

CHAPTER 2

ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

Chapter 2 details six alternatives for managing the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (Monument) to meet the purpose and need, the vision and management goals, and to address the issues discussed in Chapter 1. Each alternative represents a reasonable set of objectives and actions to guide future management of the Monument. This chapter is presented in five sections:

- General Description of Each Alternative
- Decisions Common to All Alternatives
- Current Management and Action Alternatives
- Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail
- Comparison of Alternatives

The guidance found in the Decisions Common to All Alternatives section has been carried forward from existing laws, regulations, policy, and previous planning efforts, primarily the West HiLine Resource Management Plan (RMP) (BLM 1988, 1992a) and the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP (BLM 1994a). In the Monument, the West HiLine RMP includes BLM land in the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (UMNWSR) and north of the river in Chouteau and Blaine Counties (222,000 acres). The Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP includes BLM land south of the UMNWSR in Chouteau and Fergus Counties and north of the UMNWSR in Phillips County (153,000 acres). The Decisions Common to All Alternatives, combined with the selected alternative (either the current management alternative or any of the action alternatives) will form the management plan for the Monument.

General Description of Each Alternative

The six alternatives provide a reasonable range of management options to resolve the issues identified for the Monument. The alternatives provide a range of more-intensive to less-intensive management. The following brief descriptions provide an overview of the alternatives developed and some of the unique aspects of each.

Alternative A (Current Management)

Alternative A emphasizes continuing the management that already occurs in the Monument. This is now

governed by the West HiLine RMP (BLM 1988, 1992a), Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP (BLM 1994a), Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan Update (BLM 1993) and the State Director's Interim Guidance for Managing the Monument (BLM 2001a) to the extent these plans are consistent with the Proclamation. This is the "no action" alternative that would create no change from the current management direction.

Motorized use on the river would continue with the seasonal limitations on upstream travel and a no-wake speed restriction in the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR. The number of boaters on the river would not be limited, and no allocation system would be developed. About 524 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel yearlong, 68 miles would be open seasonally, and 10 backcountry airstrips would remain open.

Current stipulations would apply to the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases, and conditions of approval for applications to drill natural gas wells would be developed and considered on a case-by-case basis during the permitting process on all 43 oil and gas leases. It is foreseeable that 35 wells could be drilled on these leases in the Monument.

Alternative B

Alternative B emphasizes more intensive recreation and transportation management. Resource management would allow camping facilities and interpretive sites at varying levels to enable visitors to experience both the natural and historic benefits of this Monument, while ensuring that resource protection is not compromised.

Motorized use on the river would be allowed yearlong on all segments. The number of boaters on the river would not be limited, and no allocation system would be developed. About 477 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel yearlong, 96 miles would be open seasonally, and 10 backcountry airstrips would be designated open.

Alternative B would be the least restrictive alternative concerning oil and gas activity. Reasonable conditions of approval would protect the objects for which the Monument was designated and 44 natural gas wells could be drilled on the existing leases in the Monument.

Alternative C

Alternative C would emphasize providing visitors with opportunities to experience the Monument. This alternative is distinguished from Alternative B in that it would more readily identify and accommodate changing conditions over time through the application of management decisions responsive to these changing conditions. This alternative provides more flexibility to respond to increasing visitation and risks to resources that could occur over time.

Motorized use on the river would be allowed with seasonal limitations on upstream travel and a no-wake speed restriction in the wild and scenic segments. Standards and indicators would be used to manage boaters on the river and impacts to resources, and no allocation system would be developed. About 439 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel yearlong, 95 miles would be open seasonally, and seven backcountry airstrips would be designated open.

Management of oil and gas operations would be more restrictive under this alternative, allowing less activity to occur than Alternatives A, B and F. Existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing reasonable conditions of approval under BLM's authority to protect the objects for which the Monument was designated. It is foreseeable that 28 natural gas wells could be drilled on the existing leases in the Monument.

Alternative D

Alternative D would also emphasize providing visitors with opportunities to experience the Monument, but in a more self-directed fashion. This alternative differs from Alternative C in that it would limit certain activities now rather than applying management decisions responsive to changing conditions.

Motorized use on the river would be allowed with seasonal limitations on upstream travel and a no-wake speed restriction in the wild and scenic segments. Standards and indicators would be used to manage boaters on the river and impacts to resources, and an allocation system would be developed when those standards and indicators are exceeded. About 292 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel yearlong, 44 miles would be open seasonally, and six backcountry airstrips would be designated open.

Management of oil and gas operations would be more restrictive under this alternative, allowing less activity to occur than Alternatives A, B, C and F. Existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing reasonable conditions of approval under BLM's authority to protect the objects for which the Monument was designated. It is foreseeable that 13 natural gas

wells could be drilled on the existing leases in the Monument.

Alternatives E and E_{NL}

Alternative E would emphasize the natural condition and place the most limitations on visitors and other activities.

Motorized use would not be allowed on any segment of the river. An allocation system would be developed to manage boaters on the river and impacts to resources. About 103 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel yearlong, 4 miles would be open seasonally, and no backcountry airstrips would be designated open.

Management of oil and gas operations would be most restrictive under this alternative, allowing no activity to occur on the existing leases within the Monument. Surface disturbance would not be allowed on the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases or the other 31 existing oil and gas leases. This alternative would also consider the environmental effects of not leasing the 12 West HiLine leases or the No Lease Alternative; a sub-alternative identified as Alternative E_{NL}. Under Alternatives E and E_{NL} it is foreseeable that no natural gas wells would be drilled on these leases in the Monument.

If either of these alternatives was selected as the approved plan, there would be legal implications since the oil and gas leases have valid existing rights. These implications are outside the scope of an RMP, which addresses environmental effects. The legal implications would be addressed in a record of decision.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative F would emphasize providing visitors with opportunities to experience the Monument. This alternative would readily identify and accommodate changing conditions over time through the application of management decisions responsive to these changing conditions. Through implementation and monitoring this alternative provides more opportunities to respond to increasing visitation and risks to resources that could occur over time.

Motorized use on the river would be allowed with seasonal limitations on upstream travel and a seasonal no-wake speed restriction in the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR from June 15 to September 15. In addition, the wild and scenic segment from Holmes Council Island to the Fred Robinson Bridge would be restricted to non-motorized watercraft from June 15 to September 15 on Sunday through Wednesday. Standards and indicators would be used to manage boaters on the river and impacts to resources and no allocation system would be developed.

About 293 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel yearlong and 111 miles would be open seasonally. Five backcountry airstrips would be designated open yearlong and one airstrip would be open seasonally. Seasonal restrictions include 81 miles for wildlife habitat security during the fall and these roads would be available for big game retrieval from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Management of oil and gas operations would be more restrictive under this alternative, allowing less surface-disturbing activity than Alternatives A or B. Existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing reasonable conditions of approval under BLM's authority to protect the objects for which the Monument was designated. It is foreseeable that 34 natural gas wells could be drilled on the existing leases in the Monument.

Summary of Major Changes (to Decisions Common to All Alternatives and the Preferred Alternative)

The Decisions Common to All Alternatives and the Preferred Alternative identified in the Draft RMP/EIS were revised based on the public comments received and additional analysis. The following major changes were made to Decisions Common and the Preferred Alternative, Alternative F, in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. All these changes were reviewed and considered within the range of alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS.

Vegetation – Riparian

Additional guidance is included on the management of riparian and wetland areas in the Monument. This includes the control or eradication of invasive woody species and the use of mitigation and Best Management Practices to protect riparian and wetland areas.

Reserved Water Rights

Additional information was included on the process for establishing the reserved water rights; and the data on flows that must be collected in Arrow Creek and the Judith River before negotiations begin with the Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission.

Livestock Grazing

Additional information is included to clarify that the current availability and allocations for livestock grazing will continue in the Monument. The Proclamation and Monument designation did not mandate a need for an adjustment of forage allocated to livestock. Livestock grazing will continue to be managed under the Standards

for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in accordance with existing regulations (43 CFR 4100) that apply to all public land administered by the BLM.

Wilderness Study Areas

Additional information is included on the Interim Management Policy for lands under wilderness review.

Fish and Wildlife – Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat

The requirement of a perennial herbaceous cover greater than seven inches for sage-grouse nesting habitat (seven-inch stubble height) was removed from the Preferred Alternative. A stubble height requirement is not a universally applicable criteria or indicator for management objectives. However, nesting habitat for sage-grouse is still an important management consideration.

Fish and Wildlife – Mitigation

A definition and description of surface-disturbing and disruptive activities, with examples of the activities for which the mitigation would apply, are now included in the Fish and Wildlife – Mitigation section. It is also clarified that rangeland monitoring, recreational activities, livestock grazing and management, and other field activities are not considered surface-disturbing or disruptive activities for applying this mitigation.

Visual Resources

The Preferred Alternative in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS clarifies that the maintenance of existing range improvement projects and other structures in VRM Class I areas would be allowed. In the WSAs, the VRM Class I designation would not prevent the construction of structures or maintenance of existing structures that would be allowed in the WSAs under the Interim Management Policy (IMP). The VRM objectives are designed to support the IMP guidelines to not impair the natural character of the existing landscape.

Right-of-Way Corridors, Avoidance Areas and Exclusion Areas

The Preferred Alternative is clarified for the Klabzuba pipeline. This corridor would only be on the south side of the Missouri River. The existing pipeline follows the McClelland/Stafford Ferry corridor on the north side of the river. Under the Preferred Alternative, the corridor for Secondary Highway #236 would be about 2 miles wide on the south side of the river and includes the original road along the Judith River and the new route on Claggett Hill. However, the width of this corridor would

be reduced to 1 mile where the two roads converge at the top of Reed Hill.

Recreation

Additional information is included under the Preferred Alternative about establishing an expanded amenity fee for overnight camping at Level 1 sites and a fee required to boat on the UMNWSR. This process includes a business plan that would involve the Central Montana RAC and an opportunity for public involvement.

Under the Preferred Alternative, specific areas are now identified where the personal collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood would not be allowed (Cow Creek ACEC, Cow Creek WSA, and Dog Creek WSA).

Upper Missouri River Special Recreation Management Area

Additional information is included concerning other special recreation permits that may be issued for commercial activities along the UMNWSR (one-time permits, permits for special events, and vending permits).

Additional information is included on managing visitor use on the Missouri River. The BLM would monitor conditions and develop management actions, as necessary, to reduce impacts to resource and social conditions without limiting the number of people boating the Missouri River.

The Preferred Alternative for the use of motorized watercraft on the Upper Missouri River was revised to provide both motorized and non-motorized opportunities on the lower stretch of the river from Holmes Council Island to the Fred Robinson Bridge (river mile 94.5 to 149). Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed Thursdays through Saturdays from June 15 to September 15. Motorized watercraft travel would not be allowed Sundays through Wednesdays from June 15 to September 15.

Uplands Special Recreation Management Area

Under the Preferred Alternative there would be no limit on the number of SRPs for commercial outfitting and guiding (hunting). Through implementation and activity level planning the BLM would identify the necessary indicators to monitor outfitter conditions of approval that include the standards and stipulations that could require a change in operations.

The BLM would encourage the use of camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats, but these would not be required for dispersed camping in the uplands.

Natural Gas Exploration and Development

Additional information on seismic operations is included under the Preferred Alternative for mitigation and the types of activity that may occur in the future.

Additional information is included on the activities that would require prior approval and those that would require prior notification.

Access

Additional information and clarification is included under the Preferred Alternative as to when BLM would acquire public access from willing landowners. The BLM would coordinate with state agencies and county governments to improve public access to BLM land. Easements or fee acquisition opportunities would only be considered with willing landowners to enhance the values of the Monument and provide legal public access to or within the Monument, or additional public access to meet management objectives, including dispersed recreation use.

BLM Road System

Under the Preferred Alternative, BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private land would remain open for public, private landowner and administrative travel. The BLM's objectives would be to retain roads to access areas commonly used for dispersed recreation (hunting areas, geological areas, Level IV dispersed camping opportunities and trailheads), recreation sites (fishing reservoirs, scenic overlooks and historic homesteads), gas well sites, major range improvement projects, and backcountry airstrips.

Aviation

Under the Preferred Alternative the Woodhawk backcountry airstrip would be open seasonally from December 1 through August 31, and the Ervin Ridge airstrip would be closed. Five other backcountry airstrips would be open yearlong.

Decisions Common to All Alternatives

The implementation and monitoring process for the Monument involves four major steps: planning; implementing; monitoring; evaluating and adjusting as necessary through planning. Planning involves a great amount of time and resources to identify issues and management opportunities to address those issues. During the planning process, the scope of the issue is identified and management goals, objectives and actions

are defined to address the issues. Once the planning process is completed, decisions are implemented, monitored, and evaluated over a period of time to determine if goals are being met and if management actions are achieving the desired objective or standard. Results of monitoring are documented and communicated to appropriate parties, and management objectives and actions are modified based on results, if necessary.

The BLM will review monitoring results on a periodic basis, and any management objectives or actions that may need to change or be adjusted will be open to public review and comment before decisions are made through an environmental review process. Appendix H provides more information on implementation and monitoring.

Through implementation an adaptive management approach may also be used for specific activities in the Monument, if appropriate, consistent with Secretarial Order 3270 (Adaptive Management). Adaptive management would require activity level planning, environmental review, and public involvement.

Adaptive Management

Adaptive management [is a decision process that] promotes flexible decision making that can be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes from management actions and other events become better understood. Careful monitoring of these outcomes both advances scientific understanding and helps adjust policies or operations as part of an iterative learning process. Adaptive management also recognized the importance of natural variability in contributing to ecological resilience and productivity. It is not a 'trial and error' process, but rather emphasizes learning while doing. Adaptive management does not represent an end in itself, but rather a means to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits. Its true measure is in how well it helps meeting environmental, social, and economic goals, increases scientific knowledge, and reduces tensions among stakeholders.

Source: Williams, B.K., R.C. Szaro, and C.D. Shapiro. 2007. Adaptive Management: The U.S. Department of the Interior Technical Guide. Adaptive Management Working Group, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC.

All proposed actions in the future must be in conformance with the Monument RMP and Record of Decision when completed (43 CFR 1601.0-5(b)). Proposed actions on or affecting BLM land must also be reviewed for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. Proposed actions fall into one of five categories: (1) actions that are exempt from NEPA; (2) actions that are categorically excluded; (3) actions that are covered by an existing NEPA environmental document; (4) actions that require preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) to determine if an environmental impact statement (EIS) is needed; or (5)

actions that require preparation of an EIS. The NEPA procedural, documentation, and public involvement requirements are different for each category. However, all proposed actions must be in conformance with the approved resource management plan. For additional information, please refer to BLM Handbook H-1790-1 available at most BLM offices or on the BLM website at <http://www.blm.gov/nhp/efoia/wo/handbook/h1790-1.pdf>.

Air Quality

The BLM's goal is to maintain the Monument as a Class II airshed.

Management will minimize or prevent air quality degradation. The BLM will comply with National Ambient Air Quality Standards and Montana Ambient Air Quality Standards (Appendix I). The BLM will also comply with Standard for Rangeland Health #4, which requires that air quality meets Montana state standards (Appendix J). Standard #4 means that air quality on BLM land helps meet the goals set out in the State of Montana Air Quality Implementation Plan. Efforts will be made to limit unnecessary emissions from existing and new point or non-point sources. Existing air quality will also be protected by the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) (Appendix K).

The Monument is part of an area that is designated as a Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) Class II area by the State of Montana under the 1977 Amendments to The Clean Air Act. Class II limits allow for moderate, well-controlled growth. Table 2.1 shows the allowable PSD increases for a Class II area.

Table 2.1
Federal Prevention of Significant Deterioration of
Air Quality Allowable Increments for Class II

<i>Allowable Increments</i> <i>(micrograms per cubic meter)</i>	
Particulate Matter	
Annual Arithmetic Mean	17
Maximum 24-Hour	30
Sulfur Dioxide	
Annual Arithmetic Mean	20
Maximum 24-Hour	91
Maximum 3-Hour	512
Nitrogen Dioxide	
Annual Arithmetic Mean	25

Implementation

Federal and state regulations require air quality monitoring for activities that could degrade existing air quality. Detailed monitoring and mitigation plans will

be developed when an environmental analysis is prepared for a proposed action that could degrade air quality.

All BLM actions and use authorizations will be designed with measures to protect the Class II designation in the Monument. These measures generally require actions during specific wind conditions to either disperse smoke or prevent chemical spray drift.

All prescribed burning operations conducted by the BLM are under a Montana Air Quality Open Burning permit issued from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality with support of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group.

Cultural Resources

The BLM's goal is to preserve historic and cultural values and sites by enhancing public awareness or protection of the resources.

The Proclamation discusses the importance of the Monument's archaeological and historical resources. The Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce National Historic Trails, teepee rings and abandoned homesteads are also mentioned. The Proclamation states, "Remnants of this rich history are scattered throughout the Monument, and the river corridor retains many of the same qualities and much of the same appearance today as it did then." The Proclamation further states, "Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof."

Archaeological and historical sites, historic landscapes and legal traditional public uses will be preserved to the extent practical and consistent with other Monument goals. The authorization of archaeological and historical investigations along with the interpretation of some cultural sites is addressed under the Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

The BLM will seek to preserve the objects of the Monument for the benefit of scientific and sociocultural use for present and future generations.

The primary objectives are to properly manage the cultural resources under BLM jurisdiction through a systematic program of identification and evaluation, and to reduce the level of conflict between cultural resources and other land and resource uses. All cultural resources within the area are segregated into management objectives. These objectives include managing for information potential, public values and conservation.

Cultural resources that contain significant information on the prehistory and history of the area will be managed for

their information potential. These are cultural properties consisting of artifacts and features on the surface or buried that have the potential to yield important information.

Cultural resources that possess sociocultural, educational and recreational attributes will be managed for their public values. These include cultural resources associated with traditional American Indian cultural values, and prehistoric or historic cultural properties that exhibit interpretive and/or recreational potential. Managing cultural properties used by American Indians will focus on avoiding uses incompatible with traditional values.

Special or unique cultural resources will be managed for their public values and conservation. These include cultural properties that contain sensitive prehistoric religious features such as medicine wheels or burials; cultural properties of a nature that would not permit current archaeological technology to adequately investigate the property; and cultural properties that are rare in the area.

Implementation

The BLM will evaluate all proposed actions, initiated or authorized by the BLM, for federal and nonfederal cultural resources. The BLM will determine, based on inventory and evaluation data, whether the proposed action will impact important cultural resources and, if necessary, take steps to avoid or mitigate possible impacts.



Cable Place

The BLM will consult with American Indian tribes when its actions have the potential to affect areas of concern to the practitioners of traditional religions. The activities of concern are those that might degrade the visual or aesthetic nature of an area, or cause the loss of plant species or other resources important to American Indians. The BLM is required to consult with traditional religious practitioners on policies and procedures to

ensure they are considered when implementing agency actions.

Those traditional cultural properties that are at least 50 years old require consideration under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The BLM will analyze each proposed action by determining the likelihood of the presence of not only significant cultural properties, but also the potential for or the presence of traditional cultural properties. Potential impacts to traditional cultural properties subject to the NHPA and determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be avoided, if possible, or mitigated.

Use Categories

The BLM will allocate all cultural properties into defined “use categories” based on their nature and relative preservation value as discussed in BLM Manual 8110 – Identifying and Evaluating Cultural Resources. Six use categories are identified for prehistoric and historic resources. They include:

- *Scientific Use:* sites are preserved until research potential is realized.
- *Conservation for Future Use:* sites are preserved until conditions for use are met.
- *Traditional Use:* long-term preservation of sites.
- *Public Use:* long-term preservation, on-site interpretation.
- *Experimental Use:* sites are protected until used.
- *Discharged from Management:* sites are removed from protective measures.

Additional information on individual use categories is presented in Appendix L.

Prehistoric Resources

For prehistoric resources the use categories will be reflected as follows:

Scientific Use: Prehistoric sites that exhibit high diversity and large quantity of artifacts (more than 50), high complexity (spatial patterning of artifacts/activities, presence of features, stratified or buried deposits), and relatively larger size properties will be placed into the Scientific Use category.

Conservation Use: Sites that are rare or exceptional examples (functionally or temporally) will be considered for Conservation Use. In the Monument this could include sites such as the multi-component White Rocks

Historic and Archaeological District, or sites with complex stratigraphic sequences (Holmes Terrace).

Traditional Use: In consultation with American Indian groups, certain types of prehistoric sites retain particular importance and significance (Deaver 1986). These site types most commonly include: burial locations, pictograph/petroglyph sites, and vision quest locations. Medicine wheels, dance grounds and intaglios (e.g., Napi Figures) also are in this category, but none are known to occur in the Monument. In addition, certain tipi ring sites may also fit this use category but need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Collectively these sites amount to less than 1% of recorded cultural resources in the Monument.

Public Use: Prehistoric sites could be considered for Public Use (interpretation) in those few instances where interpretive potential is high and site integrity could be insured through protective measures. Such uses should not be attempted without full consultation with interested American Indian groups. Consequently, such prehistoric sites still require evaluation on a case-by-case basis. Current opportunities include the Nez Perce Trail and the Cow Island Crossing.

Experimental Use or Discharge from Use: Sites with low diversity and limited quantity of artifacts (less than 50); low or limited complexity; and small size (redundant small surface lithic scatter, information potential is exhausted with initial site recordation). Sites will be individually evaluated prior to placement into Experimental Use or Discharge from Use categories.

Historic Resources

For historic resources the use categories will be reflected as follows:

Scientific Use: Historic sites with archaeological and historical values and generally poor structural integrity (collapsed or deteriorated) will be placed in this category.

Conservation Use: Historical sites that are rare or exceptional examples that retain integrity will be considered for Conservation Use. In the Monument this includes well-preserved remnants of homesteads (e.g., Hagadone).

Traditional Use: Historic sites in this category potentially include any sacred areas, traditional cultural properties, or plant gathering areas that have been historically utilized by American Indian groups that have occupied the area. These sites will be determined in consultation with representatives of tribes that have demonstrated historical use in the area. To date, American Indian traditional use areas have yet to be identified.

Public Use: Historic sites that would be considered for Public Use include those where the interpretive potential is high and site integrity could be insured through protective measures. In addition, consideration is given for those standing structures that could be preserved and maintained for administrative or recreational uses.

Experimental Use or Discharge from Use: Individual sites would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis before assignment to either the Experimental Use or Discharge from Use categories. In general, properties assigned to these categories contain little or no scientific or historical value. Sites in these categories would generally include isolated trash dumps and artifact scatters, isolated features such as prospect pits or claim markers, and collapsed structural remains that no longer retain integrity of design or workmanship. Only those sites that have been formally determined to be Not Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be placed into either of these categories.

Fish and Wildlife

The BLM's goal is to manage, enhance and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and habitat for special status species.

The Proclamation discusses the importance of the Monument's wildlife and wildlife habitat. Many of the biological species described in the Lewis and Clark Journals continue to make the Monument their home. The Proclamation states, "... The monument boasts the most viable elk herd in Montana and one of the premier big horn sheep herds in the continental United States. It contains essential winter range for sage-grouse as well as habitat for prairie dogs. . . . The cliff faces in the monument provide perching and nesting habitat for many raptors, including the sparrow hawk, ferruginous hawk, peregrine falcon, prairie falcon, and golden eagle. Several pairs of bald eagles nest along the River in the monument and many others visit during the late fall and early winter. Shoreline areas provide habitat for great blue heron, pelican, and a wide variety of waterfowl. The River and its tributaries in the monument host forty-eight fish species, including goldeye, drum, sauger, walleye, northern pike, channel catfish, and small mouth buffalo. The monument has one of the six remaining paddlefish populations in the United States. The River also supports the blue sucker, shovel nose sturgeon, sicklefin, sturgeon chub, and the endangered pallid sturgeon. The Bullwacker area of the monument contains some of the wildest country on all the Great Plains, as well as important wildlife habitat. During the stress-inducing winter months, mule deer and elk move up to the area from the river, and antelope and sage grouse move down to the area from the benchlands. . . ."

The BLM will maintain and enhance habitat for wildlife. The emphasis for habitat maintenance and development

will be placed on present and potential habitat for sensitive, threatened and/or endangered species, nesting waterfowl, game birds, fisheries and mule deer and elk winter range. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) is responsible for fish and wildlife population management.

The stocking or reintroduction of any species will be coordinated with MFWP. Introduction of game species by MFWP will only occur after the appropriate environmental review and public involvement, and will only be allowed for native species or common naturalized species within Montana, such as wild turkey. Reintroduction of any threatened or endangered species will be coordinated with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and MFWP, and will only occur after the appropriate environmental review and public involvement.

The BLM will coordinate with other agencies consistent with the National Invasive Species Management Plan (NISC 2001) and the State of Montana's Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Management Plan (Montana ANS Steering Committee 2002) to control non-native species that cause or may cause significant negative impacts and do not provide an equivalent benefit to society. Aquatic nuisance species include the New Zealand mud snail, Zebra mussel, and Quagga mussel.

Implementation

The following sections for big game, waterfowl, upland game birds, etc. address management actions that will be implemented to meet the goal and objectives described above. Specific management and mitigation measures for some wildlife species are addressed under the Health of the Land and Fire section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

Big Game

Expansion of big game populations into existing, but previously unoccupied habitat may occur. The BLM will work with MFWP, landowners and grazing permittees to determine the most appropriate management practices if monitoring indicates a deterioration of rangeland health in herd expansion areas.

The BLM will use grazing methods, prescribed fire and mechanical removal of conifer encroachment to enhance bighorn sheep habitat and allow their expansion in the Missouri Breaks. Domestic sheep and goats will not be allowed on BLM land within 15 miles of areas occupied by bighorn sheep. In other areas, domestic sheep and goats may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

The BLM could improve the quality and quantity of wildlife forage by using different grazing systems, changes in seasons of use, movement of livestock, and

reductions in livestock numbers where needed to meet Standards for Rangeland Health. This would include improving the production and availability of palatable forbs for mule deer and antelope; maintaining and/or improving mule deer and antelope winter range (especially woody species) and fawning cover; and maintaining existing sagebrush stands at a canopy cover of 15-30% with an average height over 12 inches, or at the highest potential for existing ecological site present as determined by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey.



Mule Deer

Waterfowl

Habitat enhancements (islands, nesting platforms) may be constructed on new or existing reservoirs, ponds, potholes or river systems where feasible. Pits and reservoirs will not be constructed within natural wetlands or riparian areas that provide habitat for waterfowl and amphibians. Rights-of-way on or across BLM land for the development of private water sources will carry stipulations to enhance waterfowl habitat.

The BLM may fence specific existing and new waterfowl and fishing reservoirs to establish or protect shoreline vegetation for a minimum of 10 acres. Periodic, short-term grazing of fenced enclosures may be allowed, if necessary, to maintain or improve wetland and upland habitat within the enclosure.

