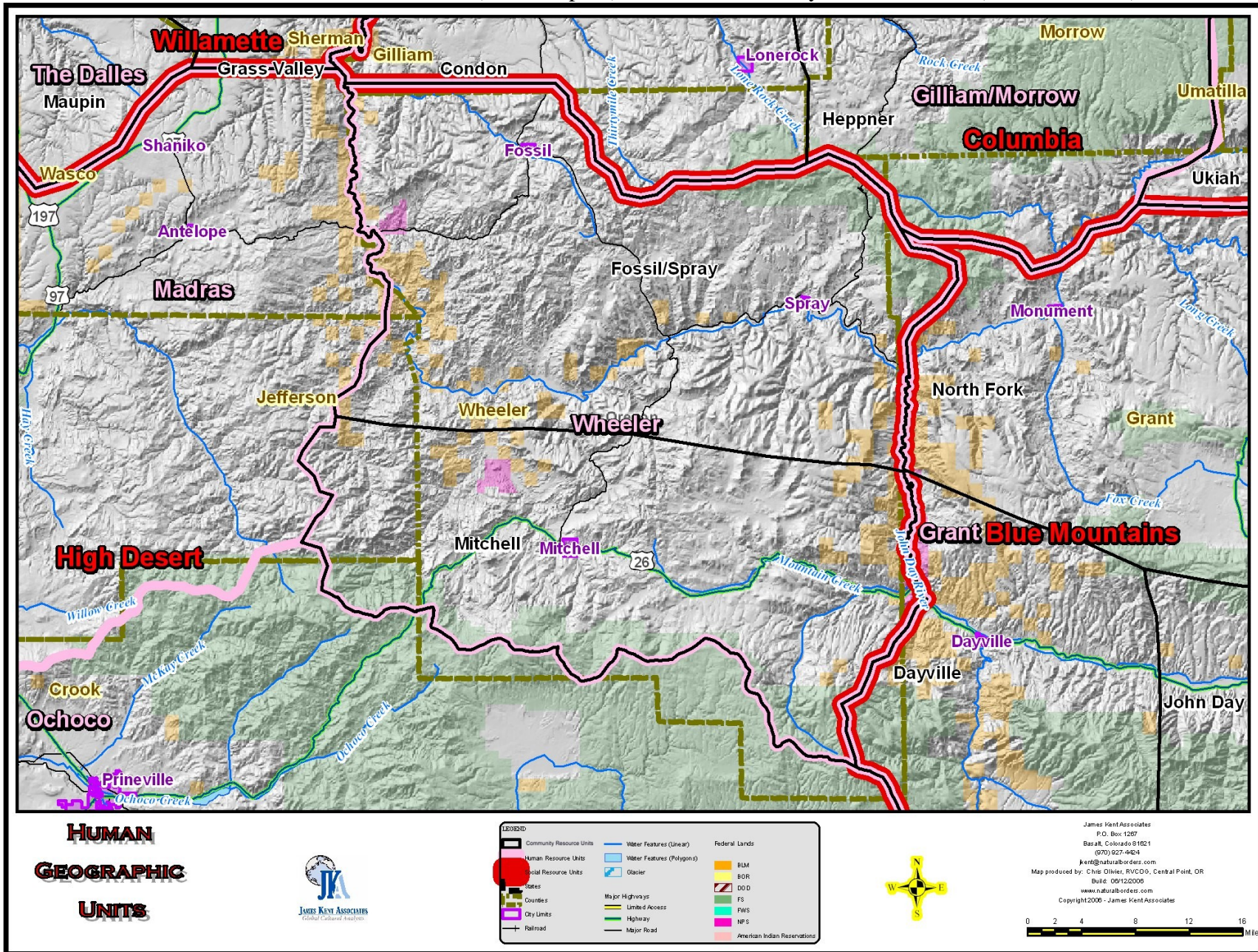
Wheeler County was formed in 1899 from parts of Grant, Gilliam, and Crook Counties. It was named after Henry H. Wheeler, who operated the first mail stage line from the Dalles to Canyon City. Portions of two national forests lie within its boundaries with forestlands covering about one-third of the county. BLM lands in the county stretch along the John Day River and are concentrated in the Sutton Mountain area.

Fossil received its name in 1876 from the discovery of fossilized bones of an elephant and a camelope. Thomas Condon more than 100 years ago uncovered plant and animal fossils dating back to the Eocene era of over 30 million years ago when sub-tropical forests covered the now dry hills.

Eighteen miles west of Fossil is the Clarno Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Eroded ancient mud slides formed cathedral-shaped spires 40 million years ago. The Sheep Rock Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument is contained within the Mitchell CRU, while the Sheep Rock Unit and the Thomas Condon



Figure Seven:  
The Wheeler Human Resource Unit (HRU, in pink) With Its Community Resource Units (CRUs, in black)



Paleontology Center, is just east of the CRU line at Highway 19. These facilities offer an attraction for locals and visitors alike.

Located near Clarno is the Hancock Field Station, a paleontology and paleobotany research facility, which is maintained by the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) (Wheeler County brochure, no date).

Table Three below shows the population trends of Wheeler County and its communities. Some demographic features of Wheeler County were summarized by the 2000 Census:

- Wheeler County population fell between 1970 and 2000 by 295 people, a 16% decline in population. However, the population grew by 11% between 1990 and 2000, a rate of 1.1% per year.
- The median age in Wheeler County was 48.1 years in 2000, compared to 36.3 in the state and 35.3 in the nation.
- Retired people (those over 65) grew as a total share of population from 21% in 1990 to 23% in 2000.

Table Five:  
Population in Wheeler County and Its Communities

Geographic Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	2004 Population	% Change, 1990-2004
Wheeler County	1,396	1,547	1,455 (2005)	4.2 (2005)
Fossil	399	469	447	12.0
Mitchell	162	170	163	0.6
Spray	149	140	133	-10.7

(Source: U.S. 2000 Census)

Some of the economic information from the 2000 Census is summarized below:

- Wage and salary employment, as a share of total employment, dropped from 68% in 1970 to 54% in 2000, while proprietorship employment rose from 32% to 46% of total employment during the same time period.
- Farm and agricultural services employment rose from 32% in 1970 (277 jobs) to 40% in 2000 (293 jobs). The Oregon Department of Labor considers that farms jobs are the real economic engine in Wheeler County (<http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj>).
- Health, legal, and business services grew between 1970 and 2000 from 8% to 13% of total employment, while government (state and local) employment rose from 19% to 25% during the same time period.



- About 43% of new jobs between 1970 and 2000 has been proprietorships, although in 1970, proprietors represented 68% of total employment and by 2000, they represented 54%.
- Non-labor income sources include two categories, dividend/interest/rent and transfer payments. These sources of income, as a share of total income, increased from 24% in 1970 to 61% in 2000, representing a stabilizing influence relative to the fluctuations in wage labor income.
- Average earnings per job, in real terms, dropped from \$26,944 in 1970 to \$14,072 in 2000.
- In 1970, 71% of gross farm income was from livestock, while 11% was from crops. By 2000, 62% of gross income was from livestock, and 5% from crops.
- Total net income from farming and ranching in Wheeler County, in real terms, dropped from \$4.7 million in 1970 to \$0.6 million in 1985, and then dropped to \$0.1 million in 2000 (Sonoran Institute 2006).

## The Mitchell Community Resource Unit (CRU)

### *Community Description*

Mitchell had 170 people in 2003, a loss of 13 people since 1980. School District 55 has 25 employees, the maintenance yard of the Oregon Department of Transportation has 6 workers, and the two cafes in town employ 8 people. Most people are ranchers or with the school. There is a sizeable and talented artist community.

People are settling in the area from Prineville, Redmond and Bend. Residents commented that there are more and more people wishing to use the land, public and private. A lot of subdividing is going on, apparently.

“Just more people that want to play and hunt. People buy half sections and think that’s a lot of land.”

Public lands remain highly important and are a frequent and casual topic of conversation.

People in the community show an ability to come together for mutual projects to get things done, including weeds, fire, and fencing. The restoration of the old schoolhouse recently involved a large number of local residents.

Many residents said that the town government of Mitchell is not functional. Generally speaking, there is a dearth of organizations through which to mobilize action and people rely on informal arrangements.

### **Community Themes and Issues**

The town of Mitchell was described as making little progress on city issues and city council positions are reportedly left unfilled.

“Absentee owners are killing us. They have no families. They take the land out of production. They inflate prices. Land will never go back to production.”

“We need summer jobs for youth.”

### **Natural Resource Themes and Issues**

#### **Natural Resource Themes**

There are quite positive and quite negative feelings about BLM in the community. Residents stated that they tolerate the differences in perception about BLM, and avoid talking about it if they can avoid it, even in long-term friendships. For example, in small settings discussing BLM, angry feelings were voiced, but then a person said privately after the meeting, “It’s not that bad.” Others commented on their friendships and their wish not to jeopardize them by voicing a difference of opinion in public. Natural resource themes include the following:

“\_\_\_\_ and I are close friends and we have vowed that our differences won’t come between us.”

”The best use of the land has changed. You can’t let a few ranchers control all the land.”

“For the most part, BLM is reasonable.”

“BLM is good to enter into projects with.”

“You have to manage for everyone, and sometimes self-interest gets in the way of being able to see that.”

“Not everything BLM does is bad. There has to be a balance.”



Figure Eight:  
The John Day River Near Highway 19 With Elk in Background



(Source: authors)

Many positive stories and feelings were shared. The rancor expressed about BLM was strongest with just a couple of individuals, and they are people who are valued and respected in their community. The feelings seem associated with two things, the Sutton Mountain exchange, described below, and a feeling, shared more widely with others, that the rules, generally linked to grazing activities, seem inflexible, arbitrary, and needlessly picky.

“Local staff are OK and even great, but they just does what higher ups tell them to.”

## **Natural Resource Issues**

Natural resource issues described below involve: the Sutton Mountain Exchange; inflexibility; grazing and range management; PILT; access; land tenure; juniper management; weeds; water; stewardship contracting; navigability; recreation and hunting; John Day Plan; paleo resources; and communication.

### *The Sutton Mountain Exchange*

The JKA team had some confusion about the Sutton Mountain situation because apparently there are several allotments involved, including Sutton Mountain Pasture and other terms of reference. However, the process of BLM acquisition and the subsequent designation of the area as a Wilderness Study Area (WSA) have left confused and angry feelings on the part of some residents. The former owners of the mountain, now quite elderly, believe that BLM promised them two things: 1) The Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) funding for the County would not be affected, since they were well aware of the dependence of the road and school funding on this source of revenue; and, 2) Things would “stay the same,” especially that there would still be grazing. The general theme relates to concerns about fairness and justice.

“BLM had meetings after the fact. They already had their mind made up about Sutton Mountain. They said they could manage it less expensively if they blocked it up and that it would stay multiple use, the same as it was.”

Specific issues related to Sutton Mountain include these:

“It should not just be special users on Sutton Mountain.”

“Only the young can get on it.”

“Access only for hikers is unfair.”

“There should be bird hunting and grazing.”

“Manage Sutton Mountain, so you can have a designated use area for vehicles/rigs. Develop the water. Roll up downed fences, they’re a hazard to snowmobilers and others.”

“Light grazing would be good on Sutton Mountain.”

“Water rights will be lost.”

“Either open it to everyone or close it to everyone, not just a few hikers.”

“Let the ranchers bring salt in with their four wheel drives to the top.”

“Close off an area for motor sports.” [This issue ties in with the interests of the Wheeler County Sheriff—see the Fossil section.]

“Let grazing happen so that wildlife will come in after. Where there is water, develop it for wildlife and cattle.”

“The mountain changed from revenue generating to revenue taking. It took money from the County, even though it was supposed to be cheaper to manage.”

### **Inflexibility**

“BLM would not let me make a temporary corral. It would be so easy to string a wire through the junipers in this grove, instead of bring them all the way back home.” [33]

“BLM burned an old cabin. It wasn’t a bother, but BLM burned it.”

“Our billing comes out of the Prineville office so we went up to see about dividing their allotment and then we were told to go to John Day. It was confusing.”

“There is a juniper tree that is really knarled up and would be useful to the guy that makes juniper furniture and ornamental stuff. The tree was on the back road from Powell Butte to Bend just inside the BLM fence. \_\_\_ called up and asked for it, but they wouldn’t let him have it.”

“I needed to cross a small piece of BLM to pump water from a creek running through my private land to another part of my land. I wanted to cross BLM and bury a pipe. It became a huge mess because someone from BLM called NOAA fisheries. There’s just flexibility, no common sense.”

### **Grazing and Range Management**

“There should be some grazing.” [Common]

“Let us develop the water better, furnish the troughs. Otherwise the grass gets ‘woofy.’” [33]

“The Dead Dog Allotment was supposed to be studied so it’s not in use. How is the study going to end up so we can plan on it or not?”

“There is uncertainty about allotments and when people can get them. It was a beautiful job burning, but no cows can use it. Local people should have first chance on allotments.”

“I haven’t been able to get a grazing permit because of an improvement study. I have no idea when the study will be done and whether or not I’ll get the permit.”

“We need a place to hold cattle overnight during round ups on Horse Mountain and Dead Dog Mountain, so that we don’t have to bring them all the way home before we ship them.”

“Priest Hole Campground has a mile wide gap in fencing, makes a chute so cattle are hard to keep out of Bond’s haying and Conley fields. Wish they’d finish the job and get the last mile in.”

“The controlled burns look good. They really helped.”

### **PILT**

Residents had many concerns about the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, believing that if funding is not reauthorized for the Craig/Wyden amendment, that irreplaceable revenues will severely hamper road and school funding for the County.

“BLM promised at the meetings that PILT would be OK.”

“Fifty-five thousand acres on Sutton Mountain were taken off the tax roles of the Mitchell School district. That plus the loss of timber really hurt the area. PILT did not keep up with taxes and then stopped altogether. Broken promises made some millionaires.”

### **Access**

“Road closures are not well advertised. One time I went to \_\_\_\_\_, the road was closed, and I had to go 50 miles out of my way.”

### **Land Tenure**

“How do you obtain BLM parcels? I called the BLM person twice but he has not called back.”

“We’d like BLM to square up its boundaries. We’d like to work out a trade on isolated land.”

“What’s the process to obtain parcels? I’m interested in a particular piece [R22E-T10S, Section 31].”

“Can the airstrip near the dump be paved so that people could use it? Maybe the County could do it with BLM.”

### **Juniper Management**

Many people commented about the positive value of BLM’s juniper management. Others had concerns.

“Let burned land rest one year instead of two. By the second year, the weeds are grown back in and you have to burn again.”

“They burned juniper on a hill (on Roden) and it falls down hill, lands on private land to clean up.”

“BLM has worked very well on juniper and thinning.”

“BLM cuts down juniper to get the grass back but the juniper sits there. You can only get firewood permits near a road. I’ve got a small cat and six buddies interested in getting the firewood on Gable Creek.”

“Can a longer term arrangement for juniper harvest be worked out? I believe I can find a market if I know there is a supply.”

“They hire contractors around her for juniper thinning and they are Hispanic. Why not locals?”

“The juniper furniture I make requires special products. I can’t seem to get permits to salvage before or after prescribed burns, firewood-cutting permits seem limited compared with the Forest Service. I’d like to get in and take a tree here and there, mostly limbs, of stuff they’re going to burn anyway.”

### Weeds

“Scotch Thistle, Knap Weed, lots of it down on the river and Keys Flats.”

