



Union County, Oregon

NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN FEDERAL LANDS POLICY FOR UNION COUNTY

2020

Ordinance 2020-04



engineering · surveying · natural resources

LA GRANDE, OR. WALLA WALLA, WA. REDMOND, OR. HERMISTON, OR.

1901 N. Fir Street (P.O. Box 1107) · La Grande, Oregon 97850

(541) 963-8309

www.andersonperry.com

**NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN
FEDERAL LANDS POLICY**

FOR

**UNION COUNTY, OREGON
ORDINANCE 2020-04**

2020

ANDERSON PERRY & ASSOCIATES, INC.

La Grande, Redmond, and Hermiston, Oregon
Walla Walla, Washington

Table of Contents

An Introduction by the Union County Commissioners.....	1
Executive Summary	2
1.0 - Definitions	5
2.0 - Introduction.....	8
2.1 Purpose and Need	8
2.2 Plan Revision	8
2.3 Land Use	8
2.4 Custom and Culture.....	10
3.0 - Principles for Federal Land Management Within Union County	13
3.1 General	13
3.2 Recognition of County Status, Responsibilities, and Authority.....	13
3.3 County Involvement in Federal Land Management	13
3.4 Coordination	13
3.5 National Environmental Policy Act Consistency Review	14
3.6 Private Property Rights and Property Interests	14
3.7 Data Quality	14
3.8 Cooperative Management and Conservation.....	14
4.0 - Federally Managed Lands Goals.....	15
4.1 Coordination Goals.....	15
4.2 Livestock, Grazing, Ranching, and Agriculture Goals.....	15
4.3 Forest Resources (Timber) Goals	16
4.4 Emergency Management Goals	17
4.5 Fish and Wildlife Goals	18
4.6 Invasive Species Goals	19
4.7 [Access and Roads Goals.....	19
4.8 Wilderness Goals.....	20
4.9 Recreation and Tourism Goals	21
4.10 Economic Development Goals	21
4.11 Special Designations and Cultural Resources Goals.....	22
4.12 Mining Goals	22
5.0 - Conclusion	23
6.0 - References	24

Appendix

Appendix A - Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy Advisory Committee Members

An Introduction by the Union County Commissioners

Donna Beverage: I want our Federal Lands to continue to be multi-use as was always intended. Follow the Forest Service Statement: *“At the USDA Forest Service, we work year-round to create new opportunities for wood products that contribute to diversified rural economics and support sustainable forest management.”* FLPMA and NFMA should strongly guide agency decisions. Manage forests to prevent Forest Fires and excess smoke and promote the local timber industry. Maintain flexibility in all plans to adjust to specific forest types or conditions. Protect and preserve the following rights of all Union County Citizens, including:

- Private Property interests, such as water rights, livestock grazing and access to lands which have ties to Federal lands.
- Historic custom, culture and values of the citizens of Union County, including hunting, fishing, forest management, recreation, grazing, clean water and clean air.

Make sure that local elected government have a seat at the table when any changes of any kind are being entertained.

Matt Scarfo: It will be important that Union County maximizes our valuable renewable resources to help economic sustainability in pursuit of job retention and growth, while also improving recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat for future generations to enjoy.

Paul Anderes: From an early age I was taught the importance of Multiple Use. There are incredibly special places that need special status to protect them for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. There are also highly productive forests that contribute to our local economies and provide renewable building materials to our nation. The same is true for forest land being used for recreation, wildlife, clean water, forage. These uses and designation are not all or none, there must be multiple use of forest land.

Note: All sections of this document discussing travel management issues have been [bracketed] to indicate that they will be revisited once complementary regional planning efforts are completed.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy is to help federal land managers understand and incorporate Union County's existing plans into federal land management policies. It is Union County's expectation that this Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy will be reviewed by federal land managers to determine if inconsistencies exist. If inconsistencies are found, an open dialogue between public and federal land managers will be led by the Union County Commissioners to resolve any issues in existing or proposed plans.

Union County promotes interdisciplinary and cooperative approaches to conservation and management of natural resources on federal lands. Federal land managers have a responsibility to consider and address inconsistencies with Union County's Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy.

Union County, Oregon, citizens rely on access to federally managed lands for social, economic, and environmental benefits. Restrictions on federally managed lands (and economic opportunities associated with use) can have a significant impact on the fiscal and social stability of Union County.

This Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy serves to expand on the goals described in Union County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Union County, 1985). This Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy also details goals that the Union County Commissioners' feel would encourage a collaborative and positive relationship with federal land managers to best serve the needs of the people and environment of Union County.

Union County's priority goals for federally managed lands include:

- **Federal Coordination:** Coordinate federal planning decisions affecting land within Union County boundaries with Union County via active and early outreach from federal agencies. Ensure Union County is a cooperating agency when any decisions are made.
- **Livestock Grazing:** Promote sustainable grazing practices that benefit producers, wildlife (elk), and the landscape.
- **Forestry:** Support optimum multiple benefits (timber production, watershed management, grazing, wildlife, recreation, and reforestation) on forested areas. Support increasing the harvest of timber and include measures that ensure that big game populations are encouraged to utilize public lands (i.e., travel management, security areas, foraging habitats).
- **Emergencies:** Promote integrated emergency management policies and locally adopted plans (Community Wildfire Protection Plan, etc.).
- **Fish and Wildlife Protection:** Protect fish and wildlife habitat and threatened and endangered species.
- **Wildlife Management:** Encourage public land managers to implement management actions that will help address big game distribution issues by improving forage conditions through active timber management and enhancing security areas for wildlife (specifically elk security areas).
- **Invasive Species:** Focus on limiting the spread of invasive species.
- **Water:** Protect watersheds, surface water, and groundwater.