Upland Game Birds

The BLM will improve the quality and quantity of nesting, brood rearing and winter habitat for upland game birds. The BLM will provide residual grass and forb cover for upland bird and waterfowl nesting. Objectives for residual cover will be developed in watershed plans and measured in terms of utilization levels or visual obscurity rating. The BLM will manage for a healthy diverse vegetative community with a variety of forbs, and maintain big sagebrush and silver sage on sage-grouse wintering and nesting areas with a

canopy cover of 15-30% and an average height of 12 inches. The BLM will improve or maintain woody vegetation for sharp-tailed grouse.

Construction of new water developments within 1/2 mile of a sharp-tailed grouse lek will only be allowed after careful consideration of potential impacts on woody vegetation due to possible increased livestock grazing. Land treatments will be designed to maintain sagebrush levels with the desired canopy cover range (15-30%) and to increase the amount of forbs. Controlled burning, seeding, and/or mechanical vegetation manipulation could be done on an individual basis to improve wildlife habitat.

Raptors

Raptor nest sites will be protected. No designated camping or other recreational development will occur within 1,000 feet of raptor nest sites. In order to reduce risk of raptor mortality, Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) guidelines will be followed for all power lines and will be incorporated into all power line rights-of-way.

Great Blue Heron and Cormorant

Identified great blue heron and cormorant rookeries on BLM land will be protected from roads, campsite developments, timber cutting and other intrusions. No disturbance will be allowed within 1,000 feet of rookeries from the start of nesting through the fledging of young birds.

Migratory Birds

The BLM will follow the Nongame Migratory Bird Habitat Conservation Plan (BLM 1992b) for managing nongame birds that migrate to the tropics or use neotropical habitats. The overall intent is to reverse the decline in some bird populations and to implement a proactive program for other migratory species. The BLM's management actions will focus on providing a variety of habitat characteristics that support successful breeding by migratory birds. This generally requires providing properly functioning habitats with the appropriate vegetation diversity, density and structure based on ecological site potential to support nesting, security and foraging. Methods used can include mechanical vegetation manipulation, prescribed fire to maintain short/mixed grass prairie, seeding or live planting to re-establish native grasslands or wetlands, and planting woody species to return sagebrush or riparian woodland species.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The BLM will work with the USFWS to recover threatened and endangered species, including

reintroduction efforts consistent with recovery plans and conservation strategies. This includes the Recovery Plan for the Pallid Sturgeon (USFWS 1993a). In order to reduce risk to the pallid sturgeon, all rights-of-way applications for pipelines that cross the Missouri River will include a condition that the pipeline be drilled under the river bed, avoiding disturbance to the river channel.

The bald eagle was removed from the list of threatened and endangered wildlife on August 8, 2007, and is considered a designated sensitive species by the BLM. In addition, protections provided to the bald eagle under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will remain in place. In order to reduce risk of bald eagle mortality, APLIC guidelines will be followed for all power lines and will be incorporated into all power line rights-of-way.

Determinations concerning endangered or threatened plants and animals will be based on one or a combination of the following factors:

- The present or threatened destruction, modification or curtailment of a species' habitat or range
- Over-utilization of a species for commercial, sporting, scientific or educational purposes
- Disease or predation of the species
- The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms
- Other natural or human-caused factors affecting a species' continued existence

No action will be initiated on BLM land that will jeopardize any federally listed threatened and endangered plant or animal. Future actions will require site-specific environmental review and, if necessary, associated biological assessments. The BLM will comply with all decisions reached during consultation with the USFWS. Prior to the initiation of any action on BLM land, its effect on other sensitive species and state-designated species of special interest will be evaluated and applicable mitigation developed.

No black-footed ferrets have been sighted in the Monument, but the area has not been inventoried for ferrets. The USFWS Black-footed Ferret Survey Guidelines (USFWS 1989) will be followed for all prairie dog towns, and a survey is required before any control or surface-disturbing activities can take place on towns or complexes over 80 acres. Small prairie dog towns occur throughout the Monument, but they are not suitable ferret habitat. These towns will be managed for the other sensitive species associated with prairie dog towns.

BLM land within the area was historic habitat for grey wolf and grizzly bear. This land is not within the recovery area or important habitat for either species. There is a remote possibility, in the future, of either species relocating to habitat within the area. In the unlikely event of these species establishing within the area, management would follow the guidelines from the USFWS and MFWP. Under present circumstances, wolves north of the Missouri River would be considered endangered and south of the river would be considered experimental (59 FR 60252, Nov. 22, 1994). Grizzly bear occurrence would follow the guidelines in the MFWP management strategy for northwestern Montana.

Canada Lynx and piping plover (both threatened) have been determined to be present in areas near the Monument. Lynx have no suitable habitat within the Monument and are unlikely to occur in the future. Piping plover occur downstream on the Missouri River, but annual mountain runoff causes untimely flooding of sandbars on the river, making the habitat unsuitable most years. Extensive surveys have repeatedly failed to find any piping plovers or nesting sites. If active nests are identified in the future, USFWS guidelines would be followed to protect these sites.

Fish

Consistent with a cooperative plan between the BLM and MFWP, the MFWP will be requested to stock Butch, Sundance and Gazob reservoirs with fish. In the future, other reservoirs may be identified for fisheries management. Priority consideration will be given to reservoirs near communities with public access. Fisheries potential will be considered during the location and design phases of new reservoirs. New reservoirs will not be constructed within natural wetlands or riparian areas that provide habitat for waterfowl and amphibians.

New fisheries reservoirs will normally be fenced and a livestock watering tank provided below the reservoir. Existing fisheries reservoirs may be fenced for a minimum of 10 acres to exclude livestock, if necessary, to improve emergent vegetation, shade, protect shoreline vegetation, and/or improve the recreational experience. Periodic, short-term grazing of fenced enclosures may be allowed, if necessary, to maintain or improve wetland and upland habitat within the enclosure.

Animal Damage Control

Animal damage control will be conducted only with the Monument Manager's approval when the animal control measure targets the specific offending animal(s) and health and safety factors are not issues. Animal damage control activities will also adhere to off-road vehicle restrictions in that all vehicle travel is limited to designated roads, including roads available for

administrative use. The Monument Manager will approve other site-specific restrictions as needed.

Geology

The BLM's goal is to protect the surface features in the landscape that are identified in the Proclamation.

The Proclamation discusses the importance of the geology in the area. The Proclamation states, "The monument is covered with sedimentary rocks deposited in shallow seas that covered central and eastern Montana during the Cretaceous period. Glaciers, volcanic activity, and erosion have since folded, faulted, uplifted, and sculpted the landscape to the majestic form it takes today."

The Proclamation reserved and appropriated all federal lands and interests in lands within the Monument and withdrew them from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, leasing, or other disposition under the public land laws, including the mineral leasing and mining laws. No new mining claims can be located, and no new prospecting or exploration activities can be undertaken to identify locatable minerals or to establish the discovery of valuable mineral deposits. Plans of Operations for mining will not be approved unless the Department of the Interior has determined that the mining claims covered by the Plan of Operations are valid under the Surface Management Regulations at 43 CFR 3809.100.

The interpretation of geologic sites is addressed under the Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

Implementation

There are no active mines in the Monument for saleable (sand and gravel) or locatable minerals (precious metals or gems). The area is closed to disposal of mineral materials by regulation (43 CFR 3601.12(a)). Currently, 32 mining claims for precious gems are located in the Monument. A Plan of Operations would have to be filed with the Lewistown Field Office before any surface disturbance exceeding casual use could be conducted on these claims (43 CFR 3809.11(7)). Casual use means activities ordinarily resulting in no or negligible disturbance of the public lands or resources. The first step in responding to the Plan of Operations is a validity determination on the mining claim(s) involved. Each claim must have a discovery of a valuable mineral prior to the date of the withdrawal to be considered a valid existing right. In the event that the claims were determined to be valid, the Plan of Operations would be processed under the Surface Management Regulations at 43 CFR 3809 or 3802 (for wilderness study areas). The

Proclamation does not direct the BLM to initiate validity determinations on the claims. Under existing policy for withdrawn lands, the claimant can continue to hold the claim by payment of annual fees in lieu of assessment or relinquish the claims. Unless the claimant initiates the process by either filing a Plan of Operations or an application for patent, no action will be taken by the BLM on the claims unless it is in the public interest to do so (BLM Manual 3060.12A).

Soils

The BLM's goal is to maintain or improve soil health and productivity to provide an ecosystem supporting plant and animal species.

To maintain and/or improve soil productivity by increasing vegetation cover and reducing erosion, the BLM will comply with Standard for Rangeland Health #1, which requires that the uplands are in proper functioning condition, and with Standard #2, which requires that riparian and wetland areas are in proper functioning condition.

Implementation

Prior to authorizing any surface-disturbing activity (including, but not limited to, range improvements, natural gas development or right-of-way location) the BLM will evaluate the activity and, if necessary, apply mitigating measures, deny the authorization or relocate the activity to a more suitable soil type. All surface-disturbing activities are subject to an on-site evaluation to develop mitigation to protect streambank stability; control runoff; reduce erosion, sediment yields, and soil compaction; improve soil stability; and control salinity. Mitigation measures or BMPs (Appendix K) will also prescribe revegetation programs. Surface-disturbing activities may be prohibited during muddy and/or wet soil periods.

Surface-disturbing activities should be avoided on soils with severe erosion hazard, badlands, slopes susceptible to mass failure, and other areas subject to active erosion (e.g. rock outcrop, dune lands, or blowouts) to reduce excessive erosion and/or reclamation problems or failure. If a surface-disturbing activity must occur on these types of sites, certified engineering and reclamation plans must be developed and approved by the authorized officer. These plans must demonstrate how the following will be accomplished:

- Site productivity will be restored.
- Surface runoff will be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas will be protected from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gullyng, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.

- Nearby watercourses will be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity will be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.

Vegetation – Native Plants

The BLM's goal is to manage for healthy vegetation communities that provide for a wide variety of long-term benefits such as aesthetics, wildlife, recreation, livestock grazing, etc.

Vegetation allocation to enhance plant health and protect watersheds, wildlife habitat, and wildlife and livestock forage was established according to policies, regulations and land use plan objectives (BLM 1979, 1982a). In general, about 60% of the annual vegetation production is allocated to watershed protection, plant health and/or wildlife forage and cover, and about 40% is allocated to livestock. However, as specific management goals are refined and changes in resource conditions become apparent through monitoring, the actual percentage of vegetation allocated may change. For example, if the area grazed is very steep and far from water the actual allocation to livestock could be substantially less than 40%. The Livestock Grazing section in Chapter 3 provides more information about forage allocation.

The Standards for Rangeland Health for northcentral Montana were developed in cooperation with the Central Montana Resource Advisory Council (BLM 1997). Standards are physical or biological conditions or functions required for healthy, sustainable rangelands. All of these standards depend on healthy native vegetation. The purpose of standards is to establish minimum required conditions for BLM lands within broad geographic areas. They address watershed function; nutrient cycling and energy flow; water quality; air quality; habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed or special status species; and habitat quality for native plant and animal populations and communities.

The following five standards were established for northcentral Montana.

Standard #1 Uplands are in proper functioning condition.

Standard #2 Riparian and wetland areas are in proper functioning condition.

Standard #3 Water quality meets Montana state standards.

Standard #4 Air quality meets Montana state standards.

Standard #5 Habitats are provided to maintain healthy, productive and diverse populations of native

plant and animal species, including special status species (federally threatened, endangered, candidate or Montana species of special concern as defined in BLM Manual 6840, Special Status Species Management).

For a complete description of the Standards for Rangeland Health, see Appendix J. Each of these standards has a set of indicators that provide clues to the health of the ecosystem. These indicators are compared with a set of criteria that have been recognized for a healthy and functional system. When measures of these indicators fall outside of the desired range, it may indicate that Standards for Rangeland Health are not being met.

The Monument will be managed to achieve a natural range of native plant associations, including measures to promote conservation of sensitive plant species. Management activities will not be allowed to substantially shift the makeup of native plant communities and associations or disrupt normal succession. However, there will be some circumstances where vegetation communities and associations will be shifted to meet specific management goals or objectives. These could include prescribed burns to reduce hazardous fuel circumstances, restoration of some habitat components in the interest of wildlife, treatments to control invasive species, etc.

Implementation

Standards determinations were made on an allotment basis. Once the determinations were documented, implementation was carried out in groups of allotments through watershed plans. This included changes to grazing management and construction of range improvements when necessary. Table 2.2 lists the watershed and landscape plans. The watershed planning process is described in Appendix M.

Table 2.2 Watershed and Landscape Plans Completed	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Year Completed</i>
Woodhawk Watershed Plan	1998
Two Calf Watershed Plan	1998
Armells Watershed Plan	2000
Beauchamp Watershed Plan	2001
Upper Missouri Watershed Plan	2002
Loma/Vimy Ridge Watershed Plan	2002
Arrow Creek/Upper River/Whiskey Ridge Landscape Plan	2004
Bears Paw to Breaks Implementation Plan	2005

When a grazing allotment is not meeting standards, the BLM is obligated to take action to correct the situation. Specifically, where grazing is responsible for not meeting standards, action is required in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2(c).

Vegetation – Riparian

The BLM's goal is to achieve, or make significant progress toward, proper functioning condition in riparian and wetland areas and to sustain a diverse age-class and composition of riparian-wetland vegetation for maintenance and recovery of riparian-wetland areas.

The BLM will maintain and/or improve the riparian-wetland areas based on proper functioning condition (PFC) and the desired plant community (Appendix J). The presence and condition of riparian vegetation will be managed to maintain riparian and wetland function. Riparian-wetland plant species, such as sedges, rushes, and cottonwood/willow on sites capable of supporting woody species, will be managed for age-class and composition diversity and high vigor considering physical site characteristics and natural disturbances history.

Implementation

The BLM will initially accomplish riparian-wetland objectives through livestock grazing methods at current stocking levels. If grazing methods are not successful in meeting management objectives, the BLM will take the necessary actions to achieve those objectives. To accomplish the riparian-wetland objectives, the BLM will consider the importance of the intermingled private lands, including valuable riparian-wetland areas that could be adversely impacted as a result of management changes on BLM land.

Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing have been implemented. The eight completed watershed plans (Table 2.2) contain management actions and livestock grazing guidelines for meeting Standards. As these actions are implemented, conditions are expected to improve. Management actions and associated changes in livestock management will continue through the watershed planning process.

Riparian-wetland objectives will continue to be developed and implemented through the watershed planning process or as a result of monitoring data. Exclosures, change in season of use, refined grazing prescriptions, riparian pastures, etc. could be used to achieve PFC and/or the desired plant community. Grazing systems could be changed to achieve other resource objectives or values such as forage or fish and wildlife habitat.

The BLM will control or eradicate, if possible, invasive, woody species such as Russian olive and salt cedar in riparian areas. The highest priority treatment for Russian olive and salt cedar will be preventing their spread into areas currently free of invasive, woody species and eradication in areas where the invasion is still within management capability.

The BLM will coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and county/city/private organizations to secure the release of water from dams upstream from the Monument. High water events would help to establish deciduous forest and woody riparian seedlings, create water flows favoring wildlife habitat and native fishes and promote endangered species recovery.

Proposed projects within riparian-wetland areas, including but not limited to pipelines, road construction, or water developments will have BMPs (Appendix K) and adequate mitigation measures applied to protect water quality, riparian-wetland vegetation, and riparian-wetland characteristics. The BLM will follow all state and federal permitting regulations for ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, and riparian-wetland areas.



Exclosure

Vegetation – Noxious and Invasive Plants

The BLM's goal is to control, contain and, if possible, eradicate invasive plants.

The management of noxious and invasive plants will continue as prescribed in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument: Guidelines for Integrated Weed Management (BLM 2001b). This weed management plan was developed to conform to the Montana Weed Management Plan (Montana Weed Management Plan 2001, 2005), and provides guidelines for the prevention, containment and eradication of invasive and noxious plants, and for the coordination of

BLM, state, county and private weed management efforts. The Integrated Weed Management plan will be updated on a periodic basis as a result of monitoring data or when new national or state plans are developed.

The BLM will coordinate with other agencies consistent with the National Invasive Species Management Plan (NISC 2001), the State of Montana's Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Management Plan (Montana ANS Steering Committee 2002), and the Montana Weed Management Plan (Montana Weed Management Plan 2005) to control non-native species that cause or may cause significant negative impacts and do not provide an equivalent benefit to society.

The use of certified noxious weed seed-free forage on public land administered by BLM in Montana is required under a supplementary rule (62 FR 54123, Oct. 17, 1997). This rule affects public land users who use hay or other forage products on BLM land such as recreationists using pack and saddle stock, ranchers with grazing permits, outfitters, and contractors who use straw or other mulch for reclamation purposes.

Implementation

The BLM will designate the Monument as a weed management area to facilitate cooperation among landowners and various federal, state, and county agencies, and to secure funding to implement integrated weed management control measures.

The BLM will identify weed prevention areas and emphasize activities to keep weed seed and regenerative plant parts from being introduced into weed free areas. Implementation of an early detection and rapid response program would ensure new infestations are identified early and aggressively managed to protect and maintain uninfested areas.

The BLM will increase public awareness of invasive plant and weed species and develop treatment and prevention strategies to control noxious weeds in and around developed and primitive recreation use areas.

The BLM will develop treatment strategies to contain and/or eradicate weed infestations throughout the Monument using integrated weed management methods.

The BLM will cooperate with other federal, state, and county agencies in developing awareness and prevention programs for aquatic nuisance species such as Hydrilla, Eurasian watermilfoil, and pondweed.

Visual Resources

The BLM's goal is to protect the cultural landscape (viewshed) and the visual features in the landscape that are identified in the Proclamation.

The visual resource management (VRM) classes are based on a process that considers scenic quality, sensitivity to changes in the landscape and distance zone. The four VRM classes are numbered I to IV; the lower the number, the more sensitive and scenic the area. Each class has a management objective that prescribes the level of acceptable change in the landscape. The objectives are guidelines that will be used with the visual resource contrast rating system during new project-level planning. The management objectives will not preclude the maintenance of existing structures and range improvements.

The VRM class objectives are defined as follows:

Class I – The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

Class II – The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class III – The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape could be moderate. Management activities may attract attention, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class IV – The objective of this class is to provide for management activities that require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance and repeating the basic elements.

Surface-disturbing activities and/or developments will be designed or mitigated to complement and harmonize

with the natural features and the VRM class objectives. Any projects must have a visual contrast rating worksheet completed as a part of the environmental analysis.

Specific management for visual resources is addressed under the Health of the Land and Fire section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

Implementation

The visual resource contrast rating system will be used during project level planning to determine whether or not proposed activities will meet VRM objectives. The contrast rating system provides a systematic means to evaluate proposed projects and determine whether these projects conform with the approved VRM objectives. The degree to which a management activity affects the visual quality depends on the visual contrast created between the project and the existing landscape. The contrast is measured by comparing elements of form, line, color, and texture to describe the visual contrast created by a project. Mitigation measures would then be identified to reduce visual contrasts, including the use of BMPs (Appendix K).

Water Quality

The BLM's goal is to maintain and/or improve the existing hydrologic systems in the Monument.

The BLM is committed to the objectives of the Federal Clean Water Act to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Furthermore, BLM will manage federal lands with reasonable land, soil, and water conservation practices in order to protect water bodies that currently meet State Water Quality Standards and to improve water quality where designated beneficial uses are not fully supported. Riparian-wetland vegetation provides an important role in maintaining or restoring water quality in the Monument. The BLM will manage for adequate vegetative cover to protect banks and dissipate energy during high flows. Healthy riparian-wetland vegetation filters sediment, aids groundwater recharge, maintains channel characteristics, and decreases pollutants such as fecal coliform and nitrates entering the water body.

Surface and ground water quality will be maintained to meet or exceed federal and state water quality standards, including Standard for Rangeland Health #3, which requires that water quality meets Montana state standards.

The BLM will improve or maintain vegetative cover on uplands and riparian-wetland areas to reduce runoff and sedimentation.

Implementation

The Environmental Protection Agency, in administering the Clean Water Act, requires all states to identify rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands where beneficial uses are impaired or threatened by human activity, and to schedule those waters for development of water quality restoration plans. This is known as the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process. The BLM will continue to comply with the TMDL process by addressing listed streams in the watershed planning process.

Through BLM's watershed planning process, BLM grazing allotments are assessed for rangeland health and compliance with Standards for Rangeland Health, including Standard #2: Riparian and wetland areas are in proper functioning condition; and Standard #3: Water quality meets Montana State standards. When an allotment is not meeting standards, and current livestock management is considered a factor, corrective adjustments are required. Through an existing memorandum of understanding with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the BLM agrees that it will participate in the development, implementation, and monitoring of water quality restoration plans and TMDLs in watershed planning areas in which BLM is a significant land manager or water user.

All surface-disturbing activities are subject to an on-site evaluation to mitigate impacts to water quality and quantity. No activities should alter stream courses. BMPs will be implemented to protect watershed values and maintain or improve water quality (Appendix K). Most water quality impacts in the Monument are or would be the result of non-point source pollution. BMPs are the primary mechanism for controlling non-point source pollution. Site-specific BMPs will be implemented for all surface-disturbing activities to minimize, to the extent possible, impacts to water quality and quantity. The effectiveness of these measures would be dependent on local site characteristics such as landform, soils, climate, natural disturbances, and other physical processes.

Water Developments and Water Rights

The BLM's goal is to maintain and/or improve the existing hydrologic systems in the Monument.

Approximately 337 reservoirs or pit dams, seven developed springs, 14 water savers, 15 wells, and 32 stock tanks exist in the Monument area for use by livestock and wildlife. The BLM will continue obtaining water rights, including joint ownership with private landowners, for all projects on BLM land and will comply with state and federal water laws.

Several shortfalls exist in the physical demand for surface water in the Monument. Suitable reservoir sites are scarce due to high siltation rates, erodibility of fill material, potential for saline seeps and lack of access for heavy equipment. Water savers are an alternative for reservoirs.

Ground water in much of the area is too deep for drilling to be cost effective, although wells with pipelines supplying many tanks may solve localized water shortages. Where ground water is available, lack of power precludes many well sites from being developed. Solar or gas-powered pumps may provide stock water in some locations.

Implementation

The BLM must consider downstream senior water rights claims before developing surface water sources. Specific management for water developments is addressed under the Health of the Land and Fire section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

Reserved Water Rights

The BLM's goal is to maintain and/or improve the existing hydrologic systems in the Monument.

The Proclamation reserves "subject to valid existing rights, a quantity of water in the Judith River and Arrow Creek sufficient to fulfill the purposes for which this monument is established. Nothing in this reservation shall be construed as a relinquishment or reduction of any water use or rights reserved or appropriated by the United States on or before the date of this proclamation."

Federal reserved water rights may be created when federal lands are withdrawn from the public domain (e.g., national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests). Federal reserved water rights are different from state appropriated water rights. They may apply to both instream and out-of-stream water uses; may be created without actual diversion or beneficial use (as defined by state law); are not lost by non-use; have priority dates established as of the date the land was withdrawn; and are for the minimum amount of water reasonably necessary to satisfy both existing and foreseeable future uses of water for the primary purposes for which the land is withdrawn (Alaska Department of Natural Resources 2000).

The BLM land needs to be managed in a manner that preserves and protects the integrity of these watershed systems. These protections must provide the opportunity for flows to support the health and regeneration of cottonwood galleries that provide a seed source for the downstream cottonwood galleries. The flows in Arrow

Creek and the Judith River, including spring pulses, should provide adequate water, lateral channel movement, and sediment yield at the appropriate time to support the water-dependent biological resources and cottonwood gallery forests within the Monument.

The BLM is currently collecting hydrologic data from both the Judith River and Arrow Creek. The BLM needs to know the magnitude, timing, and frequency of flows necessary to support the outstanding water-dependent biological resources and cottonwood galleries that were the basis for the reserved water rights. Once this data collection is complete, the BLM will begin negotiations with the Reserved Water Right Compact Commission to quantify its claimed reserved right. After June 30, 2009, the Reserved Water Right Compact Commission no longer has authority to negotiate reserved water rights. The process of quantifying this reserved right then must be adjudicated through the state court system.

Implementation

The BLM will not pursue the acquisition of water rights from private landowners unless approached by a landowner or their representative. The acquisition of water rights from willing sellers would be considered to maintain and/or improve the hydrologic conditions and restore instream flows on tributaries to Arrow Creek and the Judith River.

The BLM will continue its efforts to determine the extent and importance of the water rights reserved by the Proclamation. This will include a study to quantify the base flow and flood flows for the Judith River and the flood flows for Arrow Creek.

These water rights, if asserted, would carry a priority date of January 17, 2001 and would be junior to all water rights that existed at that time. Because these water rights are very junior in this area (the majority of water rights in these basins stem from the 1880s through the mid-1900s), they may have a very limited ability to affect or protect the streamflows in the Judith River and Arrow Creek.

Montana law provides for the Montana Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission, a state-appointed body, to negotiate with the various federal agencies and tribal governments that claim reserved water rights. This process provides for public input throughout the negotiation process and requires that the Montana legislature, Governor of Montana and Secretary of the Interior approve any settlement proposal. The BLM has not requested a negotiation at this time and cannot reach a recommendation on the assertion of the federal reserved right without further information on base and flood flows along with public input.

Lands and Realty

The BLM's goal is to provide reasonable access for the public and for private landowners, as well as for the administrative needs and authorized uses of industry and government agencies.

Under the Proclamation, all federal lands and interests in lands are “hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, or leasing or other disposition under the public land laws, . . . and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the monument. The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. . . . Lands and interests in lands within the proposed monument not owned by the United States shall be reserved as a part of the monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States.”

Implementation

Rights-of-Way

Applications for rights-of-way will be considered pursuant to existing policies and practices, identified transportation and utility corridors, identified avoidance and exclusion areas, valid existing rights, and as necessary for adequate and reasonable access to state or private land as well as access for utility or transportation services.

Applications for rights-of-way will also be considered for necessary and adequate access across BLM land to private and state minerals for exploration, development, and production (e.g., access roads and pipelines).

Applications for rights-of-way must be in conformance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and provide for mitigation necessary to protect Monument resources. The BLM has discretion to evaluate such things as construction methods, alternate routes or type of access (including only aerial access) and to establish reasonable terms and conditions necessary to protect the public interest. All power line rights-of-way must comply with APLIC guidelines to protect or reduce impacts to raptors and bald eagles. All pipeline rights-of-way that cross the Missouri River will require that pipelines be drilled under the river bed, avoiding disturbance to the river channel and potential impacts to the pallid sturgeon.

Applications for commercial wind energy systems, solar energy systems and communication sites will not be considered.

Leases and Permits

Except for the issuance of film permits, new land use authorizations for uses such as farming leases or permits under 43 CFR 2920 and Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) leases under 43 CFR 2912 will not be allowed. Applications for film permits using the uplands that may cause impacts requiring mitigation will require a Notice of Realty Action in the Federal Register, a 30-day public comment period, environmental analysis, and may require bonding and liability insurance. Film permits confined to the Missouri River and/or access roads in the Monument will be treated as minimum impact permits as defined at 43 CFR 2920.2-2. Permits are not required for casual use filming activities that normally involve non-commercial still photography or recreational videotaping.

