



SAN LUIS OBISPO

Carrizo Plain gets a new plan

by Kathy Johnston

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A long-awaited plan for taking care of the Carrizo Plain National Monument is now available from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The “Proposed Resource Management Plan” takes a middle ground between a “hands-off” approach and a more intensive management and restoration program.

Years in the making, the plan is a collaborative effort by the Bureau of Land Management, the Nature Conservancy, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Monument Advisory Committee, with input from the public. It covers nearly 250,000 acres in the eastern part of San Luis Obispo County, established as a national monument by President Bill Clinton at the tail end of his presidency in January 2001.

The goal is to enhance the landscape as a unique, undeveloped portion of the once-vast San Joaquin Valley ecosystem, emphasizing its importance for the conservation and recovery of the threatened and endangered species that make their homes on the Carrizo Plain.

Livestock grazing will be allowed for the purpose of vegetation management for wildlife habitat, representing a transition from more extensive grazing now. Wilderness qualities will be restored on 44,000 acres, and 42 miles of roads will be closed, with other roads accessible only by street-legal vehicles. Public access to the Native American art at Painted Rock will be allowed by permit and guided tour.

After a 30-day protest and comment period, the “proposed” management plan is due to become the “approved” plan. It’s available online at blm.gov/ca/bakersfield.