“The thing that’s going to hurt BLM is how long it takes to get the EIS done. We work together but it’s just not enough.”

### Water

“The springs should be developed on Stove Pipe Allotment. Pat’s Cabin Canyon allotment has some historic uses, water troughs. BLM said that if they could find pipes and show that it had historic use, they could develop it, but BLM didn’t follow through.” [33]

### Stewardship Contracting

“Russian Olive eradication is a good thing but can it be a stewardship contract? Local people could probably work for 1/3 the cost.”

“The best thing the Forest Service and BLM can do is more stewardship contracting. There are local people that can do the work.”

### Navigability

“There are lots of problems with navigability on the John Day. The public really doesn’t have a right to float the river.”

## **Recreation and Hunting**

“We really need an RV park here.”

Residents have a strong sense that hunting is presently out of control.

“Can’t BLM or somebody do something about all the hunters? They’re practically on top of each other.”

“We are over-flooded with elk and deer hunters. It’s practically a city full of campers and it’s dangerous to be in there. They go right through fencing. The number of tags should be limited.”

“There is too much [hunting] pressure on Bridge Creek.”

“Hunters trespass so regularly it would be better if there were signs marking the difference between BLM and private lands. Four wheel vehicles are coming all over our property.”

“How come hunters and four wheelers can trespass all over, but the rancher can’t use a four wheel drive to bring salt up to Coyote Canyon?”

“Close down the campground at Black Canyon [and on west side of Gird’s Creek one mile up from river on Westside] if you can’t manage it. Mostly during hunting season, there’s lots of trespass. If you get near the boat ramp, there is trash everywhere, trash on public and private land.”

“There ought to be a place where people can use their vehicles, jeeps and motorcycles, so they don’t trespass.”

A number of residents discussed the possibility of working with BLM and other partners to develop BLM lands (the Owens Ranch) near Mitchell behind the ODOT maintenance yard into a community amenity and visitor attraction. It could include interpretive trails with the old ranch building behind ODOT.

“I’d like to see a pond where Bridge Creek meets with the road stocked with fish for people to fish there. There is no real recreation for the tourists or kids in school. It’s on the parcel behind ODOT. It could have fishing, picnicking, and easy access.”

“Owens Ranch would make a great park. Do something with it. Preserve it and interpret it. Would the community have enough volunteers to make this work?”

“What if people could walk up and down the river in Mitchell on a pathway and have it interpreted for plants, rocks, old ranch structures. For example, there is

BLM land behind the ODOT building that still has old structures on it. You couldn't expect the City [of Mitchell] to initiate this, and people would be suspicious of BLM, but perhaps it could work through SWCD to lead it."

### **John Day Plan**

"Farm lands are getting retired seven years from now according to the John Day plan. There will be an impact to private lands and wildlife. BLM management is putting a lot of wildlife pressure on private farmlands."

"We can only lease lands a year at a time and if the water is low, BLM takes it for the river. We can lose our crop in that scenario, so we don't have much ability to predict or plan."

"We can only lease lands one year at a time and if the water is low, BLM takes it for the River, and we could lose our crop. We don't have much ability to predict or plan."

"I live across the river from the BLM boat landing. People are camping and picnicking there when they're just supposed to be using it for a put in. Is this going to start growing into a day use area?"

### **Paleo Resources**

"When we have found and turned in paleo resources, they have been removed and we never see them again. At least, let us have casts of them so we can promote the resources of the area."

### **Communication**

"I want a copy of the JKA report."

"I'm glad that they're sending someone to listen. That's a good thing."

"BLM should have some materials at the visitor center showing where to camp, rules, regulations, and maps. People ask, 'Where can I camp?' This material could be put on the website for Mitchell as well." [www.paintedhills.com]

### **Resolve as You Go Candidates for Early Response**

BLM should make a series of calls to people interested in land parcels, explaining the process and timing of acquiring BLM land. These include Ardis Faulkner (R22E-T10S, Section 31), Georgia Collins, and Robert Collins.

Nancy Holly should be called about the boat ramp. She is concerned the BLM area across from her is turning into a day use area.

A BLM management person should sit down with Jim Woodward, listen to his concerns and see if that relationship can get repaired. He had two bad experiences with BLM, one related to a motorcycle rally and the other with a female ranger on his property that led to court. He has a range of concerns about the Sutton Mountain Exchange. Beneath his many concerns are issues of justice and fairness that bother him. In some ways, he has a good relationship with BLM as well, when staff have had to come on his allotment and in working with the fire crews. Jim cares a lot and is a central communicator in his community.

JKA teammate Joan Resnick is available for accompanying a BLM manager to visit Jim Woodward and a few others, if that is desired. The idea of this is a “warm handshake” approach to demonstrate that BLM is listening, and to determine if there are any actionable issues within the thematic language that would warrant a response. It is JKA’s opinion that little progress can be made in the Mitchell area on the larger management issues prior to this effort.

Make sure that follow up has happened with William Mar about his interest in juniper harvest.

### **Possible Elements for Community-Based Planning**

BLM could explore working in partnership with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and other agencies to mutually address local concerns about out-of-control hunting.

The community development of Owens Ranch could be facilitated.

### **Communication Strategy for Mitchell CRU**

A segment of the community is disaffected with BLM, which is hampering a fuller collaborative approach with the agency. Generally, BLM should strive to monitor its language and its approach, avoiding “No” if possible, and making use of cooperative, empowering language like, “Let’s,” “We can,” and “Why can’t we do...?” This is a relationship and capacity building step. To the extent that citizens are responsible for their actions, it may be possible to show more flexibility with the “rules” and to mutually solve problems while agreeing what will happen if progress is not made.

Because of the Sutton Mountain history, there is a strong sense that BLM has meetings after the decision has already been made. Any communication strategy should acknowledge and accommodate this social reality.

Lee Belknap, Dan Dominighini, and Matt Williams appear to be bridgers in the local community and could be used to help mobilize people in the planning process. John



Lillicrop pointed out that it is unrealistic to expect people to come to ten meetings over the next 18 months and that it might be better to form working groups to focus on particular topics.

## The Fossil/Spray Community Resource Unit

The Fossil/Spray Community Resource Unit includes the communities of Fossil and Service Creek along the Service Creek tributary of the John Day River, as well as the communities of Spray and Kimberly (in Grant County) along the John Day River. While Spray lost 10% of its population since 1990, Fossil has gained 12% in the same time period (Table Five, page 57).

### **Community Description**

Wheeler County has been a relatively poor county, especially since the logging industry left in the late 1970s. Tax revenue has decreased accordingly. In 1996 the County ran out of money and the State Treasurer threatened to dissolve the County. The vast majority of land in the County is public land, forestland or agricultural land, all of which is taxed at very low rates or not at all. Wheeler County needs economic development to shore up tax base—1.4% of county land base pays 56% of taxes.

The current settlement pattern is characterized by young people leaving after high school, large holdings being bought by wealthy outsiders, (many absentee), and some newcomers who stir things up a bit. Citizens and officials look to diversify the economy with specialty beef, eco-tourism, and small non-industrial businesses.

Fossil is the county seat for Wheeler County. The town had 470 people in 2001, down from 535 people in 1980. Its major employers are the Fossil School District, county government, a retirement center, a medical center and a car dealership. Tourism and agriculture in the form of cattle/calves operations and specialty products, dominate the local economy. School district enrollment was 97 in 2001. Because of slowly declining enrollments, the school district has needed to consolidate some activities with Condon.

The town of Spray has 140 people currently and incorporated in 1958. The Spray School District, enrollment 70 in 2001, is the largest employer with 30 staff, while the Oregon Department of Transportation Maintenance Yard employs 7, a geographic company employs 5, and the grocery/hardware employs 4. In recent years, Spray has embraced tourism as a viable economic development strategy, deploying public resources to create visitor amenities and supporting the absorption of newcomers. A number of real estate companies, for example, are now active in the community.

This part of Wheeler County has been in the midst of social and economic change related to the gradual decline of the traditional sectors, primarily ranching and forest products, and the limited economic activity related to increased visitation. Residents report a trend of increasing sale of ranches to newcomers who are less interested in the cattle industry.

The two “newcomer” ranches on Bridge Creek Road and Kinzua Road were often cited but there are other examples as well. At Twickenham, the Diamond C Ranch was split into 8-10 large parcels of many hundred acres each. Two billionaires reportedly are negotiating to buy 40,000-acre holdings in the Rock Creek area east of Mitchell for a resort.

“New westerners want building sites, buffers around them, privacy. They have money, take care of the land, and don’t need an immediate cash flow.”

Moreover, river and hunting based recreation reportedly is fairly self-contained so that additional local spending from visitation does not occur very much, reinforcing the local perception that recreation visitation does not generate enough economic activity.

The Fossil industrial park has experienced little activity. The County feels hampered by land use laws that limit land uses and discourage settlement. Some settlement by retired people is occurring but as their medical needs grow, they tend to leave again.

Despite these negative conditions, community people reported upbeat energy about recent changes and the future. Wheeler County communities seem to have accepted that economies need to diversify and not be dependent on past forest product industries. Newcomers are more common in recent years and they have begun to change the shape of the community, participating in local government and civic affairs. The County has an active artists community of painters and writers.

“We looked for two years before we chose this community. I’m from Bend and it was growing so fast, I couldn’t even recognize my own town anymore. Our kids are doing well in school which was one of our major goals.”

The Fossil/Spray area has experienced successes in recent years. “Painted Hills Premium Beef” is a local initiative to create a niche market for local cattle. During a tenuous beginning, the wives reportedly worked in grocery stores to promote the product. Residents reported now that the enterprise employs 7 workers and it is grossing millions annually.

Another success has been the concerted and coordinated focus on the paleontological resources of the area, which includes BLM in a partnership role with many others. The Paleo Project, strongly sponsored by Wheeler County officials, has attracted large scale funding, is linked with museums, and is part of a three county tour of “geo-tourism.” The school district has a paleological site next to the high school and hosts citizen digs.

Figure Nine:  
The Mastodon as an Art Form, Fossil, Oregon



(Source: authors)

People can dig up plant fossils for a fee, an interpreter on site helps educate, and people can take home up to three pieces. Last year was the first year and netted \$6,000 for the schools district. This program is being further developed. Business banners may feature the local mastodon sculpture as an icon. Camp Hancock, a facility of OMSI (Oregon Museum of Science and Industry) specializing in these resources, is now at capacity. The spin-offs of this activity include a woman who sells fossil digging kits, and outfitters who do cultural tours of the petroglyphs along the river. In addition, the State Cultural Trust funds have been growing, awarding Wheeler County \$5,000 this year, with likely increases next year.

“Some people close to it here estimate that we could get in 50,000 visitors annually for paleo activities. There are partnerships to be had here, if we could just get our act together.”

The Paleo Project could use technical assistance from a geologist to define area limits, interpretation guidelines, and planning for long term development of the site.

Three new businesses have come into Spray in recent months, one a steel fabrication company employing 5 people. A new sewer system will make several lots in town developable. The town is actively focused on river development and enhancing the visitor experience. Officials and informal leaders voiced interest in Recreation and Public Purpose leasing to address community goals. Positive energy is obvious in the community.

## *Community Themes and Issues*

“We’re getting past it.” Many residents commented on the community changes of the last several years, in particular the anger many felt at the slow decline of the traditional economic sectors, and the perception of some that the natural resource agencies were to blame. One person said, “No one wanted to rock the boat or wanted anyone else to rock the boat much either.” However, many also expressed the sentiment that “We have moved on,” and that residents are now more actively engaged in making a better and different future for their community.

The County has some successes upon which to build, according to Judge Burch – the Paleo project, Painted Hills Natural Beef, a good summer youth employment program, and an active Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

“Wheeler and Gilliam County need to work together and think as a ‘Region’ – whatever is good for one of us will help the other.” [Judge Burch]

Economic development is at the top of the agenda for County officials. The Lower John Day Partnership is working on economic development in the county.

The county has a good broadband system installed and is looking to improve cell telephone coverage in the county as well.

Community issues relate to economic development:

“The industrial park here is stagnant.”

“The industrial park needs to be modified to fit smaller business needs and its marketing needs to fit a newer paradigm.”

“There is a shortage of low cost decent housing to attract new residents and small business people.”

“Fossil needs more lodging. During the Blues Festival, people complained there was no place to camp or rooms to rent. We have several such events each year—car shows, motorcycle rallies.”

“There is not enough business here to create a truly healthy community.”

“There is no work for young people—kids leave for jobs and want to come back later, but there are no jobs here.”

One big issue that is affecting the region is the potential loss of PILT money because of the expiration of the Craig/Wyden bill that replaced lost timber tax revenues with

treasury money. The funds are earmarked for roads and schools, and no replacement source of funding is yet in sight.

Fossil town officials related a number of concerns. They want businesses at the new industrial park that will increase tax base and bring jobs. The town is working with the Corps of Engineers to get approval to begin construction of new water supply line.

Fossil leaders also desire more affordable newer housing to attract people to community. Housing stock is in poor shape in the county. Affordable homes are old and rundown. New homes planned in the Spray area will cost about \$200,000 each, affordable for baby boomers, but not affordable for local residents.

Officials and residents discussed the limitations of the current land use planning system for the future of the County.

“I favor getting ‘rural residential zones’ established so that people can build houses. Homes and businesses provide more tax base than open land. The County tried to do that a few years back but backed off when a few people resisted. I wish they would follow through.”

“Zoning laws don’t easily allow for development of new building sites, unless you zone for rural residential. The County got shot down on its attempt. This hurts economic development because people won’t move here to buy an old house. We need small acreages for building sites.”

### **Natural Resource Themes and Issues**

One theme related to natural resource management is a familiar one that government cannot be trusted. At the same time, however, was personal trust and even affection for particular government personnel. The theme underscores the overriding importance of building relationships, what JKA calls “staffing the culture.”

“I don’t trust the government, but I like working with \_\_\_\_\_(people they know personally like Heidi Mottl, Patrick Kolliga).”

“John Zancanella is a great partner for paleo and geological technical coordination.”

The other themes related to the widespread interest in access and the perception that public involvement is a cover for decisions “already made.”

“BLM and the Forest Service should do something about preserving public access to public and forest lands.”

“They say they want our input and usually already have their proposal drafted.”

Actionable issues related to natural resource management include issues about maps and information, access, hunting, recreation, land tenure, stewardship contracting, forest management, weeds, and mutual aid.

### **Maps and Information**

People are frustrated that they don't know where BLM boundaries are, especially in popular and heavily used areas. They want boundaries marked so trespass can be avoided. They want public ownership maps to be accurate.

“Good maps are needed. If you could get a large, accurate one, I'd hang it up in my restaurant. A lot of visitors come here.”

“With all the land trades, we don't know where BLM lands are. We need good maps.”

“We don't have a good supply of up-to-date maps for selling to hunters, floaters, and campers. We get a lot of requests. The maps have to be accurate for search and rescue.”

“Better maps would help with law enforcement. Now, we can't always know where the boundaries are.”

### **Access**

People are frustrated about having lost access to public lands as private land owners have closed gates on roads traditionally used by locals. People also fear access loss will only get worse as wealthy outsiders continue to buy large ranches. This concern is widespread throughout Fossil/Spray area. Several people are concerned that Wheeler County doesn't have good jurisdiction records for county records, which could result in more access loss in future.