Land Ownership Adjustment

The BLM will not pursue the acquisition of private land or interests in land unless approached by a landowner or their representative. Conservation easements or fee acquisition (i.e., campsite) opportunities that are brought forward by private landowners will be considered if they enhance the values of the Monument and are within the BLM's staff and budgetary constraints. Land and Water Conservation Funds may be used for land acquisitions (either fee or conservation easement).

BLM land will not be disposed of other than by exchange, and only when necessary to further the protective purposes of the Monument, block up BLM land within the Monument and enhance the values for which the Monument was designated.

Disposal of BLM land would be limited to parcels meeting these criteria:

- The parcel is located at the edge of the Monument and disposal would not create an inholding;
- The parcel contains minimal Breaks topography; and
- The parcel contains minimal objects for which the Monument was designated.

The BLM will explore the feasibility of a land exchange program with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Such exchanges would focus on state lands that would contribute to the objects for which the Monument was designated.

Lands acquired by the BLM will be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land. Upon acquisition of title, acquired lands will become part of the Monument and are withdrawn accordingly.

Revised Statute 2477

Revised Statute 2477, which provided that “[t]he right of way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted,” was repealed on October 21, 1976, by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The FLPMA did not terminate valid rights-of-way established under Revised Statute 2477 prior to its repeal. Since 1993, the BLM deferred any processing of Revised Statute 2477 assertions except in cases where there was a demonstrated, compelling, and immediate need to make such determinations.

Current guidance is contained in Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2006-159: Non-Binding Determinations of R.S. 2477 Right-of-Way Claims. Briefly, this guidance states that the BLM does not have the authority to make binding determinations on the validity of R.S. 2477 right-of-way claims. The BLM may, however, make informal, non-binding determinations for its own land use planning and management purposes. A non-binding determination that the right-of-way exists is required before completing consultation with states or counties on any proposed improvements to a claimed R.S. 2477 right-of-way, i.e., any work beyond routine maintenance. A non-binding determination may also be appropriate before taking action to close or otherwise restrict the use of a claimed R.S. 2477 right-of-way. Such determinations must be based on the particular laws of each state in which a claimed right-of-way is situated. No determinations will be made through this resource management plan since there are no R.S. 2477 right-of-way claims.

Livestock Grazing

The BLM's goal is to permit livestock grazing consistent with maintaining healthy vegetation communities.

Under the Proclamation, the “[l]aws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument.” Livestock grazing will continue to be governed by a number of laws and regulations that apply to grazing on all public land administered by the BLM. In addition, the BLM developed Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota which was approved by the Secretary of the Interior in August 1997. To protect the objects for which the Monument was designated livestock grazing will continue to be managed under the Lewistown District (Lewistown and Malta Field Offices) Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1997). Livestock grazing on allotments in the

Monument will continue to be allocated about 38,000 animal unit months (AUMs) of forage on an annual basis (Appendix N). Grazing applications will continue to be processed consistent with existing regulations (43 CFR 4100).

The allocation of forage for livestock grazing was established following the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. Since that time, several laws, regulations and changes have revised livestock grazing on BLM land. The most recent change concerning livestock grazing was the establishment of Standards for Rangeland Health in 1997. Continued livestock grazing is permitted pursuant to the terms and conditions of permits and leases. Livestock grazing will be managed through implementation of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (Appendix J). Grazing guidelines were established in 43 CFR 4180(f)(2), and regionally refined guidelines were established in the Montana/Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1997). Through the watershed and/or activity plan process, assessments of standards were prepared. If existing grazing management is responsible for not meeting standards, modifications to the grazing authorization are implemented to ensure standards will be met. These can include changes to allocated use, seasons of use, grazing rotations or other grazing management practices. Continued monitoring as it relates to Standards for Rangeland Health will be the basis of making adjustments to livestock grazing.

Terms and conditions, beyond basic guidelines for livestock grazing, may be developed in the watershed planning process or as monitoring indicates a need for change to meet specific goals and objectives in the watershed or allotment.

Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management practices will be followed to protect the objects of the Monument and rangeland resources and, where necessary, to mitigate conflicts with other Monument uses and values. Administrative actions will be implemented under existing regulations to ensure compliance with existing permit/lease requirements. These actions include monitoring and supervision of grazing use and enforcement in response to unauthorized use. NEPA documentation will be prepared before renewal of grazing permits. This documentation will include a review of new monitoring and resource data, and may include a reassessment or evaluation. The normal term of a grazing permit is 10 years, but they may be issued for a shorter period if resource concerns or administrative reasons merit.

Implementation

The BLM will continue to implement the completed watershed plans (Table 2.2) including the associated

range improvement projects to meet Standards for Rangeland Health. The watershed planning process is described in Appendix M. These watershed plans or other grazing activity plans will be updated as necessary during the renewal of 10-year grazing permits.

Maintenance of existing range improvement projects (fences, reservoirs, and other water developments) will occur in the same general manner and degree as in the past. Maintenance of water facilities may include routine maintenance or involve reconstruction. Routine maintenance is normally carried out under an existing cooperative agreement or permit and does not result in a change in the design or capacity of the facility.

Reconstruction normally involves a new design with a change in capacity and new surface disturbance outside the original footprint of the facility. Table 2.3 provides a general description of maintenance and reconstruction activities.

Livestock grazing will continue to be managed through development and monitoring of grazing activity plans and supervision of grazing use. Plans and grazing prescriptions will be developed with multiple use objectives to enhance vegetation production and diversity; maintain and enhance wildlife habitat; protect watersheds; reduce bare ground; and minimize livestock/recreation conflicts. If improved grazing management alone does not meet management objectives, vegetation treatments will be considered.

All allotments have been assigned to a management category depending on the resources and problems contained in the allotment. The three categories of Improve (I), Maintain (M) and Custodial (C) reflect resource conditions, resource potential and economic considerations for each allotment. The terms improve, maintain and custodial relate to resource objectives for the allotment, i.e. whether conditions need to be improved or maintained, or if custodial management is appropriate because of relatively limited resources and resource problems. The BLM's allotment categorization system will continue to determine priorities for implementing grazing activity plans, spending range improvement funds and monitoring. Allotments will be subject to recategorization based on changes in resource conditions as determined through monitoring.

New range improvements (primarily reservoirs, other water facilities, fences and land treatments) could be built to support activity plans, enhance Monument resources, or meet overall management goals. Fences will be designed to allow easy passage of wildlife. Vegetative manipulations could be planned, developed and implemented to ensure that negative impacts to resources (primarily wildlife, soils, range, and watersheds) are identified and mitigated. Treatments may be applied if maintenance or improvement cannot be achieved with grazing management practices. Watershed parameters, topography, soil type, infiltration and soil loss potential will also be considered and mitigated, as necessary, in vegetation manipulation projects.

Table 2.3 Water Facility Maintenance and Reconstruction Activities	
<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>Reconstruction</i>
<p>Work is normally performed in accordance with a cooperative agreement or range improvement permit.</p> <p>The original design and capacity of the facility is maintained. No survey, design, or engineering are required.</p> <p>Surface disturbance occurs within the area of previous disturbance ("footprint"). This includes the route to access the site with equipment needed for maintenance.</p> <p>Maintenance work includes rip-rapping with native rock on active and localized erosion points.</p>	<p>Work is normally performed by BLM, a contractor, or someone who is authorized by the BLM.</p> <p>The original design and capacity of the facility is updated. Survey, design, and engineering are required. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase or decrease in capacity • Change in height or profile of structure • Change in height, location or capacity of spillways • Installation of a pit within the structure • Installation or removal of trickle tubes • Breaching or otherwise removing the existing structure <p>Surface disturbance occurs outside the area of previous disturbance ("footprint"). This may sometimes include access to the worksite.</p> <p>Reconstruction involves rip-rapping with other than native rock and/or for more than just localized active points of erosion.</p>

All vegetation increases will be allocated to watershed until soils and vegetation are stabilized to a satisfactory condition as determined by an interdisciplinary team prior to increasing livestock or wildlife allocations.

Some unallocated parcels will remain available for livestock grazing. These are generally isolated small tracts. An environmental assessment will be prepared for areas not previously grazed by livestock. When the opportunity becomes available to create resource reserve allotments, these allotments would technically not be allocated in the sense of adjudication of grazing preference attached to base property; however, they would be available for grazing under guidelines established for use of the resource reserve allotment.

Livestock forage allocations on newly acquired land will be based on management needs and objectives of the acquisition. The allocation may range from zero to full capacity and could be adjusted if monitoring indicates a need to make changes to meet management objectives.

Temporary decreases in livestock forage allocations will be implemented in the event of a temporary loss of forage such as in severe drought, fire, or insect or weed infestations. Temporary increases in livestock forage allocations will be made on a temporary nonrenewable basis, where such increases are within the available carrying capacity and are consistent with multiple use objectives as determined by an interdisciplinary review.

Grazing permittees (permit/lease) have an opportunity to apply each year for changes in grazing use within their permitted use level. These changes may include adjustments in season of use, livestock numbers or class of livestock. Applications for major changes in livestock use will be considered through environmental analyses.

Livestock forage allocation and rangeland health will be monitored on a continuing basis for actual use, utilization and trends, and to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of grazing permits and leases. The monitoring data will be analyzed to determine if grazing management is achieving land use or activity plan objectives; to allow temporary increases or decreases in AUMs; and to revise grazing activity plans. Monitoring intensity will be based on meeting Standards for Rangeland Health. Violations of permits will be pursued in accordance with the grazing regulations.

Developed recreation sites will be excluded from livestock grazing, except where grazing is needed to maintain the desired plant community. Goats and/or sheep could be used under strict prescriptions to control weeds in special circumstances. Grazing by horses and other livestock used by recreationists in developed recreation sites will be managed through specific activity plans.

The BLM will maintain or enhance bighorn sheep habitat. A change in class of livestock from cows to domestic sheep will not be allowed within 15 miles of areas occupied by bighorn sheep. In other areas, domestic sheep may be allowed on a case-by-case basis to control noxious weeds.

Existing grazing activity plans will be revised to incorporate grazing management practices to improve riparian community conditions. The management emphasis will discourage or prevent livestock congregation along the bottoms to maintain or enhance riparian vegetation.

The Ervin Ridge Wild Horse Herd Area, identified under the Wild Horse and Burro Act, will remain free of wild horses (BLM 1985).

Minerals – Oil and Gas

The BLM's goal is to provide reasonable oil and gas exploration and development on existing leased land without diminishing the objects of the Monument.

The Proclamation does not allow new oil and gas leases in the Monument. The 43 federal oil and gas leases in the Monument are considered to have valid existing rights based upon the Proclamation, wherein it states “The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. The Secretary of Interior shall manage development on existing oil and gas leases within the monument, subject to valid existing rights, so as not to create any new impacts that would interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by this proclamation.” The existing leases are also in compliance with their lease terms and conditions. (See Chapter 3 Minerals – Oil and Gas, Appendix O and the Glossary for more information regarding the leases.)

Specific management for oil and gas is addressed under the Natural Gas Exploration and Development section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

Implementation

Notices of Intent and/or Sundry Notices will be required for all seismic operations. Any approvals by the BLM will include inventories and mitigation measures to avoid new impacts that interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by the Proclamation. Off-lease seismic operations or seismic operations on BLM land with unleased federal minerals may be permitted for the purpose of defining the limits of the federal lessee's interests or exploring state and private oil and gas minerals. Seismic operations planned off of existing roads must demonstrate that proposed transportation and exploration methods will minimize the potential for creating new roads or trails.

Existing well operations and maintenance will continue and could involve activities that do not require approval under existing oil and gas regulations. These activities could include routine well operations, well stimulation operations, down-hole well maintenance or tests for production capability.

Through the environmental review process, the BLM will determine the potential impacts of oil and gas operations and mitigation measures to avoid interference with the proper care and management of the objects protected by the Monument. If the analysis and documentation indicate that a proposal may have impacts that are not in conformance with the Proclamation, regulation, BMPs or existing resource management plans, the BLM will work with the applicant to find alternatives or modifications to the proposal that will minimize such impacts through special permit conditions, consistent with the applicant's rights under applicable laws, regulations and stipulations.

The current application for permit to drill (APD) review process will be utilized. That process includes a 30-day posting period for public review of the proposal. Following the 30-day posting period, the application can be approved in accordance with lease conditions of approval; Onshore Oil and Gas Orders; and Onshore Oil and Gas regulations (43 CFR 3160) if the application is administratively and technically complete. (See Appendix O – Reasonable Foreseeable Development scenario regarding discussion under the section Possible Oil and Gas Operations to Occur in the Monument.)

A lease stipulation or condition of approval developed for an APD is subject to waiver, exception, or modification if the authorized officer determines that the factors leading to its inclusion have changed sufficiently to make the protection provided by the stipulation or condition no longer justified or if the proposed operations would not cause unacceptable impacts. When the waiver, exception, or modification (WEM) is substantial the proposed WEM is subject to public review for 30 days. This public review can be accomplished by posting the WEM request with the regulatory requirement to post the APD for 30 days; posted on the agency website; posted in a local paper as a legal notice or incorporated into a newspaper article; or, the notice may be included as part of the NEPA document's public review, if the NEPA document is offered for review.

Surface construction for new well pads, roads, pipelines and associated facilities will involve the minimum acreage necessary for safe operation in order to mitigate impacts to Monument objects. Existing rights-of-way and roads will be used for new operations as much as possible to avoid impacts that interfere with proper care of Monument resources. Using existing disturbed areas for well locations will be emphasized. Production

facilities will be located at individual well sites or co-located if grouping of production facilities would minimize visual contrasts with Monument objects. Gas pipelines will follow existing road corridors if available. All oil and gas operations within the Monument, including reclamation activities, will be a high priority for surface inspections.

The following will be considered standard measures within the Monument for controlling invasive weed species whether it is oil and gas related or for other surface disturbing activities. Operators would be responsible for weed control on disturbed areas within the limits of an authorized area or disturbed areas. The operator is responsible for consultation with the authorized officer for acceptable weed control methods and materials. All equipment shall be pressure washed at an approved wash station (e.g., car wash with city sewer services, so weed seeds are properly disposed of) prior to entering the lease as a preventative weed control measure. Operators would also be required to control any noxious weeds which may become established within the project area including well pads, pipeline corridors or access roads; this requirement would be for the life of the access road, pipeline or well. For all surface-disturbing activities, including plugging, the operator is responsible for weed control on the well pad, road and pipeline for the life of the well plus five years post plugging. Operators would be responsible for consultation with the authorized officer for acceptable weed control methods and materials and would be subject to submittal and approval of a pesticide use proposal on BLM land.

Recreation

The BLM's goal is to manage for a variety of sustainable visitor opportunities in mostly primitive and natural landscapes.

The BLM will maintain and/or enhance the recreational quality of BLM land and resources to ensure enjoyable recreational experiences. Specific management for recreation is addressed under the Visitor Use, Services, and Infrastructure section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

The BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services Workplan 2003-2007 (as extended by the Unified Strategy, WO IM No. 2007-043), Recreation 2000 guidance and the Tri-State Recreation Plan incorporate the following provisions:

- Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities on DOI managed or partnered lands and waters;
- Ensure a quality experience and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources on DOI managed or partnered lands and waters;

- Provide for and receive fair value in recreation;
- Manage visitor services including a permit system, interpretive programs, visitor contact and efforts to improve the BLM's image with public land users;
- Maintain all facilities where the public comes in contact with BLM roads, trails, signs, recreation sites and buildings;
- Develop partnerships among other agencies, organizations and private citizens; and
- Enhance budget/marketing techniques that showcase the BLM's land management.

The recreation emphasis will be to develop and maintain opportunities for dispersed recreational activities such as hunting, hiking, scenic and wildlife viewing and driving for pleasure, consistent with current policies and practices and the Proclamation. Methods to achieve these opportunities include emphasizing public access and the Watchable Wildlife and Back Country Byways programs. The BLM will provide dispersed recreation opportunities to support local, regional and national needs.

The BLM will increase coordination with the Montana tourism industry to market BLM recreational opportunities, particularly with the Charlie Russell and Missouri River Tourism Regions for the State of Montana.

The BLM will emphasize a pack in/pack out garbage policy.

The BLM will emphasize dispersed recreation opportunities including hiking and development of non-motorized hiking trails.

The BLM will provide uniformed law enforcement patrols of the Monument. The law enforcement program will stress public compliance through education and outreach to develop a sense of public ownership of the Monument. The BLM will respond to resource violations consistent with current law enforcement responsibilities within the Lewistown Field Office. The Blaine, Chouteau, Fergus and Phillips County Sheriff Departments conduct emergency services in the Monument. The BLM assists as requested with available resources. Emergency services are guided by BLM policy and administrative action.

Geocaching is an appropriate, casual use of BLM land, and a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) is not required if the activity is casual use and inflicts no damage on the resources (no surface disturbance). However, if the activity becomes too large and begins to conflict with other authorized uses or affects the resources of the

Monument, appropriate steps will be taken to manage the activity. This would include preparation of an environmental assessment or other appropriate NEPA document; issuance of letters of agreement or SRPs with special stipulations to mitigate concerns; and requirements for the registration of geocaching sites and removal of those geocaches if authorization is not given.

The BLM will continue to work with and support the Undaunted Stewardship program. The program is directed jointly by federal, state and private entities, with guidance from statewide historic, conservation and agricultural groups, funded by the public and private sectors. This is a cooperative and multi-faceted program that seeks to ensure the long-term maintenance of the environmental quality and economic productivity of privately-owned, agricultural landscapes – especially areas rich in history along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail in Montana.

Four Undaunted Stewardship interpretive projects are located on private property intermingled with the Monument along the UMNWSR. This is a collaborative partnership program that involves private landowners (ranchers), Montana Stockgrowers Association, Montana State University and the BLM. The objective is to preserve both Lewis and Clark and Montana frontier history. The four sites are the ABN Ranch east of Virgelle, the Lanning/Terry Ranch south of Big Sandy, the Crawford Farm & Ranch north of Geraldine, and the Wortman Ranch near the PN Bridge (Judith Landing) north of Winifred.

Implementation

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River

Management of the UMNWSR is guided by the 1993 River Plan Update (BLM 1993). The River Plan Update identified the specific actions necessary to implement guidance provided by the West HiLine RMP (BLM 1992a) and to revise some outdated management actions. In the future, the river plan will be updated based on the guidance from the Monument RMP, specifically the Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

The UMNWSR will be managed to protect and preserve the remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, and other values as directed by Congress in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542, 1968) and the amendment for the Upper Missouri (PL 94-486, 1976). The BLM will manage the segment of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail within the planning area in a manner that is consistent with the purposes and provisions of the National Trails System Act (PL 90-543, 1968) as amended by PL 95-625 (1978).

The BLM will provide recreational opportunities and visitor services consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended. Future developments will mitigate impacts to natural and cultural resources. Mitigation measures will be determined after site-specific evaluations.

The Fort Benton River Management Station/Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center will support visitor services for the UMNWSR and provide interpretive information on the cultural and natural history of the Monument. Access points at the Chouteau County Fairgrounds Campground and Canoe Launch, Fort Benton Power Boat Ramp, Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing and James Kipp Recreation Area will serve as points of contact to provide health and safety information, register boaters, and collect visitor use information.

The BLM will continue, and may expand, visitor services operations to provide for public health, safety and law enforcement. Search and rescue operations and law enforcement will continue as a cooperative effort between the BLM and state and local agencies.

Boaters on overnight trips on the UMNWSR may not dispose of solid human waste by any means other than a portable toilet for containerization and carryout of solid human waste. This is necessary due to increasing levels of public use and the health, sanitation and aesthetic problems that improper disposal of human waste can create along the river.

The BLM will coordinate with the USFWS on bankside recreation use and management within the Charles M. Russell (CMR) National Wildlife Refuge boundaries, between river miles 139-149.

Nez Perce National Historic Trail

The Nez Perce National Historic Trail passes through the Monument. The BLM will manage the recreation activities and opportunities associated with this portion of the trail in a manner consistent with the purposes and the provisions of Public Law 90-543, as amended by Public Law 99-445, and the comprehensive plan prepared by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS 1990). This key segment of the trail begins near Winifred and enters the UMNWSR near Cow Island. It provides several opportunities for interpretation. It also parallels portions of the Missouri River Breaks Back Country Byway. Scenic and cultural values will be protected on BLM land along this historic trail.

An activity plan will be developed to detail the management activities along the trail.

Transportation

The BLM's goal is to provide access to state and federal land and reasonable access for private landowners while protecting the features of the Monument.

The BLM's goal is to manage legal and physical public access to and within the Monument to provide opportunities for diverse recreation activities (motorized and non-motorized) while considering the surrounding regional recreation opportunities in northcentral Montana.

The Proclamation states, “the Secretary shall prohibit all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road, except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes.” In addition, the Secretary “shall prepare a transportation plan that addresses the actions, including road closures or travel restrictions, necessary to protect the objects.”

According to the Proclamation, these BLM lands are designated as “limited” consistent with 43 CFR 8340. A limited area means an area restricted at certain times, in certain areas, and/or to certain vehicular use, such as no off-road travel. A single-track trail system for motorized travel (ATVs, quads, motorcycles, etc.) is not authorized or permissible in the Monument. All motorized and mechanized vehicles must stay on roads.

Aircraft overflights in the airspace covering the Monument (commercial, recreational, or military) are allowed under the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and the Hays Military Operations Area (MOA) policy.

Implementation

The Access and Transportation alternative discussions later in this chapter address the transportation plan for the Monument in accordance with the Proclamation and designation criteria outlined under 43 CFR 8342.1.

The BLM regulations (43 CFR 8341.2 and 8364.1) allow for area or road closures where off-road vehicles are causing or will cause considerable adverse impacts on soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, threatened or endangered species, other authorized uses, or other resources. The authorized officer can immediately close the area or road affected until the impacts are eliminated and measures are implemented to prevent future recurrence.

Fire Management

The BLM's goal is to manage wildland fire safely, efficiently and with minimal impact to resource values while minimizing the risk of catastrophic fire within the Monument and communities adjacent to the Monument. This includes maintaining or reestablishing the natural influence of fire on vegetation communities and associations.

Fire will be used to manage fuels and minimize the risk to those biological, geological and historical objects of interest for which the Monument was established. Fire could be a positive influence in much of this area, and restoration of natural fire regimes will be encouraged where practical. However, each occurrence will require special consideration. Obvious concerns focus around structures, croplands, livestock and livestock forage needs, the reduction of big game thermal and hiding cover, and reduced canopy coverage in sagebrush habitats. Social and political considerations will help determine how each fire occurrence will be managed.

Appropriate management response based on current fire danger, resource availability and predicted weather will be used to ensure safety of fire suppression personnel, reduce cost of fire suppression and to return fire to a more natural ecological role. An appropriate management response may also include limiting fires ignited by lightning to pre-planned barriers and natural fuel breaks. Appropriate management response criteria will be based on risks to firefighters, public health and safety; land and resource management objectives; weather; fuel conditions; threats, values to be protected; and cost efficiencies.

The Montana DEQ has the primary responsibility for attaining and maintaining air quality standards through coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA through the document, Interim Air Quality on Wildland and Prescribed Fires, supports increasing the reintroduction of fire into federal land management programs to allow fire to play its natural role and provide resource benefits consistent with public health and environmental quality considerations. All prescribed burning planned in the Monument will comply with the certified Smoke Management Program. This program is administered by the Montana DEQ with support of the Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group.

Specific management for fire is addressed under the Health of the Land and Fire section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

Implementation

Wildland Fire Suppression and Rehabilitation

The BLM will suppress fires at minimum cost, based on fire fighter and public safety, and the benefits and values to be protected consistent with resource objectives. Where an identified risk to private croplands exists, all wildland fires will be suppressed during the hot or dry season. The BLM works in an interagency fashion with rural fire departments and other federal and state fire agencies. The closest available fire suppression resources respond to a fire for initial attack, irrespective of land ownership. The BLM Lewistown Fire Dispatch Center provides interagency wildland fire dispatching for much of central Montana.

The appropriate management response to wildland fire in the Monument, including wilderness study areas (WSAs), will involve traditional fire line tactics, including the use of natural barriers and hand-constructed fire lines. The use of heavy equipment will be allowed through authorization of the Field Manager, Monument Manager or the appropriate agency administrator. Careful consideration will be given to how and where heavy equipment would be used to minimize erosion. Staging areas will be placed outside the Monument whenever possible. The application of fire retardant is prohibited within the White Cliffs section of the Monument, and is also prohibited within 300 feet of any perennial water body.

Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns and constraints. Certified weed-free seed and seeding with appropriate native species is required.

Prescribed Fire and Other Fuels Management

Prescribed burns will be used in the Monument to protect infrastructure or wildlife habitat that would be permanently lost in the event of a catastrophic fire, to achieve desired plant communities, and to reduce hazardous fuel loads. Livestock grazing could be considered as a vegetation management tool to reduce hazardous fuel loads. The BLM will coordinate fuel management with private landowners, affected interests and other agencies. Land uses are to be monitored and adjusted as necessary after a fire to sustain soils and vegetation.

Wildland Fire – Wilderness Study Areas

The BLM will protect the wilderness characteristics of land within the National Wilderness Preservation System and in WSAs. Fire management-related activities should preserve the natural character of wilderness areas and avoid unnecessary impairment of a WSA's suitability for preservation as wilderness. The use of heavy equipment

during wildland fire suppression and rehabilitation in WSAs should be avoided to protect wilderness characteristics. Fire camps should be located outside WSAs. Using motorized vehicles and mechanical equipment during mop-up should be minimized. A fire plan developed for any WSA should specify fire management objectives, historic fire occurrence, acceptable suppression techniques, buffer zones, smoke management concerns, and anticipated impacts on private or other agency inholdings and on adjacent landowners. Suppression methods may include use of power tools, aircraft, motorboats and motorized fire-fighting equipment while applying appropriate techniques. A wildland fire situation analysis will be completed by appropriate fire managers and resource staff for any fire that escapes initial attack or has the potential to remain in the extended attack mode for more than 48 hours.

Prescribed Fire – Wilderness Study Areas

The use of heavy equipment will be avoided to protect wilderness characteristics. Staging areas and fire camps will be located outside of WSAs unless safety or overriding logistical concerns dictate otherwise. A prescribed burn plan will specify fire management objectives, historic fire occurrence, the natural role of fire, expected fire behavior, smoke management, and impacts on private or other agency inholdings and on adjacent landowners. The use of power tools and motorized equipment will be limited.

Wilderness Study Areas

The BLM's goal is to preserve or enhance the primitive characteristics of the wilderness study areas.