- **[Access:** Allow public input on road management decisions. Union County supports sustainable access to federally managed lands in a way that balances multiple use land management goals.]
- **Wilderness:** Ensure new federal wilderness area studies are compatible with Union County's "custom and culture" and economic viability goals. [Limit the restriction of lands that have important economic value to Union County citizens. Union County should be consulted early on all wilderness decisions within the boundaries of Union County.]
- **Recreation:** Promote policies that satisfy the recreational needs of Union County citizens and visitors.
- **Economic Development:** Promote economic development on federally managed lands by strategic management of natural resources County-wide and region-wide (other forests affect Union County [i.e., Umatilla]).
- **Private Property Interests:** Advocate for the protection of private property interests on federally managed lands.
- **Protection of Cultural and Historic Resources:** Conserve open space and protect natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources on federally managed lands. Protect all tribal treaty rights.

Union County's priority land use activities on federally managed lands include:

- **Biological Diversity:** Promote a healthy ecosystem that maintains a diverse balance of native plants and animals.
- **Timber:** Promote sustainable harvest to help in reducing wildfire, providing natural resources jobs, and improving the forest ecosystem.
- **Grazing:** Promote sustainable grazing practices that benefit both producers and the landscape.
- **Recreation:** Promote policies that satisfy the recreational needs of Union County citizens and visitors.
- **[Travel:** Maintain road quality on primary arterials within federally managed lands and, even when maintenance is not feasible, allow transit through federally managed lands.]
- **Private Property:** Protect private property interests.
- **Mining:** Allow aggregate mining to ensure road materials are locally available. Allow other mining activities, including precious metal extraction, when permitted and when consistent with multiple use.

Union County's citizens have a custom and culture that includes supporting a healthy economy composed of agriculture, grazing, forestry, and social services, which can provide a means for citizens to thrive now and for generations to come. It is the goal of this Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy to protect the custom and culture of Union County by preserving multiple uses of federally managed lands while maximizing economic benefits derived from these resources in a socially and environmentally sustainable way.

Union County will work collaboratively with federal land managers. Because approximately 51.5 percent of land in Union County is federally managed, decisions related to natural resource management made by federal agencies directly impacts the way of life in Union County. Union County supports following

federal laws that require agencies to make federal plans consistent with local plans through coordination. This is anticipated to advance many of Union County's priority goals for federally managed lands.

1.0 - Definitions

A sustainable ecosystem “is one that, over the normal cycle of disturbance events, maintains its characteristic diversity of major functional groups, productivity, and rates of biogeochemical cycling. These traits are determined by a set of four ‘interactive controls’ (climate, soil resource supply, major functional groups of organisms, and disturbance regime) that both govern and respond to ecosystem processes” (Chaplin III, 2010).

Sustainable use “refers to the use of the environment and resources to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (Chaplin III, 2010).

[Road maintenance - Do not close roads if they cannot be graded.]

Economic, Social, Environmental, and Energy Consequences (as described by the Oregon’s Statewide Land Use Planning Goals) - Land Use Planning Goals) - “ESEE consequences” are the positive and negative economic, social, environmental, and energy (ESEE) consequences that could result from a decision to allow, limit, or prohibit a conflicting use.

ESEE Decision Process

- (1) Local governments shall develop a program to achieve Goal 5 for all significant resource sites based on an analysis of the economic, social, environmental, and energy (ESEE) consequences that could result from a decision to allow, limit, or prohibit a conflicting use. This rule describes four steps to be followed in conducting an ESEE analysis, as set out in detail in sections (2) through (5) of this rule. Local governments are not required to follow these steps sequentially, and some steps anticipate a return to a previous step. However, findings shall demonstrate that requirements under each of the steps have been met, regardless of the sequence followed by the local government. The ESEE analysis need not be lengthy or complex but should enable reviewers to gain a clear understanding of the conflicts and the consequences to be expected.

The steps in the standard ESEE process are as follows:

- (a) Identify conflicting uses;
 - (b) Determine the impact area;
 - (c) Analyze the ESEE consequences; and
 - (d) Develop a program to achieve Goal 5.
- (2) Identify conflicting uses. Local governments shall identify conflicting uses that exist, or could occur, with regard to significant Goal 5 resource sites. To identify these uses, local governments shall examine land uses allowed outright or conditionally within the zones applied to the resource site and in its impact area. Local governments are not required to consider allowed uses that would be unlikely to occur in the impact area because existing permanent uses occupy the site. The following shall also apply in the identification of conflicting uses:

- (a) If no uses conflict with a significant resource site, acknowledged policies and land use regulations may be considered sufficient to protect the resource site. The determination that there are no conflicting uses must be based on the applicable zoning rather than ownership of the site. (Therefore, public ownership of a site does not by itself support a conclusion that there are no conflicting uses.)
 - (b) A local government may determine that one or more significant Goal 5 resource sites are conflicting uses with another significant resource site. The local government shall determine the level of protection for each significant site using the ESEE process and/or the requirements in Oregon Administrative Rules 660-023-0090 through 660-023-0230 (see 660-023-0020(1)).
 - (2) Determine the impact area. Local governments shall determine an impact area for each significant resource site. The impact area shall be drawn to include only the area in which allowed uses could adversely affect the identified resource. The impact area defines the geographic limits within which to conduct an ESEE analysis for the identified significant resource site.
 - (3) Analyze the ESEE consequences. Local governments shall analyze the ESEE consequences that could result from decisions to allow, limit, or prohibit a conflicting use. The analysis may address each of the identified conflicting uses, or it may address a group of similar conflicting uses. A local government may conduct a single analysis for two or more resource sites that are within the same area or that are similarly situated and subject to the same zoning. The local government may establish a matrix of commonly occurring conflicting uses and apply the matrix to particular resource sites to facilitate the analysis. A local government may conduct a single analysis for a site containing more than one significant Goal 5 resource. The ESEE analysis must consider any applicable statewide goal or acknowledged plan requirements, including the requirements of Goal 5. The analyses of the ESEE consequences shall be adopted either as part of the plan or as a land use regulation.
- 5) Develop a program to achieve Goal 5. Local governments shall determine whether to allow, limit, or prohibit identified conflicting uses for significant resource sites. This decision shall be based on and supported by the ESEE analysis. A decision to prohibit or limit conflicting uses protects a resource site. A decision to allow some or all conflicting uses for a particular site may also be consistent with Goal 5, provided it is supported by the ESEE analysis. One of the following determinations shall be reached with regard to conflicting uses for a significant resource site:
 - (a) A local government may decide that a significant resource site is of such importance compared to the conflicting uses, and the ESEE consequences of allowing the conflicting uses are so detrimental to the resource, that the conflicting uses should be prohibited.
 - (b) A local government may decide that both the resource site and the conflicting uses are important compared to each other, and, based on the ESEE analysis, the conflicting uses should be allowed in a limited way that protects the resource site to a desired extent.
 - (c) A local government may decide that the conflicting use should be allowed fully, notwithstanding the possible impacts on the resource site. The ESEE analysis must

demonstrate that the conflicting use is of sufficient importance relative to the resource site and must indicate why measures to protect the resource to some extent should not be provided, as per subsection (b) of this section.

2.0 - Introduction

2.1 Purpose and Need

Union County citizens rely on federally managed lands for social, economic, environmental, and energy benefits and consequences. Social benefits include recreational activities such as hiking and hunting; economic benefits include income producing activities such as timber harvest and grazing; and environmental benefits include ecosystem-related elements such as availability of clean water, preservation of biodiversity, and providing high quality fish and wildlife habitat. Restriction of the utilization of federally managed lands (and economic opportunities associated with use) has a significant impact on the fiscal and social stability of Union County, leading to reductions in economic benefits, which create gaps in funding for public services needed by the most vulnerable populations.

Union County has a rich history of advocating for the protection of fish and wildlife resources, the sustainable use of natural resources including timber, aggregate materials, and pastureland, and the promotion of recreational activities such as hiking and traveling along roads in Union County. Union County has made it a priority to describe goals and policies related to all statewide planning goals in its Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Union County, 1985). The Comprehensive Land Use Plan includes goals related to state, private, and federal lands.

The Union County Commissioners believe that detailing Union County's priorities in relation to activities on federally managed lands is an important addition because federal land use policy requires more specific consultation and long-term strategy development than is provided in the existing Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy serves to expand on Union County's goals described in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy also details goals that the Union County Commissioners feel would encourage a collaborative and positive relationship with federal land managers to best serve the needs of the people and environment of Union County. These goals include land management principles (Section 2) and federally managed land goals (Section 3).

This Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy has been developed by reviewing Union County land use policies, discussing policies with County Commissioners, and providing opportunity for input by the Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy Advisory Committee and the public (see Appendix A for Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy Advisory Committee Members).

2.2 Plan Revision

This Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy is intended to be a living document that will change and require updates with changes in environmental, social, and economic conditions in Union County. This Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy will be reviewed on a five-year basis and can be modified at will following Union County public notice procedures.

2.3 Land Use

Union County is 3,089 square miles in area. Union County is located in northeast Oregon in the lush valley of the Grande Ronde River, surrounded by the expansive Blue, Elkhorn, and Wallowa Mountain

Ranges. The larger Grande Ronde River Watershed system drains to the Snake River, then the Columbia River. Elevations in Union County range from 2,700 feet at the valley floor to more than 6,000 feet in the mountainous areas that bound the region. The climate is semi-arid with hot, dry summers and cold, moist winters. Mean annual precipitation ranges from 12 to 25 inches for elevations of less than 3,000 feet to more than 50 inches above 5,000 feet (Grande Ronde Water Quality Committee, 2000). Mean annual precipitation throughout the entire county is approximately 28 inches per year. The hydrology of Union County is dominated by snowmelt runoff. Sixty percent of Union County is forestland, 20 percent is rangeland, and the majority of the remaining acreage is used for crops and pastureland, with a small percentage located in residential areas.

Federal agencies manage approximately 51.5 percent of the land in Union County, comprising a total of 1,016,511 acres. Approximately 33 percent of Union County is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, 18.5 percent is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and an additional 10,067 acres, or 0.5 percent of Union County, is managed by the State of Oregon. The remaining 48 percent of the land in the county, approximately 950,382 acres, is privately owned.

Union County's priority land use activities on federally managed lands include:

- **Biological Diversity:** Promote a healthy ecosystem that maintains a diverse balance of native plants and animals.
- **Timber:** Promote sustainable harvest to help reduce wildfire, provide natural resources jobs, and improve the forest ecosystem.
- **Grazing:** Promote sustainable grazing practices that benefit both producers and the landscape.
- **Recreation:** Encourage citizens and visitors to utilize federal lands for multiple recreational purposes. Promote policies that satisfy the recreational needs of Union County citizens and visitors.
- **[Travel:** Maintain road quality on primary arterials within federally managed lands and, even when maintenance is not feasible, allow transit through federally managed lands.]
- **Private Property:** Protect private property rights.
- **Mining:** Allow aggregate mining to ensure road materials are locally available. Allow other mining activities, including precious metal extraction, when permitted and when consistent with multiple use.