When people were asked to identify specific locations where access has become a problem, two areas commonly were mentioned, the Butte Creek Road, leading from Fossil to the John Day River, and the Kinzua area that borders the west side of the Umatilla National Forest. In the first, access was lost when an old ranch became the 90,000-acre Stanley Ranch, which controlled the road and closed it off. In the second, the perception is that the Umatilla National Forest, when negotiating land trades, should have assured access along this road and did not, setting the stage for closure by the new owner. A number of less important sites were identified as well where access has been lost.

“We would welcome any help the BLM could provide.” [Wheeler County roadmaster]

“Access, access, access.” [Common]

“We lost access to Spring Basin, near the River. Access to Kinzua, on the other side, was lost too because of the Forest Service. Lands that we have had access to for generations are lost to us.”

“When the Kinzua Road was blocked, I had a bunch of hunters in my restaurant. They asked directions but came back later, frustrated that they could not get in. After that, hunters stopped coming to Fossil.”

“The Kinzua Road got vandalized a lot because he made people so mad. What was once a ½ hour drive to the Umatilla now takes 1 ½ hours.”

“The County needs to determine the legal status of many roads. Perhaps the BLM planning process could lend itself to support that effort through funding or technical support.”

### **Hunting**

More ranchers are closing land to general hunting and charging individuals significant amounts to hunt. It is estimated that more than half of ranchers already have fee hunting.

“A bad turn was made when they allowed hunting for a fee. Now, regular people don’t get a turn.”

“For locals, hunting was meat. Now, you can pay \$2,000-3,000 for a tag, \$500 a day.”

“Fee hunting has become big. We heard about a \$15,000 elk.”

“You could walk to Juniper Island this year because of the low water in the John Day. The hunting is supposed to be very good.”

### **Recreation**

Fossil is midway between Clarno and Cottonwood, in excellent position to take advantage of economic opportunities for shuttling, camping, meals, fuel, clothing, maps, autotellers, and gifts. There are also opportunities to promote other family tourist experiences in Wheeler County such as paleontological adventures, hiking, biking, ATV activities, and camping.

“BLM lands are important to the economy of Wheeler County. We need to learn how to take better advantage of the floaters and boaters in order to capture more dollars locally.” [Judge Jeanne Burch]

“We need to attract boaters to stay longer than just for boating.” [Judge Jeanne Burch]

“Edu-tourism – we want to attract tourists, like the baby-boomers, who want to learn about special areas in the county.” [Judge Jeanne Burch]

Wheeler County parks are popular, well maintained and often used by OHV users from Bend/Prineville heading to the Morrow County OHV Park.

“We get good comments about our parks.” [Judge Burch]

Wheeler County has an active summer youth employment program, working on projects in the community and on forestlands. Salaries for youth workers are paid by the State. They would like more involvement with BLM projects on public lands.

“We haven’t had much luck yet getting projects on BLM lands. We need more projects for the kids to do.” [Sally Motley, Elwyn Grout, Youth Program]

People are concerned about the anticipated effects of the stream navigability issue – that private landowners along streams will lose valuable streamside land. Wheeler County officials are concerned that stream navigability provisions will cause havoc with property boundaries. Several people are concerned that numbers of river floaters will increase significantly and more camping opportunities and regulation on BLM lands are needed. The Wheeler County Sheriff anticipates a heavy future impact from Prineville/Bend ORV users on public lands and wants to develop a planned use area on public land. Several Fossil citizens believe Fossil has a shortage of accommodations for tourists. Hancock Station (OMSI) is concerned about obtaining use of additional areas for their expanding educational programs.

“I don’t like campers at Muleshoe leaving trash at my facility or on lands nearby because there is no trash service.” [Outfitter in Service Creek area]

“I’d like to see BLM develop more campgrounds along the river.”

“We do not see much resource damage around here, although there is increased OHV use from Prineville and Bend. There is occasional illegal trash dumping on public and private lands.” [Wheeler County Sheriff]

### **Land Tenure**

Residents and leaders in Spray expressed interest in Recreation and Public Purpose leasing to further their economic development goals. Some BLM parcels are strategically located along the river in Spray, which would contribute to the evolving campsite capacity and allow the town to get a better handle on visitor impacts like trash and vandalism. Other parcels are more isolated and could be used for special purposes such as OHV use. Knowledge about how to acquire R&PP leases was very low.



Several people are frustrated that they don't know the BLM policies regarding disposal of tracts of public lands. They especially want to know how to be involved. One person wants BLM to offer to sell isolated small tracts to its neighbors.

"I'd like to get a community airport on a piece of ground just north of Mitchell on Sutton Mountain. It would bring big name rodeo riders in and would provide access to high end landowners who want to build destination resorts." [The R&PP lease process was described in general and this person was encouraged to get community support before proceeding.]

"I'd like to get a designated OHV area on Sutton Mountain like the one established in Morrow County." [Wheeler County Sheriff]

"Because Hancock Station is so near capacity, we'd like to expand our school activities onto nearby BLM lands."

### **Stewardship Contracting**

Residents also expressed interest in stewardship contracting related to particular sections of the canyon. Conceivably, Spray could collect fees in order to fund its visitor support activities, the contracts could provide summer jobs for kids, the local school dorms could be utilized for summer programs, the trash issue at Service Creek could be addressed, and current maps and user regulations could be distributed and interpreted by locals.

### **Forest Management**

"I want BLM and the Forest Service to salvage dead trees and reduce fuel loads in bug-killed timber."

"Work closer with small communities when doing prescribed burns to avoid periods where inversion layers trap smoke in the canyons.

"The only possible tenant at the industrial park right now could be Tim Coe's Burnt Ranch Juniper business making juniper furniture and caskets. They need a grant to purchase a small sawmill."

### **Weeds**

Weeds are an ongoing issue for Wheeler County, especially around the river. The county has a weed coordinator and would like work with BLM to improve cooperative efforts to eradicate noxious weeds.

"We would like to be able to have our employees spray weeds on BLM ground."  
[Judge Jeanne Burch]

### **Mutual Aid**

A Search and Rescue volunteer in Spray is concerned that BLM and the Forest Service continue promoting mutual aid policies with communities for fire fighting.

### **Resolve as You Go Candidates for Early Response**

Provide accurate maps showing current BLM parcels and any special rules for camping, hunting, etc – work with several local outlets to make sure they have current maps & info – local businesses (Big Timber restaurant and hardware store in Fossil and General Store in Spray) are willing to be points of information for residents and visitors.

Have a conversation about land tenure policies (disposal or exchange of public lands) and R&PP leases with citizens and government representatives. Help explain why past exchanges were done and what tenure decisions need to be included in the RMP. Ensure that leadership in Spray and the Wheeler County Sheriff understand the opportunities associated with R&PP leases.

We recommend BLM consider identifying a project in Wheeler County this coming field season for the youth employment program. One candidate could be trash cleanup near Muleshoe and Service Creek for example. (Contact Elwyn Grout, The Dalles, 541-308-0015, 541-298-4104)

We also recommend BLM discuss with Wheeler County opportunities to expand current cooperative weed control efforts. Explore possibilities for county weed control people to spray weeds on public lands. People are interested in this issue and want BLM's full participation. Find opportunities to provide any federal weed control funds to the County's efforts.

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### **Possible Elements for Community-Based Planning**

Community-based approaches in dealing with access issues shows the promise of increasing citizen capacity and responsibility in this area, fostering partnerships with local governments, and attracting a wider array of resources to address the widespread interests in access.

The current BLM focus on geo-tourism and cultural resources appears to be correct and well grounded. Such a focus is consistent with local direction and aspirations. It is possible that an even more concerted effort is appropriate. If the economic development of paleontological resources continues, several venues will need additional land and/or paleo resources upon which to draw. BLM could facilitate coordinated planning among the various players to clarify the extent of future need and respond accordingly.

During the coming decade, the number of river runners and ORV users from larger communities in western and central Oregon is expected to increase substantially, bringing significant impacts and opportunities to Wheeler County. Some basic community-based economic planning now can maximize opportunities and minimize impacts. BLM planning can stimulate and facilitate this important discussion.

Wheeler County officials look with admiration and strong interest at the Morrow County OHV Park and would like to explore possibilities of loop trails and maybe an off-road recreation area. This interest arose in separate conversations with three different county officials (Sheriff, Assessor, Judge). They would like to explore possibilities of using BLM or Forest Service lands, along with private lands, for parks and trails.

The newly hired Executive Director for the Paleo Institute is identifying ways for the BLM planning effort to support education and economic development activities related to geologic and paleontological features in the area.

“The Myers Canyon Blue Schist outcrop is 220 million years old and in desperate need of protection – how about designating it in the RMP as an ACEC [Area of Critical Environmental Concern]?” [Ellen Morris Bishop, Paleo Institute Executive Director]

The Paleo Institute is looking to get more people, especially families and younger people out on the ground and in touch with paleontological, historic, botanical, geologic, and cultural features of the region. The Institute would like to especially focus on the “shoulder tourist seasons” – early spring and fall.

“We need trail locations, including some on BLM lands – how about identifying locations as part of the transportation plan BLM intends to do for the RMP?” [Ellen Morris Bishop, Paleo Institute Director]

“BLM can help get replicas of fossils/mammoth tusks, etc out to sites or to the new Paleo center in Fossil.” [Ellen Morris Bishop]

”BLM can partner with us to provide more effective kiosks and interpretive signs on roads.” [Ellen Morris Bishop]

### **Communication Strategy for the Fossil/Spray CRU**

Economic development should be a planning element that drives BLM planning in this area. It is possible that BLM could provide technical or financial support to assist the area in further focusing its development efforts, and also provide leadership and facilitative skills to a small area needing all the support it can get. While typically economic development efforts within BLM are focused on recreation, we are suggesting that the entire BLM land use planning effort is facilitative and capacity building.

Partner with the County, SWCD, the towns of Fossil and Spray, and economic development interests to explore ways for public land to contribute to economic development. Examples are R&PP leases for camping along the John Day River near Spray, permitting cultural/paleo sites to OMSI and Camp Hancock and the Paleo project in Fossil, and R&PP lease for an ATV area near Sutton Mountain.

Offer to partner with Wheeler Co to determine legal status of all roads in the County, as prelude to setting access priorities. It is possible that a joint transportation plan between the County and BLM could address mutual interests, an idea that will be further explored with County officials in the coming weeks.

It may be that BLM wishes to consider strategies for deploying its labor for the land use planning process. JKA research to date indicates value in geographically oriented teams whose members could get to know the residents in their area and facilitate progress in a number of planning areas, not just their specialties. Such an approach would offer continuity and foster capacity in ways that other approaches may not.

People in the Fossil area make use of two newspapers, Wheeler County News in Spray and The Times-Journal in Condon. The Glover Memorial Senior Center is a good place to make announcements and KFSL Radio can insert public service announcements. The City of Fossil offered to include notes in their monthly water bills. Cheryl Jenison, a realty broker, is part of an informal business association, and she has offered to help set up meetings and gather people together.



## CHAPTER FIVE: THE SHERMAN AREA OF THE DALLES HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT (HRU)

Figure Ten on the next page shows The Dalles HRU, which includes portions of Hood River and Sherman Counties. The border on the north is north of the Columbia River, including parts of Skamania County, Washington, on the west is the crest of the Cascade Mountains, on the south by the Confederated Warm Springs, and on the east by the John Day River. The CRUs located in Sherman County include the Biggs/Rufus, the Moro/Wasco, Grass Valley, and Maupin. The Deschutes River (also the Sherman County line) serves as the western border of these CRUs.

This chapter explores the Sherman area of The Dalles HRU along the following dimensions:

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

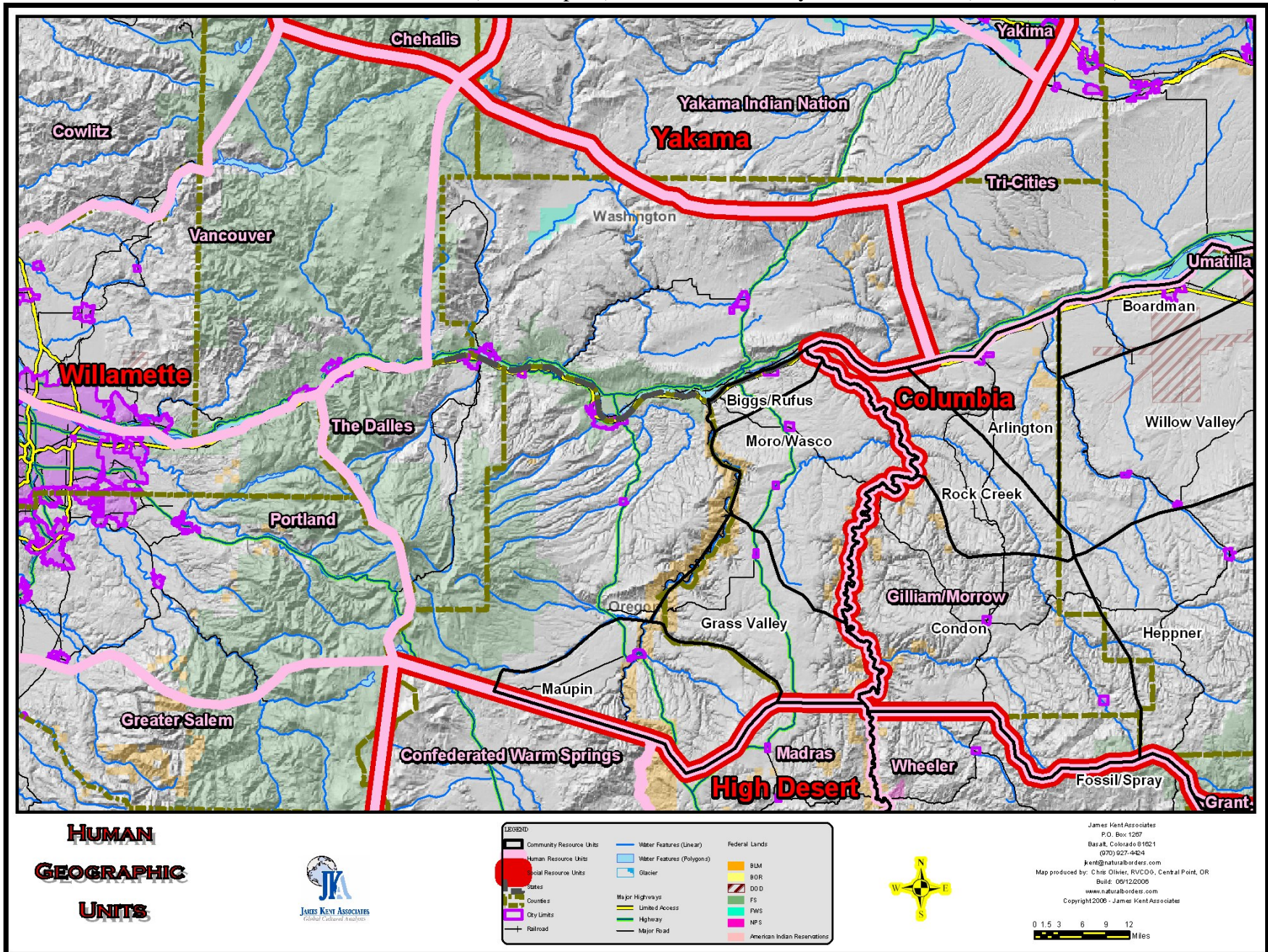
### **Community Description**

Stockmen settled Sherman County in the 1870s. By 1881, the homesteaders arrived, permanently changing the area by plowing and fencing the tall grass. Sherman County was formed out of the northeast corner of Wasco County in 1889. Since then, the county has been a wheat-growing area with miles of waving grain on rolling hills of wind-blown glacial silt. The total absence of timber in the county exemplifies the true meaning of the “wide open spaces of the West.” Its pastoral landscape has spectacular views of canyons and rivers with mountains silhouetted in the distance. Recreation abounds on the rivers, from the famous and scenic fly-fishing and whitewater-rafting stream of the Deschutes to water-skiing, wind-surfing, boating, fishing and rafting on the John Day and Columbia Rivers. Sherman County is one of Oregon’s leaders in soil and water conservation.