The wilderness program is in the transitional stage between wilderness study and Congressional action. Six WSAs in the Monument were identified in the Montana Wilderness Inventory (BLM 1980). A final suitability study and environmental impact statement completed by the BLM (BLM 1987) recommended wilderness designation for a portion of the Antelope Creek and Cow Creek WSAs. Table 2.4 shows the recommendations for the six WSAs. All WSAs will be managed according to the Interim Management Policy (IMP) and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review – July 1995 (BLM Manual H-8550-1) until such time as Congress acts upon the recommendations. Only Congress can designate or release these lands.

Implementation

The WSAs will continue to be managed under the BLM's Interim Management Policy. The BLM will prepare a wilderness management plan for any areas

designated as wilderness by Congress. The WSAs not designated as wilderness by Congress will subsequently be managed in accordance with guidance for adjacent BLM land unless otherwise specified in this RMP.

The Interim Management Policy, BLM Handbook H-8550-1), describes the policies under which the BLM will manage the six WSAs under wilderness review until Congress either designates these lands as wilderness or releases them for other purposes. Section 603(c) of FLPMA tells the BLM how to manage lands under wilderness review, in these words: "During the period of review of such areas and until Congress has determined otherwise, the Secretary shall continue to manage such lands according to his authority under this Act and other applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness"

This language is referred to as the "nonimpairment" mandate. The BLM will review all proposals for uses and/or facilities within the WSAs to determine whether the proposal meets the nonimpairment standard. Uses and/or facilities found to be nonimpairing may be permitted on lands under wilderness review. Uses and/or facilities found to be impairing will be denied. The following criteria are referred to as the nonimpairment criteria.

Nonimpairment Criteria

The use, facility, or activity must be temporary. This means a temporary use that does not create surface disturbance or involve permanent placement of facilities may be allowed if such use can easily and immediately be terminated upon wilderness designation. "Temporary" means the use or facility may continue until the date of wilderness designation, at which time the use must cease and/or the facility must be removed. In the WSAs, "surface disturbance" is any new disruption of the soil or vegetation that would necessitate reclamation.

Decisions to allow or deny proposed actions based on the nonimpairment criteria will be included in appropriate decision documents.

When the use, activity, or facility is terminated, the wilderness values must not have been degraded so far as to significantly constrain the Congress's prerogative regarding the area's suitability for preservation as wilderness.

The only permitted exceptions to the above rules are:

- Emergencies such as suppression activities associated with wildfire or search and rescue operations;

Table 2.4 Montana Wilderness Recommendations for WSAs in the Monument			
<i>WSA Name</i>	<i>WSA Number</i>	<i>Acres Recommended for Wilderness</i>	<i>Acres Recommended for Non-Wilderness</i>
Antelope Creek	MT-065-266	9,600	2,750
Cow Creek	MT-066-256	21,590	12,460
Dog Creek South	MT-068-244	0	5,150
Ervin Ridge	MT-068-253	0	10,200
Stafford	MT-066-250	0	4,800
Woodhawk	MT-068-246	0	8,100

- Reclamation activities designed to minimize impacts to wilderness values created by IMP violations and emergencies;
- Uses and facilities that are considered grandfathered or valid existing rights under the IMP;
- Uses and facilities that clearly protect or enhance the land's wilderness values or that are the minimum necessary for public health and safety in the use and enjoyment of the wilderness values; and
- Reclamation of pre-FLPMA impacts.

Some lands under wilderness review may contain minor facilities that were found in the wilderness inventory process to be substantially unnoticeable. For example, these may include primitive vehicle routes ("ways") and livestock developments. The IMP does not require such facilities to be removed or discontinued. They may be used and maintained as before, as long as this does not cause new impacts that would impair the area's wilderness suitability.

Current Management and Action Alternatives

The following sections provide a detailed description of the six alternatives for the four categories: Health of the Land and Fire; Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure; Natural Gas Exploration and Development; and Access and Transportation.

The *Health of the Land and Fire* section includes management guidance that would apply to most resources and resource uses in the Monument and includes alternatives for fish and wildlife; vegetation; range improvements; visual resources; forest products; right-of-way corridors, avoidance areas and exclusion areas; land ownership adjustment; fire; and eligible wild and scenic rivers.

The *Visitor Use, Services, and Infrastructure* section includes management for recreation in the Monument. This section includes alternatives for recreation management areas; fees; gateway communities; research, collection, and special events; recreation in sensitive wildlife habitat; potential interpretive sites; special recreation permits; opportunities for boaters; camping facilities; and motorized watercraft.

The *Natural Gas Exploration and Development* section includes management guidance for the existing oil and gas leases in the Monument. This section includes alternatives for the West HiLine and non-West HiLine oil and gas leases that include timing, controlled surface use and no surface-disturbing or disruptive activities; and alternatives for seismic; drilling operations; production facilities and equipment; and reclamation.

The *Access and Transportation* section includes management guidance for the transportation system in the Monument. This section includes alternatives for access; the BLM road system; and aviation.

Health of the Land and Fire

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Fish and Wildlife – Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat

The BLM's goal is to manage, enhance and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and habitat for special status species.

Alternative A (Current Management)

The BLM would maintain and enhance wildlife habitat, including greater sage-grouse habitat in the Judith-Valley-Phillips planning area (BLM 1994a), through monitoring of habitat conditions and grazing use, changing the season of use, adjusting stocking rates, specifying salt and supplement locations, or terminating grazing by October 31. In the West HiLine planning area (BLM 1988, 1992a) livestock grazing methods (that may include adjusting stocking rates, specifying locations of salt and other supplements, changing the season of use or terminating grazing by October 31) would be used to maintain sagebrush stands with 15-30% canopy cover with 12 inch height, or at the highest potential for existing ecological site present, as determined by NRCS soil survey.

Alternatives B, C, and D

Sage-grouse management would utilize the 2005 “Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage-Grouse in Montana – Final” for overall guidance and direction.

The BLM would use prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatments to reduce or increase sagebrush cover to desired levels for nesting, brood rearing, breeding habitat and winter habitat.

The BLM would identify likely nesting habitat within 2 miles of individual sage-grouse leks through field assessments. These alternatives would require leaving adequate residual herbaceous cover beneath sagebrush within nesting areas at the end of the grazing season to allow adequate cover for next year's nesting.

These alternatives would prohibit supplemental feeding, mineral placement or other activities likely to cause livestock to congregate in identified active sage-grouse habitat during sensitive seasonal times (from March 1 to June 15).

These alternatives may increase sagebrush habitat and reduce crested wheatgrass in selected areas in or near nesting habitat. This may included reseeding native sagebrush in areas that have been previously disturbed.

Concentrations of livestock near leks or winter habitat can disturb or displace sage-grouse. Therefore, high livestock densities would not be allowed in identified

active nesting habitat from March 1 to June 15. Also, when conditions are required for sage-grouse security, livestock grazing would not occur in identified active winter habitat (sagebrush canopy 10-30% and 10-14 inch height) from December 1 to March 31.

Alternative E

Sage-grouse management would utilize the 2005 “Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage-Grouse in Montana – Final” for overall guidance and direction.

The BLM would use prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatments to reduce or increase sagebrush cover to desired levels for nesting, brood rearing, breeding habitat, and winter habitat.

The BLM would identify likely nesting habitat within 2 miles of individual sage-grouse leks through field assessments. This alternative would require leaving adequate residual herbaceous cover beneath sagebrush within nesting areas at the end of the grazing season to allow adequate cover for next year's nesting.

This alternative would prohibit supplemental feeding, mineral placement or other livestock congregating functions in identified active sage-grouse habitat during sensitive seasonal times (March 1 to June 15).

This alternative would increase sagebrush habitat through conversion of crested wheatgrass in selected areas in or near nesting habitat, and native sagebrush would be reseeded in areas that have been previously disturbed.

Concentrations of livestock near leks or winter habitat can disturb or displace sage-grouse. Therefore, livestock grazing would not be allowed in identified sage-grouse nesting habitat from March 1 to June 15. Also, from December 1 to March 31, livestock grazing would not occur in identified crucial winter habitat (sagebrush canopy cover of 10-30% and 10-14 inch height).

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Sage-grouse management would utilize the 2005 Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage-Grouse in Montana – Final for overall guidance and direction.

The BLM would consider mechanical treatment as the primary method and prescribed fire as a secondary method to remove conifers encroaching on sage-grouse habitat, except where forested habitat is limited.

This alternative would require grazing permittees to avoid the placement of salt or mineral supplements near leks during the breeding season (March 1 to June 15).

The placement of salt or mineral supplements by other entities would not be allowed. Supplemental winter feeding would not be allowed on sage-grouse winter habitat and around leks.

This alternative would promote sage planting, where appropriate, on project areas (such as sites where sagebrush has been removed for crested wheat grass conversions) occurring within sage-grouse habitats and would reclaim and/or reseed areas disturbed by treatments.

Concentrations of livestock near leks or winter habitat can disturb or displace sage-grouse. Therefore, concentrations of livestock on leks or other key sage-grouse habitats could be avoided by using conservative stocking levels, locating salt or other supplements away from leks or winter habitat, adjusting grazing seasons and locating water facilities where they would not jeopardize habitat.

Conservative Stocking Level

Conservative stocking level is a stocking rate that would result in a moderate utilization level (or less) by livestock at the end of the grazing period for the year. A conservative stocking level would be established based on resource management goals including maintaining healthy vegetation; acceptable livestock performance; expected normal weather; and annual plant production consistent with the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

Fish and Wildlife – Black-tailed Prairie Dogs

The BLM's goal is to manage, enhance and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and habitat for special status species.

Alternative A (Current Management)

In the West HiLine planning area, prairie dog towns smaller than 10 acres would not be actively managed. Should control measures be considered on any town larger than 10 acres, threatened and endangered or special interest species would be given priority and necessary mitigation would be developed prior to initiating any control measures.

In the Judith-Valley-Phillips planning area, prairie dog towns on BLM land in Fergus and Chouteau Counties would be maintained or managed based on the values or problems encountered (these problems could include the loss of vegetation and/or prairie dog habitat). Prairie dog towns on BLM land in Phillips County would be maintained at the 1988 survey level for recreational

viewing, associated species and prairie dog shooting. Some small, isolated prairie dog towns (towns smaller than 10 acres or towns further than 10 km from another active town) may be reduced or eradicated, if approved by the authorizing officer.

When poisoning is scheduled on a prairie dog town that includes state or private land, a cooperative effort would be made to control the entire town. The cost of poisoning for the state and private land would be the responsibility of the private landowner or the state land permittee.

Alternatives B, C, and D

Prairie dog management would utilize the Conservation Plan for Black-Tailed and White-Tailed Prairie Dogs in Montana (Montana Prairie Dog Working Group 2002) for overall guidance and direction. Regional plans (based on Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks administrative regions) would be utilized when they are completed.

Prairie dog towns would be allowed to expand as long as they are not adversely impacting adjacent private or state land, other resources, or affecting Standards for Rangeland Health (Appendix J). Prairie dog towns would be adversely impacting other resources, and controls could be considered, if prairie dog towns are: the source of or an exacerbation of invasive or noxious plants; substantially limiting forage and/or important habitat for wildlife species in the immediate area; substantially limiting forage for livestock in the immediate area; overriding the effectiveness of other management measures; or posing a substantial economic hardship or risk for other landowners, resulting from the need to control populations on private or state land because of prairie dogs on adjacent BLM land. Controls would not occur where mountain plover or burrowing owls have been documented using established habitat. Prairie dogs could be reestablished on historic towns that have been eradicated or that have died out due to sylvatic plague. Specific actions to address adverse impacts to or from prairie dogs would be addressed through the watershed planning process and/or a site-specific environmental assessment.

Alternative E

Prairie dog management would utilize the Conservation Plan for Black-Tailed and White-Tailed Prairie Dogs in Montana (Montana Prairie Dog Working Group 2002) for overall guidance and direction. Regional plans (based on MFWP administrative regions) would be utilized when they are completed. However, under this alternative, prairie dog towns in the Monument would be allowed to expand with no control measures. Treatments to encourage prairie dog expansion or reestablish historic prairie dog colonies could be authorized, including

prescribed fire, mechanical vegetation control, salting or mineral supplements for livestock, and translocation to suitable habitat.



Prairie Dog

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Prairie dog management would utilize the Conservation Plan for Black-Tailed and White-Tailed Prairie Dogs in Montana (Montana Prairie Dog Working Group 2002) for overall guidance and direction. Regional plans (based on Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks administrative regions) would be utilized when they are completed.

Prairie dog towns would be allowed to expand as long as they are not adversely impacting adjacent private or state land, other resources, or affecting Standards for Rangeland Health (Appendix J). Prairie dog towns would be adversely impacting other resources, and controls could be considered, if the towns are:

- The source of or an exacerbation of invasive or noxious plants;
- Substantially limiting forage and/or important habitat for wildlife species in the immediate area;
- Substantially limiting forage for livestock in the immediate area;
- Overriding the effectiveness of other management measures; or
- Posing a substantial economic hardship or risk for other landowners, resulting from the need to control populations on private or state land because of prairie dogs on adjacent BLM land.

Controls would not occur where mountain plover or burrowing owls have been documented using established habitat. Prairie dogs could be reestablished on historic towns that have been eradicated or that have died out due

to sylvatic plague. Specific actions to address adverse impacts to or from prairie dogs would be addressed through the watershed planning process and/or a site-specific environmental assessment.

Fish and Wildlife – Mitigation

The BLM's goal is to manage, enhance and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and habitat for special status species.

The following mitigating measures would be applied to new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities for identified/important wildlife habitat in the Monument. Mitigating measures would be applied on a case-by-case basis during activity level planning after an on-site evaluation of the project area indicates the presence of a species. Exceptions to these mitigation measures may be granted by the authorized officer if an environmental review demonstrates there would be no adverse impacts, habitat for the species is not present in the area, or portions of the area can be occupied without affecting a particular species. Exceptions would also be considered for interim and final reclamation.

Surface-Disturbing or Disruptive Activities

Surface-Disturbing Activities: Those activities that alter the structure and composition of vegetation and topsoil/subsoil. This includes any action created through mechanized or mechanical means that would cause soil mixing or result in alteration or removal of soil or vegetation and expose the soil to erosive processes. Some examples of surface-disturbing activities include construction of roads, well pads, trenching for pipelines, construction or reconstruction of reservoirs and pits, and facility construction. Vegetation renovation treatments that involve soil penetration and/or substantial mechanical damage to plants (plowing, chiseling, chopping, etc.) are also surface-disturbing activities.

Disruptive Activities: Those activities that disrupt or alter wildlife actions at key times, during important activities, or in important areas (feeding, breeding, nesting, herd movement, winter habitat). Disruptive activities are those that can result in reductions of energy reserves, health, reproductive success, or population. Some examples of disruptive activities include geophysical (seismic), well plugging or work-over operations that last 24 to 48 hours or longer, and road reclamation.

Emergency activities, rangeland monitoring, recreational activities, livestock grazing and management, and other field activities are not considered surface-disturbing or disruptive activities.

Alternative A (Current Management)

Greater Sage-Grouse – The BLM would not authorize any surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 500 feet of sage-grouse leks. Nor would the BLM allow any surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within strutting grounds during the nesting period (March 1 to June 30). This alternative would not authorize surface-disturbing or disruptive activities in sage-grouse winter habitat from December 1 to May 15.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog – This alternative would not allow surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of occupied prairie dog towns that are habitat for species of special interest.

Designated Sensitive Species – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed for 60 days. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

Bald Eagle – This alternative may control or exclude surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of essential habitat for the bald eagle.

Big Game Winter Range – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed on wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to May 15.

Bighorn Sheep – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed for 60 days.

Alternative B

Greater Sage-Grouse – The BLM would not authorize new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of leks, nor would it allow new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within nesting areas (a 2-mile radius of the lek) from March 1 to June 15. This alternative would not authorize any new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities in active sage-grouse winter habitat from December 1 to March 31.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog – No new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be authorized on any prairie dog towns.

Designated Sensitive Species – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed for 60 days. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

Bald Eagle – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within 1 mile of active winter roosting areas from November 15 to February 29 if such activities could create an adverse impact. Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within 1 mile of active bald eagle nest sites from February 1 to July 31 if such activities could create nest abandonment or failure.

Big Game Winter Range – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed on wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to March 31.

Bighorn Sheep – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity could be delayed for 60 days. New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep lambing areas from April 1 to June 15 if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

Alternative C

Greater Sage-Grouse – The BLM would not authorize new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of leks, nor would it allow new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within nesting areas (a 2-mile radius of the lek) from March 1 to June 15. This alternative would not authorize any new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities in active sage-grouse winter habitat from December 1 to March 31.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would avoid or mitigate disturbance on prairie dog towns (e.g., routing proposed roads around a town or implementing timing stipulations).

Designated Sensitive Species – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of identified habitat and active nests. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

Bald Eagle – This alternative would not allow new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/2 mile of an eagle nest that has been active in the last seven years.

Big Game Winter Range – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed on wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to March 31.

Bighorn Sheep – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep distribution areas from December 1 to March 31 and within bighorn sheep lambing areas from April 1 to June 15 if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

Alternative D

Greater Sage-Grouse – The BLM would not authorize new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of leks, nor would it allow new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within nesting areas (a 2-mile radius of the lek) from March 1 to June 15. This alternative would not authorize any new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities in active sage-grouse winter habitat from December 1 to March 31.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be authorized within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns if such activities would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

Designated Sensitive Species – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of identified habitat and active nests. Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may also be controlled or excluded within 1/2 mile of active nests during the nesting period from March 1 to August 1. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

Bald Eagle – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within 1/2 mile of an eagle nest that has been active in the last seven years and within riparian-area nesting habitat.

Big Game Winter Range – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed on wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to May 15.

Bighorn Sheep – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep distribution areas from December 1 to March 31 and within 1 mile line-of-sight of bighorn sheep lambing areas if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

Alternative E

Greater Sage-Grouse – The BLM would not authorize new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 2 miles of leks, nor would it allow new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within sage-grouse winter habitat.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be authorized within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns if such activities would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

Designated Sensitive Species – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/2 mile of identified habitat and active nests.

This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

Bald Eagle – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within 1/2 mile of an eagle nest that has been active in the last seven years and within riparian area nesting habitat.

Big Game Winter Range – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed on wildlife winter ranges.

Bighorn Sheep – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep distribution areas and within 1 mile line-of-sight of bighorn sheep lambing areas if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Greater Sage-Grouse – The BLM would not authorize new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of active leks, nor would it allow new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within nesting areas (a 2-mile radius of an active lek) from March 1 to June 15. This alternative would not authorize any new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities in active sage-grouse winter habitat from December 1 to March 31.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be authorized within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns if such activities would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

Designated Sensitive Species – The BLM may control or exclude any new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of the proposed site or delay such activities for 90 days within identified habitat and within 1/4 mile of active nests. Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may also be controlled or excluded within 1/2 mile of active ferruginous hawk nests from March 1 to August 1. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

Bald Eagle – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within 1/2 mile of an eagle nest that has been active in the last seven years if such activities could cause nest abandonment or failure.

Big Game Winter Range – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed on antelope, mule deer and elk winter range from December 1 to March 31. This timeframe could be shortened depending upon weather conditions, animal health and forage availability.

Bighorn Sheep – New surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep distribution areas from December 1 to March 31 or within bighorn sheep lambing areas from April 1 to June 15 if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.



Bighorn Sheep

Vegetation

The BLM's goal is to manage for healthy vegetation communities that provide for a wide variety of long-term benefits such as aesthetics, wildlife, recreation, livestock grazing, etc.

Alternative A (Current Management)

In areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation, the BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation. No additional guidance would be considered beyond the management detailed in the Vegetation section of Decisions Common to All Alternatives.

Reclamation would follow standard operating procedures. Previously disturbed sites would be allowed to reclaim naturally.

Alternative B

Activity plan updates, such as watershed plans or allotment management plans, would emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. In areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation, the BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation.

If the opportunity is available (through the cancellation or relinquishment of a livestock grazing permit or acquisition of additional land) the BLM could establish resource reserve grazing allotments. These allotments would be available to offset the impacts of drought or to

implement projects such as prescribed fires that could create a temporary loss of AUMs.

The BLM would determine the priority for restoring non-native vegetation sites to a native species community. Priority sites would be areas where the natural plant community has been substantially disrupted and the natural resource values have been lost, or are in jeopardy of being lost, and the site could potentially be restored to a natural state. Priority ranking would be based on an emphasis to control highly invasive non-native species. The BLM would also apply reasonable discretion in establishing priority areas based on the extent and seriousness of the situation and resources available (funding and staffing). Livestock grazing strategies such as adjusting grazing or rest seasons, adjusting stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements could be used to achieve the vegetation goals outlined during allotment or watershed planning.

Surface-disturbed areas would be rehabilitated with native and non-native grasses, forbs and shrubs to minimize the potential for soil erosion and to provide forage and cover for wildlife and livestock.

Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures. Where reclamation activities could cause more surface disturbance and where natural reclamation is possible, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The reclamation standards for all surface-disturbing activities would minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. For previously disturbed sites, a reclamation plan would be completed. Non-functional reservoirs, pits and water developments could be allowed to reclaim naturally if the reclamation activity would cause more unnecessary disturbance.

Alternative C

Activity plan updates, such as watershed plans or allotment management plans, would emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. In areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation, the BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation.

If the opportunity is available (through the cancellation or relinquishment of a livestock grazing permit or acquisition of additional land) the BLM could establish resource reserve grazing allotments. These allotments would be available to offset the impacts of drought or to implement projects such as prescribed fires that could create a temporary loss of AUMs.

The BLM would determine the priority for restoring non-native vegetation sites to a native species community. Priority sites would be areas where the natural plant community has been substantially disrupted and the natural resource values have been lost, or are in jeopardy

of being lost, and the site could potentially be restored to a natural state. Priority ranking would be based on the size and site potential, the need to increase biodiversity, the benefits to wildlife and other resources and the effectiveness of the treatment and the ongoing maintenance requirements. The BLM would also apply reasonable discretion in establishing priority areas based on the extent and seriousness of the situation and resources available (funding and staffing). Livestock grazing strategies (such as adjusting grazing or rest seasons, adjusting stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements) could be used to achieve the vegetation goals outlined during allotment or watershed planning.

Surface-disturbed areas would be rehabilitated with native grasses, forbs and shrubs to minimize the potential for soil erosion and to provide forage and cover for wildlife and livestock. Non-native plants may be used under special circumstances, such as emergency soil stabilization.

Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures. Where reclamation activities could cause more surface disturbance and natural reclamation is possible, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The reclamation standards for all surface-disturbing activities would minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. A reclamation plan would be completed for previously disturbed sites. Non-functional reservoirs, pits and water developments could be allowed to reclaim naturally if the reclamation activity would cause more unnecessary disturbance.

Alternative D

This alternative would be the same as Alternative B, except that the BLM would restore all non-native vegetation sites to a native species community. In Level 1, 2, and 3 campgrounds the BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation. No planting of riparian vegetation would occur anywhere outside of Level 1, 2, or 3 campgrounds.

Livestock grazing strategies (adjusting grazing or rest seasons, stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements) could be used to achieve the vegetation goals outlined during site-specific planning.

The reclamation standards for all surface-disturbing activities would attempt to recapture an area's pre-disturbance appearance. When the disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre, the area would be recontoured and revegetated. A reclamation plan would be completed for previously disturbed sites. If the reclamation effort would reduce the impacts created by development, the BLM would remove and rehabilitate non-functional reservoirs, pits, and water developments in WSAs or in other areas where there is viewshed infringement.

Alternative E

Site-specific activity plan updates, such as watershed plans or allotment management plans, would emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. In Level 1, 2, and 3 campgrounds BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation. No planting of riparian vegetation would occur anywhere outside of Level 1, 2, or 3 campgrounds.

The BLM would not establish resource reserve allotments.

The BLM would restore all non-native vegetation sites to a native species community. Livestock grazing strategies (adjusting grazing or rest seasons, stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements) could be used to achieve the vegetation goals outlined during allotment or watershed planning.

The reclamation standards for all surface-disturbing activities would attempt to recapture an area's pre-disturbance appearance. When the disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre, the area would be recontoured and revegetated. A reclamation plan would be completed for previously disturbed sites. If the reclamation effort would reduce the impacts created by development, the BLM would remove and rehabilitate non-functional reservoirs, pits, and water developments in WSAs or in other areas where there is viewshed infringement.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Activity plan updates, such as watershed plans or allotment management plans, would emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. In areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation.

If the opportunity is available (through the cancellation or relinquishment of a grazing permit or acquisition of additional land) the BLM could establish resource reserve grazing allotments. These allotments would be available to offset the impacts of drought or to implement a project such as a prescribed fire that could create a temporary loss of AUMs. The Hay Coulee allotment would be a resource reserve allotment. The grazing regulations also allow for adjusting grazing allotments to incorporate the area in neighboring allotments, accepting of new grazing applications from qualified applicants, reallocation of forage to existing grazing permittees, or temporarily not allocating grazing. In each instance, alternatives would be developed and analyzed in an environmental assessment and followed with decisions in accordance the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4100).

The Monument would be managed to achieve a natural range of native plant associations, including measures to promote conservation of sensitive plant species. Management activities would not be allowed to substantially shift the makeup of native plant communities and associations or disrupt normal succession. However, there would be some circumstances where vegetation communities and associations would be shifted to meet specific management goals or objectives. These circumstances could include prescribed burns to reduce hazardous fuel loads, restoration of some habitat components in the interest of wildlife, treatments to control invasive species, etc.

The BLM would determine the priority for restoring non-native vegetation sites to a native species community. Priority sites would be areas where the natural plant community has been significantly disrupted by surface-disturbing activities and the natural resource values have been lost, or are in jeopardy of being lost, and the site could potentially be restored to a natural state. Priority ranking would be based on an emphasis to control highly invasive non-native species. The BLM would also apply reasonable discretion in establishing priority areas based on the extent and seriousness of the situation and resources available (funding and staffing). To achieve the vegetation goals outlined during site-specific planning, livestock grazing strategies (adjusting grazing or rest seasons, adjusting stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements), prescribed burning, use of herbicides, and mechanical treatments could be used to manage vegetation communities.

Surface-disturbed areas would be rehabilitated with native grasses, forbs and shrubs to minimize the potential for soil erosion and to provide forage and cover for wildlife and livestock. Non-native plants may be used under special circumstances, such as emergency soil stabilization or to establish vegetative cover as an interim step to native species.

Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures and BMPs (Appendix K). In some areas, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The intent of the reclamation standards would be to minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. If the reclamation effort would reduce the impacts created by previous developments that are non-functional and beyond repair, the BLM could remove and rehabilitate non-functioning reservoirs, pits and water developments in WSAs or in other areas where there is viewshed infringement.

Range Improvements

The BLM's goal is to manage for healthy vegetation communities that provide for a wide variety of long-term benefits such as aesthetics, wildlife, recreation, livestock grazing, etc.