Union County has long advocated for the following general principals of land use on federally managed lands (Union County, 1985):

- Support legal existing uses of land
- Promote citizen involvement when making land use decisions
- Preserve the natural beauty of Union County (including scenic values and viewscapes)
- Encourage recreation development, [including road and trail access], to satisfy recreational needs of Union County citizens and visitors
- Conserve water quality and quantity for future and continued use
- Promote sustainable use of aggregate material development for road and building construction

- Support the needs of livestock grazing on federally managed lands without infringing on other uses
- Preserve sites of historical and cultural significance
- Support optimal multiple benefits (timber production, watershed management, grazing, wildlife, recreation, and reforestation) in forested areas

Union County has further documented concerns related to the following issues on federally managed lands:

- Union County is concerned that forestlands are being diminished by not being actively managed for timber production and sustainable forest health. (Union County, 1985).
- Union County is concerned that increased wilderness areas will reduce opportunities for multiple uses (Union County, 1985).
- Federally managed lands are to be utilized productively to support the local economy, in lieu of tax income (also known as the payment-in-lieu-of-taxes program). This revenue is essential to the Union County budget to provide social services for the population that pays ad valorem taxes (Union County, 1985).
- Forest fires are recognized by Union County as occurring both on federally managed lands and on private lands. Strong coordination between local and federal land managers is essential to a successful fire management strategy (Union County, 1985).

2.4 Custom and Culture

It is the goal of this Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy to protect the custom and culture (detailed below) of Union County by preserving multiple uses of federally managed lands while maximizing economic benefits derived from these resources in a socially and environmentally sustainable way. Union County requires genuine consultation and coordination efforts from federal land managers on an on-going basis for planning purposes. For federal planning purposes, the phrase “custom and culture” essentializes social, economic, and environmental values. What follows is a brief discussion of the history and modern elements that compose these Union County values that are centered on always growing and improving our natural resource-based economy.

The beginning of Union County’s customs and culture began long before Union County was established. Historically, many tribes included the Grande Ronde Valley within their territories. The Cayuse homeland extended primarily along the Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Grande Ronde Rivers, as well as north and east along the Touchet and Tucannon (Stern, 1998). The Grande Ronde Valley was neutral ground for hunting, quarrying, and harvesting roots and berries. The Grande Ronde River provided sustenance to the tribes with its abundance of whitefish, salmon, trout, and lamprey. Camas was gathered and horses were grazed in the area’s lush meadows (Hunn et al., 2015).

European Americans contact with the native peoples of the region first occurred in 1805, when Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery navigated the Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia Rivers. The possible discovery of gold by a lost group of emigrants along the Malheur River spurred a greater exploration of northeastern Oregon. With miners and emigrants constantly passing through the area, settlements soon sprang up in the Grande Ronde Valley. In 1864, Union County was created from a portion of Baker County (Mead, 2006).

Mining and timber production surrounded the Grande Ronde Valley, which provided a steady demand for goods. The first agriculture in the area mostly included raising livestock, but later crops of small grains, potatoes, and other vegetables became important to the area (Hug, 1961). In 1862, fruit trees (mostly apples and pears) were brought to Union County from Vancouver, Washington, which started the fruit industry in the area. Hay was grown and harvested to feed livestock (cattle, sheep, horses) over the winter, allowing increasing numbers of livestock in the valley. Cattle continued to become an important economic staple to the settlers of Union County; at first providing the surrounding mining and logging camps and with meat and dairy products, and then expanding to Portland, Oregon, once the railroad arrived in 1884. Sheep were also a common commodity in the area; however, around 1900, the increase in cattle production and overgrazing caused sheep numbers to decline.

Wheat was a thriving staple for farmers in Union County and flouring mills were abundant in Union County. Surplus flour was sold to mining camps and fed to hogs (Hug, 1961). Other crops were also essential including potatoes, sugar beets, grass seed, and peas.

In addition to agriculture, productive forest lands surround the Grande Ronde Valley and are a vital and long-standing resource to Union County. The first settlements were built from the trees harvested from the forests and red fir and tamarack were used to make hundreds of miles of fencing. Sawmills began to populate Union County. The continued growth in railroad and roadway infrastructure opened up the logging market throughout much of Union County. Splash dams were created on waterways throughout the region to transport logs to the mills on the valley floor. The splash dams were mostly replaced by railroad transportation in the early 1900s (History of Union County, Oregon). The logging industry continued to expand with technological advances. Tractors and log trucks entered the forests, increasing the efficiency of logging operations.

Historically, agriculture has been a primary economic driver in Union County with timber, public sector jobs, and a service economy also providing economic opportunities in the region. Historically, sawmills and early placer mining operations also illustrate that the economy is highly dependent on natural resources.

In the 1980s, the logging industry sharply declined, putting Union County into a time of economic hardship. Not only were logging operations strained, but sawmills, including two in North Powder, went out of business. Rather than exporting predominantly finished lumber products, Union County now exports mostly logs.

Currently, Union County's natural resource economy relies on agriculture and forestry, which have been able to remain in existence; however, environmental conditions, regulations, and limitations on access to federally managed lands have restricted the ability for these parts of the economy to flourish. The natural resource component is only one part of the overall economy of Union County. Health care, manufacturing, education, and government services are also important economic drivers.

Union County is bountiful with natural resources of sustainable forest, quality river and stream systems, and a fertile valley floor. The beauty of the area has also been a component in expanding tourism and the service economy in the region.

The culture of Union County remains committed to using the surrounding natural resources to support rich and fulfilling livelihoods. Renewable forest products, high-quality water resources, and a healthy agricultural-based economy continue to shape the way of life in Union County. The citizens of Union

County understand that maintaining the striking beauty and natural resources of the area is integral in maintaining the heritage that has been passed along for generations.