Sherman County is an agricultural county with no industry. It has a larger percentage of its 831 square miles under cultivation than any county in Oregon. Its farms are devoted to growing wheat and barley. Cattle raising also contributes to the county's economy as does recreation on the rivers bordering the county. (Oregon Blue Book 2004; <http://bluebook.state.or.us/local/counties/counties28.htm>). In recent years, farm and ranch income has been supplemented by fee hunting, and on a few ranches, by wind generation farms.



Figure Ten:  
The Dalles Human Resource Unit (HRU, in pink) With Its Community Resource Units (CRUs, in black)



The population changes in Sherman County and its communities are shown in Table Four.

- Between 1990 and 2005, Sherman County lost nearly 9% of its population, dropping from 1,918 to 1,749.
- There is a greater percentage of residents 65 years old and over (18.3%) than for Oregon as a whole (12.8%). Percent of residents of Hispanic or Latino origin in 2000 was 4.9%, compared to 8% for Oregon as a whole.
- The median age in Sherman County, OR is 41.8 years old, compared to 36.3 in the state and 35.3 in the nation.
- The retirement age category has been stable.

Table Six:  
Population of Sherman County and Its Communities

Geographic Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	2004 Population	% Change, 1990-2004
Sherman County	1,918	1,934	1,749 (2005)	-8.8 (2005)
Wasco	374	381	335	-10.4
Moro	292	337	296	1.4
Grass Valley	160	171	150	-6.3

(Source: 2000 U.S. Census)

Economic changes summarized by the 2000 U.S. Census include these:

- The average earnings per job, in real terms, dropped from \$38,638 in 1970 to \$11,724 in 2000. From 1970 to 2000, Sherman County lost \$29 million in personal income, in real terms.
- In the same time period, net income from farming and ranching dropped from \$25 million to -\$12 million.
- Wage and salary employment rose from nearly 58% in 1970 to nearly 63% in 2000, as a share of total employment, compared to proprietors' employment, which dropped from 42% to 37% of total employment in this time period.
- Farm employment dropped as a total share of employment from 35% of the workforce in 1970 to 26% of the workforce in 2000.
- The share of total employment of retail trade increased from 15% in 1970 to 24% in 2000, while legal and businesses services employment increased from 6% to 10%.



- In 1970, non-labor income sources represented 20% of total personal income. By 2000, they comprised 67%.
- While labor income has been widely variable over thirty years, non-labor income is steady, offering a stabilizing effect on the local economy.
- In 2000, 14.6% of county residents were below the federal poverty line, compared to 11.6% statewide. In 2002 Sherman County ranked at or near the bottom of all Oregon counties for per capita income. In 2003 unemployment was 11.9% compared to 8.2% statewide (Sonoran Institute 2006).

Once claiming a strong local economy, Sherman County now ranks last out of 36 Oregon counties in per capita income, as shown in Figure Three, page 12 (Ouder Kirk and Pedden 2005, citing the Northwest Area Foundation).

### **Community Themes and Issues**

The town of Moro shows some prospect of being a place to retire to or to live the small town life. The schools are notably good in Moro and some people have moved there to get out of city areas and to take advantage of school system. Community life also seems to center around high school sports. Some traditional rivals have had to become single teams in order to fund sports in schools.

Improving the economic well being of the community is a strong focus within the county. Business counseling services are locally available from The Dalles Small Business Development Center and Six Rivers Community Mediation.

Sherman County, by virtue of its proximity to the Columbia Gorge, has ample wind resources of a commercial grade. It is also close to the transmission grid for easy transmission. Wind generation has helped in recent years bringing county coffers \$20,000 per turbine in annual tax revenues and \$2000 to \$4000 per turbine annual royalty payments to landowners. The Klondike wind farm east of Wasco was the first major commitment to develop energy in the county. Finished in 2001, the first phase built 16 towers producing 24 megawatts of electricity. Phase II is ready to go. Klondike owner Pacific Power Marketing anticipates the \$700 million project could generate \$100 million in tax revenue to the county, in addition to an economic boost during construction. Pacific Power actively supports community social and economic development activities in the county (Renewable Northwest Project, [www.RNP.org](http://www.RNP.org)).

Fifty wind turbines generating a capacity of 75 megawatts will be erected near the existing 24 turbines at the Klondike wind power plant east of Wasco (Fridley 2005)

More recently, the Sherman Development League and the County Government hired a renowned economic development consultant, supported by a grant, to conduct a

countywide workshop to guide the future development of the county. The "Shaping Sherman" workshop excited 200 citizens, developed county vision and mission statements, and spawned several citizen action teams that are still actively working to improve their communities. An active core network of community-minded citizens writes grants, involves other citizens, and generally facilitates action in the county. Some of the key network members are Sherry Kaseberg, Melva Thomas, and Sandy Macnab. The Sherman Development League is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) with a large donation from the Klondike wind farm owner to improve economic opportunities in the county.

"The Shaping Sherman workshop was really exciting. It got a lot of new faces involved with planning the future of our county. We plan to have a follow-up workshop (Shaping Sherman II) in May to celebrate progress and plan next steps." [Melva Thomas]

Figure 11:  
The Front Entrance to the Sherman County  
School District Office in Wasco



(Source: Oregon State Archives

<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/county/images/scenic/ohrp/scenicsherman.htm>.)

## **Natural Resource Themes and Issues**

Although BLM is an important presence for the people of Sherman County, it is not for economic reasons. Citizen interests regarding BLM fall in three main areas – fire safety and suppression, access to John Day River and public lands, and status of small parcels of public land adjacent to or surrounded by private land. In addition, protection of the John Day River, hunting, grazing, noxious weeds, and the need for better maps and information were topics of interest as well. Officials from the conservation districts and the county extension agent hope that the BLM land use planning process may help them to complete their digital soils inventory, a boon to a three county area.

### **Mutual Aid for Fire Safety and Suppression**

During discussions with several ranchers, their first concern was that BLM continue to provide fire suppression presence in Sherman County. One rancher described past experiences with BLM fire suppression and expressed the importance of having a strong continuing BLM presence, such as the Fire Guard station in Grass Valley. Most fires are lightning fires on grass and croplands.

“We had some big problems between ranchers and the BLM during big fires about ten years ago – afterward BLM came back into communities and listened to citizens and smoothed things out pretty well.”

### **Access to BLM lands and the John Day River**

Public road access to the John Day River and public lands from Sherman County exists primarily at Cottonwood Bridge. In addition, the Murtha Ranch on the west side of Cottonwood Bridge currently allows hunters access to the ranch and to adjoining public lands and the river without charging fees. The JKA team heard from three different people about the situation regarding the recent death of Mike Murtha, apparently without leaving a will, and their concern about the ranch’s future. Mike’s brother, Jim Murtha, operates the ranch. This is one of the last access points for hunters. Apparently, Jim Murtha is being offered large sums of money by hunting organizations for exclusive access rights, but is refusing to sell the rights. Several citizens want to see BLM or some other agency help find a way to secure public access on the Murtha property.

During discussions with County officials and private citizens, the JKA team heard conflicting statements describing public access to BLM lands within Sherman County. There seems to be inconsistent understanding of which roads approaching BLM lands were public or private roads.

Some ranchers spoke of other ranchers who would like additional roads on BLM lands to make some parcels more accessible.

Social and economic impacts to Sherman County from boaters using the John Day River are relatively minor.

“Yeah, we get a few boaters coming through on highway 97 to put in at Clarno and take out at Cottonwood, but they usually don’t stop here.” (Elected County official)

“We occasionally get a carload of boaters stopping in here at the restaurant.” (Wasco restaurant owner)

### **Land Tenure**

Several ranchers we talked with are concerned about the status and future plans for managing small BLM parcels adjacent to or surrounded by their private lands. Specifically, they worry that future restrictions imposed on BLM lands could mean that they would be forced to fence boundaries in order to be able to use their own lands.

“How does the Endangered Species Act regulations apply on very small parcels surrounded by private lands? Would it be necessary to fence off the BLM parcel?” (County extension agent)

Those ranchers expressed interest in buying the small BLM parcels in order to simplify ownership patterns and ranching operations, and to give them more predictability for their future operations. One rancher suggested that BLM set up a fast-track process to sell small tracts to neighbors.

“Let’s put some of those lands back on the County tax rolls.” (Rancher)

### **Protection of the John Day River**

The Sherman County Judge expressed concern about environmental protection of the John Day River. He favors limits on numbers of boaters and wants the County to have a voice in setting policy.

“I believe the amount of use by boaters is already at its upper limit. The John Day River is a warm water river and can’t absorb impacts like the Deschutes can.”

One rancher expressed distrust of the Association of Northwest Steelheaders organization, believing they attempt to control use on the River for their own members.

### **Hunting**

Most of the ranchers in Sherman County have closed land to general hunting access and charge individuals significant amounts to hunt, either as day use or as leases to hunting groups or organizations. Fee hunting provides supplemental income to landowners. Most clients are repeat customers and often referred by word of mouth.

“When you charge a fee, that hunter will report any unauthorized hunting or trespass. A fee hunter will take care of the land he pays to use, so he can use it again.”

Fee hunting also provides a level of monitoring on the land. Ranchers have first-hand stories about theft, vandalism, or damage to their property.

“Anything you let the public into gets destroyed.”

Several ranchers we talked with believe hunting, in general, is becoming an elitist activity based on higher income levels. Locals who want to hunt can still do so, based on long term personal relationships with landowners, but even that is changing.

“Hunting is becoming an elitist activity – the average person is being priced out of hunting.”

In the past, ranchers had been challenged by hunters to allow them access across private lands to hunt on public lands. However, in recent years this problem has significantly lessened. The word seems to have gotten around to hunters that some public lands don’t have public access.

Several ranches in the County allow bird hunting access to individuals under a State program called the “Upland Cooperative Access Program”, whereby landowners collect \$.50 per acre from the State and manage hunting traffic on their land. Several hunters praised the program.

One rancher (Murtha) adjacent to Cottonwood crossing, a notable exception, does not charge fees for hunting or boating access, even though he has experienced trespass and damage in the past from hunters and other users. We heard from several neighbors that he is being pressured by hunting groups to sell them access rights.

“We just try to get along with everybody.” (Rancher at Cottonwood)

### **Grazing Program and Rancher Relationships with BLM**

Ranchers JKA talked with want to continue grazing permits with the BLM. Their comments about BLM presence and management was mixed. One rancher near Wasco expressed pride in managing grazing activities on his private land and BLM lands and would like to see more BLM presence.

“I haven’t seen a BLM person out here in 20 years – I’d like to see one out here to show what I’m doing.”

Another rancher with two BLM grazing permits said the permits are working well and expressed that he had a good relationship with BLM employee Craig Obermiller. The county extension agent didn't know the name of any BLM employee.

Several ranchers expressed some frustration in coordinating improvement projects on grazing land with BLM. Ranchers get a grant to do a project, want to coordinate with adjoining BLM land, but BLM is usually not able to act quickly enough to make the project feasible.

The Sherman County SWCD District Conservationist and the Farm Services Agency (FSA) representatives confirmed the difficulty ranchers have in coordinating improvement projects between CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) and BLM. They suggested that there needs to be a coordinated management and improvement plan for BLM lands developed collaboratively with BLM, SWCD, FSA, and ranchers.

“If there was an overall plan of attack we could all coordinate with, ranchers would do the work – right now it's shot-gunned rancher by rancher.”

“We could use more cooperation with BLM with the CREP program (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) Make it easier for ranchers to do work on BLM land, have a treatment plan, develop some trust.”

The SWCD and FSA representatives also relayed other issues they hear from ranchers for which there may not be easy resolutions. Ranchers may just want to be heard on some frustrations they have.

The “fish window” – cattle have to come off grazing allotments when steelhead run, which is sometimes not the best time for ranchers.

### **Noxious Weeds**

There is recognition of an ongoing weed issue in Sherman County, although ranchers believe they have an effective program in the County and a good weed coordinator. There are some questions about what can be done to control weeds on small BLM parcels surrounded by private lands.

Noxious weeds in flood plain – ranchers would like to spray, but can't in flood plain or the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) because of legal requirements.

### **Maps and Information**

None of the key gathering places had a map showing locations of BLM lands or public roads, even though they get frequent questions from non-local hunters about where they

can access hunting or public lands. The ranchers and county officials had difficulty pointing out where roads and boundaries were.

Sherman County is in a conservation district with Wheeler and Gilliam Counties and would be eligible for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) if all three counties had digitally mapped soils information. Wheeler can't afford it, so none of the three counties are eligible. The Sherman County Extension Agent wants to explore ways BLM could help Wheeler County map soils – apparently BLM in Malheur County is helping Malheur County with mapping. (Malheur County Extension agent contact is Devon Knutson 541-881-1417)

### **Resolve as You Go Candidates for Early Response**

Provide accurate maps showing current BLM parcels and any special rules for camping, hunting, etc. Work with several local outlets to make sure they have current maps and information. Local businesses (Lean To/Goose Pit Restaurant in Wasco, Café Moro in Moro), as well as the County Courthouse in Moro, are willing to be points of information for residents and visitors.

County Extension Agent Sandy Macnab has offered to arrange an extension meeting and invite farmers and ranchers and BLM specialists. BLM could give an overview of the upcoming planning effort and answer questions about land tenure and other topics of interest. Have BLM range and land tenure specialists attend. It would be best to have the discussion prior to any formal scoping meeting held in the area.

### **Possible Elements for Community-Based Planning**

There are opportunities to use community-based approaches in dealing with access issues. One opportunity is a joint effort with County government and BLM to clarify the legal status of key roads approaching public land in the County and to develop an accurate map of public access routes. The BLM planning process could support that effort.

Another opportunity is to develop a coordinated management and improvement plan for public and private ranch lands west of the John Day River. The opportunities include building trust with ranching partners, taking better advantage of resources for improvements, and fostering partnerships with SWCD, FSA, and County government.

The increasing numbers of river users and hunters using limited public access in the John Day River Canyon will bring more impacts and potential conflicts between users and landowners. Develop an easy to understand set of user rules for the river and adjacent public and private lands by partnering with County, State, federal and private partners.

## **Special Opportunity**

The Jim Murtha Ranch at Cottonwood Bridge is a rare and unique opportunity for the BLM to secure additional public access to the River and nearby public lands. For example, an access easement might be negotiated with Mr. Murtha, using a funding partner interested in public access issues. The window of opportunity may be narrow, but is worth exploring

This is an issue still in the emerging stage and represents a proactive opportunity for BLM to help secure access to hunting and other activities near the river. It can be addressed under the scope of existing plans and outside the planning process. With some major collaborative partners that can help obtain the rights, BLM could significantly improve public access to public lands and the river.

Even so, any opportunity would need to be explored first with local residents to assure success.