Alternative A (Current Management)

The BLM would follow the standard specifications for fence installation to mitigate risks to wildlife. However, some existing fences may restrict wildlife movement, especially big game.

On some ridges, installation of water developments may be limited to avoid unnecessary competition between mule deer and livestock. To facilitate livestock watering, tanks could be placed in some allotments where they would help improve resource values. All tanks would have bird escape ramps installed to reduce the possibility of birds and small mammals drowning. Proposed winter water tanks would be located away from private lands to encourage elk to increase their use of BLM land which, in turn, could reduce depredation on croplands.

Alternatives B, C, and D

The BLM fence specifications would be followed with allowances for certain classes or types of livestock. Four-wire fences could be authorized if the class or kind of livestock necessitate the need for a more substantial fence. The BLM would modify existing fences that are creating barriers to wildlife movement. In isolated cases, the BLM would relocate fences to better fit with topography and management needs.

Any new water developments would be considered on a site-specific basis and would consider the benefits/detriment to all resources. All tanks would have bird escape ramps installed to reduce the possibility of birds and small mammals drowning. Proposed winter water tanks would be located away from private lands to encourage elk to increase their use of BLM land which, in turn, could reduce depredation on croplands. Decisions about installing water developments would be based on grazing practices and wildlife habitat needs within a specific use area. A site should only be developed if the development would improve resource values. Site-specific planning would be used to make these determinations.

Alternative E

BLM fence specifications would be followed. Four-wire fences would not be allowed under any circumstance. The BLM would modify all existing fences to standards, even if the fence does not restrict wildlife movement. Fences that are poorly located within their surrounding

topography would be relocated. Site-specific watershed plans would be modified to accommodate changes to allotment boundaries and the resulting change in carrying capacity.

Any new water developments would be considered on a site-specific basis and would consider the benefits/detriment to all resources. All tanks would have bird escape ramps installed to reduce the possibility of birds and small mammals drowning. Proposed winter water tanks would be located away from private lands to encourage elk to increase their use of BLM land which, in turn, could reduce depredation on croplands. Decisions about installing water developments would be based on grazing practices and wildlife habitat needs within a specific use area. A site should only be developed if the development would improve resource values. Site-specific planning would be used to make these determinations.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

The BLM fence specifications would be followed with allowances for certain classes or types of livestock BLM Handbook H-1741-1). Four-wire fences could be authorized if the class or kind of livestock necessitate the need for a more substantial fence. For additional wildlife mitigation, the bottom wire on four wire fences would be 12 1/2 gauge barless wire placed at least 16 inches above the ground or 18 inches from the ground if barbed. New fences would not have a top wire over 40 inches from the ground and wire stays would not be allowed. When suitable alternatives are available, fences would not be constructed along steep slopes or in dense vegetation, including timber.

The BLM could modify existing fences that are creating barriers to wildlife movement. In isolated cases, the BLM could relocate fences to better fit with topography and management needs.

Any new water developments would be considered on a site-specific basis and would consider the benefits/

detriment to all resources. All tanks would have bird escape ramps installed to reduce the possibility of birds and small mammals drowning. Proposed winter water tanks would be located away from private lands to encourage elk to increase their use of BLM land which, in turn, could reduce depredation on croplands. Decisions about installing water developments would be based on grazing practices and wildlife habitat needs (big game, migratory birds, sage-grouse, amphibians, etc.) within a specific use area. A site should only be developed if the development would improve resource values. Site-specific planning would be used to make these determinations.

Visual Resources

The BLM's goal is to protect the cultural landscape (viewshed) and the visual features in the landscape that are identified in the Proclamation.

Alternative A (Current Management)

The Monument is currently divided into Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I, II, III and IV ratings as shown in Table 2.5 and Map A.

In all areas, surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special designs (location, painting and camouflage) to blend with the natural surroundings and to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures would be allowed.

In the WSAs the VRM Class I designation would not prevent the construction of structures or maintenance of existing structures that would be allowed in the WSAs under the Interim Management Policy. The VRM objectives are designed to support the IMP guidelines to not impair the natural character of the existing landscape.

Table 2.5
Visual Resource Management Class Designations

VRM Class	Alternative A (Current Management) Acres	Alternative B Acres	Alternative C Acres	Alternative D Acres	Alternative E Acres	Alternative F (Preferred Alternative) Acres
Class I	61,700	111,480	62,000	111,480	111,480	111,480
Class II	118,800	104,320	217,000	263,520	263,520	161,560
Class III	8,200	8,200	17,500	0	0	24,770
Class IV	186,300	151,000	78,500	0	0	77,190

Alternative B

The WSAs, portions of the wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer Landscapes would be designated as VRM Class I. The Bodmer Landscapes are fan-shaped viewsheds associated with each of Karl Bodmer's illustrative drawings along the Missouri River. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II, III or IV (Table 2.5). If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In all areas, surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special designs (location, painting and camouflage) to blend with the natural surroundings and to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures would be allowed.

In the WSAs the VRM Class I designation would not prevent the construction of structures or maintenance of existing structures that would be allowed in the WSAs under the Interim Management Policy. The VRM objectives are designed to support the IMP guidelines to not impair the natural character of the existing landscape.

Alternative C

The VRM designations in the Monument would be based on the updated 2004 inventory for the existing VRM Class III and IV areas prior to management adjustments for the WSAs. A portion of the WSAs and wild segments of the UMNWSR would be designated as VRM Class I. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II, III, or IV (Table 2.5 and Map B).

In VRM Class I areas, the BLM would reduce the visual contrast on BLM land in the existing landscape by utilizing proper site selection; reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures in VRM Class I areas would be allowed.

In the WSAs the VRM Class I designation would not prevent the construction of structures or maintenance of existing structures that would be allowed in the WSAs under the Interim Management Policy. The VRM objectives are designed to support the IMP guidelines to not impair the natural character of the existing landscape.

In VRM Class II and III areas all surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures would be allowed.

Alternative D

The WSAs, portions of the wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer Landscapes would be designated as VRM Class I. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II (Table 2.5). If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In VRM Class I areas the BLM may prohibit surface-disturbing activities if such activities are not designed to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures in VRM Class I areas would be allowed.

In the WSAs the VRM Class I designation would not prevent the construction of structures or maintenance of existing structures that would be allowed in the WSAs under the Interim Management Policy. The VRM objectives are designed to support the IMP guidelines to not impair the natural character of the existing landscape.

In VRM Class II areas the BLM would reduce the visual contrast on BLM land in the existing landscape by utilizing proper site selection; reducing soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, returning the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures would be allowed.

Alternative E

The WSAs, portions of the wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer Landscapes would be designated as VRM Class I. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II (Table 2.5). If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In VRM Class I and II areas, the BLM may prohibit surface-disturbing activities if such activities are not designed to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures in VRM Class I and II areas would be allowed.

In the WSAs the VRM Class I designation would not prevent the construction of structures or maintenance of existing structures that would be allowed in the WSAs under the Interim Management Policy. The VRM objectives are designed to support the IMP guidelines to not impair the natural character of the existing landscape.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

The WSAs, portions of the wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer landscapes would be

designated as VRM Class I. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II, III, or IV as shown on Map C and in Table 2.5. The WSAs would be classified as VRM Class I and managed according to VRM Class I management objectives until such time as Congress decides to designate the area as wilderness or release it for other uses (WO IM No. 2000-096). If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In VRM Class I areas, the BLM may, if necessary, prohibit new surface-disturbing activities if such activities are not designed to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures in VRM Class I areas would be allowed.

In the WSAs, the VRM Class I designation would not prevent the construction of structures or maintenance of existing structures that would be allowed in the WSAs under the Interim Management Policy. The VRM objectives are designed to support the IMP guidelines to not impair the natural character of the existing landscape.

For new projects in VRM Class II, Class III and Class IV areas the BLM would reduce the visual contrast on BLM land in the existing landscape by utilizing proper site selection; reducing soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, returning the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape. Maintenance of existing range improvements and other structures would be allowed.

Forest Products

The BLM's goal is to provide a healthy ecosystem that achieves a sustainable natural variation of vegetation communities.

Alternative A (Current Management)

It is not BLM's intent to conduct forest product sales within the Monument. However, vegetative use areas for forest products (post/pole/house logs/firewood/Christmas trees and incidental harvest related to activities such as road building or gas well site development) would be identified at BLM's discretion, as long as the resources for which the Monument was established are not adversely impacted. Also, before these products are lost to prescribed fire or mechanically cleared for fuel reduction, the BLM may consider a forest product sale.

Forest products would be available for sale outside of the WSAs and UMNWSR. The sale of forest products may be permitted and would undergo an environmental analysis during the site-specific evaluation phase.

Recreational use of forest products within the UMNWSR would be limited to dead-and-down material.

Each BLM office could establish areas for personal use forest product sales. Oftentimes, forest product personal use permits are issued for non-specific geographical areas, unless a specific product area is identified.

Alternatives B and C

Any commercial forest product sales (post/pole/house logs/firewood/Christmas trees and incidental harvest related to activities such as road building or gas well site development) would be incidental and associated with other projects/activities and vegetative goals or objectives as outlined in activity plans. Where forest/woodland health is in jeopardy, minimal impact wood product harvesting techniques may be pursued.

The Monument Manager could designate personal use areas for cutting Christmas trees, post and pole, firewood, or logs.

Alternative D

Where forest/woodland health is in jeopardy, minimal impact wood product harvesting techniques may be pursued.

The Monument Manager could designate personal use areas for cutting Christmas trees and firewood. Under a permit, individuals would be allowed to utilize material from wildland fires.

Alternative E

Commercial product sales and incidental personal use would be prohibited.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Where forest/woodland health is in jeopardy, minimal impact harvesting techniques that are appropriate for soil and topographical conditions may be pursued.

The Monument Manager could designate personal use areas for cutting Christmas trees and firewood. Under a permit, individuals could be allowed to utilize incidental material. The permit would address the specific type of material and conditions under which removal would occur.

Right-of-Way Corridors, Avoidance Areas and Exclusion Areas

The BLM's goal is to provide reasonable access for the administrative needs and authorized uses of private landowners, industry and government agencies.

Avoidance areas for lineal rights-of-way (ROWs) include the Stafford Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the Ervin Ridge WSA, that portion of the Cow Creek WSA in Blaine County, the Cow Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), riparian areas and areas containing sedimentary Breaks soils. The recreational and scenic sections of the UMNWSR would continue as avoidance areas.

Alternative A (Current Management)

Seven utility and transportation corridors cross the Missouri River in the Monument as identified in the West HiLine RMP and (Table 2.6).

Exclusion areas include the wild sections of the UMNWSR; the Dog Creek, Woodhawk, and Antelope Creek WSAs; and that portion of the Cow Creek WSA in Phillips County. If the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and are released from WSA status, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

Table 2.6 Utility and Transportation Corridors on the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Alternative A (Current Management)	
<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Utility and Transportation Corridor</i>
River Mile 0 to 1	Highway 80 - State Highway 80 from Fort Benton to Stanford crosses the UMNWSR at Fort Benton. The road is located entirely on private land. At this location the Wild and Scenic River extends only from bank to bank.
River Mile 20 to 21	Loma - A buried telephone line (M59069) parallels the county road (M78762) that connects Loma with Geraldine. The telephone and road cross a small portion of BLM land in Section 18, T25N R10E. The Wild and Scenic River extends only from bank to bank in this location.
River Mile 38.5 to 39.5	Virgelle Ferry - A power line is located where the Ferry crosses the UMNWSR at Virgelle and does not encumber BLM land. The Wild and Scenic River extends only from bank to bank in this location.
River Mile 88 to 89	Secondary Highway 236 - Secondary Highway 236 extends southeast from Big Sandy and across the PN Bridge to Winifred. A power line (M59070) and an underground telephone line (M39347A) are located along this road and cross several miles of BLM land on the south side of the Missouri River.
River Mile 101 to 103	McClelland/Stafford Ferry - The McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road, which connects Chinook with Winifred, crosses BLM land both north and south of the Missouri River. A power line (M24219) that provides power to the Ferry runs alongside the road on BLM land on the south side of the Monument.
River Mile 131.5 to 132.5	DY Trail/Power Plant - The DY Trail crosses BLM land and accesses the south bank of the Missouri River in Fergus County across from the old Power Plant Ferry location. The Bull Creek/Power Plant Ferry road crosses BLM land in Phillips County and leads to the abandoned ferry location on the north bank of the Missouri River. No utilities are located along these roads.
River Mile 148.5 to 149.5	Highway 191 - U.S. Highway 191 (M013368) extends from Malta to Lewistown crossing the Monument near its eastern boundary. A power line (M052239) and a buried telephone line (M049342) parallel the highway; both are located on about a mile of Corp of Engineers (COE) land that is leased by BLM, east of the highway in this area.

Alternative B

In addition to the seven utility and transportation corridors that cross the Missouri River, the Klabzuba pipeline would also be designated a corridor (Table 2.7). The utility and transportation corridors on BLM land would have defined boundaries within 1/2 mile of the

centerline of the following roads: U.S. Highway 191; State Secondary Highway 236; the McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road; DY Trail/Power Plant Ferry road; and the Klabzuba pipeline. The corridors at Fort Benton, Loma and Virgelle would retain their current status.

Table 2.7
Utility and Transportation Corridors in the Monument
Alternatives B, C, and D

<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Utility and Transportation Corridor</i>
River Mile 0 to 1	Highway 80 - State Highway 80 from Fort Benton to Stanford crosses the UMNWSR at Fort Benton. The road is located entirely on private land. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 20 to 21	Loma - A buried telephone line (M59069) parallels the county road (M78762) that connects Loma with Geraldine. The telephone and road cross a small portion of BLM land in Section 18, T25N R10E. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 38.5 to 39.5	Virgelle Ferry - A power line is located where the Ferry crosses the UMNWSR at Virgelle and does not encumber BLM land. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 88 to 89	Secondary Highway 236 - Secondary Highway 236 extends southeast from Big Sandy and across the PN Bridge to Winifred. A power line (M59070) and an underground telephone line (M39347A) are located along this road and cross several miles of BLM land on the south side of the Missouri River. The defined corridor extends one-half mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.
River Mile 101 to 102	McClelland/Stafford Ferry - The McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road that connects Chinook with Winifred crosses BLM land both north and south of the Missouri River. A power line (M24219) that provides power to the Ferry runs parallel to the road on BLM land on the south side of the Monument. The corridor extends one-half mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.
River Mile 103.5 to 104.5	Klabzuba - The Klabzuba natural gas pipeline M41268 follows the McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road north of the Missouri River. The corridor would include BLM land south of the Missouri River. The corridor extends one-half mile either side of the pipeline.
River Mile 131.5 to 132.5	DY Trail/Power Plant - The DY Trail crosses BLM land and accesses the south bank of the Missouri River in Fergus County across from the old Power Plant Ferry location. The Bull Creek/Power Plant Ferry road crosses BLM land in Phillips County and leads south to the abandoned ferry location on the north bank of the Missouri River. No utilities are located along these roads. The corridor extends one-half mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.
River Mile 148.5 to 149.5	Highway 191 - U.S. Highway 191 (M013368) extends from Malta to Grass Range crossing the Monument near its eastern boundary. A power line (M052239) and a buried telephone line (M049342) parallel the highway; both are located on about a mile of COE land that is leased by the BLM, east of the highway in this area. The corridor extends one-half mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.

Avoidance areas for ROWs would include the scenic sections of the UMNWSR, the Bodmer Landscapes, the Cow Creek ACEC, cultural/historic sites, riparian and wetland areas, areas containing unique geologic formations, areas containing severely erosive soils, and sage-grouse seasonal habitat unless the infrastructure is buried.

Exclusion areas would include the wild sections of the UMNWSR and the six WSAs, pending determinations by Congress. If the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and are released from WSA status, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

Alternative C

This alternative would be the same as Alternative B, except if the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and are released from WSA status, they would be managed as avoidance areas.

Alternative D

This alternative would be the same as Alternative B, except if the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and are released from WSA status, they would be managed as exclusion areas.

Alternative E

In addition to the seven utility and transportation corridors that cross the Missouri River, the Klabzuba

pipeline on the south side of the river would also be a designated corridor (Table 2.8). The utility and transportation corridors would be 1/2 mile wide and on BLM land would have defined boundaries within 1/4 mile of the centerline of the following roads and pipeline: U.S. Highway 191; State Secondary Highway 236; the McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road; DY Trail/Power Plant Ferry road; and the Klabzuba pipeline. The corridor for the pipeline would be only on the south side of the river. The pipeline follows the McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road corridor on the north side of the river. The corridors at Fort Benton, Loma and Virgelle would be 1/2 mile wide. While these three corridors cross the UMNWSR they do not involve any BLM land.

Avoidance areas for ROWs would include the scenic sections of the UMNWSR, the Bodmer Landscapes, the Cow Creek ACEC, cultural/historic sites, riparian and wetland areas, areas containing unique geologic formations, areas considered unsuitable due to erosion and slope, and sage-grouse seasonal habitat where impacts could not be mitigated or effectively controlled. If the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and are released from WSA status, they would be managed as exclusion areas.

Exclusion areas would include the wild sections of the UMNWSR and the six WSAs, pending determinations by Congress.

Table 2.8
Utility and Transportation Corridors in the Monument
Alternative E

<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Utility and Transportation Corridor</i>
River Mile 0 to 1	Highway 80 - State Highway 80 from Fort Benton to Stanford crosses the UMNWSR at Fort Benton. The road is located entirely on private land. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 20 to 21	Loma - A buried telephone line (M59069) parallels the county road (M78762) that connects Loma with Geraldine. The telephone and road cross a small portion of BLM land in Section 18, T25N R10E. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 38.5 to 39.5	Virgelle Ferry - A power line is located where the Ferry crosses the UMNWSR at Virgelle and does not encumber BLM land. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 88 to 89	Secondary Highway 236 - Secondary Highway 236 extends southeast from Big Sandy and across the PN Bridge to Winifred. A power line (M59070) and an underground telephone line (M39347A) are located along this road and cross several miles of BLM land on the south side of the Missouri River. The defined

	corridor extends one-quarter mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.
River Mile 101 to 102	McClelland/Stafford Ferry - The McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road that connects Chinook with Winifred crosses BLM land both north and south of the Missouri River. A power line (M24219) that provides power to the Ferry runs parallel to the road on BLM land on the south side of the Monument. The corridor extends one-quarter mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.
River Mile 103.5 to 104.5	Klabzuba - The Klabzuba natural gas pipeline M41268 follows the McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road north of the Missouri River. The corridor would include BLM land south of the Missouri River. The corridor extends one-quarter mile either side of the pipeline.
River Mile 131.5 to 132.5	DY Trail/Power Plant - The DY Trail crosses BLM land and accesses the south bank of the Missouri River in Fergus County across from the old Power Plant Ferry location. The Bull Creek/Power Plant Ferry road crosses BLM land in Phillips County and leads south to the abandoned ferry location on the north bank of the Missouri River. No utilities are located along these roads. The corridor extends one-quarter mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.
River Mile 148.5 to 149.5	Highway 191 - U.S. Highway 191 (M013368) extends from Malta to Grass Range crossing the Monument near its eastern boundary. A power line (M052239) and a buried telephone line (M049342) parallel the highway; both are located on about a mile of COE land that is leased by the BLM, east of the highway in this area. The corridor extends one-quarter mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

In addition to the seven utility and transportation corridors that cross the Missouri River, the Klabzuba pipeline on the south side of the river would also be a designated corridor (Table 2.9). The corridor for the Klabzuba pipeline would only be on the south side of the river. The pipeline follows the McClelland/Stafford Ferry corridor on the north side of the river.

Four of the utility and transportation corridors would have defined boundaries through the Monument. The corridors would be 1 mile wide and on BLM land would have defined boundaries within 1/2 mile of the centerline of the following roads and pipeline: the McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road; DY Trail/Power Plant Ferry road; and the Klabzuba pipeline.

The corridor for State Secondary Highway 236 would be about 2 miles wide on the south side of the Missouri River, which includes the original road along the Judith River and the new route on Claggett Hill. However, the width of this corridor would be reduced to 1 mile when the two roads converge at the top of Reed Hill.

The corridors at Fort Benton, Loma, Virgelle and Highway 191 would retain their current status (1 mile

wide). These four corridors extend from bank to bank where they cross the UMNWSR and do not involve any BLM land.

The eight corridors are shown on Map 1.

The corridors would be available to all uses (pipelines, transmission/power lines, roads, etc.) with the appropriate mitigation. If feasible, future utilities would be located adjacent to existing roads within the designated corridors or restricted to the least intrusive disturbance.

Within the DY Trail/Power Plant corridor, pipelines would be bored under the Missouri River to avoid river channel disturbance. Boring would not be allowed during the spawning season from March 30 to July 15. Overhead power and/or telephone lines would be allowed to cross the Missouri River to avoid disturbance to spawning sensitive species (sauger, paddlefish, and sturgeon).

Avoidance areas for ROWs would include the scenic sections of the UMNWSR, the Bodmer Landscapes, the Cow Creek ACEC, cultural/historic sites, riparian and wetland areas, areas containing unique geologic formations, areas considered unsuitable due to erosion

and slope, and sage-grouse seasonal habitat where impacts could not be mitigated or effectively controlled. If the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and are released from WSA status, they would be managed as avoidance areas.

Exclusion areas would include the wild sections of the UMNWSR and the six WSAs, pending determinations by Congress.

Table 2.9 Utility and Transportation Corridors in the Monument Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)	
<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Utility and Transportation Corridor</i>
River Mile 0 to 1	Highway 80 - State Highway 80 from Fort Benton to Stanford crosses the UMNWSR at Fort Benton. The road is located entirely on private land. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 20 to 21	Loma - A buried telephone line (M59069) parallels the county road (M78762) that connects Loma with Geraldine. The telephone and road cross a small portion of BLM land in Section 18, T25N R10E. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 38.5 to 39.5	Virgelle Ferry - A power line is located where the Ferry crosses the UMNWSR at Virgelle and does not encumber BLM land. At this location the Monument extends only from bank to bank along the UMNWSR.
River Mile 88 to 89	Secondary Highway 236 - Secondary Highway 236 extends southeast from Big Sandy and across the PN Bridge to Winifred. A power line (M59070) and an underground telephone line (M39347A) are located along this road and cross several miles of BLM land on the south side of the Missouri River. The defined corridor extends one-half mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north of the River. On the south side of the River, the corridor encompasses both the original county road along the Judith River and the new county road on Claggett Hill for a width of about 2 miles where they cross BLM land. Where the two roads converge at the top of Reed Hill, the corridor width is reduced to one-half mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land.
River Mile 101 to 102	McClelland/Stafford Ferry - The McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road that connects Chinook with Winifred crosses BLM land both north and south of the Missouri River. A power line (M24219) that provides power to the Ferry runs parallel to the road on BLM land on the south side of the Monument. The corridor extends one-half mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.
River Mile 103.5 to 104.5	Klabzuba - The Klabzuba natural gas pipeline M41268 follows the McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road north of the Missouri River. The corridor would include BLM land south of the Missouri River. The corridor extends one-half mile either side of the pipeline.
River Mile 131.5 to 132.5	DY Trail/Power Plant - The DY Trail crosses BLM land and accesses the south bank of the Missouri River in Fergus County across from the old Power Plant Ferry location. The Bull Creek/Power Plant Ferry road crosses BLM land in Phillips County and leads south to the abandoned ferry location on the north bank of the Missouri River. No utilities are located along these roads. The corridor extends one-half mile either side of the road centerline on BLM land north and south of the River.
River Mile 148.5 to 149.5	Highway 191 - U.S. Highway 191 (M013368) extends from Malta to Grass Range crossing the Monument near its eastern boundary. A power line (M052239) and a buried telephone line (M049342) parallel the highway; both are located on about a mile of COE land that is leased by the BLM, east of the highway in this area.

Land Ownership Adjustment

Alternative A (Current Management)

Any BLM land identified for disposal would need to meet the criteria discussed in the Decisions Common to All Alternatives portion of this chapter and a plan amendment would be completed.

Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F (Preferred Alternative)

The following BLM land is identified for disposal by exchange and meets the criteria discussed in Decisions Common to All Alternatives: T22N R16E, E2NE4 of Section 15 (80 acres). The parcel is on the edge of the Monument, contains minimal Breaks topography, and contains no objects for which the Monument was designated. The BLM land would be exchanged for private land identified as T22N R15E, Section 3, Lot 5 (24.60 acres) and Section 4, Lot 8 (46.52 acres). This land exchange proposal was initiated by the private landowner in March 2002.

Fire Management

The BLM's goal is to manage wildland fire safely, efficiently and with minimal impact to

resource values while minimizing the risk of catastrophic fire within the Monument and communities adjacent to the Monument. This includes maintaining or reestablishing the natural influence of fire on vegetation communities and associations.

The Monument includes four fire management units: Wild and Scenic River, Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument (Map D). Fire management alternatives for these fire management units (FMU) would be based on the options listed in Table 2.10 for wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire.

Alternative A (Current Management)

The current fire management guidance, based on the State Director's Interim Guidance (BLM 2001a), would continue. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.11. The appropriate management response to wildland fires in all of the fire management units could be based on firefighter and public safety while considering the role of fire. Fires would be managed using less than full suppression efforts and, in most cases, would be allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered.

Table 2.10 Options for Wildland Fire Suppression and Prescribed Fire	
<i>Option</i>	<i>Description of Fire Suppression Option</i>
Aggressive	All fires would be suppressed aggressively using all available methods based on firefighter and public safety. The focus of this strategy would be to limit acres burned. Cost would not be a consideration in most cases.
Appropriate	Appropriate management response would be based on firefighter and public safety considering the natural role of fire (fire regime and condition class (FRCC)). Fires could be managed using less than full suppression in most cases and allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. Cost of the suppression activity would also be considered.
Wildland Fire Use	A wildland fire use plan would be developed. Areas could be identified where prescribed fire would be used based on firefighter and public safety along with FRCC and the goal to return fire to a natural role on the Monument landscape.
<i>Option</i>	<i>Description of Prescribed Fire Option</i>
None	No prescribed fire use would be allowed.
Safety and Habitat	Prescribed fire could be used based on public safety (fuel hazard reduction) and resource issues (range improvement, wildlife habitat).
Natural Role of Fire	Prescribed fire would be used based on FRCC and the goal to return fire to a natural role on the Monument landscape with very few constraints.

Prescribed burns could be used in all of the FMUs, based on public safety and resource issues.

Table 2.11 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options Alternative A (Current Management)		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
Wilderness Study Areas	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
North Monument	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
South Monument	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat

Alternative B

Wildland fire suppression efforts would be more aggressive. The BLM could pursue limited use of prescribed fire, based on public safety and property protection. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.12. Wildland fires in all of the FMUs would be suppressed aggressively using all available methods, including mechanical means. The focus of this strategy would be to limit the number of acres burned. Cost would not be a consideration in most cases.