Union County currently faces challenges, including a struggling economy where many citizens are forced to move away for economic opportunities that access to federally managed lands once provided. Although times are tough now, with expanded opportunities and increased access to federally managed lands, significant improvements could be made to the economic viability of this natural resources-based economy. It is Union County's goal to continue to promote the custom and culture of the region to allow people to use their talents to make productive use of natural resources to provide a strong economic base for the communities within Union County.

In summary, Union County recognizes and promotes the following elements of custom and culture:

- Preservation of hunting, fishing, and other practices of regional tribes.
- Ability of people to live in the area and make a living.
- Agriculture and livestock grazing.
- Active management of forest resources.
- Tourism, recreation, and service.
- The role of federally managed lands in promoting these elements.

3.0 - Principles for Federal Land Management Within Union County

3.1 General

Union County seeks a collaborative working relationship with federal land managers. Because approximately 51.5 percent of land in Union County is federally managed, decisions related to natural resource management made by federal agencies directly impacts the way of life in Union County.

3.2 Recognition of County Status, Responsibilities, and Authority

Union County recognizes its responsibility to have a proactive and collaborative approach in working with federal land managers to achieve optimal outcomes for Union County citizens. Union County also encourages federal land managers to be equally proactive in reaching out to Union County for consultation.

In recognition of the value and necessity of integrating federal planning processes with those at the state and local level, laws including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and National Forest Management Act (NFMA) were created for the express purpose of helping provide guidance on how to consistently and correctly coordinate with local interests when developing plans at a national level.

These laws require federal agencies to engage in meaningful consultation with interested parties related to actions on federal lands. Local jurisdictions have a critical role to represent local interests to federal agencies to enable the best decision-making possible (42 USC §4321-4370h).

3.3 County Involvement in Federal Land Management

This Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy reflects Union County's desire and willingness to be involved with federal land management decisions. It also represents Union County's desire to be included as a partner in decision-making and to provide local knowledge to inform national-level decisions.

3.4 Coordination

While coordination is mandated by NEPA when a federal nexus is associated with a project or action, the Union County Commissioners want additional voluntary coordination which will enhance large-scale ecosystem management and planning for natural resources in the region.

Federal agencies have different requirements for NEPA review. Relevant statutes related to local coordination are listed below:

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), according to 43 USC § 1712(c)(9), supports coordinating the land use inventory, planning, and management activities with local governments. The outcome of this coordination is a consistent plan, one that is consistent with federal and local policies and plans (43 CFR § 1601.0-5(c).

- The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) seeks to develop and revise land and resource management plans in a coordinated effort with state and local governments and seek outcomes that contribute to joint objectives (16 USC § 1604(a); 36 CFR § 219.4; 36 CFR § 212.53).

Union County needs to be involved in all decisions regarding federally managed land as an additional cooperating agency.

3.5 National Environmental Policy Act Consistency Review

NEPA requires that a federal agency prepare a consistency review for any federal agency action calling for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Specifically, Council on Environmental Quality regulations require that EISs “shall discuss any inconsistency of a proposed action with any approved state or local plan and laws (whether or not federally sanctioned). Where an inconsistency exists, the [EIS] should describe the extent to which the agency would reconcile its proposed action with the plan or law” (40 CFR § 1506.2(d)).

Laws related to NEPA include the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and the National Preservation Act.

Union County supports streamlining NEPA wherever possible to reduce the cost and timeline of the environmental review process such as Good Neighbor Authority, Forest Products Modernization efforts, and Environmental Analysis and Decision-Making process improvements.

3.6 Private Property Rights and Property Interests

Private individuals in Union County may hold rights on federal lands including access, water rights, mining claims, or grazing rights. Union County will support and preserve these rights and work with federal land managers to ensure these rights do not infringe on others.

Federal law requires federal land management agencies consider the environmental, social, and economic impacts of actions on counties. Specifically, the USFS and BLM must consider the impact of actions on communities near federal lands and on employment in the affected areas. Union County is a critical partner in these studies.

3.7 Data Quality

Union County makes decisions based on best available scientific data. Union County expects federal land managers to use peer-reviewed data and routinely use measured field data to verify models when making decisions in the region.

3.8 Cooperative Management and Conservation

Union County promotes interdisciplinary and cooperative approaches to conservation and management of natural resources on federal lands.

4.0 - Federally Managed Lands Goals

The following sections detail categories of goals for federally managed lands in Union County. The overall goal is shown in bold and italics while the bulleted statements represent smaller actions that will be taken to support the larger goal.

4.1 Coordination Goals

As described in Section 2.5, Coordination, Union County will provide input through early consultation on federal land use plan drafts or revisions to produce an outcome consistent with Union County goals and policies. Through early discussions, opportunities to achieve joint objectives can be more readily accomplished and the planning process can generally be smoother.

Preserve Union County's "Custom and Culture" by Incorporating it into Land Use Decisions on Federally Managed Land

- Share the Natural Resources Plan Federal Lands Policy with federal land managers to allow a greater understanding of Union County's goals.
- Federal planning decisions affecting land within Union County boundaries should be communicated with Union County. It is requested that federal land management agencies notify Union County Commissioners of potential plans and actions early to resolve conflicts in an amicable way. It is also requested that federal land managers inform Union County Commissioners of potential conflicts with federal plans prior to public participation when given the opportunity to review upcoming Union County plans and policies.
- Union County will coordinate with other local, state, and federal agencies in implementing environmental standards. Union County will reach out for early consultation from federal land managers on federal projects and policies and requests that federal land managers will seek early consultation with Union County on their projects.
- Union County will develop a method for tracking and reviewing proposed plans and policies on federally managed lands.
- Union County supports streamlining National Environmental Policy Act review wherever possible to reduce the cost and timeline of the environmental review process.