## **Communication Strategy for the Sherman Area**

To reach farmers and ranchers, have county extension agent Sandy Macnab (541-565-3230) help. Sandy's grandmother was one of the first settlers' children to be born in the county. He knows almost everyone, and he is very active in the community. He hosts an Agriculture Marketing Club that meets every 2 weeks. He also publishes a monthly Farmers' Newsletter to help publicize items of interest to farmers and ranchers. There are about 130 farmers and ranchers in the county.

There is a grain grower organization – Mid Columbia Producers, Rawleigh Curtis, manager, 541-565-3737. The local cattlemen/stockgrower organization is mostly inactive right now, according to the county extension agent.

Good places for meetings in Sherman County are the Grass Valley School, Rebekah Lodge Hall, Moro Fire Hall, and the Moro Fairgrounds.

Even though the Condon based Times-Journal is the paper of record for Sherman County, there is little regular interaction between citizens of Gilliam and Sherman Counties. Meetings in Gilliam County would not likely attract citizens from Sherman County, and vice versa.

Use the informal email network, Sherman County E-News, a free non-governmental newsletter usually updated daily and managed by Sherry Kaseberg, County Commissioner and community activist and caretaker. Contact the network at [sherryK@gorge.net](mailto:sherryK@gorge.net).

The Sherman County Reporter is an excellent quarterly newsletter published by Sherman County government with articles about important county meetings, new programs,



opportunities for citizen volunteers, and status of the “Shaping Sherman” Action Teams. We recommend BLM contact editor Sherry Kaseberg about including a short informative article about the upcoming RMP process. (Sherry Kaseberg 541-442-5514)

Figure 12:  
The Goose Pit Saloon in Wasco, Sherman County



Gathering places include the very popular Lean To Restaurant and Goose Pit Saloon in Wasco, where longtime owners Mike Gutfleisch and Kathy Heihart will post flyers; Café Moro in Moro; owners Jack and Jenny McCallister are interested in youth and community issues. The café maintains a special counter space where patrons can read local newsletters, flyers, and advertisements.

Harvest Moon Gallery in Moro is a cooperative art gallery run by Richard Warrick. He is a retired business consultant and would be willing to help communicate planning news throughout the community.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE GILLIAM AREA OF THE GILLIAM/MORROW HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT

Figure 13 on the next page shows the Gilliam/Morrow HRU. This HRU generally includes Gilliam and Morrow Counties and is divided into the CRUs of Boardman, Willow Valley, Heppner, Condon, Rock Creek, and Arlington. Its southern border extends into Grant County until the North Fork of the John Day River and into the northeast corner of Wheeler County.

This chapter describes the Gilliam County areas of the Gilliam/Morrow HRU along the following dimensions:

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

### **Community Description**

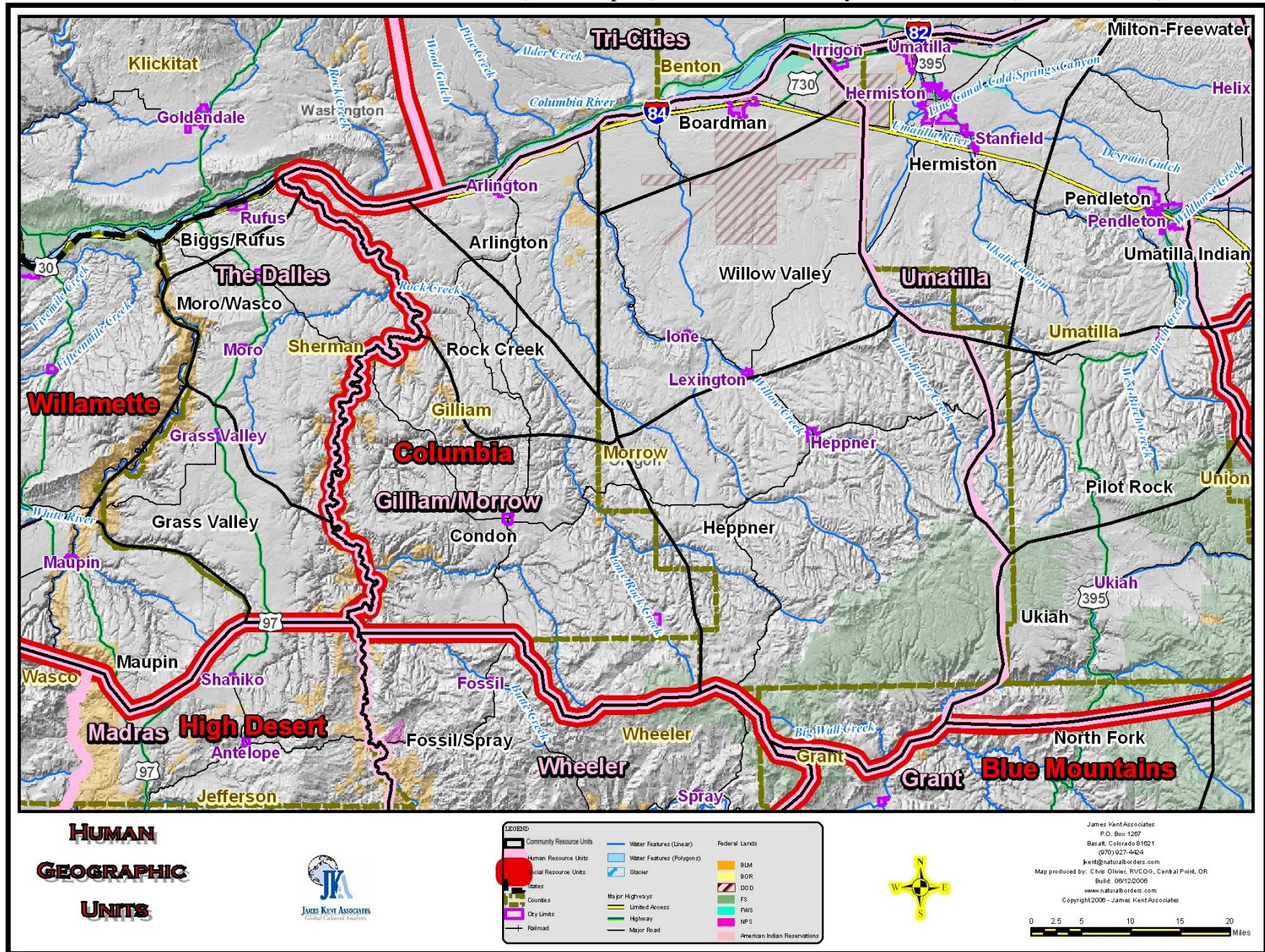
Gilliam County was formed in 1885 from the eastern one-third of Wasco County and has two main towns - Arlington, Condon, as well as dispersed settlements such as Rock Creek. Condon is the county seat. Population in Gilliam County grew 11.5% between 1990 and 2000 but has fallen off about 5% between 2000 and 2004. Population in 2004 was estimated at 1817 residents. There is a greater percentage of residents 65 years old and over (19.1%) than for Oregon as a whole (12.8%). Percent of residents of Hispanic or Latino origin in 2000 was 1.8%, compared to 8% for Oregon as a whole.

Gilliam County is in the middle of the Columbia Basin wheat area. With an average farm size of 4,200 acres, its economy is based primarily on agriculture centering on wheat, barley, and beef cattle. Apples and other irrigated crops are becoming an increasingly important part of the economy of the north end of the county. After agriculture and livestock, other principal industries of Gilliam County include tourism, hunting, and fishing. The largest individual employers in the county are two subsidiaries of Waste Management Inc., Chemical Waste Management of the Northwest and Oregon Waste Systems, Inc., two regional state-of-the-art disposal landfills.

With elevations of over 3,000 feet near Condon in the south of the county and 285 feet at Arlington, 38 miles north, the county offers a variety of climates and atmosphere. Hunting, fishing and tourism are secondary industries. Two major rivers, the John Day and Columbia, traverse the area east-to-west, as well as Interstate 84. Highway 19 connects the county's major cities north-to-south and serves as gateway to the John Day



Figure 13:  
The Gilliam/Morrow Human Resource Unit (HRU, in pink) With Its Community Resource Units (CRUs, in black)





Valley. (Oregon Blue Book 2004;  
<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/county/cpgilliamhome.html>).

The 2000 Census information for Gilliam County revealed this demographic information:

- From 1970 to 2000, the population in Gilliam County fell by 340 people, a 15% decline. Table Five below shows that between 1990 and 2005 the population gained 4.5%.
- The median age in Gilliam County was 42.8 years in 2000, compared to 26.3 in the state and 35.3 in the nation.
- The percentage of people in the population of retirement age, age 65 or older, has been stable at 19% between 1970 and 2000.

Table Seven:  
 Population of Gilliam County and Its Communities

Geographic Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	2004 Population	% Change, 1990-2004
Gilliam County	1,717	1,915	1,794 (2005)	4.5 (2005)
Condon	635	759	719	13.2
Arlington	425	524	499	17.4

(Source: 2000 U.S. Census)

Economic information from the 2000 Census related to Gilliam County is as follows:

- Average earnings in Gilliam County per job, in real terms, dropped from \$33,628 in 1970 to \$12,894 in 2000.
- Wage and salary employment, as a share of total employment, rose from 59% in 1970 to 66% in 2000. Conversely, proprietors' employment, as a share of total employment, declined from 41% to 34% in the same time period.
- Farm jobs declined from 40% (516 jobs) in 1970 to 26% (355 jobs) in 2000.
- In a rare exception for counties in the U.S. West, retail trade declined from 14% to 10% of total employment between 1970 and 2000, reflecting the decline of population, the growth of retail trade outside the county, and a high leakage factor for the local economy. Health, legal and business services remained steady at 12% whereas it has increased substantially in other counties of the region.
- Government employment declined from 20% to 18% between 1970 and 2000. The low point was in 1979 and government employment has slowly increased since that time.

- From 1970 to 2000, Gilliam County lost \$24 million in personal income, in real terms.
- Per capita income, in real terms, decreased by 18% from 1990 to 2000.
- Average earnings per job in Gilliam County, in real terms, have fallen from \$33,628 in 1970 to \$12,894 in 2000.
- In 1970, 35% of gross farm income was from livestock, while 43% was from crops. By 2000, 26% of gross income was from livestock, and 24% from crops. Income from government payments has risen from 12% of gross in 1970 to 37% in 2000.
- Total net income from farming and ranching in Gilliam County, in real terms, dropped from \$22.5 million in 1970 to \$3.8 million in 1985, and then dropped to -\$14.3 million in 2000.

The Ta-My Slah Wind Project is being planned west of Arlington, with a capacity of 104 megawatts, according to the Oregon Employment Department (<http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj>).

A social worker at the Condon Child Services Office noted a recent increase in caseloads for abused and neglected children in Gilliam County. He couldn't tie the increase to any other social or economic changes and was puzzled by the increase. Judge Laura Burch of Wheeler County, who is also a juvenile judge, suggests the increase is due to better casework reporting in recent years.

Fewer large farms and ranches seem to be changing ownership in Gilliam County than in Wheeler County. While there is some change of ownership, most farms and ranches seem to be surviving on traditional wheat, barley, and cattle ranching, supplemented by Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments, fee hunting, and some wind generators.

A realtor mentioned that newer landowners are buying land for reasons other than farming and ranching.

“People are moving in and staying. They don't need the land to make a living.”

### **Community Themes and Issues**

Economic development is important to citizens and local government. In recent years, the local economy has diversified by developing two regional landfills on the north end of the county, taking waste materials from Portland and Seattle, providing good jobs, and bringing revenue into the County. Each County property taxpayer has the first \$500 of

Figure 14:  
The Condon Hotel



(Source: Oregon State Archives

<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/county/images/scenic/ohrp/scenicgilliam7.htm>)

their property taxes paid by the \$1 per ton “tippage” fees from the landfills. Other diverse economic projects include wind generator farms on private land. We understand that any further wind farm projects would require upgrading capacity of expensive trunk lines out of the County. A third economic development project is a specialty flourmill trying to encourage some ranchers to grow higher-protein wheat locally.

The schools are the center of activities for many Gilliam County residents. School events are well-attended and popular conversation topics in gathering places. Condon school enrollment has fallen in recent years so Condon and Fossil have combined high school athletic teams. Several citizens realize that well being of Condon depends on keeping their schools going.

The recently renovated Hotel Condon is a source of pride to some residents who anticipate that the hotel will attract tourists. They acknowledge that the current owner is having trouble paying off renovation costs.

### **Natural Resource Themes**

Threats of rangeland fires are a common and ongoing concern in the County. Several ranchers and County officials acknowledge the presence and cooperation of BLM in fire suppression. They remember particularly large fires in the past when BLM fire suppression crews were very helpful.

“They [BLM] saved us.” (Judge Laura Pryor)

## *Natural Resource Issues*

Access is an issue for both residents and visitors to the County. Free public access to the John Day River and to public lands exists at Clarno and Cottonwood Bridge. Otherwise, access is limited in the area and is being managed by informal and formal agreements amongst landowners and users. Primarily, local farmers are “managing” access, including to public lands. There does seem to be an equity issue in that many people get turned away although it appears that is happening less and less. Most locals rely on Cottonwood Bridge or get on through friendships with landowners. In fact, access management has become a commodity, a moneymaker for some.

Communication ability of recreationists within the John Day River Canyon is poor. Gilliam County plans to put wireless towers at several locations along the rim on private land, according to Judge Pryor.

Locals, as well as visitors, lamented the lack of accurate maps showing location and jurisdiction of boundaries and roads. The JKA team heard conflicting descriptions, even between long-time residents, of where County roads end and private sections begin.

Policies and regulations regarding use of the River and lands within BLM’s Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) are not well understood within the community. There are State and federal fishery rules in addition to WSA rules. The navigability issue will further complicate user rules in the canyon.

The cost of rescuing people from the River canyon is borne by County. Several local residents think there should be a mechanism to reimburse some of the costs, such as requiring a license fee on the rafts and boats using the River. Several locals talked about also having boaters get some kind of education before getting on the river.

“Boaters need to get information, like hunters do, about what to expect when they get out here, i.e., that their cell phones won’t work, about trash, about impediments to rescue and walking out.” (Judge Pryor and Rita Rattray)

The number of boaters on the John Day River has increased significantly in recent years. Most people anticipate some sort of permitting process and are not as concerned with “if” permitting happens, but “how” it’s implemented. Residents expressed interest in being active players in developing a permitting system.

Figure 15:  
The John Day River on Highway 206, Gilliam County



(Source: Oregon State Archives <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/county/images/scenic/ohrp/scenicgilliam3.htm>)

### **Resolve as You Go Candidates for Early Response**

Landowner Bill Rose, a part owner of the Buckhorn Ranch, is interested in building an A-frame cabin on a particular parcel of private land within the WSA. He requested information about the possibility.

Realtor Boyd Harris is interested in developing road access across BLM to a private parcel of land. He would like to speak to a BLM official regarding his interest.

Develop an easily understood set of current user rules for the John Day River Canyon, integrating applicable State and federal regulations, private land access, as well as any agreements with partners such as the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. Provide the information to boaters at put-in points, to local residents and key contact points in the nearby communities. Maybe a small local business could brief boaters as part of a future permitting system.

Make accurate maps showing boundaries and access routes easily available (for sale) at key community locations. In Gilliam County, maps could be available at Country Flowers, the Country Café, Hotel Condon, and the Condon Motel.