Prescribed fires would not be used in three of the FMUs (Wild and Scenic River, North Monument and South Monument). Prescribed fire in the WSAs could be used based on public safety and resource issues.

Table 2.12 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options Alternative B		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Aggressive	None
Wilderness Study Areas	Aggressive	Safety and Habitat
North Monument	Aggressive	None
South Monument	Aggressive	None

Alternative C

The BLM would have more discretion in its fire management response, but the emphasis would remain on public safety and protection. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.13.

Wildland fires in three of the FMUs (Wild and Scenic River, North Monument and South Monument) would be suppressed aggressively using all available methods, including mechanical means. The focus would be to limit the number of acres burned. The appropriate management response to fires in WSAs would be based on firefighter and public safety while considering the natural role of fire. Fires would be managed using less than full suppression and, in most cases, would be allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered.

Prescribed fires would not be used in the Wild and Scenic River FMU. In the other three FMUs (Wild and Scenic River, North Monument and South Monument) prescribed fire could be used based on public safety and resource issues.

Table 2.13 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options Alternative C		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Aggressive	None
Wilderness Study Areas	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
North Monument	Aggressive	Safety and Habitat
South Monument	Aggressive	Safety and Habitat

Alternative D

The BLM would increase its management responsiveness based on a wide range of fire management tools available and more management flexibility. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.14.

The appropriate management response to wildland fires in three of the FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument) would be based on firefighter and public safety while considering the

natural role of fire. Fires would be managed at less than full suppression and, in most cases, allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered. Wildland fires in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be suppressed aggressively using all available methods, including mechanical means. The focus would be to limit the number of acres burned. Cost would not be a consideration in most cases.

Prescribed fire in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be based on public safety and resource issues. In the other three FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument) prescribed fire would be used based on flexibility to respond to changing conditions and the goal of retuning fire to a natural role in the Monument landscape with very few constraints.

Table 2.14 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options Alternative D		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Aggressive	Safety and Habitat
Wilderness Study Areas	Appropriate	Natural Role of Fire
North Monument	Appropriate	Natural Role of Fire
South Monument	Appropriate	Natural Role of Fire

Alternative E

This alternative would emphasize natural processes with minimal intervention. The management response would be subtle and provide the least intensive management approach. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.15.

The BLM would develop a fire use plan for wildland fires in three of the FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument). This plan would identify areas where wildland fire would be used under prescription, based on flexibility to respond to changing conditions and the goal of returning fire to a natural role in the Monument landscape. The appropriate management response to fires in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be based on firefighter and public safety, while considering the natural role of fire. Fires would be managed using less than full suppression efforts and, in most cases, would be allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered.

Prescribed fires could be used in three of the FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument) based on the flexibility to respond to changing conditions and the goal of returning fire to a more natural role on the Monument landscape. Prescribed fire in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be based on public safety and resource issues.

Table 2.15 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options Alternative E		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
Wilderness Study Areas	Wildland Fire Use	Natural Role of Fire
North Monument	Wildland Fire Use	Natural Role of Fire
South Monument	Wildland Fire Use	Natural Role of Fire

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

The BLM's response would be based on a wide range of fire management tools available and more management flexibility to respond to changing conditions. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.16.

The appropriate management response to all wildland fires would be based on firefighter and public safety and resource values on BLM, state, and private land while considering the natural role of fire. Fires could be managed with less than full suppression efforts and, in most cases, allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered. Resource values, such as sage-grouse habitat, would be protected during wildland fire suppression through the knowledge of resource advisors assigned to wildland fire incidents and/or information on the location of critical resource areas available to incident commanders; however, protection for resource values would be secondary to life safety and property values.

Prescribed fires could be used in three of the FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument) based on the flexibility to respond to changing conditions and the goal of returning fire to a more natural role on the Monument landscape. Prescribed fire in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be based on public safety and resource issues.

Table 2.16 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
Wilderness Study Areas	Appropriate	Natural Role of Fire
North Monument	Appropriate	Natural Role of Fire
South Monument	Appropriate	Natural Role of Fire

Wild and Scenic Rivers (Eligible Stream Segments: Cow Creek, Eagle Creek and Dog Creek)

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Pub. L. 90-542 as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287) established a method for providing federal protection for certain of our country's remaining free-flowing rivers, preserving them and their immediate environments for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Including a river in the system provides protective management and controls development. Appendix P is the Wild and Scenic River Eligibility and Suitability Report for the Monument.

The BLM inventoried 66 streams and found three streams eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and

Scenic Rivers system: Cow Creek, Eagle Creek, and Dog Creek. These three streams were found to be free-flowing and possessed one or more outstandingly remarkable values. The eligibility and suitability of these streams is addressed in Appendix P. The alternatives address BLM's recommendation for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system.

Alternative A (Current Management)

The BLM would not make a recommendation on suitability. The three eligible stream segments would be managed to protect their outstanding remarkable values.

Alternatives B, C, and D

The BLM would not recommend the three eligible stream segments as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Management for each area would be provided by the guidance in the Monument RMP.

Alternative E

The BLM would recommend the three eligible stream segments as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Management for each area would be provided by the guidance in the Monument RMP.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

The BLM would not recommend the three eligible stream segments as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Management for each area would be provided by the guidance in the Monument RMP.

Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure

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Recreation

The BLM's goal is to manage for a variety of sustainable visitor opportunities in mostly primitive and natural landscapes.

This section addresses management for the entire Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and would apply to all the recreation management areas.

Alternative A (Current Management)

Recreation Management Areas – The BLM would continue with the four special recreation management areas (SRMAs) for BLM land. The SRMAs do not follow a legal boundary. They are simply areas delineated for specific recreation management focus. The SRMAs include the South Phillips SRMA, the Judith Extensive SRMA, the North Missouri Breaks SRMA, and the Upper Missouri River SRMA. These SRMAs include BLM land in and outside of the Monument.

Fees – The BLM would continue the expanded amenity fee for overnight camping at the James Kipp Recreation Area (currently \$12 per vehicle). The fee amount may be updated by the BLM through a business plan. Development of the business plan would involve the Central Montana RAC and notification to the public.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at the James Kipp Recreation Area. The fees would be used for site maintenance and visitor services improvements as established in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA).

Gateway Communities – The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The UMNWSR offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be financed by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with management objectives. These initiatives may or may not generate profit or result in permanent facilities.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the UMNWSR for touring and instructional purposes, for the development of privately funded research, and for expanded regional promotional activities. A special recreation permit must be issued for all commercial and competitive activities that make a profit from recreational visitor activities on BLM land.

Currently, the BLM, City of Fort Benton, and The River and Plains Society are partners in the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center. The City of Fort Benton will assist with maintenance of the grounds and The River and Plains Society will provide seasonal staffing and volunteers during the summer months as well as manage the center's gift store.

Research, Collection and Special Events – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they could add to the body of knowledge and interpretation opportunities. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research by accredited institutions. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds and berries) would be allowed. Commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument Manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument Manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. Large group events would be authorized subject to restrictions to protect resources. These restrictions may include, but would not be limited to, the designation of specific roads or trails for a particular event, limitations on parking, use of campfires, sanitation requirements, and the number of people involved in the event.

Recreation in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting). However, the BLM could implement a seasonal restriction on the collection of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter, if harassment is a problem.

Recreational use of islands would not be permitted during deer and waterfowl reproduction (e.g., fawn birthing, nesting and brood rearing) periods. Camping on BLM islands in the Missouri River would be discouraged from April 1 to July 31.

Interpretive Sites – Interpretation of cultural and geological sites would occur on a case-by-case basis. Some areas would be developed for self-guided interpretive study because of their geological, historical, cultural, paleontological or natural values. Prior to developing interpretive sites for cultural resources, the sites would be evaluated and criteria developed to minimize any potential negative impacts to critical resources. These developments may include interpretive signs and displays that would be consistent with visual resource management objectives. The cultural sites that could be developed include McClelland/Stafford Ferry, Cow Creek, Evans Bend, Steamboat Point, Little Sandy and Hole-in-the-Wall. Other sites may be developed if substantial public use occurs, if BLM acquires important land, or if major new resource discoveries are made.

Alternative B

Recreation Management Areas – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map E). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Fees – The BLM would discontinue the fee system at the James Kipp Recreation Area and would not implement a recreation user fee system at additional sites.

Gateway Communities – The BLM would strive to provide a staffed visitor information site in Chinook, Big Sandy and Winifred or partner with these gateway communities to provide visitor information.

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The Monument offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be provided by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with the Monument. These

initiatives would not result in permanent facilities in the Monument.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the Monument for touring and instructional purposes and for expanded regional promotional activities. A special recreation permit must be issued for all commercial and competitive activities that make a profit from recreational visitor activities on BLM land.

Currently, the BLM, City of Fort Benton, and The River and Plains Society are partners in the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center. The City of Fort Benton will assist with maintenance of the grounds and The River and Plains Society will provide seasonal staffing and volunteers during the summer months as well as manage the center's gift store.

Research, Collection and Special Events – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they could add to the body of knowledge and interpretation opportunities. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit, and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed in specifically identified areas, as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds and berries) would be allowed. Commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would normally be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument Manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the

goals of the Monument. The use of metal detectors without a permit may be authorized in certain areas. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument Manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. Large group events would be authorized subject to restrictions to protect resources. These restrictions may include, but would not be limited to, the designation of specific roads or trails for a particular event, limitations on parking, use of campfires, sanitation requirements, and the number of people involved in the event.

Recreation in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting). However, the BLM could implement a seasonal restriction on the collection of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter, if harassment is a problem.

There would be no restrictions concerning camping on BLM islands in the Missouri River.

Interpretive Sites – Historic, archaeological and geological opportunities on BLM land would be enhanced by developing the interpretive potential at selected sites. Interpretive sites would be developed with explanatory signs, exhibits and trails.

Topics for interpretation would be selected based on access, information potential and the potential to provide important segments of the area's history or prehistory via interpretation. Some potential cultural sites for interpretation would include Decision Point; Eagle Creek; Murray/PN dugout; Hagadone, Middleton, Ervin, Gist, Cable, and Nelson homesteads; Gilmore cabin; Nez Perce Trail; and the sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Other possible interpretive sites and topics include prehistoric sites and the steamboat era on the Missouri River.

Some potential geological interpretive sites would include the stratigraphic cross section of the Missouri River from Virgelle to the James Kipp Recreation Area showing the regional dip of beds starting in Colorado Shale and ending in Bearpaw Shale; the glacial geomorphology and paleo channel of the Missouri River at Little Sandy Creek; the igneous dike known as the Grand Natural Wall from the Lewis and Clark Journal entry; Hole-in-the-Wall; the Big Sag at Judith Landing; Sugarloaf Rock fault plane vs. bedding plane at McClelland/Stafford Ferry; the diatreme at Gist Bottom; and the invertebrate paleo site at Woodhawk.

Alternative C

Recreation Management Areas – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map E). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Fees – The BLM would implement an expanded amenity fee (currently \$12 per night per vehicle at the James Kipp Recreation Area) for overnight camping in developed recreation sites (Level 1). This would include Wood Bottom, Coal Banks, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk, the James Kipp Recreation Area and any additional Level 1 sites that may be constructed. After the RMP is completed the BLM, with public input, would develop a business plan to determine the actual fee amounts charged for new sites.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at Level 1 sites for expenditure on site maintenance and visitor service improvements as established in FLREA.

Gateway Communities – The BLM would strive to provide a staffed visitor information site in Chinook, Big Sandy and Winifred or partner with these gateway communities to provide visitor information and benefits such as family education opportunities and educational and interpretive experiences.

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The Monument offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be provided by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with the Monument. These initiatives would not result in permanent facilities in the Monument.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the Monument for touring and instructional purposes and for expanded regional promotional activities. A special recreation permit must be issued for all commercial and competitive activities that make a profit from recreational visitor activities on BLM land.

Currently, the BLM, City of Fort Benton, and The River and Plains Society are partners in the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center. The City of Fort Benton will assist

with maintenance of the grounds and The River and Plains Society will provide seasonal staffing and volunteers during the summer months as well as manage the center's gift store.

Research, Collection and Special Events – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they could add to the body of knowledge and interpretation opportunities. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit, and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed in specifically identified areas, as limited by the BLM's regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds, and berries) would be allowed in specified areas. Commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would normally be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument Manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. The use of metal detectors without a permit may be authorized in certain areas. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument Manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. The BLM may limit the size of a group or specific activities. The authorization of large group events would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis prior to issuing an SRP.

Recreation in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn

hunting) with a seasonal restriction (December 1 to March 31) on the collection of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter.

There would be no restrictions concerning camping on BLM islands in the Missouri River.

Interpretive Sites – Historic, archaeological and geological opportunities on BLM land would be enhanced by developing the interpretive potential at selected sites. The BLM would establish small, low-key interpretive signs at specific sites that blend in with the surroundings and would not be visible from the Missouri River. The BLM would provide portable interpretation (guidebooks) for some cultural sites and install simple markers that key to the guidebooks.

Topics for interpretation would be selected based on access, information potential and the potential to provide important segments of the area's history or prehistory via interpretation. Some potential sites for interpretation would include Decision Point; Eagle Creek; Murray/PN dugout; Hagadone, Middleton, Ervin, Gist, Cable, and Nelson homesteads; Gilmore cabin; Nez Perce Trail; and sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Other possible interpretive sites and topics include prehistoric sites and the steamboat era on the Missouri River.

Some potential geological interpretive sites would include the stratigraphic cross section of the Missouri River from Virgelle to the James Kipp Recreation Area showing the regional dip of beds starting in Colorado Shale and ending in Bearpaw Shale; the glacial geomorphology and paleo channel of the Missouri River at Little Sandy Creek; the igneous dike known as the Grand Natural Wall from the Lewis and Clark Journal entry; Hole-in-the-Wall; the Big Sag at Judith Landing; Sugarloaf Rock fault plane vs. bedding plane at McClelland/Stafford Ferry; the diatreme at Gist Bottom; and the invertebrate paleo site at Woodhawk.

Alternative D

Recreation Management Areas – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map E). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Fees – The BLM would implement an expanded amenity fee for overnight camping in Level 1 recreation sites. The sites would provide at least a majority of the following: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, reasonable visitor protection, refuse

containers, toilet facilities and simple devices for containing a fire. Level 1 sites currently include Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk and the James Kipp Recreation Area. This fee system would also apply to any additional Level 1 sites that may be constructed. After the RMP is completed the BLM, with public input, would develop a business plan to determine the actual fee amounts charged for new sites.

A permit and associated fee would be required to boat on the Missouri River. It would be referred to as a Special Area Permit. The cost of the permit would be established by the State Director based on the cost of operating the permit system, special costs related to management of the area, comparability with other agencies and similar special areas, and fairness and equity among all users. Camping overnight at Level 1 expanded amenity fee sites would be included with the Special Area Permit fee. This permit is a separate permit from a commercial activity permit.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at Level 1 sites for expenditure on site maintenance and visitor services as established in FLREA.

Fees associated with the Special Area Permit to float the Missouri River would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used to cover management costs. In addition, fees could be used to support county emergency services and to purchase short-term campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners.

Gateway Communities – The BLM would strive to provide a staffed visitor information site in Chinook, Big Sandy and Winifred or partner with these gateway communities to provide visitor information and other visitor benefits such as family education opportunities and educational and interpretive experiences.

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The Monument offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be provided by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with the Monument. These initiatives would not result in permanent facilities in the Monument.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the Monument for touring and instructional purposes and for expanded regional promotional activities. A special recreation permit must be issued for

all commercial and competitive activities that make a profit from recreational visitor activities on BLM land.

Currently, the BLM, City of Fort Benton, and The River and Plains Society are partners in the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center. The City of Fort Benton will assist with maintenance of the grounds and The River and Plains Society will provide seasonal staffing and volunteers during the summer months as well as manage the center's gift store.

Research, Collection and Special Events – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they could add to the body of knowledge and interpretation opportunities. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit, and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed in specifically identified areas, as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds and berries) would be allowed in specified areas. Commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would normally be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument Manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. The use of metal detectors without a permit may be authorized in certain areas. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument Manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was

designated. The BLM may limit the size of a group or specific activities. The authorization of large group events would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis prior to issuing an SRP.

Recreation in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting). However, the BLM could implement a seasonal restriction (December 1 to May 15) on the collection of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter, if harassment is a problem.

Camping would not be allowed on BLM islands from April 1 to July 31, to protect wildlife during sensitive periods (e.g., nesting, brooding periods).

Interpretive Sites – Historic, archaeological and geological opportunities on BLM land would be enhanced by developing the interpretive potential at selected sites. The BLM would establish small, low-key interpretive signs at specific sites that blend in with the surroundings and would not be visible from the Missouri River. These low-key sites would be for dispersed recreation experiences. The BLM would provide portable interpretation (guidebooks) for some cultural sites and install simple markers that key to the guidebooks.

Topics for interpretation would be selected based on access, information potential and the potential to provide important segments of the area's history or prehistory via interpretation. Some potential cultural sites for interpretation would include Decision Point; Eagle Creek; Murray/PN dugout; Hagadone, Middleton, Ervin, Gist, Cable, and Nelson homesteads; Gilmore cabin; Nez Perce Trail; and sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Other possible interpretive sites and topics include prehistoric sites and the steamboat era on the Missouri River.

Some potential geological interpretive sites would include the stratigraphic cross section of the Missouri River from Virgelle to the James Kipp Recreation Area showing the regional dip of beds starting in Colorado Shale and ending in Bearpaw Shale; the glacial geomorphology and paleo channel of the Missouri River at Little Sandy Creek; the igneous dike known as the Grand Natural Wall from the Lewis and Clark Journal entry; Hole-in-the-Wall; the Big Sag at Judith Landing; the Sugarloaf Rock fault plane vs. bedding plane at McClelland/Stafford Ferry; the diatrema at Gist Bottom; and the invertebrate paleo site at Woodhawk.

Alternative E

Recreation Management Areas – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map E). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes

BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Fees – The BLM would implement an expanded amenity fee for overnight camping in Level 1 recreation sites. The sites would provide at least a majority of the following: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, collection by an employee or agent, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities and simple devices for containing a fire. Level 1 sites currently include Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk, and the James Kipp Recreation Area. This fee system would also apply to any additional Level 1 sites that may be constructed. After the RMP is completed the BLM, with public input, would develop a business plan to determine the actual fee amounts charged for new sites.

A permit and associated fee would be required to boat on the Missouri River. It would be referred to as a Special Area Permit. The cost of the permit would be established by the State Director based on the cost of operating the permit system, special costs related to management of the area, comparability with other agencies and similar special areas, and fairness and equity among all users. Camping overnight at Level 1 expanded amenity fee sites would be included with the Special Area Permit fee. This permit is a separate permit from a commercial activity permit.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at Level 1 sites for expenditure on site maintenance and visitor services as established in FLREA.

Fees associated with the Special Area Permit to float the Missouri River would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used to cover management costs. In addition, fees could be used to support county emergency services and to purchase short-term campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners.

Gateway Communities – The BLM would provide visitor information to local communities to enhance their capability to provide benefits such as family education opportunities and educational and interpretive experiences.

Currently, the BLM, City of Fort Benton, and The River and Plains Society are partners in the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center. The City of Fort Benton will assist with maintenance of the grounds and The River and Plains Society will provide seasonal staffing and volunteers during the summer months as well as manage the center's gift store.

Research, Collection and Special Events – The BLM would not allow or authorize archaeological and historical investigations (except 106 permits) or paleontological research.

The personal collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood would be prohibited.

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds, and berries) would be prohibited.

The use of metal detectors would be prohibited.

The BLM would not authorize large group activities or events in the Monument.

Recreation in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat – The BLM would not allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) in the Monument.

Camping would not be allowed on BLM islands in the Missouri River.

Interpretive Sites – The BLM would not provide site interpretation, but would encourage search and discover experiences.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Recreation Management Areas – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map E). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Fees – The BLM would implement an expanded amenity fee for overnight camping in Level 1 sites and an individual special recreation permit for boating the Missouri River. After the RMP is completed the BLM would develop a business plan to determine the actual fee amounts charged for new sites. Development of the business plan would involve the Central Montana RAC and include an opportunity for public involvement. Fees would not be charged until completion of the business plan, except for the fee system for the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Level 1 recreation sites would provide at least a majority of the following: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, collection by an employee or agent, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities and simple devices for containing a fire. Level 1 sites currently include Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk and the James Kipp Recreation Area. An expanded amenity fee would be charged at any additional Level 1 sites that

may be constructed. In addition, the BLM may charge fees for use of some existing structures in the Monument, including cabins and corrals, consistent with FLREA.

River Recreation Facilities

Level 1 – Developed public access sites. These sites are accessible by road with a full range of developments that could include parking lots, boat ramps, vault toilets, campsites for tents and RVs and picnic facilities. These sites include the Chouteau County Fairgrounds Campground and Canoe Launch, Decision Point Interpretive Trail, Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk and the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Level 2 – Developed boat camps. These sites are accessible to the public only by boat. The sites could include vault toilets, metal fire rings and occasionally open-air shelters. They include Little Sandy, Eagle Creek, Hole-in-the-Wall and Slaughter River. The BLM has administrative road access to these sites.

Level 3 – Primitive boat camps. These sites are accessible only by boat and could contain a metal fire ring. There are no other developments. These sites include Evans Bend, Senieurs Reach, Black Bluff Rapids, Dark Butte, Pablo Rapids, The Wall, McGarry Bar, Gist Bottom, Cow Island, Upper Woodhawk and Hideaway.

Level 4 – Dispersed camping opportunities. In addition to the developed sites described above, camping is permissible on any of the 90,000 acres of BLM land adjacent to the river. The absence of development allows opportunities for those seeking a completely primitive experience. In many areas private land is intermingled with BLM land and landowner permission is required to access or cross private land.

A permit, referred to as a Special Area Permit, and associated fee would be required to boat on the UMNWSR. BLM regulations (43 CFR 2930) specify permits may be required for individual recreational use of special areas. Special areas include rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The cost of the permit would be established through a business plan based on the cost of operating the permit system, special costs related to management of the area, comparability with other agencies and similar special areas, and fairness and equity among all users. Camping overnight at Level 1 expanded amenity fee sites would be included with the special area permit fee. This permit is a separate permit from a commercial activity permit.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at Level 1 sites for expenditure on site maintenance and visitor services as established in FLREA.

Fees associated with the Special Area Permit to boat the Missouri River would be returned to the Lewistown

Field Office and used to cover management costs associated with toilet pumping, trash collection, and site maintenance. In addition, fees could be used to support county emergency services and to purchase short-term campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners.

Gateway Communities – The BLM would encourage and sustain collaborative partnerships, volunteers and citizen-centered public service. The BLM would partner with gateway communities to provide visitor information.

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The Monument offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be provided by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with the Monument. These initiatives would not result in permanent facilities in the Monument.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the Monument for touring and instructional purposes and for expanded regional promotional activities. A special recreation permit must be issued for all commercial and competitive activities that make a profit from recreational visitor activities on BLM land.

Currently, the BLM, City of Fort Benton, and The River and Plains Society are partners in the Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center. The City of Fort Benton will assist with maintenance of the grounds and The River and Plains Society will provide seasonal staffing and volunteers during the summer months as well as manage the center's gift store.

Research, Collection and Special Events – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they can add to knowledge and interpretation of the Monument. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use

allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The surface collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be authorized and allowed, as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365), except in the Cow Creek ACEC, Cow Creek WSA, and Dog Creek WSA. It is permissible to collect reasonable amounts of nonrenewable resources such as rocks, mineral specimens, common invertebrate fossils and semiprecious gemstones (43 CFR 8365.1-5(b)(2)). The maximum quantity of petrified wood that any one person is allowed to remove is 25 pounds in weight plus one piece, provided that the maximum total amount that one person may remove in one calendar year does not exceed 250 pounds (43 CFR 3622.4(1)). In the Cow Creek ACEC, Cow Creek WSA, and Dog Creek WSA the collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood would be prohibited. Exceptions could include collections authorized by permit in conjunction with authorized research or management activities.

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds and berries) would be authorized and allowed as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 8365). It is permissible to collect reasonable amounts of commonly available renewable resources such as flowers, berries, nuts, seeds, cones and leaves (43 CFR 8365.1-5(b)(1)). Commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument Manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument Manager.

Special recreation permit applications for organized group activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. Large group events would be authorized subject to restrictions to protect resources. These restrictions may include, but would not be limited to, the designation of specific roads or trails for a particular event, limitations on parking, use of campfires, sanitation requirements and the number of people involved in the event.

The BLM may also issue permits for commercial hiking, horseback riding and other commercial recreation activities that are not associated with big game hunting or river boating.

Recreation in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting).

Camping would not be allowed on BLM islands from April 1 to July 31, to protect wildlife during sensitive periods (e.g., nesting, brooding periods).

Interpretive Sites – Historic, archaeological, and geological opportunities on BLM land would be enhanced by developing the interpretive potential at selected sites (Map 2). Small, low-key interpretive signs that blend in with the surroundings (and not visible from the Missouri River) would be established at specific sites. These low-key sites would be for dispersed recreation opportunities. Simple markers would be provided for some cultural sites. Portable interpretation (guidebooks and brochures) may also be available.

Topics for interpretation would be selected based on setting, visitor benefits and the potential to provide the area's history or prehistory via interpretation. Some potential cultural sites for interpretation would include Decision Point; Eagle Creek; the Murray/PN dugout; Hagadone, Middleton, Ervin, Gist, Cable, and Nelson homesteads, Gilmore cabin; Nez Perce Trail; and sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Other possible interpretive sites and topics could include prehistoric sites and the steamboat era on the Missouri River.

Some potential geological interpretive sites would include the stratigraphic cross section of the Missouri River from Virgelle to the James Kipp Recreation Area showing the regional dip of beds starting in Colorado Shale and ending in Bearpaw Shale; the glacial geomorphology and paleo channel of the Missouri River at Little Sandy Creek; the igneous dike known as the Grand Natural Wall from the Lewis and Clark Journal entry; Hole-in-the-Wall; the Big Sag at Judith Landing; the Sugarloaf Rock fault plane versus bedding plane at McClelland/Stafford Ferry; the diatreme at Gist Bottom; and the invertebrate paleo site at Woodhawk.

Upper Missouri River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

The BLM's goal is to manage these lands for a variety of sustainable visitor experiences in mostly primitive and natural landscapes. This goal would allow BLM to provide dispersed and developed recreation opportunities and ensure that visual quality characteristics reflect a predominantly primitive or natural landscape while providing a diversity of visitor experiences.

This section addresses specific management for the Upper Missouri River SRMA that primarily includes management for the UMNWSR.

Alternative A (Current Management)

Special Recreation Permits – There would be a limit of 23 SRPs and a one-trip-per-season permit for non-permitted commercial users. An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930). Permits help the BLM manage river use to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts. A free use permit would be required for non-profit organized groups.