4.2 Livestock, Grazing, Ranching, and Agriculture Goals

Agriculture in Union County includes both livestock and crops. Livestock production significantly benefits from utilizing grazing leases on federally managed land during summer months. This includes land managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Preservation of these permits is essential to allowing for this economic livelihood. Grazing is also one of the tools effective in reducing fine fuels and helpful in conditioning forage for big game.

Support Livestock Grazing on Federally Managed Lands in a Sustainable Way that Allows Multiple Uses

- Approximately 63 percent of the land area in Union County classified as “timber-grazing” is federally managed. Union County will work with federal land managers on an integrated grazing strategy to meet multiple uses for the land.
- Union County will meet with federal land managers about the ongoing permitting process and determine if Union County can assist in analysis or decision making. It is Union County's option to provide input on topics of concern.
- Union County will work to support land management decisions that maintain current levels of grazing and, when possible, increase levels of grazing. This includes supporting the allocation of currently open allotments and allowing grazing to continue in areas that are under NEPA review by federal land management agencies.
- Union County requests that reauthorization of vacant and closed allotments occur in a timely fashion to potential permit holders. The County would like to see no net loss of grazing opportunities but understands that there are multiple factors that influence decisions surrounding allotment authorization (i.e., recreation conflicts, range conditions, weed infestations, threatened and endangered species).

4.3 Forest Resources (Timber) Goals

Union County seeks a sustainable timber harvest regime to help reduce wildfire, provide natural resources jobs, and improve the forest ecosystem.

Support Optimum Multiple Benefits (Timber Production, Watershed Management, Grazing, Wildlife, Recreation, and Reforestation) on Forested Areas

- Review and provide comments on proposed federal land management actions to support the goal of multiple use management.

Support Sustainable Forestry Practices on Federally Managed Lands

- Promote policies to encourage sustainable harvest and management of timber. Sustainable harvest plans include those that bring economic benefit, protect the environment from natural hazards such as fire, and benefit the overall ecosystem in a cost-effective manner.
- Union County supports planning to increase sustainable harvest levels of commercial timber.
- Allow for most forested land to be considered for timber production but evaluate circumstances in which forest or grazing lands may include parks, natural preserves, archaeological, geological, biological or botanical sites, habitat for threatened or endangered species, or other uses of a significant nature. Before removing the land from timber use, evaluate economic and environmental consequences of such an action (Union County, 1985).

- Work with the USFS, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon State University Extension Service, and private industry to ensure revegetation occurs on those lands capable of producing commercial timber (Union County, 1985).
- Promote the use of diseased and/or downed timber and other solid waste to be used as a source of energy, when feasible (Union County, 1985).
- Promote policies that increase access to firewood.

4.4 Emergency Management Goals

Union County has an all hazards comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that provides guidance on hazard vulnerability, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. The EOP creates a response framework covering a variety of concerns including wildfire, flooding, and other natural and human-caused emergencies. Union County jointly developed the Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to provide implementation strategies for the Cohesive Wildfire Strategy (CWS). The CWPP was developed by local, state, and federal partners. Federal land managers play key roles in supporting the EOP including providing resources both on the ground and in overhead positions in support of a coordinated response.

Promote Integrated Emergency Management Policies with Both Long- and Short-Term Visions

- Support and implement mitigation action items identified in the CWPP.
- Actively participate in the CWPP steering committee.
- Actively participate and further the all hands/all lands approach and the three CWS goals:
 - Resilient Landscapes
Design, prioritize, and implement fuels treatments within the Wildland Urban Interface and “middle ground” to reduce fire intensity and create opportunities for firefighters to be successful. When managing wildfire for resource benefit use a right time, right place, right resources approach to maximize the probability of success. Accelerate pace and increase the scale of fuels treatment effect and implementation, including prescribed fire to overcome the momentum created by past challenges in resource management.
 - Fire-adapted Communities
Design, prioritize, and implement fuels treatment across boundaries to maximize funding opportunities and strategic value. Support state and local wildfire and emergency preparedness education efforts such as “ready, set, go” and “Firewise.” Coordinate fire danger levels with state and local partners to maintain consistent messaging and clear communication. Design, prioritize, and implement fuels treatments emphasizing commercial harvest to offset more costly fuels treatments and maintain key infrastructure such as mills and skilled workforce.
 - Effective Wildfire Response
Enhance wildfire response through the development and implementation of mutual aid agreements and close forces response emphasizing the all hands/all lands approach. Provide training and support to local emergency responders through

integration in prescribed fire and wildfire response. Integrate local resources into staffing and drawdown considerations to maintain a strategic vision of available resources. Coordinate managing wildfire for resource benefit with local resources to ensure adequate local resources are available.

- Integrate federal emergency response plans with Union County's Emergency Operations Plan.
- Ensure communication among law enforcement agencies and ensure the Union County Sheriff's Office has access to public lands.
- Union County supports aggressive and integrated wildfire management and considers salvage of the commercial volume remaining after the fire to be a key component in recovery and mitigation. Salvage operations should maximize availability and recovery with a goal of implementation in less than one year. Federal managers should also implement post-fire mitigations for other fire effects such as flooding, landslides, watershed degradation, impacts to irrigators, and other "downstream" effects of wildfire.

4.5 Fish and Wildlife Goals

Federal, state, and local agency coordination is essential for the management and protection of fish and wildlife because many of these animals migrate and are affected by decisions made in different jurisdictions.

Promote Biological Diversity

- Promote a healthy ecosystem that maintains a diverse balance of native plants and animals.

Protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Threatened and Endangered Species

- Union County requires early coordination and may oppose inclusion of any river or stream in Union County into the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers program unless studies show favorable benefits to Union County (Union County, 1985).
- Support the NEPA process for federal actions that could impact threatened and endangered species (including plants and animals). Streamline the NEPA process to reduce time and cost in preparing environmental analyses.
- Engage partners to actively restore and protect threatened and endangered species habitat on federal lands.

Support Federal Policies to Reduce Big Game Winter Damage to Forest Resource Lands and Private Property While Supporting Viable Populations

- Management of wildlife, particularly big game such as deer and elk, will be coordinated with Union County as population impacts from herds can reach past the borders of federal land to private land. Union County can assist with informing federal land managers and local wildlife managers regarding potential crop damage and other reported issues.
- Union County believes that where big game winter damage to agricultural and forest resource land occurs the adverse conflicts could potentially be resolved by 1) removing

- problem-causing big game, 2) using damage control management techniques (i.e., hazing, fencing, panels, cooperative forage enhancement), 3) considering reduction of herd size (Union County, 1985), 4) increasing early seral habitat on federally managed lands, and 5) predator control.
- Promote effective elk management and studies to verify whether closure of roads near elk corridors are needed to ensure population viability and assist with prevention of environmental impacts.

4.6 Invasive Species Goals

Invasive plants and animals are an ever-present threat to Union County economic and environmental interests. Coordination and support at a federal level is essential to limit the spread of these species and conduct management efforts.

Focus on Limiting the Spread of Invasive Species and Reducing Populations in High Risk Areas

Union County supports ongoing efforts to limit the spread of invasive species in accordance with federal, state, and local noxious weed laws. This includes working to stop invasive weeds from going to fruition.

Watershed, Surface Water, Groundwater Goals

Groundwater and surface water are connected in Union County, and protection of the entire watershed is important to support the sustainable use of these resources for the future to meet both in-stream and out-of-stream needs.

Protect Watershed, Surface Water, and Groundwater

- Coordinate and cooperate with state and federal agencies in regulating of surface and groundwater resources.
- Encourage conservation of water resources and protection of municipal watersheds.
- Union County's first priority for use of water resources is supporting overall watershed health, as well as domestic and stock water use and production of food, fiber, and energy. Union County supports the State of Oregon in their regulation of water when it is limited.
- Work closely with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and related agencies on their water monitoring programs (Union County, 1985)
- Support relevant goals developed through Union County's place-based integrated water resources planning process.

4.7 [Access and Roads Goals

Access to federally managed lands in Union County represents a delicate balance of supporting the public's use of public lands and existing roads; limiting development of new roads which create environmental impacts; and preserving existing wild areas without restricting the rights of people.

Travel management policies in Union County are created for the purpose of continuing historic access to public lands and creating positive experiences for recreating visitors and private businesses using the roads. Travel management policies also serve to support emergency services such as access for firefighting.

Support Access to Federally Managed Lands

- Assist agencies with maintaining main roads and promote keeping unmaintained roads open. existing roads and promoting their availability to the public through improved signages and maps to aid in navigation on public lands.
- Limit road closures and allow public input for all closure decisions. Union County promotes access to roads. Union County does not generally support the closure of roads due to maintenance concerns; Union County would prefer roads remain open and unmaintained, rather than be closed.
- Union County supports maintaining access to the land for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to sustainable logging, ecological benefits, supply of clean water, firewood, grazing, recreation, hunting, fishing, hiking, use of ATVs, full fire suppression.
- Coordinate all road inventory actions with Union County and share all data collected in GIS format.]

4.8 Wilderness Goals

Wilderness areas on federally managed lands are important to preserve vital characteristics of the landscape. A balance between allowing for respectful enjoyment of federally managed lands and keeping wilderness areas safe from human-caused environmental impacts, is what a coordinated policy between Union County and federal land managers could accomplish. This will utilize the specific rules currently in place that dictate how wilderness areas will be managed.

Limit New Wilderness Areas

- Ensure the designation of new federal wilderness areas are compatible with Union County's custom and culture and economic viability goals. Limit or eliminate the creation of new wilderness areas within the boundaries of Union County.
- Union County supports the limited sale of federally managed lands to private ownership upon satisfactory completion of the Oregon Statewide planning process for destination resort sites.
- Union County supports the principle that additional public land withdrawals for wilderness preservation be limited to those lands that have minimal economic value to county communities and that a full economic analysis be made as a part of any future wilderness proposal.
- Coordinate closely with federal land managers when changes or new land use classifications are proposed. Such classifications of special interest to Union County include, but are not limited to wilderness characteristics, area of critical environmental concern, national monuments, and historical sites.

4.9 Recreation and Tourism Goals

Recreation and tourism are an increasing part of Union County's modern economy. Coordinated planning will help grow and sustain this nascent industry.

Promote Policies that Satisfy the Recreational Needs of Union County's Citizens and Visitors

- Union County is supportive of encouraging developed recreational use of existing National Forest multiple use lands, consistent with recognized natural resource management practices.
- [Union County desires connectivity of roads and trails for extended recreational opportunities within Union County that will contribute to large-scale trail systems extending to other counties, states, and regions.]
- Improve, maintain, and develop facilities to support recreational opportunities such as parking, camping, bathroom facilities, trails and connectors, roads, and road maintenance.