The comments that BLM should offer to sell small parcels of interspersed public land continue to arise in conversations with landowners. During early stages of the planning process, discuss current BLM policies and rationale about land tenure decisions and



actions. Listen to their concerns regarding the small parcels as well. Since BLM has not been intending a large focus on land tenure in this area, it is feasible to handle these interests informally and keep them from being inserted into the public aspects of the planning process.

### **Possible Elements for Community-Based Planning**

There seems to be a strong anticipation that a permit system for boaters on the river will be needed in the near future. Some of the interests we heard expressed were about protecting private land, determining emergency rescue responsibilities, availability of permits for locals, where to go to get permits, and regulating camping activities. This issue is a great opportunity for collaboration with citizens, partners and officials from Wheeler, Gilliam, and Sherman Counties. Implementation could include community stewardship and economic development opportunities.

### **Communication Strategy for Gilliam County Area**

Citizens in Gilliam County seem comfortable with traveling the 20 miles to Fossil for community meetings. The January Sonoran Institute workshop in Fossil was attended by several people from the Condon area, so meetings could be held for the Fossil/Condon area citizens in Fossil.

The Condon Times Journal is the newspaper of record for Wheeler, Gilliam and Sherman Counties. Owner/publisher Mac Schinfield offered to help coordinate times and places of any meetings to be held in Gilliam County and to help publicize meetings held in Wheeler and Sherman Counties as well.

Gathering places include M&A Autoparts, Country Kitchen restaurant, Hotel Condon, and Country Flowers gift shop and restaurant. Flyers can be posted at those gathering places, as well as at the Two Boys grocery store, the Condon Motel, and the county courthouse.

“M&A Autoparts is like the bar in this town; that’s where all the gossip is.”

There is an active Senior Citizen network operating between Fossil, Mayville, and Condon, primarily around eating lunch. The attendees are very well informed about regional happenings and welcome informal presentations/discussions. Currently, lunches are scheduled for Wednesdays in Fossil and Thursdays in Condon. Contact Don or Rose McGrew in Fossil.

Several people are clearly network communicators and want to be added to the BLM planning mailing list. Their names will be included in the scoping support document.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE MORROW COUNTY AREA OF THE GILLIAM/MORROW HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT

Figure 13 (page 94) shows the Morrow County portion of the Gilliam/Morrow Human Resource Unit. It contains the Community Resource Units of Boardman, Willow Valley, and Heppner. This chapter describes this area along the following dimensions:

1. Community Description
2. Natural Resource Themes and Issues
3. Possible Community-Based Planning Elements
4. Communication Strategy

### **Community Description**

Morrow County is located in the north central part of the state and east of the Cascade Mountains. The county is bounded by the Columbia River on the north, Umatilla County on the east, Grant County on the south, and Gilliam County on the west. The county contains 2,049 square miles.

Morrow County was created in 1885 from the western portion of Umatilla County and a small portion of eastern Wasco County. There are five main communities – Heppner, Lexington and Ione in the south-central portion of the County and Boardman and Irrigon along the Columbia River. Heppner is the County seat.

The County has somewhat distinctly different northern and southern social and economic subareas. The economy in the northern portion is oriented to energy production (coal fired generating plant located in Boardman), crops such as corn, potatoes, melons, grapes, wheat, canola, dairying, and food processing. The Morrow Port District, situated on the Columbia River near the town of Boardman, was established in 1958. In the south-central portion the economy is oriented to wheat farming, livestock ranching, some lumbering, hunting, and other outdoor recreation.

Morrow County's 2000 population of 10,995 represented an increase of 44.20% over 1990. Most of the growth has been in the northern portion of the county, near Boardman and Irrigon. Heppner actually experienced a decrease of 2% in the 1990's. The population in Boardman and Irrigon are younger and more racially diverse than the rest of the county. Statistics show that Hispanics comprise 50% of the population in Boardman and 27% in Irrigon, compared to less than 3% for the rest of the county. Residents' median age is 25.4 for Boardman, 30 for Irrigon, and approximately 42 for the rest of the county.

Early cattlemen found an abundance of rye grass along the creek bottoms of the region and drove their herds into the area to forage on these natural pastures. They established

cattle camps and from them grew the county's first settlements. Stock raising was the primary economic force in the county for many years. Increased settlement, the enclosure of the free grazing lands and diminished pastures due to overgrazing, resulted in the decline of ranching during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Farming and other agricultural pursuits became predominant. The completion of rail lines into the county in 1883 increased access to markets and encouraged wheat production in the area. The principal industries in the county today include agriculture, food processing, utilities (there is a coal fired generating plant located in Boardman), lumber, livestock, and recreation.

Figure 16:  
Willow Creek Reservoir Near Heppner, Oregon



(Source: <http://www.rapidserve.net/pattonweb/reservoir.htm>.)

Heppner was almost destroyed by a flood on June 14, 1903. The flood was precipitated by a sudden cloudburst and accompanying hail that caused a dam collapse and flash flooding. A wall of water and debris swept down the creeks and canyons and through the town. It has been estimated that 247 people were drowned. Property damage was reported at nearly \$1,000,000. The nearby towns of Ione and Lexington also sustained significant damage.

Morrow County experienced steady growth in population reaching a peak in 1920 with 5,617 people. The county's population declined in the following years and did not surpass the 5,000 mark again until 1978. However, the 2000 population of 10,995 represented an increase of 44.20% over 1990 (Oregon Blue Book 2004; <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/county/cpmorrowhome.html>).

The 2000 Census had the following demographic data related to Morrow County:

- Morrow County grew by 4,041 people from 1970 to 2005, a 53% increase in population (Table Six). The Columbia River communities of Irrigon and

Boardman grew at high rates during this period, while Lexington lost a few people and Heppner remained stable.

- The median age in Morrow County was 33.3 years in 2000, compared to 36.3 in the state and 35.3 in the nation.
- The proportion of people in the population 65 years and older has remained stable at about 12% between 1970 and 2000.

Table Eight:  
Population of Morrow County and Its Communities

Geographic Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	2004 Population	% Change, 1990-2004
Morrow County	7,625	10,995	11,666 (2005)	53.0 (2005)
Heppner	1,412	1,395	1,450	2.7
Ione	255	321	335	31.4
Lexington	286	263	275	-3.8
Irrigon	737	1,702	1,789	142.8
Boardman	1,387	2,855	3,026	118.7

(Source: 2000 U.S. Census)

Economic information gleaned from the 2000 U.S. Census includes the following:

- Net income from farming and ranching dropped from \$17 million in 1970 to \$14 million in 2000.
- Income from government payments has risen from 12% of gross farm income in 1970 to 37% in 2000.
- The total proportion of employment derived from wages and salaries rose from 63% to 73% between 1970 and 2000, while conversely, proprietorship employment as a share of total employment dropped from 38% to 27% in the same time period.
- Total farm and agricultural services employment dropped from 42% of total jobs in 1970 to 28% of total jobs by 2000.
- Manufacturing grew from 7% of the total workforce in 1970 to 16% in 2000.
- Retail trade, as a share of total employment, dropped from 13% in 1970 to 8% in 2000, while health, legal and businesses services increased from 9 to 13% of total jobs.
- Construction employment, as a share of the total, gained 2% to 3.4% in 2000, while government employment slipped by 2% to 16% between 1970 and 2000.

- Per capita income, in real terms, decreased by 13% from 1990 to 2000, from \$21,161 to \$18,467.
- In 2000, proprietor's income accounted for 12% of total personal income, compared to 21% in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, proprietor's income shrank by 28%, in real terms. Wage and salary income during those years grew by 30%.
- Average earnings per job in Morrow County, OR, in real terms, have risen from \$26,278 in 1970 to \$26,650 in 2000.
- In 1970, 28% of gross farm income was from livestock, while 51% was from crops. By 2000, 35% percent of gross income was from livestock, and 50% percent from crops.
- Total net income from farming and ranching in Morrow County, OR, in real terms, rose from \$17.2 million in 1970 to \$41.3 million in 1985, and then dropped to \$14.4 million in 2000.

### **Natural Resource Themes and Issues**

Citizens in the south-central portion of the county have a long connection with national forest and public lands, because the predominant economic activities of settlers since the mid 1800's were grazing and logging on those lands. BLM administered public lands within the county comprise a very small set of holdings near the county's southern border. However, straddling the south boundary of Morrow County, in Grant and Umatilla Counties, are the newly acquired North Fork Exchange Lands, now administered by BLM. These lands can be easily accessed from Morrow County via Morrow County Road 670 (and Grant County Road 3) to Monument. The exchange lands are also easily accessed by the gravel road along the North Fork of the John Day River west off of U.S. Highway 395 in Umatilla and Grant Counties.

A key success of Morrow County has been the creation of the Morrow OHV Park. People throughout the region have admired the park and some, like the sheriff in Wheeler County, have talked about duplicating such a park on BLM ground. From discussions in the Heppner area, it seems that residents are very pleased with the park and pleased with the process of how it was created. Apparently, there was quite a diverse set of people that participated long hours in its planning, and then long volunteer hours to make it a reality.

Figure 17:  
Morrow OHV Park



(Source: <http://www.morrowcountyparks.org/17290.html>)

The Morrow County OHV Park system consists of three separate areas – Anson Wright Park, Cutsforth Park, and Morrow County OHV Park. The OHV Park has 6200 acres and 100 miles of designated trails. The Park was developed in partnership with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, with funding from permit fees and recreation vehicle gas tax. The parks give locals and tourists a safe, challenging place to recreate and attracts clubs, groups and individuals from a broad geographical area. Some economic spin-off activity is being noticed in Lexington and Heppner.

“The gas stations stay open longer for selling gas and minor OHV repairs for visitors.”

“The grocery store ordered an extra shipment because they were running out of some items.”

Local interest appeared high in participating in the planning for the North Fork John Day River lands among OHV enthusiasts. The Fun Runners OHV club in Hermiston, with some members in the Heppner area, is highly interested in these areas. Two of the their members have cabins on the North Fork, and the proximity of these lands will make them very attractive. They talked about creating a loop trail with the Morrow OHV Park, the Umatilla Forest, and BLM lands.

“It’s a good idea to block up public lands – we have a better chance of getting to use it.”

“The North Fork lands would be a good place to drive from Heppner just to view wildlife”

Loss of access to forestlands and public lands is an issue to some Morrow County hunters and road users.

“It seems that the Forest Service is planning to close off all roads that aren’t graveled.”

“Private ranches close off roads to public land. The worst of the bunch is the Long View Ranch.”

Maps provided by the Morrow County Parks and Public Works Departments to OHV users are relatively accurate. They provide good guidance for use of County Park lands and for respecting adjoining public and private lands.

### **Possible Elements for Community-Based Planning**

Involve Morrow County OHV users and County Parks Department officials to help develop a management plan and an effective transportation plan for the North Fork exchange lands. They offered to provide any advice they could to another county that wanted to explore OHV parks and trails.

The success of the Morrow County OHV Park created a positive experience for local residents. Hence, there is a lot of social capital to draw from in developing the BLM plan—people already have some good experience in working together. These networks can easily be tapped if needed to work out the part of the plan dealing with the newly acquired lands on the North Fork of the John Day River.

### **Communication Strategy for the Morrow County Area**

Use the networks engaged by Morrow County Parks Department to communicate with local and nonlocal OHV users about the management objectives of the North Fork exchange lands and how to use the roads and lands responsibly. Contact County employee April Miller 541-989-9500, [mcparks@co.morrow.or.us](mailto:mcparks@co.morrow.or.us).

Morrow County residents are interested in management of the public lands in general (Forest Service and BLM administered). Few would probably drive outside the county to a scoping meeting for BLM planning, however. Any meeting should be in Heppner and advertised in the Heppner Gazette-Times.

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H. Lee & Associates

2005 John Day Downtown Plan, Prepared for City of John Day, Oregon and Oregon Department of Transportation, Prepared by J. Lee & Associates and Robert H. Foster Consultants.

Ouderkirk, Brad & Meghan Pedden

2004 Windfall from the Wind Farm, Sherman County, Oregon, Renewable Northwest Project, 917 SW Oak, Suite 303, Portland, Oregon, 97205, revised, December.

Sonoran Institute

2006 Population, Employment, Earnings and Personal Income Trends, For Grant, Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam, and Morrow Counties. May 17.

Wheeler County

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Yohannan, Jason L.

2005 Grant County's Recovery Stalls, Oregon Labor Market Information System (OLMIS), August 24. [Http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/](http://www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/).





APPENDIX A:

MAILING LIST OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WITH  
INTEREST IN THE BLM PLANNING PROCESS

Appendix A:  
Mailing List of Individuals and Groups with  
Interest in the BLM Planning Process

Names are organized by county but they are not alphabetized.

## Grant County

Linda Starbucks, Mayor  
Corry Rider, Town Manager  
City of Seneca  
P.O. Box 208  
106 A Avenue  
Seneca, OR 97873  
541-542-2161  
1.800.785.2900

Don Mooney, Mayor, Canyon City  
Tammy Bremner, Canyon City Manager  
123 S. Washington St.  
PO Box 276  
Canyon City, Oregon 97820  
541-575-0509

Jim Hamsher, Mayor  
City of Prairie City  
133 S Bridge  
Prairie City, OR 97869

Bob Quinton, Mayor  
City of John Day  
450 East Main  
John Day, Oregon 97845  
541-575-0028

Kenny C. Miller  
P.O. Box 41  
Seneca OR 97873  
541-542.2716

Ray and Kevin Winegar  
PO Box 604  
Prairie City, Oregon 97869  
541-820-3535

Jim McKinley  
PO Box 90  
Prairie City, Oregon 97869  
541-820-4598

Roger McKinley  
PO Box 335  
Prairie City, Oregon 97869  
541-820-4410

Nadia Schultz  
PO Box 82  
Prairie City, Oregon 97869

Mark & Sandy Murray  
PO Box 217  
Prairie City, Oregon 97869

Sarolta Sperry  
PO Box 457  
Prairie City, Oregon 97869  
541-820-3641

Sharon Livingston  
Cattlegrowers Association  
541-421-5276  
[bwr96@oregontrail.net](mailto:bwr96@oregontrail.net)

Chester (Chet) Hettinga  
Dayville Grazing Association  
Cottonwood Ranch  
43424 Hwy 26  
Dayville, Oregon 97825  
541-987-2356

Carl & Ronda Metler  
High Desert Office Equipment  
141 Main St.  
John Day, OR 97845  
541-575-0208

Paddy Howard  
P.O. Box 372  
Monument, OR 97864  
541-934-2654

Brian Woodell  
P.O. Box 371  
Monument, OR 97864

Jeremy Boyer  
P.O. Box 412  
Monument, OR 97864

Kelly Morris  
55895 Schoolhouse Road  
Ritter, Oregon 97856  
541-421-3274

Josh Hamilton  
45175 Highway 402  
Kimberly, OR 97848

Kenny Guest  
POB 433-A  
Monument, Oregon 97864

Arlene McGetrick,  
Grant County Chamber of Commerce,  
281 West Main Street  
John Day, OR 97845  
[grant@grantcounty.cc](mailto:grant@grantcounty.cc)  
541-575-0547

Arleigh G. Isley, Chairman  
Grant County Public Forest Commission  
206 NW Valley View Dr.