Opportunities for Boaters – The BLM would re-determine user capacity based on the Limits of Acceptable Change criteria (West HiLine RMP, Appendix 22.10). This process would, with public participation, identify how much environmental change would be acceptable. The character and rate of change due to human factors would be kept within acceptable levels. Parameters to be considered during the review process would include, but would not be limited to, vegetation change; the amount of bare ground near a campsite; bank-side trails; sanitation problems; litter; and available firewood.

The BLM would require a special recreation permit for groups larger than 50 people boating the Missouri River (non-commercial). This would be a free use permit.

Camping Facilities – The existing camping facilities would remain at the current campsites along the Missouri River. Dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities) would be allowed on all BLM land.

BLM land currently provides varying levels of camping facilities and recreational opportunities. See "River Recreation Facilities."

The BLM would continue maintaining undeveloped sites by clearing brush (maximum 1/4 acre) for campsite location and enforcing a pack-in/pack-out policy. All undeveloped sites in the scenic and recreation segments of the UMNWSR would be signed and shown on user maps.

Undeveloped sites may be improved to developed sites in scenic and recreation segments of the UMNWSR, if one or more of the following criteria are met:

- Public use of the river or the existing undeveloped sites increases;
- Impacts to soil and vegetation (heavy use that compacts soils/kills vegetation);
- Sanitation becomes a problem;

- Additional sites are needed to rest existing campsites; or
- Better distribution of public use sites is needed.

The BLM would maintain all developed sites. New sites would be established if one or more of the above criteria are met. New capital improvements would be allowed if impacts to cultural and natural resources could be mitigated to an acceptable level. Improvements in the wild section of the UMNWSR would be allowed if the sites can be serviced by existing roads or by river. All improvements would comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended.

Developed sites in recreational sections would be established and managed based on demand and economic feasibility.

The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit for camping.

Camp stoves, fire pans, or fire mats would not be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Level 1 sites would continue offering a full range of signs including kiosks, interpretive signs, traffic signs and other signs as necessary to provide information and facilitate the safe use of campgrounds. International signs would continue being used to mark Level 2 and 3 campsites and some signs and notices would be posted in vault toilets at Level 2 sites.

Motorized Watercraft – The BLM would continue the seasonal boating restrictions (Memorial Day to Labor Day) on the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR

Table 2.17 Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River Alternative A (Current Management)	
<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from the Saturday before Memorial Day through the Sunday after Labor Day.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from the Monday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed only from the Monday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day.</p>
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segments)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from the Saturday before Memorial Day through the Sunday after Labor Day.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from the Monday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed only from the Monday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day.</p>

(89 miles). The recreation segments would remain open to motorized watercraft yearlong (60 miles). Table 2.17 shows the motorized watercraft restrictions by river segment.

There would be no restrictions for the administrative use of motorized watercraft on the Missouri River. This includes livestock grazing permittees.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

Alternative B

Special Recreation Permits – An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR.

There would be no limit on the number of SRPs.

Opportunities for Boaters – The BLM would not develop an allocation system and there would be no limit or restriction on the number of boaters.

The BLM would not require a special recreation permit for large groups boating the Missouri River. There would be no launch restrictions for groups.

Camping Facilities – The BLM would provide additional Level 1, 2 and 3 recreation sites, as needed, to address increasing use demands or to resolve visitor use issues (such as constructing a launch/take out facility at McClelland/Stafford Ferry or building a boat ramp in the vicinity of Coal Banks Landing).

The BLM would work to establish agreements with willing private landowners to develop alternative campsites on their private property.

The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit for camping.

Camp stoves, fire pans, or fire mats would not be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Appropriate signing could be used, as necessary, at any level of facility development (Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4) or on other BLM lands located within the UMNWSR. Such signing would not necessarily be associated with a developed site.

Motorized Watercraft – The BLM would revise the current seasonal boating restrictions, and the Missouri River would be open to motorized watercraft yearlong (149 miles). Table 2.18 shows the motorized watercraft restrictions by river segment.

Table 2.18 Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River Alternative B	
<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong. The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong. The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong. The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segments)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong. The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.

There would be no restrictions for the administrative use of motorized watercraft on the Missouri River. This includes livestock grazing permittees.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

Alternative C

Special Recreation Permits – There would be a limit of 30 SRPs for commercial users and a one-trip-per-season permit for non-permitted commercial users. An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930). Permits help the BLM manage river use to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts.

Opportunities for Boaters – The BLM would monitor standards and indicators to manage visitor use of and impacts to resources (Appendix Q). Once those standards and/or indicators are reached or exceeded, the BLM would take the necessary action to reduce impacts to resources without limiting the number of people boating the Missouri River. Management actions are discussed in Appendix Q and include, but would not be limited to, a mandatory registration system, camping at designated sites, limiting the number of days camping at designated sites, resting and/or rotating campsites, and closing campsites.

From June 15 to August 1, the BLM would require groups larger than 20 people to launch at Coal Banks or Judith Landing on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Groups of less than 20 people could launch from any site, any day.

Camping Facilities – Additional Level 1 sites would be constructed only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Improvements to existing Level 1 and 2 sites could occur to improve infrastructure or address visitor use issues. New Level 2 facilities could be constructed between Fort Benton and Judith Landing, but only as necessary to improve resource conditions, improve visitor distribution or resolve visitor use conflicts. Associated facilities and construction could not detract from the visual character and integrity of the UMNWSR. Additional Level 3 campsites could be added as needed to accommodate increases in use. Dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities) would be allowed on all BLM land.

During the core use period on the river, June 15 to August 1, the BLM would implement a 2-night limit at Level 2 campsites. The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit at Level 1, 3 and 4 sites.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and require the use of camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in Level 1 sites could be used to safely direct traffic, provide information or provide interpretive messages. Signing should be commensurate with visual surroundings and the level of development. Signing located along the Missouri River would identify campsites and would be of minimum size and only used at Level 1, 2 and 3 campsites. Signing within campsites and elsewhere within the UMNWSR would be limited to existing infrastructure and of sufficiently low profile to not be visible from the river.

Motorized Watercraft – The BLM would revise the current boating restrictions, and the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR would have a seasonal restriction from June 15 to September 15 (89 miles); however, personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed at any time in the wild and scenic segments. The recreation segments would be open to most types of motorized watercraft yearlong; however, personal watercraft and floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 (Fort Benton area) and floatplanes would be allowed from September 16 to June 4 on river miles 84.5 to 92.5 (Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island). Table 2.19 shows the motorized watercraft restrictions by river segment.

During the seasonal restrictions in the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR, the BLM would designate specific days (selected to avoid peak visitor use days) when agencies could use upstream travel. The BLM would pursue administrative use agreements with other agencies, encouraging them to also abide by these guidelines for motorized use.

Livestock grazing permittees would be allowed upstream travel to administer their grazing permit with prior notification to the BLM. The BLM would authorize the travel verbally for unplanned situations or by a letter to the permittee for activities requested in advance.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

Alternative D

Special Recreation Permits – There would be a limit of 30 SRPs for commercial users and a one-trip-per-season permit for non-permitted commercial users. An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930). Permits help the BLM manage river use to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts.

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 2.19 Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River Alternative C</p>	
<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 yearlong.</p>
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from June 15 to September 15.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from September 16 to June 14.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft would not be allowed yearlong</p> <p>The landing of floatplanes would be allowed only from September 16 to June 4.</p>
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segments)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from June 15 to September 15.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from September 16 to June 14.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>

Opportunities for Boaters – The BLM would monitor standards and indicators to manage visitor use and impacts to resources (Appendix Q). Once those standards and/or indicators are reached or exceeded, the BLM would first take the necessary actions to reduce impacts to resources without limiting the number of people boating the Missouri River and then, if necessary, develop and implement an allocation system. Management actions are discussed in Appendix Q and include, but would not be limited to, a seasonal allocation system, or a temporary emergency allocation system in the White Cliffs area, a mandatory registration with stipulations pertaining to camping on BLM land, resting and/or rotating campsites, and closing campsites.

The BLM would require a special recreation permit for groups larger than 30 people boating the Missouri River. The processing of SRP applications would follow administrative cost recovery procedures (43 CFR 2930).

Camping Facilities – To provide dispersed recreation opportunities and benefits, no additional Level 1 facilities would be constructed. Improvements to

existing Level 1 and 2 sites could occur to improve infrastructure or address visitor use issues. Additional Level 2 campsites would be constructed only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Additional Level 3 sites could be added, as needed, to accommodate increases in use. However, in the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR at least 60% of campsites would be Level 4 opportunities.

The BLM would work to establish agreements with willing private landowners to develop alternative campsites on their private property.

During the core use period on the Missouri River, June 15 to August 1, the BLM would implement a 2-night limit at Level 2 campsites. The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit at Level 1, 3 and dispersed camping sites (Level 4 opportunities).

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and require the use of camp stoves, fire pans, or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing would be limited to Level 1 sites, commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing could be used as necessary at Level 2 sites, but only within new or existing infrastructure. No other signing would be used within the UMNWSR.

Motorized Watercraft – The BLM would revise the current boating restrictions on the UMNWSR as shown in Table 2.20.

The recreation segments of the UMNWSR would be open to motorized watercraft yearlong, except personal watercraft would not be allowed from June 15 to September 15. However, floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 near Fort Benton.

The wild segment from Pilot Rock to Deadman Rapids would have a seasonal restriction from May 1 to December 1 with downstream travel only at a no-wake speed. Personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed on this segment of the river yearlong.

The wild and scenic segment from Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge would have a seasonal restriction from June 5 to September 15, when no motorized watercraft would be allowed. From September 16 to December 1, motorized watercraft would be allowed for downstream travel only at a no-wake speed. Personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed on this segment of the river yearlong.

Table 2.20 Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River Alternative D	
<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft would be allowed only from September 16 to June 14.</p> <p>The landing of floatplanes would be allowed only on river miles 0 to 3 yearlong.</p>
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from May 1 to November 30.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from December 1 to April 30.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft would be allowed only from September 16 to June 14.</p> <p>The landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segments)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel would not be allowed from June 15 to September 15.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from September 16 to November 30.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed from December 1 to June 14.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>

The BLM (and those with special use authorizations) would abide by the seasonal no-wake downstream travel restrictions and would pursue administrative use agreements with other agencies, encouraging them to also abide by these guidelines for motorized use.

Livestock grazing permittees would be allowed upstream travel to administer their grazing permit with prior notification to the BLM. The BLM would authorize the travel verbally for unplanned situations or by a letter to the permittee for activities requested in advance.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

Alternative E

Special Recreation Permits – Based on a use allocation system (developed after the RMP is completed) the number of user days would be limited for commercial users. However, there would be no limit on the number of commercial SRPs. A Special Recreation Permit, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930). Permits help the BLM manage river use to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts.

Opportunities for Boaters – The BLM would develop and implement an allocation system after completion of the Monument RMP. The development of an allocation system would include public participation.

The BLM would require a special recreation permit for groups larger than 16 people boating the Missouri River. The processing of SRP applications would follow administrative cost recovery procedures.

Camping Facilities – The BLM would maintain the current number and location of recreation facilities and campsites within the UMNWSR. Additional campsites would not be developed.

The BLM would work to establish agreements with willing private landowners to develop alternative campsites on private property.

During the core use period on the Missouri River, June 15 to August 1, the BLM would implement a 2-night limit at Level 2 and 3 campsites and maintain the 14-night limit at Level 1 and dispersed camping sites (Level 4 opportunities).

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and require the use of camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Table 2.21 Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River Alternative E	
<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft would not be allowed yearlong. The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild Segment)	Motorized watercraft would not be allowed yearlong. The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft would not be allowed yearlong. The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segments)	Motorized watercraft would not be allowed yearlong. The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.

Signing would be limited to Level 1 sites and would be commensurate with the visual surroundings and level of development. No other signing would be used within the UMNWSR.

Motorized Watercraft – The BLM would revise the current seasonal boating restrictions on the UMNWSR as shown in Table 2.21. Motorized watercraft would not be allowed on any segment of the UMNWSR.

Agency motorized watercraft (and those with special use authorizations) would abide by the same seasonal restrictions as the public. The BLM would pursue administrative use agreements with other agencies, encouraging them to also abide by these guidelines for motorized use.

Livestock grazing permittees would be allowed upstream travel to administer their grazing permit with prior notification to the BLM. The BLM would authorize the travel verbally for unplanned situations or by a letter to the permittee for activities requested in advance.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Special Recreation Permits – There would be a limit of 23 SRPs for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR. An SRP, with a fee, would be required (43 CFR 2930). Permits help the BLM manage river use to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts. The 23 permits would include boating on the Missouri River for commercial hunting, fishing, and scenic and interpretive tours.

One-time permits, authorizing one trip per season, would be issued on a case-by-case basis primarily for institutions and organized groups that meet BLM's definition of commercial use (recreational use of the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR for business or financial gain). One-time permits may also be issued to river-based commercial hunting, fishing and scenic and interpretive tour operators not allowed under the 23 permits. One-time permits would authorize a specific use to take place on a specified range of dates within a given calendar year, and would not guarantee authorization for future occupancy and use of the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR.

Special events, such as competitive and organized group events, where the event takes place on the river, would be permitted only in the recreation classified segments of the UMNWSR.

Vending permits could be issued in association with special permitted events. Vending permits are

temporary, nonexclusive, revocable authorizations. Any facilities associated with the permit would be temporary in nature and confined to Level 1 sites (developed public access sites). Vending permits for food services, souvenirs or clothing, other than those associated with a special event, would not be allowed.

Vending permits could also be issued for shuttle services, boat and equipment rental and other services that directly support or enhance BLM's goals for visitor use management.

Opportunities for Boaters – The BLM would not develop an allocation system for visitor use on the Missouri River. The BLM would monitor conditions and develop management actions, as necessary, to reduce impacts to resource and social conditions without limiting the number of people boating the Missouri River. Management actions may include, but would not be limited to, further restrictions on group size, limits on the number of nights allowed at one site, designated campsites, closure of campsites, construction of additional facilities, and development of additional dispersed campsites. Standards and Indicators (Appendix Q) establish a broad framework for managing visitor use and impacts to resources and social conditions. As monitoring confirms change in visitor use patterns and impacts, or as populations shift or other major social events occur that may dramatically change use patterns, additional refinement within those standards and indicators may become necessary.



Floaters on the Upper Missouri River

From June 15 to August 1 at Coal Banks and Judith Landing, groups larger than 20 people could only launch on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Groups larger than 30 people would require a special recreation permit, year round, for boating the Missouri River.

Camping Facilities – The existing camping facilities would remain at the current campsites along the Missouri River (Map 2). Additional Level 1 and 2 sites would only be considered from Fort Benton downstream to Judith Landing. To provide dispersed recreation

opportunities and benefits, additional Level 1 sites would be constructed only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Improvements to existing Level 1 and 2 sites could occur to improve infrastructure or address visitor use issues.



Campers at Eagle Creek

Additional Level 2 sites could be constructed between Fort Benton and Judith Landing as necessary to improve resource conditions, improve distribution of visitor use or resolve visitor use conflicts. Associated facilities and construction could not detract from the visual character and integrity of the UMNWSR. No additional Level 2 sites would be constructed below Judith Landing. Additional Level 3 campsites could be added as needed to accommodate increases in use, disperse visitor use along the Missouri River, and rest or rotate the use of individual sites. Dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities) would be allowed on all BLM land.

The BLM would maintain all developed sites. New capital improvements would be allowed if impacts to cultural and natural resources could be mitigated to an acceptable level. All improvements would comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended.

If the opportunity is available, the BLM would purchase short-term (1-5 year) campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners for alternative or additional campsites to provide dispersed camping opportunities and benefits.

The BLM would implement a 2-night limit at Level 2 campsites from June 15 to August 1. The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit at Level 1 and 3 sites and for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and require the use of camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in Level 1 sites could be used to safely direct traffic, provide information, or provide interpretive messages. Signing should be commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing located

along the Missouri River would identify campsites and would be of minimum size and only used at Level 1, 2 and 3 campsites. Level 4 sites would not be signed. Signing within campsites and elsewhere within the UMNWSR would be limited to existing infrastructure and of sufficiently low profile to not be visible from the river.

Motorized Watercraft – The BLM would revise the current seasonal boating restrictions on the Missouri River as shown in Table 2.22 and displayed on Map 2. The recreation segments of the UMNWSR would be open to motorized watercraft year round except personal watercraft and floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 near Fort Benton.

The wild segment from Pilot Rock to Deadman Rapids would have a seasonal restriction from June 15 to September 15 with downstream travel only at a no-wake speed. Personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed on this segment of the river yearlong.

The wild and scenic segments from Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge would have a seasonal restriction from June 15 to September 15. Motorized watercraft traveling downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed on Thursdays through Saturdays. On Sundays through Wednesdays motorized watercraft travel would not be allowed. Personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed on this segment of the river yearlong.

Administrative use of motorized watercraft would occur during the seasonal restrictions. A cooperative effort among agencies operating on the river would be initiated. A Memorandum of Understanding would be developed with the goal of achieving uniform standard operating procedures designed to minimize impacts to boaters from administrative use of motorized watercraft.

Livestock grazing permittees would be allowed upstream travel to administer their grazing permit with prior notification to the BLM. Prior notification would be verbal for unplanned situations or by a letter from BLM to the permittee for activities known in advance. Verbal notification could be with the Lewistown Field Office (Monument Manager, Field Manager, or acting) or the Fort Benton River Management Station (Park Ranger). Prior notification allows the BLM to inform boaters at launch points that administrative use may be occurring along specific sections of the river and to respond to boaters' questions concerning administrative use.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes. This includes the use of motorized watercraft by the public for emergency purposes and the landing and take-off of floatplanes for safety reasons, such as avoiding inclement weather.

<p>Table 2.22 Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</p>	
<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 yearlong.</p>
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from June 15 to September 15.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from September 16 to June 14.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segments)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed on Thursdays through Saturdays from June 15 to September 15.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel would not be allowed on Sundays through Wednesdays from June 15 to September 15.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from September 16 to June 14.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>

Uplands Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

The BLM's goal is to manage these lands for a variety of sustainable visitor experiences in mostly primitive and natural landscapes. This goal would allow BLM to provide dispersed and developed recreation opportunities and ensure that visual quality characteristics reflect a predominantly primitive or natural landscape while providing a diversity of visitor experiences.

This section addresses specific management for the Uplands SRMA that primarily includes management for the BLM land outside of the UMNWSR.

Alternative A (Current Management)

Special Recreation Permits – The BLM would continue to issue SRPs for commercial hunting with no limit on

the number issued (43 CFR 2930). The BLM would not allocate permits or specific use areas for outfitters and guides. All BLM land would be available at the discretion of the Monument Manager as long as permittees maintain a special use permit and meet the BLM requirements. However, each permit would be assigned to a specific geographic area (requested or assigned hunting area). Outfitters and other recreational users would continue to be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would issue special recreation permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be allowed on all roads designated open.

Camping Facilities – Dispersed camping and camping facilities would be allowed. In some areas, the BLM would not construct developed recreation sites based strictly on local use, unless these sites can be realized through partnerships with other government entities,

local service organizations, etc. The BLM would encourage and support reasonable recreational initiatives from local and regional groups through partnerships, agreements, challenge cost sharing and volunteer efforts.

The BLM would not require camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

The BLM would use upland signs, maps and brochures to identify recreational resources for the public.

Level 1 sites currently contain a full range of signs including kiosks and interpretive signs, traffic signs and other signs to provide for safe use of campgrounds. International signs would be used to mark Level 2 and 3 campsites. Signs and notices could be posted in vault toilets at Level 2 sites.

Upland Recreation Facilities

Level 1 – Developed public access sites. Recreation sites where a high level of infrastructure development could include campsites, parking lots, vault toilets, interpretive signs, campground host facilities, tree plantings, picnic tables, waste facilities and other infrastructure improvements that accommodate the transition from highway to collector roads. Sites would be marked on a map. An example of a Level 1 site is the James Kipp Recreation Area on the river.

Level 2 – Developed upland sites. Campsites, trailheads, scenic overlooks and reservoirs where moderate levels of infrastructure development could include metal fire rings, vault toilets, and improved gravel parking areas. Interpretive signs and information boards may be present but would be much less obtrusive than at Level 1 sites and would blend well with natural surroundings. Sites would be marked on a map. Examples of Level 2 sites are FR Reservoir, Butch Reservoir, Spencer Road Overlook, Gazob Reservoir, Gilmore Cabin, Snake Point Overlook and Sunshine Ridge Overlook.

Level 3 – Primitive campsites. Pull-out sites immediately adjacent to a road. They contain a fire ring and may include minimal signing, but no other infrastructure.

Level 4 – Dispersed camping opportunities. Public land in a natural state used for dispersed, undeveloped camping. No infrastructure would be present. These areas may be accessible by motorized or non-motorized travel.

Alternative B

Special Recreation Permits – The BLM would continue to issue SRPs for commercial hunting with no limit on the number issued. Each permit issued would be assigned to the entire Monument. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would issue special recreation permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be allowed on local and collector roads and some identified resource roads.

Camping Facilities – The BLM would consider developing Level 1 and 2 campsites, but they would be confined to places such as fishing reservoirs, overlooks and historic sites. Level 3 camping sites would be pull-out sites away from the road and fire rings would be the only improvement at these sites.

The BLM would not require camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in the uplands could be used as necessary at all levels of facility development (Level 1, 2 and 3 campsites) or on BLM lands located within the uplands, but not necessarily associated with a developed site.

Alternative C

Special Recreation Permits – The BLM would limit the number of SRPs for commercial hunting to the current level of outfitters (14). Each permit issued would be assigned to the entire Monument. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would issue special recreation permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be allowed on local and collector roads.

Camping Facilities – The BLM would consider developing Level 1 campsites, but they would only be constructed at the beginning of public access roads into the Monument. These sites could include interpretive kiosks. The BLM would encourage private landowners outside the Monument to develop Level 1 sites and services. Level 2 campsites would be “park and explore” sites where people could walk from designated parking areas. Level 3 campsites would be pull-out sites away from the road, and fire rings would be the only improvement at these sites.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program, and camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats would be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing at Level 1 sites in the uplands could be used as needed to safely direct traffic, provide information, or provide interpretive messages. Signing in Level 1 sites should be commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing located in the uplands to identify campsites would be of minimum size and only used at Level 1, 2 and 3 campsites. Signing within campsites and elsewhere in the uplands would be limited to existing infrastructure.

Alternative D

Special Recreation Permits – The BLM would issue SRPs for commercial hunting with no limit on the number issued. However, permits would only be issued in areas with large blocks of BLM land that have limited public access. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would issue special recreation permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be restricted to two vehicles or less per operator per day on local, collector and some identified resource roads.

Camping Facilities – The BLM would not develop Level 1 campsites. Level 2 sites would only be developed on main arterial roads (collector and some local roads). Level 3 campsites would be pull-out sites located away from the road, and fire rings would be the only improvement at these sites.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program, and camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats would be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in the uplands would be limited to Level 1 sites, commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing could be used as necessary at Level 2 sites, but only within new or existing infrastructure. No other signing would be used within the uplands except for required transportation system signs.

Alternative E

Special Recreation Permits – The BLM would issue SRPs for commercial hunting with no limit on the number issued. However, permits would only be issued in areas with large blocks of BLM land that have public access. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would not issue special recreation permits for commercial motorized tours.

Camping Facilities – The BLM would not develop Level 1, 2 or 3 campsites.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program, and camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats would be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in the uplands would be limited to safety and commensurate with visual surroundings. No other signing would be used in the uplands.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Special Recreation Permits – The BLM would provide SRPs for commercial outfitting and guiding (hunting) in the Monument consistent with 43 CFR 2932.26 and the goal of managing these lands for a variety of sustainable visitor experiences in mostly primitive and natural landscapes. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

It is the BLM's goal to provide quality recreational opportunities that serve the public interest via authorized commercial operators for visitors lacking the skill or equipment necessary to otherwise participate. To meet this goal, a management approach may be developed through activity level planning that is responsive to changing visitor use trends, use patterns, and resource conditions. While the current use levels for the upland SRPs appear to be adequate, visitor demand for commercial hunting and guiding services could increase in the future.

Visitor use data would be collected and analyzed with the results incorporated into future management decisions. Visitor use data includes hunter/client use days and areas of use. Social conflicts with the general public, as well as conflicts between or among outfitters would also be taken into consideration. In addition, should visitor use levels increase, patterns of use change, or if permitted areas are not used, it may be necessary to decrease the number of permits, adjust use areas, incorporate conditions limiting net hunter/client use days (visitor use days). Conversely, it may be necessary to increase the number of permits due to demand or other conditions.

Activity level planning would be developed through an environmental review process and public involvement. Activity level planning would be based on BLM's 2930 Recreation Permit Administrative Handbook, BLM's Montana Outfitter Management Guidelines, the 1997 Memorandum of Understanding with the Montana Board of Outfitters (BLM MOU MT932-9111), and the Lewistown Field Office/Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Commercial Outfitter and Guide Policy. This management approach would identify the necessary indicators to monitor outfitter conditions of approval that include the standards and stipulations that could require a change in operations. Such management actions are necessary to enhance visitor use opportunities and protect resource values.

The BLM could issue special recreation permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be restricted to two vehicles or less per day for each commercial permit on local, collector and some identified resource roads.

The BLM may also issue permits for commercial hiking, horseback riding and other commercial recreation activities that are not associated with big game hunting or river boating.

Camping Facilities – The BLM would consider developing Level 1 campsites, but they would only be constructed at the beginning of public access roads into the Monument. These sites could include interpretive kiosks. The BLM would encourage private landowners outside the Monument to develop Level 1 sites and services. Level 2 campsites would be park and explore sites where people could walk from designated parking areas. Level 3 sites would be pullout sites immediately

adjacent to a road. Fire rings would be the only allowable development at these sites. The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and encourage the use of camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in the uplands would be limited to Level 1 sites commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing could be used as necessary at Level 2 sites, but only within new or existing infrastructure. No other signing would be used within the uplands except for required transportation system signs.

Natural Gas Exploration and Development

The alternatives in this section address natural gas exploration and development of the existing oil and gas leases in the Monument.

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Oil and Gas

The BLM's goal is to provide reasonable oil and gas exploration and development on existing leased land without diminishing the objects of the Monument.

The Proclamation does not allow new oil and gas leases in the Monument. The 43 federal oil and gas leases in the Monument are considered to have valid existing rights based on the Proclamation that states, "The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. The Secretary of Interior shall manage development on existing oil and gas leases within the monument, subject to valid existing rights, so as not to create any new impacts that would interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by this proclamation." The existing leases are also in compliance with their lease terms and conditions. See Chapter 3 (Minerals – Oil and Gas), Appendix O and the Glossary for more information about these leases.