4.10 Economic Development Goals

Union County seeks to promote diversified and sustainable economic development. The economy of the region is supported by retail trade, health services, construction, professional services, leisure and hospitality, natural resources and mining, manufacturing, financial activities, information services, and government services (Union County, 2011). Union County recognizes economic value in federally managed lands. Timber resources can be extracted through private or forest stewardship contracts and sustainable energy development. Private stock of cattle and sheep can graze in the summertime on portions of federally managed lands that will not negatively impact critical fish and wildlife habitats, riparian areas, or waterbodies. Other economic goals include support of recreational users (both local and non-local) who come to Union County and hike, bike, camp, ski, horseback ride, hunt, fish, snowmobile, ATV, and take in the scenery.

Promote Economic Development on Federally Managed Lands

- Support federal agencies completing an economic and social analysis before major federal actions and verify actions will not adversely impact vulnerable populations (environmental and social justice analysis).
- Ensure that the amount of federally managed land does not increase and, whenever economically, socially, and environmentally beneficial, work to increase private land within Union County.
- Advocate for the protection of private property rights on federally managed lands for purposes including mining claims, water rights, and [access].
- Support federal agencies issuing contracts for private or public-private partnership projects on federally managed lands and policies, increasing the ability for individuals to cut firewood.

4.11 Special Designations and Cultural Resources Goals

Significant cultural and historic resources are found on public lands in Union County. Coordinated efforts are needed to ensure that these irreplaceable resources are protected.

Conserve Open Space, Promote Scenic Values, and Protect Natural, Cultural, Historic, and Scenic Resources on Federally Managed Lands

- Union County supports state and federal laws of historic preservation to ensure recognition and protection of historical and cultural locations and structures, and protection of significant views and sites.
- Union County supports tribal use of federally managed lands and supports the preservation of all treaty rights.
- Union County supports the preservation of areas of scenic value.

4.12 Mining Goals

There is limited mining in Union County. Union County will coordinate with federal land managers for mining activities on these lands.

5.0 - Conclusion

Union County is principally interested in working cooperatively with federal land managers to ensure optimal decisions are being made. Managing natural resources and access to these resources, when on federally managed lands, is critical to preserving the custom and culture of Union County citizens.

6.0 - References

- 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 212.53. Travel Management; Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use. Coordination with Federal, State, county, and other local governmental entities and tribal governments. U.S. Forest Service (USFS). 2001.
- 36 CFR 219.4. National Forest System Land Management Planning. USFS. 2001.
- 43 Federal Register 1601.0-5(c). Resource Management Planning. BLM. 2017.
- Chaplin III, F. Stuart, et al., 2010. "Ecosystem Stewardship: Sustainability Strategies for a Rapidly-Changing Planet." Trends in Ecology and Evolution Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 241-249
- Grande Ronde Water Quality Committee. 2000. Upper Grande Ronde River Subbasin Water Quality Management Plan. April 2000.
- Hug, Bernal D., 1961. History of Union County, Oregon. Edited and Compiled for the Historical Society of Union County, Oregon. Printed by Eastern Oregon Review, La Grande, Oregon.
- Hunn, Eugene S., E. Thomas Morning Owl, Phillip E. Cash Cash, and Jennifer Karson Engum. 2015. Čáw Pawá Láakni, They Are Not Forgotten: Sahaptian Place Names Atlas of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla. Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, Pendleton, Oregon.
- Mead, George R. 2006. A History of Union County, with an Appendix: The Chinese in Oregon. E-Cat Worlds, La Grande, Oregon.
- Stern, Theodore. 1998. Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla. In Plateau, edited by Deward E. Walker, Jr., pp. 395-419. Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 12, William C. Sturtevant, general editor, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- Union County, 1985. Union County Comprehensive Plan.
- Union County, 2011. Union County Economic Development Corporation. Business and Industry. Accessed May 22, 2020 <<https://ucedc.org/about/economy/business-industry/>>
- 16 United States Code (USC) 1604(a). National Forest Management Act. USFS. 1964.
- 42 USC 4321-4370h. National Environmental Policy Act. 1970.
- 43 USC 1712(c)(9). Federal Land Policy and Management Act. USFS. 1976.

APPENDIX A
Natural Resources Plan
Federal Lands Policy
Advisory Committee Members*

*Lindsay Warness is no longer part of the committee.

UNION COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Formed: April 5, 2017, Amended: May 3, 2017

Resolution 2017-07

Member	Court Order #	Representing
Donna Beverage	2017-20	Commissioner
JB Brock	2017-20	Emergency Services
jbrock@union-county.org		
Brian Clapp	2017-20	Weed Control
Alternate: Samantha Bernards		
bclapp@union-county.org ; samantha@tricountycwma.org		
Scott Hartell		Planning
shartell@union-county.org		
Sean Chambers		MERA
schambers@union-county.org		
Buck Fullerton	2017-20	Timber Industry
Alternate: Lindsay Warness		
1917 Jackson St		
La Grande, OR 97850		
(541) 786-1305 johnfullerton@bc.com ; lindsaywarness@bc.com		
Jon Paustian	2017-20	ODFW
107 20 th St		
La Grande, OR 97850		
(541) 786-4694 Jon.a.paustian@state.or.us		
Chris Heffernan	2017-20	Ranching/Grazing/Woodland Owner
63600 Viewpoint Lane		
North Powder, OR 97867		
(541) 786-2257 northslope@wildblue.net		
Lois Barry	2017-20	At Large
PO Box 566		
La Grande, OR 97850		
(541) 963-3562 Loisbarry31@gmail.com		
Frank Mason	2017-20	At Large
1305 22 nd St		
La Grande, OR 97850		
(619) 916-1810 Ltcfm@aol.com		
Kathryn Boula	2017-38	Environmentalist
1404 1 st Street		
La Grande, OR 97850		
(541) 962-5449 kmboula@hotmail.com		
Irene Gilbert		
2310 Adams Avenue		
LaGrande, OR 97850		
(541) 963-8160 ott.irene@frontier.com		