John Day, OR 97845

Greater Prairie City Community  
Association  
PO Box 758  
Prairie City, OR 97869

Ben Phillips  
Training and Employment Consortium  
190 East Lane  
Ontario, OR 97914

John and Lindy Bastian  
Snowballers Snowmobile Club  
P.O. Box 100  
Canyon City, Oregon 97820  
541-575-3640

Grant County Shooting Sports Club  
PO Box 654  
John Day, OR 97845

Mike Clark  
43462 Antone Hwy Rd  
Dayville, OR  
987-2351

Wayne Brosnian  
18710 SW Boones Ferry Rd,  
Tualatin, OR 97062

Julie Conley  
Monument Soil and Water Conservation  
District  
311 Wilson Street  
Monument, Oregon 97864  
541-934-2141

Alex Conley  
North Fork John Day Watershed Council  
311 Wilson Street  
Monument, Oregon 97864

## Wheeler County

City of Fossil  
PO Box 467  
Fossil, Oregon 97831  
503-763-2124

Ellen Morris Bishop, Executive Dir.,  
Paleo Lands Institute  
P.O. Box 104  
Fossil, Oregon 97830  
office phone 541-763-4480,  
personal cell 541-398-1810  
[ebishop@oregonpaleoproject.org](mailto:ebishop@oregonpaleoproject.org)

Robert Collins  
POB 186  
Mitchell, OR 97750

William Mars  
39675 Hwy 207  
Spray OR 97874

Lyn & Mike Craig  
Bridge Creek Flora Inn  
828 Main Street  
Fossil Oregon  
541-763.2355

Robert and Ruth Collins  
P.O. Box 186  
Mitchell, Oregon 97750

Emily Prud'homme, Director  
Hancock Field Station  
Fossil, OR 97830  
[hancock@omsi.edu](mailto:hancock@omsi.edu)  
541-763-4691

Teresa Hunt  
Fossil City Mgr and member Painted  
Hills Beef  
401 Main St  
Fossil, OR

541-763-2698

John and Judy Fessler  
Fossil Outpost –  
811 Main St.  
Fossil, OR 97830  
[judy@fossiloutpost.com](mailto:judy@fossiloutpost.com) and  
[kfsl@jlfnet.com](mailto:kfsl@jlfnet.com)  
541-763-4224

Senior Citizen Network  
Don and Rose McGrew  
Glover Memorial Senior Center  
Fossil, OR 97830  
541-763-2671

Pine Creek Conservation Area  
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs  
Mark Berry  
39067 Highway 218  
Fossil, OR 97830  
541-489-3477

Joan Fields  
Wheeler Co News  
PO Box 190  
Spray, OR 97874  
541-468-2112

Cheryl Jenison  
Real Estate Outback  
PO Box 68  
Spray, OR 97874  
541-468-3113

John Asher  
Co Commissioner, mail carrier  
Spray, OR 97874  
541-468-2842

Oregon Paleological Lands Institute  
Pete Dobert, contact

541-815-9113

Wheeler County Cultural & Heritage  
Coalition  
PO Box 231  
Fossil, OR 97830  
Dan Cannon, 541-462-3298

John Fessler,  
Fossil Business Group  
811 Main St.  
Fossil, OR 97830  
541-763-4224

Rimrock Art Society,  
Hyon Fielding, contact  
PO Box 387  
Fossil, OR 97830  
541-763-4075

LEO Lights  
P.O. Box 231  
Fossil, Oregon 97830  
541-763-2355

## Sherman County

Mike Gutfleisch, Kathy Heihart  
Lean To/Goose Pit Restaurant & Saloon  
P.O. Box 224  
Wasco, OR 97065  
541-442-5709  
[gooney@gorge.net](mailto:gooney@gorge.net)

541-442-5514  
[Sherryk@gorge.net](mailto:Sherryk@gorge.net)

Jim Murtha, Rancher  
P.O. Box 383  
Wasco, OR 97065

Mike Weedman, Rancher  
97130 Klondike Lane  
P.O. Box 237  
Wasco, OR 97065  
541-442-5888

Dick Stradley,  
Sherman County Assessor  
P.O. Box 283  
Moro, OR 97039  
541-565-3416

Richard Warrick  
Harvest Moon Gallery  
400 Scott Street  
Moro, OR 97039  
541-565-0513

Leo Coelsch, Rancher  
Krista Coelsch  
Manager, Moro Conserv. Distr. Service  
Center  
541-565-3551

Jack & Jenny McAllister  
Café Moro  
410 Main Street  
P.O. Box 241  
Moro, OR 97039  
541-565-3716

Sandy Macnab  
Sherman Development League  
Sherman County Extension agent  
500 Court Street  
P.O. Box 365  
Moro, OR 97039  
541-565-3230

Sherry Kaseberg  
County Commissioner  
Community Email network

Judge Gary Thompson  
500 Court Street

P.O. Box 365  
Moro, OR 97039  
541-565-3416

Melva Thomas  
Sherman Development League  
Sherman County Administration  
P.O. Box 365  
Moro, OR 97039  
541-565-3416

Mid Columbia Producers (grain  
growers)  
Rawleigh Curtis, Mgr

Mayor Karen Kellogg  
City of Wasco  
P.O. Box 26  
Wasco, Oregon 97065

## Gilliam County

Bill Rose  
Buckhorn Ranch  
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Hubbard, OR 97032  
503-651-2130  
[bill@turf-seed.com](mailto:bill@turf-seed.com)

Ted Schumacher, hunter  
17352 S. Bradley Rd.  
Oregon City, OR 97045

Sidney (Sam) Seale  
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Condon, OR 97823

Andrew Jameison  
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Condon, OR 97823

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Rattray River Ranch  
12905 Buckhorn Lane  
Condon, OR 97823  
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The Times-Journal  
P.O. Box 746  
Condon, OR 97823  
541-384-5901(h), 541-384-2421(w)

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P.O. Box 427  
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541-384-2381  
[Susie@ncesd.k12.or.us](mailto:Susie@ncesd.k12.or.us)

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Gilliam County Assessor  
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P.O. Box 484  
Condon, OR 97823  
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Condon Motel  
216 N. Washington  
Condon, OR 97823  
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Mountain Valley Land Company-  
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## Morrow County

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Morrow County  
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Willow Creek Economic Development  
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## Umatilla County



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Jack & Bev Baker

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Nancy & Walter Hinz  
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Stanfield, OR 97875

Judy & Mike Julio  
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2347 NE Bobcat Lane  
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Jeff Pedersen  
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80434 Umatilla River Rd.  
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Mary Riggs & John Estes  
P.O. Box 929  
Heppner, OR 97836

Tom & Linda Severns  
68367 Old Oregon Trail  
Pendleton, OR 97801

Ben Smith  
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Cheri Smith  
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Caroleen Stockdale  
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Lisa & Allen Sword  
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81284 Vetter Lane  
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Gary Walls  
81195 Cooney Lane  
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## APPENDIX B:

### SEVEN CULTURAL DESCRIPTORS USED IN THE DISCOVERY PROCESS™ FOR COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Appendix B:  
Seven Cultural Descriptors  
Used in the Discovery Process™ for  
Community Assessment

***ONE Describe the publics and their interests***

**Definition**

A public is any segment of the population that can be grouped together because of some recognized demographic feature or common set of interests. A public may exist currently or at some future date; it may reside permanently in a geographic area, or may live elsewhere and have an interest in the management of natural resources. Sample publics include ranchers, loggers, tourists, small businesses, industries, miners, senior citizens, minorities, homemakers, youth, preservationists and governmental bodies.

By identifying publics and characterizing each public's interests, a resource manager can understand how segments of a population will be affected differently by resource decision making. Also, predictions can be made about how changing public interests will influence management in the future.

**Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- What publics are within the immediate sphere of influence of resource management and decision making activities? What are the ongoing interests of each identified public? Which of the publics have specific resource-related interests? Are there any public interests or activities that affect resource management activities?
- Is there any public that is directly affected by the resource decision making process? Which publics currently benefit from jobs generated by the resource outputs? Are there any individuals, businesses or industries that are dependent upon a specific output?
- Which publics could potentially benefit from resource use and development activities? Which publics could potentially be affected from a change in current management activities?
- What publics are outside the immediate sphere of influence of resource management activities, but use the resource or are involved in the decisionmaking process? Do these publics have a relationship to the resource because they affect or are affected by resource management activities?

## **TWO**

### ***Describe the networks***

#### **Definition**

A network is comprised of individuals who support each other in predictable ways and have a shared commitment to some common purpose (Figure Four). Networks may be informal arrangements of people tied together for cultural, survival, or caretaking reasons. Networks may also be formal arrangements of people who belong to an organization, club or association, which has a specific charter or organizational goals. Networks may function in a local geographic area or may influence resource management activities from regional or national levels. Examples of informal networks include ranchers who assist each other in times of need, miners who work on the same shift, grass-roots environmentalists, or families who recreate together. Examples of formal organizations include a cattlemen's association, coal mining union, preservationist or snowmobile club.

A knowledge of networks citizens form to express their interests is essential for identifying public issues relating to management activities and for monitoring the effectiveness of resource decisionmaking.

#### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- What informal networks do each of the identified publics form to express their interests? What is the function of each network? When and where does each informal network gather to share information or services? How do the members of each network communicate with each other?
- Which networks function in an ongoing manner for cultural, caretaking or survival reasons? Which networks are temporarily involved around particular events or issues?
- What is the informal leadership in each network or who is respected and why? Are any networks more effective than others in addressing the issues that concern them?
- Which networks extend beyond the local level and function on a regional or national scale? Are there any regional or national networks that influence resource management activities?
- What formal organizations, associations or clubs do the identified publics form to express their interests? What is the purpose of each group? When and where does each formal organization meet to share information or provide

services? How do the members of each group communicate with each other? Which organizations operate in an ongoing manner and which operate temporarily?

- What is the formal and informal leadership in each organization or who is respected and why? Are any groups more effective than others in addressing the issues that concern them?
- Which organizations have a membership that extends beyond the local level and operates on a regional or national level? Are there any regional or national organizations that influence resource management activities?

### ***THREE***                      ***Describe the settlement pattern***

#### **Definition**

A settlement pattern is any distinguishable distribution of a population in a geographic area, including the historical cycles of settlement in an area. This cultural descriptor identifies where a population is located and the type of settlement categorized by its centralized/dispersed, permanent/temporary, and year-round/seasonal characteristics. It also describes the major historical growth/non-growth cycles and the reasons for each successive wave of settlement.

Knowledge of settlement patterns provides a resource manager with a basis for predicting the significance of probable population changes associated with resource management and development activities.

#### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- Where do people live and how is the population distributed in the immediate geographic area? Are the settlement areas dispersed throughout the countryside and/or centralized in towns and cities?
- What is the history of settlement? What types of people came with each successive wave of settlement? Why did people settle in the area? Are there any particular characteristics of the settlement pattern that make it unique?
- Have there been any significant increases or decreases in population in the past? What caused these? Is the current settlement stable or on the increase or decrease? What is causing this trend?

- What major changes have occurred during past settlement cycles? How rapidly have these changes occurred? How have people handled or accepted change in the past? Are these changes easily recalled by people?
- What new publics have settled in the area in recent years? How have long-term residents accepted newcomers? Is the area settled with diverse or homogenous publics? Which settlement areas are integrated with diverse publics and which are not and why?
- What future publics can you anticipate residing in the immediate geographic area? What will be the possible causes of the future settlement patterns? How rapidly will the settlement occur?

## **FOUR**                      *Describe the work routines*

### **Definition**

A work routine is a predictable way in which people earn a living, including where and how. The types of employment, the skills needed, the wage levels and the natural resources required in the process are used to generate a profile of an area's work routines. The opportunities for advancement, the business ownership patterns, and the stability of employment activities are also elements of the work routine descriptor.

A knowledge of work routines can be used to evaluate how alternative uses of natural resources will affect the ways people earn a living and how changes in work routines, in turn, will impact future natural resource uses.

### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- What are the ways in which the people in the immediate geographic area earn a living? Are people self-employed or employed by small business or large corporations? What are the primary employment activities and the approximate percentage of people involved in each sector?
- What kinds of skills are required of people in the various types of employment? What level of pay is received? Has there been any significant shift in employment activities or income levels in recent years? If so, has the shift influenced resource use or management activities?
- Are the majority of businesses owned locally or by corporations and people from outside the area? Are generational cycles of families in the same employment typical?



- Are there any work routines that are seasonal in nature? Are the seasonal jobs taken by residents of the area or from outside the area? Do many people work two jobs or is it common for families to have two wage earners? Is the unemployment significant? If so, among which publics?
- What is the average age of the labor force? Are youth able to find employment in the area? Are there adequate opportunities for advancement? Do people change jobs frequently or work in the same activities most of their lives? Which publics have a strong cultural identity associated with their work?
- Is there a compatible mix of employment activities? Which activities are aggravating each other? How do current resource management practices maintain the mix of activities? How could future changes in resource management stabilize or enhance the current employment mix?

## ***FIVE***                      ***Describe the supporting services***

### **Definition**

A supporting service is any arrangement people use for taking care of each other. Support services occur in an area in both formal and informal ways. Examples of formal support services include the areas of health, education, law enforcement, fire protection, transportation, environment and energy. Examples of informal support activities include the ways people manage on a day-to-day basis using family, neighborhood, friendship or any other support system.

A resource manager can use the supporting services descriptor to evaluate how alternative uses of resources will affect the ways people take care of each other and how changes in supporting services, in turn, will impact future natural resource management.

### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- Where are the formal support services such as the commercial, health, education, transportation, protective, energy facilities located? What is the geographic area that is serviced? Which services are used routinely by people in the area? Which services do people have to leave the area to obtain?
- How are the services operated? Are the facilities and services provided adequate for the area? Which are inadequate and for what reasons?

- What informal supporting activities occur in the area? How do people care for each other on a day-to-day basis and in times of crisis? Do families, friends, church or volunteer organizations provide support?
- How much do people take care of each other on an informal basis and how much do people rely on formal services? Do people still trade for services or almost always pay cash for services?
- How are the elderly, single parents, youth, poor and others taken care of? Are informal systems used such as neighborhoods, or are formal organizations used for assistance? To what degree do people take care of their own problems or rely on government agencies and formal services? Do all people have access to the supporting services and activities?
- Has the amount or type of supporting services changed in recent years? How has the provision of support services and activities changed? What has contributed to these changes?

## ***SIX***

### ***Describe the recreational activities***

#### **Definition**

A recreational activity is a predictable way in which people spend their leisure time. Recreational opportunities available, seasonality of activities, technologies involved, and money and time required are aspects of the recreational descriptor. The frequency of local/non-local uses of recreational resources, the preferences of local/non-local users, and the location of the activities are also included.

A manager can use this cultural descriptor to evaluate how alternative uses of resources will affect the ways people recreate and how changes in recreational activity, in turn, will impact future resource management.

#### **Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization**

- What are the principal types of recreational activities of people in the area? Which activities, sites or facilities are most preferred? Are certain activities seasonal?
- What is the orientation of the leisure time activities? Are the activities of individual, family, team, church or school related? Are there significant recreational activities in which a wide range of individuals participate? How do groups like youth and senior citizens recreate?

- How much time is spent in recreational activities? How much money is spent on recreational activities? What kinds of recreational vehicles or equipment are used? Do the majority of activities occur on public or private lands and facilities?
- Are there recreational opportunities in the area that attract people on a regional or national scale? What activities, sites or facilities are most preferred? Are certain activities seasonal? Is there a significant number of businesses that rely on the income from these recreational activities? Which activities relate to natural resource uses and management?
- Have there been any major changes in recreational activities in recent years? What events caused the change? What types of sporting goods or recreational license sales have been on the increase? What recreational sites or facilities have experienced an increase or decrease in use and why? Do current recreational sites and facilities accommodate the demands? What changes in recreational activities are anticipated in the future and why?
- What written and unwritten rules do people use when recreating? Is there much of a difference between the recreational activities of residents in the area and those who temporarily visit the area? How does the type of recreation differ?

## **SEVEN**

### ***Describe the geographic boundaries***

#### **Definition**

A geographic boundary is any unique physical feature with which people of an area identify. Physical features separate the activities of a population from those in other geographic areas such as a valley that people identify as being “theirs” or a river that divides two towns. Examples of geographic boundaries include topographic and climatic features, distances, or any unique characteristic that distinguishes one area from another. Geographic boundaries may be relatively permanent or short-lived; over time, boundaries may dissolve as new settlement patterns develop and as work routines and physical access to an area change.

By knowing the geographic boundaries of a population, a manager can identify and manage the effects of natural resource use and development that are unique to a particular geographic area.

## Questions Used to Complete Human Resource Unit (HRU) Characterization

- How do people relate to their surrounding environment? What geographic area do people consider to be a part of their home turf? Within what general boundaries do most of the daily activities of the area occur? How far do the networks people use in their routine activities extend throughout the area?
- What is the area people identify with as being “theirs”? Are there any particular characteristics, social or physical that people think are unique to the area? What features attracted people to the area or provide a reason to stay?
- Are there any physical barriers that separate the activities of a population from those in other geographic areas? Are there any evident social barriers?
- What are the predominant uses of the land and what topographic or climatic features support such activities? What percentage of the geographic area is in the private and public sector? Is most of the private land owned by year-round residents or by people from outside the area?

Have there been any significant changes in the use of the land and its resources in recent years? What has caused the changes? How have these short- or long-term changes affected people and their ways of life? How accessible is the area to external influences? What kind of influences? Are these beneficial or negative impacts on the area?



## REPORT TWO: SCOPING SUPPORT DOCUMENT

This report offers the Central Oregon Resource Area (CORA) scoping support for its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It focuses on three elements:

1. Social and Economic Criteria for Evaluating Planning Alternatives
2. Planning Questions from a Social and Economic Perspective
3. Environmental Justice

### ***Social and Economic Criteria for Evaluating Planning Alternatives***

When evaluating the merits of proposed alternatives, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) stipulates that the goal is “productive harmony,” that balance between people and nature that enhances sustainability. NEPA, as well as the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), also state that social and economic factors should be given full consideration when evaluating “major federal actions.” Hence, the primary evaluating question when considering alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) associated with the Resource Management Plan (RMP) is, “Does this alternative lead the area toward or away from productive harmony?”

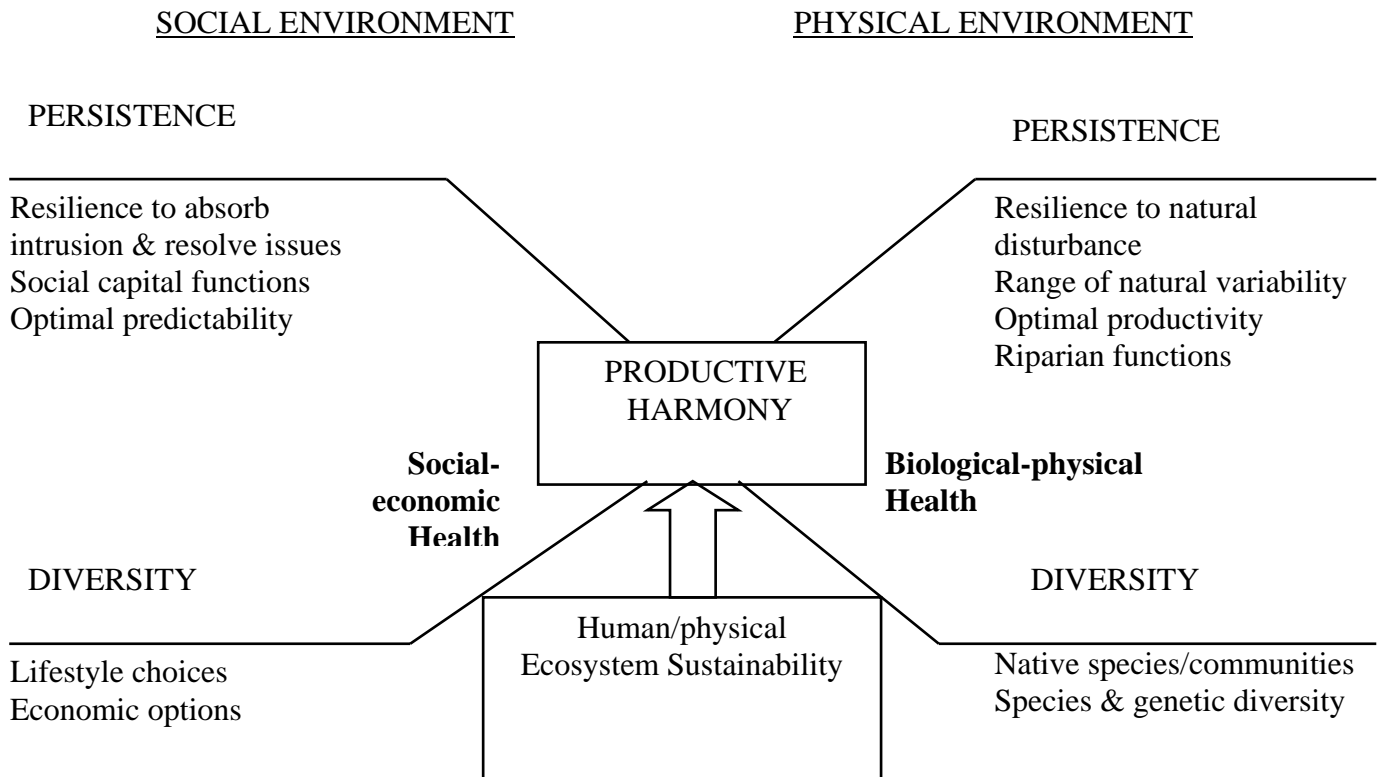
Figure One below is a model used by JKA to embody the productive harmony concept, incorporating the health of both the physical and social environments. As ecologists seek to foster characteristics like persistence and diversity in the physical environment, we propose that healthy communities also need qualities like persistence and diversity in order to promote sustainability.

The model is the basis for proposing the following social and economic criteria for evaluating planning choices:

#### **Social Criteria**

1. Are the changes associated with the proposed action likely to be absorbed over time in the community, or are they likely to be so great in scale and effect as to be an intrusive force whose issues cannot be resolved?

Figure One:  
The Productive Harmony Model of Bio-Social Ecosystem Management



2. Does the proposed action foster the development of social capital, those enduring norms of trust and reciprocity that create social cohesion in a community? If the action provides practice for people in working together, or if it increases the “social overlap” of different groups who may not characteristically experience much interaction, the proposed action is likely to be positive. If the proposed action is likely to fragment the community, increase the level of polarization, perhaps lead to business boycotts or other forms of disruption, it cannot be judged positive from a social capital standpoint.
3. Does the proposed action provide enough lead-time for community members to take advantage of positive effects and/or to adjust to negative effects? Are identified mitigations adequate to address negative effects and are they implementable?
4. Does the proposed action restrict or expand the diversity of ages or lifestyle choices in the affected area? If the action makes it more difficult to have young people or old people in the community, it cannot be good for community health.

## Economic Criteria

5. Does the proposed action increase the number of jobs in the area? Even better, does the action increase the number of family wage jobs?
6. Does the proposed action increase workforce capacity and foster businesses for long-term sustainability? Can federal actions foster new economic niches based on restoration forestry?
7. Does the proposed action foster greater economic diversification in the affected area? Diversification can be measured both within and between economic sectors. If a proposed increase in timber harvest increases the type of forestry-related enterprises, greater diversification within the forestry sector has been created. If the same timber harvest increase in some way fosters greater recreation opportunities, diversification has increased between economic sectors.
8. Special care should be taken to evaluate effects on marginal economic sectors. Because economic diversification is so important for healthy communities, any actions which would further erode the ability of marginal sectors to survive should be particularly scrutinized.
9. Does the proposed action foster greater turnover of dollars in the local communities? If there is a “value-added” component in the economy created by the action, and each dollar will circulate five times instead of two times before exiting the local economy, for example, the action can be judged to have a positive effect. Typically, input/output analyses are used for measuring multiplier effects, such as the Forest Service IMPLAN model or county input/output models.

## **Planning Questions from a Social and Economic Perspective**

Each of these proposed planning questions addresses the key public land management issues summarized in Chapter Two of Report One.

1. How can communication between BLM and community members be improved in order to foster greater awareness of BLM lands and greater understanding of BLM management practices?
2. Because accurate maps are of such widespread interest, and immediate, practical importance, how can BLM “fast track” the creation of accurate maps and assure their distribution in key information spots in the management area?
3. How can BLM work cooperatively with counties, local government, residents, nonprofit organizations, and other interested organizations, to foster greater access to BLM lands, where appropriate, and to prevent the further loss of access through the blockage of private roads?



4. How can BLM effectively educate local residents about the process of land acquisition and Recreation and Public Purposes leases, as well as foster participation in determining which parcels to retain in public ownership, in order to encourage an efficient and appropriate land tenure program?
5. How can BLM undertake a review of grazing allotments with effective communication among interested parties, in order to address concerns related both to environmental integrity and economic viability?
6. Are there ways for BLM to review its timber program in order to support the remaining timber industry in its management area, particularly through the low elevation thinning of overstocked small diameter stands to promote the emergence of a forest restoration workforce and industry?
7. How can BLM promote the emerging recreation economy by supporting interest in shooting ranges, OHV riding areas, forestry craft products, winter recreation, and the management of hunting activities, while sustaining ecological integrity?
8. How can BLM lands play a continued role in supporting youth so that they have options to remain in the area, they have natural resource jobs and recreation opportunities, and they understand land stewardship?
9. How can the planning process for the newly acquired lands on the North Fork of the John Day River be managed to optimize civic participation and to address residents' issues favoring multiple use, fishing and hunting, fire and forest management, fencing, access, roads, gates, noxious weeds, "wild and scenic" designations, business development, and maps?
10. What are the requirements of the mutual aid agreements with relevant counties for fire safety and suppression and how can they be sustained in order to ensure the continuation of these programs?
11. How can recreation management on the lower reaches of the John Day River (Sherman and Gilliam Counties) be done in a way that minimizes regulation, addresses the increasing levels of use, optimizes the economic benefits, promotes stewardship contracting for management of recreation opportunities, and fosters continued access to BLM lands near the river?
12. How can BLM lands be managed to support and advance the economic goals of its partner counties and small communities, such as Spray, particularly related to the paleontological resources in Wheeler County?
13. How can BLM best accommodate the current trend in the decline of hunting licenses, the widespread increase in fee hunting on private lands, and the emergence of class-based (that is, primarily rich only) hunting?

## **Environmental Justice**

Environmental Justice, promulgated by Executive Order 12898, issued in 1993 by the Clinton Administration, is defined as,

“The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local and tribal programs and policies.” (BLM Instructional Memorandum, No. 2002-164, May 2, 2002).

The Department of Interior (DOI) developed a strategic plan in 1995 to address Environmental Justice requirements. It developed 4 goals, BLM responses to which are described:

1. The Department will involve minority and low-income communities as we make environmental decisions and assure public access to our environmental information.

BLM has established a Native American Program Office, located in New Mexico, to coordinate policy and guidance for BLM programs. It holds public meetings on issues of importance such as range reform, mineral management and so on, and since 1993, it has had a formal policy of identifying minority, tribal or low income populations that may be affected by pending decisions during the preliminary scoping under NEPA. BLM state offices include tribal governments on news releases, and many BLM district offices with lands adjacent to Indian reservations provide extensive technical and regulatory support to the neighboring tribes. It uses multi-lingual signage around hazardous sites, as appropriate.

2. The Department will provide its employees environmental justice guidance and with the help of minority and low-income communities develop training which will reduce their exposure to environmental health and safety hazards.

BLM provides Environmental Justice guidance through an Instruction Memorandum entitled “Policy of Promoting Environmental Justice in Public Lands Decisions,” and an information bulletin entitled “Strategic Plan for Environmental Justice.” BLM has drafted a handbook on American Indian consultation. Since the mid-1980s, BLM has avoided authorizing high-risk activities on public lands such as landfills, non-emergency aerial spraying and others. BLM state offices send employees to dispute resolution training.

3. The Department will use and expand its science, research, and data collection capabilities on innovative solutions to environmental justice-related issues (for

example, assisting in the identification of different consumption patterns of populations who rely principally on fish and/or wildlife for subsistence.

BLM's National Native American Program Office will coordinate and explore new approaches to the principles of the Indian Self-Determination Act and creative adaptations to Rural Empowerment Zones affecting all rural low-income people.

4. The Department will use our public partnership opportunities with environmental and grassroots groups, business, academic, labor organizations and Federal, Tribal, and local governments to advance environmental justice.

BLM Oregon participates in ongoing Tribal Leadership Forums hosted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to explore federal/tribal relations in the Northwest (Source: Department of Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance; [http://www.doi.gov/oepec/ej\\_goal1.html](http://www.doi.gov/oepec/ej_goal1.html)).

In a land use planning process, such as the current effort, IM No. 2002-164 instructs BLM to:

1. Determine if its proposed actions will adversely and disproportionately impact minority populations, low-income communities and Tribes.
2. Provide opportunities for full involvement of minority populations, low-income communities, and Tribes in BLM decisions that affect their lives, livelihoods, and health.
3. Incorporate EJ considerations in land use planning alternatives to adequately respond to EJ issues and problems facing minority populations, low-income communities, and Tribes living near public lands, working with, and/or using public land resources.
4. Work with local community groups/associations, governments and tribal leaders where disproportionately high adverse impacts are anticipated to determine if land disposition and/or acquisition policies affect real estate values and real income of minority and low income communities and tribes; and
5. Continue to make EJ a mandatory critical element for consideration in all land use planning and NEPA documents.

At this stage of the planning process, BLM is collecting baseline information, of which this report is part. From a baseline standpoint, it is fair to say that no findings of significance related to environmental justice have been discovered. The bases for this claim are these.

First, extra efforts have been made to contact low-income and ethnic populations through this outreach effort of JKA on behalf of BLM. Second, no ethnic populations besides

Anglo and Tribal are present in any significant numbers. Although there has been a modest increase in Hispanic settlement in the management area (Table Two, Chapter Two, Report One), they identified no unique activities on public lands or special considerations of issues that were unique from the general population. It is worth noting as well that the growth of the Hispanic population in Morrow County has been in the north part of the county along the Columbia River, and not in Heppner and the south county, whose residents make much more extensive use of new BLM lands on the North Fork of the John Day.

Third, no clear trends in poverty rates were discovered in the management area (Table 2, Chapter Two, Report One). Although the area has undergone economic depression resulting from a shift in the economic base from the natural resource sectors to the trades and services sectors (including recreation), substitute business and employment development is quite evident, resulting in a partial or even full recovery. There is no evidence that continued poverty is the ongoing legacy of the shift. While poverty rates are higher in the north central counties than the state as a whole, they are not extremely so, nor any higher than other rural counties in the region. Nor is the trend obviously toward increased poverty, as the table makes clear.

As the land use process continues, and land use alternatives are developed, further analysis of Environmental Justice considerations will be necessary.