In March 2000, the Montana Wilderness Association (MWA) filed suit challenging BLM's issuance of three leases that are now included in the Monument, alleging the BLM did not fully comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The leases involved in the suit, as well as nine others in the Monument were based on the BLM's 1988 West HiLine RMP. In March 2004, the United States District Court for the District of Montana, Great Falls Division, ruled in favor of the Plaintiffs and ordered the BLM to:

- Prepare an EIS for the oil and gas leasing program that covers the three leases.
- Prepare a valid biological assessment of the oil and gas leasing program in conjunction with the EIS.
- Consult with all required entities.

Under the order, all surface-disturbing activity on the three leases is prohibited pending completion of the appropriate environmental reviews. In January 2006 the District Court enjoined activity on the three leases until BLM could demonstrate compliance with the directives set forth in the March 2004 order. In light of the court's ruling, the BLM believes all 12 Monument leases based on the West HiLine RMP should be analyzed in this Monument RMP. To fully comply with the January 2006 court order this RMP also addresses a no lease alternative for the 12 West HiLine leases. The no lease alternative is addressed as a subalternative, Alternative E_{NL} which would not allow surface disturbance or the processing of APDs. The BLM will not process any further applications for permits to drill (APDs) on any leases in the Monument until the RMP is completed

(BLM 2002d). Consultation under the ESA and NHPA is discussed in Chapter 5.

Leases issued for federal minerals include stipulations that apply to the exploration and development activity that might be proposed during the lease term. Existing resources should be taken into consideration before oil and gas lease activity is permitted. Over the last 36 years of issuing leases within what is now the Monument, eight stipulation forms were used. Many of the early leases (May 1967 through September 1971) contained no stipulations beyond the standard terms of the lease; the majority of the leases issued after July 1972 included stipulations with provisions for wildlife, cultural resources, rough terrain and threatened and endangered species, should they be present on the lease. All oil and gas lease activities would be subject to existing laws (e.g., Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and National Historic Preservation Act) regardless of the age of the lease or the stipulations attached to the lease.

The oil and gas leases in the Monument can be divided into two categories: leases issued under the West HiLine RMP, and non-West HiLine RMP leases (Table 2.23). Some of the leases are located both within and outside of the Monument. The range of alternatives for the leases in the Monument (42,805 acres) focuses on the conditions of approval necessary during the APD process to protect the objects. With the exception of Alternative E, the current stipulations (Form 3109-1, and others for the older leases) would apply to portions of the leases located outside of the Monument (25,097 acres) along with other site-specific conditions determined during the permitting process. However, under Alternative E, surface disturbance would not be allowed on any of the 12 West HiLine RMP leases (12,782 acres). The leases are displayed on Map 3 – Side A. Appendix O provides additional information about these oil and gas leases.

Each alternative describes management of natural gas operations for the existing leases in the Monument. The alternatives address seismic operations, conditions of approval, drilling operations, production facilities and equipment and reclamation.

Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations and Conditions of Approval

The lease stipulations that apply to Alternative A (Current Management) are detailed in Appendix O.1. The conditions of approval for all the other alternatives are displayed in Table 2.24 and detailed in Appendix O.1. These include specific conditions for timing, controlled surface use, and surface-disturbing or disruptive activities for each alternative. The lease stipulations and conditions of approval only apply to federal minerals. These restrictions do not apply to private minerals adjacent to or intermingled with federal minerals.

Table 2.23
Oil and Gas Leases in the Monument

<i>MTM Lease No.</i>	<i>Lease Effective Date</i>	<i>Specific Resource Stipulations</i>	<i>Lease Acreage in the Monument</i>	<i>Lease Acreage outside the Monument</i>	<i>Total Lease Acreage</i>
West HiLine Leases					
084559	November 1, 1995	Yes ¹	1,880	0	1,880
084560	November 1, 1995	Yes ¹	134	1,119	1,253
087212	September 1, 1997	Yes ¹	122	528	650
087658	October 1, 1998	Yes ¹	485	0	485
089082	May 1, 1999	Yes ¹	1,131	167	1,298
089452	November 1, 1999	Yes ¹	800	0	800
089469	November 1, 1999	Yes ¹	640	0	640
089473	November 1, 1999	Yes ¹	1,240	0	1,240
089474	November 1, 1999	Yes ¹	80	480	560
089475	November 1, 1999	Yes ¹	1,280	0	1,280
089476	December 1, 1999	Yes ¹	1,120	160	1,280
089482	November 1, 1999	Yes ¹	1,416	0	1,416
Subtotal			10,328	2,454	12,782
Non-West HiLine Leases					
1565	May 1, 1967	None	2,560	0	2,560
1568	May 1, 1967	None	2,320	240	2,560
1578	May 1, 1967	None	575	1,988	2,563
1885	June 1, 1967	None	40	611	651
1886	June 1, 1967	None	1,920	640	2,560
1888	June 1, 1967	None	480	1,982	2,462
1903	June 1, 1967	None	1,360	200	1,560
1903-B	June 1, 1967	None	320	240	560
1914	June 1, 1967	None	200	440	640
2060	July 1, 1967	None	640	0	640
2061	July 1, 1967	None	640	0	640
13816	November 1, 1969	None	2,533	0	2,533
13818	November 1, 1969	None	2,532	0	2,532
13821-A	November 1, 1969	None	1,099	0	1,099
13827	November 1, 1969	None	1,156	0	1,156
16098	September 1, 1970	None	1,240	1,280	2,520
16102	September 1, 1970	None	1,506	163	1,669
16103	September 1, 1970	None	13	2,507	2,520
16327	October 1, 1970	None	80	2,358	2,438
16458	October 1, 1970	None	688	1,272	1,960
16461	October 1, 1970	None	2,547	0	2,547
16617	November 1, 1970	None	490	929	1,419
16618	November 1, 1970	None	320	2,240	2,560
16939	December 1, 1970	None	2,530	0	2,530
17376	February 1, 1971	None	40	80	120
18274	July 1, 1971	Some	1,367	1,160	2,527
18282	May 1, 1973	Some	851	1,680	2,531
18283	May 1, 1973	Some	1,240	1,320	2,560
19446	May 1, 1971	None	110	1,113	1,223
53751	June 1, 1982	Yes ¹	680	160	840
89460	November 1, 1999	Yes ¹	400	40	440
Subtotal			32,477	22,643	55,120
Total			42,805	25,097	67,902

¹ See Table 2.24 and Appendix O.1.

Table 2.24 Stipulations for Alternative A and Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval for Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F						
Resource	Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)	Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval				
		Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)
Greater Sage-Grouse						
Lek	For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be restricted or excluded within 1/4 mile from identified sage-grouse leks. ¹ For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. ²	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.			No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.
Nesting Area	For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be restricted or excluded during the period March 1 and June 30. ¹ For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. ²	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek.			No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek.
Winter Habitat	For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be restricted or excluded from December 1 to May 15. ¹	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from December 1 to March 31 within winter habitat.			No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within winter habitat.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from December 1 to March 31 within winter habitat.

Table 2.24
Stipulations for Alternative A and Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval for Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval</i>				
		<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
	For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. ²					
Black-tailed Prairie Dog	For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be restricted or excluded within 1/4 mile of identified essential habitat of prairie dogs. ¹ For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. ²	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities on any prairie dog towns.	Surface-disturbing activities or disruptive would avoid, or minimize, disturbance on prairie dog towns.	If an activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns.		If an activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species, new surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns.
Designated Sensitive Species	For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be restricted or excluded within identified habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests. ¹ For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. ²	Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days within identified habitat or active nests.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within identified habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within identified habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests. Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be prohibited from March 1 to August 1 within 1/2 mile of active nests.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within identified habitat or within 1/2 mile of active nests.	Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of the activity or the activity delayed 90 days within identified habitat or active nests. Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be prohibited from March 1 to August 1 within 1/2 mile of active ferruginous hawk nests.

<p align="center">Table 2.24 Stipulations for Alternative A and Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval for Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F</p>						
<i>Resource</i>	<i>Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval</i>				
		<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
Bald Eagle	For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of identified habitat of the bald eagle. ¹ For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. ²	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1 mile of active winter roosting areas from November 15 to February 29, if disturbance could cause an adverse effect. No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1 mile of active bald eagle nest sites from February 1 to July 31, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.		No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure
Big Game Winter Range (Mule Deer, Elk, & Antelope)	For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be restricted or excluded from December 1 to May 15 on winter range. ¹ For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. ²	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from December 1 to March 31 within winter range.		No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from December 1 to May 15 within winter range.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within winter range.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from December 1 to March 31 within winter range.
Bighorn Sheep Distribution	For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or	Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution.		No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within bighorn sheep distribution.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from December 1 to March 31 within

<p align="center">Table 2.24 Stipulations for Alternative A and Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval for Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F</p>						
<i>Resource</i>	<i>Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval</i>				
		<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
	<p>excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days.¹</p> <p>For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply.²</p>	meters or the activity or the activity delayed 60 days.				bighorn sheep distribution.
Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas	<p>For 14 leases, surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days.¹</p> <p>For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply.²</p>	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities from April 1 to June 15 in bighorn sheep lambing areas.		No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within bighorn sheep lambing areas.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within 1 mile of bighorn sheep lambing areas, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.	No surface-disturbing or disruptive activities within bighorn sheep lambing areas from April 1 to June 15.
Streams, Riparian/ Wetland Areas, and-100 Year Floodplains	<p>For 14 leases, surface-disturbing activities may be restricted within 500 feet of the channels of reservoirs, ephemeral, intermittent and perennial streams.¹</p> <p>Surface-disturbing activities may be restricted or excluded within 1,000 feet of</p>	No surface-disturbing activities within the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within riparian and wetland areas.	No surface-disturbing activities within 1,000 feet of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1,000 feet of riparian and wetland areas.	No surface-disturbing activities within 1/4 mile of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1/4 mile of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.		No surface-disturbing activities within 100-year floodplains or within 500 feet of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 500 feet of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.

<p align="center">Table 2.24 Stipulations for Alternative A and Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval for Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F</p>						
<i>Resource</i>	<i>Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval</i>				
		<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
	<p>riparian and wetland areas.¹</p> <p>For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply.²</p>					
Soils	<p>For 14 leases, surface-disturbing activities may be restricted or excluded on slopes over 30% or on slopes over 20% with severely erodable and/or slumping soils.¹</p> <p>For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply.²</p>	<p>Prior to surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% and greater an engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer.</p>	<p>Prior to surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erodable and/or slumping soils, an engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer.</p> <p>No surface-disturbing activities on slopes 40% and greater. This applies to well locations, facilities and roads. Exceptions would apply.</p>	<p>Prior to surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erodable and/or slumping soils, an engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer.</p> <p>No surface-disturbing activities on slopes 40% and greater. This applies to well locations, facilities and roads. No exceptions would apply.</p>	<p>No surface-disturbing activities on slopes 20% and greater.</p>	<p>Prior to surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erodable and/or slumping soils, an engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer.</p> <p>No surface-disturbing activities on slopes 40% and greater. This applies to well locations, facilities and roads. Exceptions would apply to pipelines for short distances (less than 300 feet).</p>
VRM Class I	<p>For 14 leases, all surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special</p>	<p>All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special design including</p>	<p>Reduce the visual contrast on public land in the existing landscape by utilizing 1) proper site selection; 2) reduction</p>	<p>No surface-disturbing activities in VRM Class I areas.</p>		

Table 2.24
Stipulations for Alternative A and Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval for Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval</i>				
		<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
	<p>design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.¹</p> <p>For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply.²</p>	location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.	of soil and vegetative disturbance; 3) choice of color; and 4) over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.			
VRM Class II, III and IV	<p>For 14 leases, all surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.¹</p> <p>For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply.²</p>	All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.		Reduce the visual contrast on public land in the existing landscape by utilizing 1) proper site selection; 2) reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; 3) choice of color; and 4) over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.	No surface-disturbing activities in VRM Class II, III and IV areas.	Reduce the visual contrast on public land in the existing landscape by utilizing 1) proper site selection; 2) reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; 3) choice of color; and 4) over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

Table 2.24
Stipulations for Alternative A and Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval for Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval</i>				
		<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
Recreation Sites	<p>For 14 leases, surface-disturbing activities would be restricted 300 feet from developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use.¹</p> <p>For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply.²</p>	No surface-disturbing activity within 300 feet of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use.	No surface-disturbing activity within the line of sight or sound or 300 feet, whichever is closer. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays only, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.	No surface-disturbing activity within the line of sight or sound or 300 feet, whichever is closer. Work-over types of operations, like well fracing (hydraulic fracturing) or maintenance, would be limited to Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.		No surface-disturbing activity within the line of sight or sound or 300 feet, whichever is closer. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays only, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.

¹ See Table 2.23 and Appendix O.1.

² Surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed 60 days (43 CFR 3101.1-2).

Alternative A (Current Management)

West HiLine Oil and Gas Leases – Twelve oil and gas leases were issued under the West HiLine RMP (Table 2.23). These oil and gas leases include stipulations for a variety of resources should they be present on the lease during the permitting process (Appendix O.1). The stipulations include: seasonal or distance restrictions to protect sage-grouse nesting areas, sage-grouse winter habitat and big game winter range; controlled surface use to protect soils and visual resources; no surface occupancy to protect sage-grouse leks, designated sensitive species and streams and riparian/wetland areas. A notice is used to inform lessees and operators of the requirements for cultural resource historic preservation compliance and compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

Non-West HiLine Oil and Gas Leases – Thirty-one non-West HiLine oil and gas leases were issued over a number of years, some with stipulations but most with no stipulations (Table 2.23 and Appendix O.1).

Two oil and gas leases were issued with stipulations for a variety of resources, which are the same as those attached to the West HiLine leases (Appendix O.1).

Three oil and gas leases were issued with reasonable requirements/conditions for soil erosion, air and water pollution, and unnecessary damage to the surface vegetation. The stipulations also included no occupancy of the surface within specific distances from improved roads, highways, trails, and water sources (lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and springs) (Appendix O.1).

Twenty-six oil and gas leases were issued without stipulations.

During the permitting process for APDs, conditions of approval may also be applied to surface-disturbing or disruptive activities consistent with the leases rights. These conditions would be considered on a case-by-case basis during the well onsite evaluation and review of the APD.

Alternative B

Reasonable conditions of approval would protect the objects in the Monument. The conditions of approval would apply to all the oil and gas lease acreage (42,805 acres) in the Monument (Table 2.24). The conditions of approval would be applied to the APD after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource and after considering the waivers, exceptions, and modifications listed in Appendix O.1. The current stipulations (Form 3109-1) would apply to the portions of five of the 12 West HiLine leases that are outside the Monument (2,454 acres).

Seasonal or distance restrictions would be placed on oil and gas activities to protect sage-grouse nesting areas and winter habitat, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, big game winter range and bighorn sheep lambing areas.

Timing – Alternative B

Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Greater Sage-Grouse Winter Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter habitat for sage-grouse. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1 mile of active winter roosting areas from November 15 to February 29, if disturbance could cause an adverse effect.

Big Game Winter Range – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter range for mule deer, elk and antelope. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from April 1 to June 15 within bighorn sheep lambing areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Controlled surface use conditions or standard lease terms would be applied to protect designated sensitive species, bighorn sheep distribution, soils, visual resources and cultural resources.

Controlled Surface Use – Alternative B

Designated Sensitive Species – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed 60 days within identified habitat or active nests.

Bighorn Sheep Distribution – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the

activity delayed 60 days within bighorn sheep distribution.

Soils/Steep Slopes – Prior to surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% and greater a certified engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. This plan must demonstrate how the following would be accomplished:

- Site productivity would be restored.
- Surface runoff would be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas would be protected from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gullying, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.
- Nearby watercourses would be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.
- Surface-disturbing activities would not be conducted during extended wet periods.
- Construction or reclamation would not be allowed when soils are frozen.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes I, II, III and IV – All surface disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Class I, II, III, and IV areas may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the visual quality objectives for the area.

Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, black-tailed prairie dogs, streams and riparian/wetland areas and developed recreation sites.

No Surface-Disturbing or Disruptive Activities – Alternative B

Greater Sage-Grouse Leks – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.

Black-tailed Prairie Dogs – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited on prairie dog towns.

Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas – Surface disturbing activities would be prohibited within the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within riparian and wetland areas.

Recreation – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within 300 feet of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use.

Alternative C

The existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing reasonable conditions of approval under BLM's authority to protect the objects in the Monument. The conditions of approval would apply to all the oil and gas lease acreage (42,805 acres) in the Monument (Table 2.24). The conditions of approval would be applied to the APD after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource and after considering the waivers, exceptions, and modifications listed in Appendix O.1. The current stipulations (Form 3109-1) would apply to the portions of five of the 12 West HiLine leases that are outside the Monument (2,454 acres).

Seasonal or distance restrictions would be placed on oil and gas activities to protect sage-grouse nesting areas and winter habitat, big game winter range, bighorn sheep distribution and bighorn sheep lambing areas.

Timing – Alternative C

Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Greater Sage-Grouse Winter Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter habitat for sage-grouse. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Big Game Winter Range – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter range for mule deer, elk and antelope. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Bighorn Sheep Distribution – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from April 1 to June 15 within bighorn sheep lambing areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Controlled surface use conditions would be applied to protect black-tailed prairie dogs, soils, visual resources and cultural resources.

Controlled Surface Use – Alternative C

Black-tailed Prairie Dogs – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would avoid, or minimize, disturbance on prairie dog towns.

Soils/Steep Slopes – Prior to surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erosive and/or slumping soils, a certified engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. This plan must demonstrate how the following would be accomplished:

- Site productivity would be restored.
- Surface runoff would be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas would be protected from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gully, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.
- Nearby watercourses would be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.
- Surface-disturbing activities would not be conducted during extended wet periods.
- Construction or reclamation would not be allowed when soils are frozen.

The operator must also provide an evaluation of past practices on similar terrain and be able to demonstrate success under similar conditions.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I – All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Class I would utilize proper site selection; reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes II and III – All surface disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Class II and III areas may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the visual quality objectives for the area.

Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, designated sensitive species, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, streams and riparian/wetland areas, soils on slopes 40% and greater, and developed recreation areas.

No Surface-Disturbing or Disruptive Activities – Alternative C

Greater Sage-Grouse Leks – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.

Designated Sensitive Species – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within identified habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests.

Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of known bald eagle nest sites that have been active within the past 7 years.

Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within

1,000 feet of the channel of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1,000 feet of riparian and wetland areas.

Soils/Steep Slopes – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited on slopes 40% and greater.

Recreation – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within the line of sight/sound or 300 feet (whichever is closer) of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.

Alternative D

The existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing reasonable conditions of approval under BLM's authority to protect the objects in the Monument. The conditions of approval would apply to all the oil and gas lease acreage (42,805 acres) in the Monument (Table 2.24). The conditions of approval would be applied to the APD after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource and after considering the waivers, exceptions and modifications listed in Appendix O.1. The current stipulations (Form 3109-1) would apply to the portions of five of the 12 West HiLine leases that are outside the Monument (2,454 acres).

Seasonal or distance restrictions would be placed on oil and gas activities to protect sage-grouse nesting areas and winter habitat, active nests of designated sensitive species, big game winter range and bighorn sheep distribution.

Timing – Alternative D

Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Greater Sage-Grouse Winter Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter habitat for sage-grouse. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Designated Sensitive Species – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from March 1 to August 1 within 1/4 mile of active nests.

Big Game Winter Range – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to May 15 within winter range for mule deer, elk and antelope. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Bighorn Sheep Distribution – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Controlled surface use conditions would be applied to protect most soils, visual resources in Class II, III and IV areas and cultural resources.

Controlled Surface Use – Alternative D

Soils/Steep Slopes – Prior to surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erosive and/or slumping soils, a certified engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. This plan must demonstrate how the following would be accomplished:

- Site productivity would be restored.
- Surface runoff would be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas would be protected from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gully, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.
- Nearby watercourses would be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.
- Surface-disturbing activities would not be conducted during extended wet periods.
- Construction or reclamation would not be allowed when soils are frozen.

The operator must also provide an evaluation of past practices on similar terrain and be able to demonstrate success under similar conditions.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II – All surface disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Class II would utilize proper site selection; reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, black-tailed prairie dogs, designated sensitive species, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, bighorn sheep lambing areas, streams and riparian/wetland areas, soils on slopes 40% and greater, visual resources in VRM Class I areas and developed recreation areas.

No Surface-Disturbing or Disruptive Activities – Alternative D

Greater Sage-Grouse Leks – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.

Black-tailed Prairie Dogs – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns if an activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

Designated Sensitive Species – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within identified crucial habitat and within 1/4 mile of active nests.

Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of known bald eagle nest sites that have been active within the past 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.

Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within bighorn sheep lambing areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1/4 mile of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.

Soils/Steep Slopes – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited on slopes 40% and greater. This would apply to locations, facilities and roads.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited in VRM Class I areas.

Recreation – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within the line of sight/sound or 300 feet (whichever is closer) of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. Work-over types of operations, like well fracing or maintenance, would be limited to Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Alternatives E and E_{NL}

Surface disturbance would not be allowed on any of the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases regardless if the land is inside or outside the Monument (Table 2.24). This includes the entire leasehold (12,782 acres). APDs on these leases would not be processed.

This alternative would also consider the environmental effects of not leasing the 12 West HiLine leases or the No Lease Alternative; a sub-alternative identified as Alternative E_{NL}.

Conditions of approval would be applied to surface-disturbing or disruptive activities for the 31 non-West HiLine oil and gas leases in the Monument (32,477 acres). The conditions of approval would not be subject to waivers, exceptions, and modifications. Table 2.24 and Appendix O.1 provide more information about these leases. The conditions of approval would be applied at the activity level phase, after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource. Application of these conditions of approval would effectively eliminate any surface disturbance on these leases in the Monument.

Surface use would be controlled to protect cultural resources.

Controlled Surface Use – Alternative E

Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or

resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, nesting areas and winter habitat, black-tailed prairie dogs, designated sensitive species, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, big game winter range, bighorn sheep distribution, bighorn sheep lambing areas, streams and riparian/wetland areas, soils on slopes 20% and greater, visual resources and developed recreation sites.

No Surface-Disturbing or Disruptive Activities – Alternative E

Greater Sage-Grouse Leks – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks.

Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks.

Greater Sage-Grouse Winter Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within winter habitat for sage-grouse.

Black-tailed Prairie Dogs – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns.

Designated Sensitive Species – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within identified crucial habitat and within 1/2 mile of active nests.

Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of known bald eagle nest sites that have been active within the past 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.

Big Game Winter Range – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within winter range for elk, mule deer, and antelope.

Bighorn Sheep Distribution – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within bighorn sheep distribution areas.

Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1

mile of bighorn sheep lambing areas, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1/4 mile of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.

Soils/Steep Slopes – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited on slopes 20% and greater.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes I and II – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited in VRM Class I and II areas.

Recreation – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within the line of sight/sound or 300 feet (whichever is closer) of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. Work-over types of operations, like well fracing or maintenance, would be limited to Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

The existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing reasonable conditions of approval under BLM's authority to protect the objects in the Monument. The conditions of approval would apply to all the oil and gas lease acreage (42,805 acres) in the Monument (Table 2.24). The conditions of approval would be applied to the APD after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource and after considering the waivers, exceptions and modifications listed in Appendix O.1. The current APD review process would be utilized, which includes a 30-day posting period for public review of the proposal. The current stipulations (Form 3109-1) would apply to the portions of five of the 12 West HiLine leases that are outside the Monument (2,454 acres).

Seasonal or distance restrictions would be placed on oil and gas activities to protect sage-grouse nesting areas and winter habitat, active ferruginous hawk nests, big game winter range, and bighorn sheep distribution and bighorn sheep lambing areas.

Timing – Alternative F

Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

Greater Sage-Grouse Winter Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter habitat for sage-grouse. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

Ferruginous Hawk – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from March 1 to August 1 within 1/2 mile of active ferruginous hawk nest sites.

Big Game Winter Range – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter range for elk, mule deer, and antelope. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

Bighorn Sheep Distribution – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution areas. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited from April 1 to June 15 within bighorn sheep lambing areas. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

Controlled surface use conditions would be applied to protect black-tailed prairie dogs, designated sensitive species, most soils, visual resources in VRM Class II, III and IV areas and cultural resources.

Controlled Surface Use – Alternative F

Black-tailed Prairie Dogs – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns, if an activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

Designated Sensitive Species – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of the proposed site or the activity delayed 90 days within identified crucial habitat or active nests.

Soils/Steep Slopes – Prior to surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erosive and/or

slumping soils, a certified engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. This plan must demonstrate how the following would be accomplished:

- Site productivity would be restored.
- Surface runoff would be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas would be protected from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gully, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.
- Nearby watercourses would be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.
- Surface-disturbing activities would not be conducted during extended wet periods.
- Construction or reclamation would not be allowed when soils are frozen.

The operator must also provide an evaluation of past practices on similar terrain and be able to demonstrate success under similar conditions.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes II, III and IV – All surface disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Classes II, III and IV would utilize proper site selection; reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, return the disturbed area to a natural landscape.

Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, streams and riparian/wetland areas, soils on slopes 40% and greater, visual resources in VRM Class I areas and developed recreation areas.

No Surface-Disturbing or Disruptive Activities – Alternative F

Greater Sage-Grouse Leks – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of active sage-grouse leks.

Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat – Surface-disturbing or disruptive activities would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of known bald eagle nest sites that have been active within the past 7 years, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.

Streams, Riparian/Wetland Areas, and 100-Year Floodplains – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within 100-year floodplains or within 500 feet of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 500 feet of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.

Soils/Steep Slopes – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited on slopes 40 percent and greater.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited in VRM Class I areas.

Recreation – Surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited within the line of sight/sound or 300 feet (whichever is closer) of developed recreation areas (Level 1, 2, and 3 sites) and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.

Natural Gas Operations

Alternative A (Current Management)

Seismic Operations – Planned off-road seismic operations must demonstrate that proposed transportation and exploration methods would minimize the potential for creating new roads or trails. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter. Seismic operations would follow the current regulations, including 43 CFR 3150 and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book.

Drilling Operations – The BLM would be consistent with the state spacing requirements and current Board Orders for the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain Gas Fields. Currently, one well is allowed per half section within the Leroy Gas Field and one well per section is allowed within the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field (Appendix

O.2). Each field contains multiple exceptions for additional wells to be drilled per half section/sections or location exceptions. Changes, exceptions or modifications would be allowed to maximize the extraction of the natural gas resource.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), American Petroleum Institute (API) recommended practices, BMPs (Appendix K) and standard operating procedures, including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and USFS, referred to as the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Administrative access on resource roads for natural gas operations would be allowed with no restrictions.

Production Operations, Facilities and Equipment – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security), No. 5 (Measurement of gas), and No. 7 (Disposal of produced water); and BMPs (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

The placement and construction of pipelines would follow standards consistent with the 2006 Gold Book (BLM and USFS the 4th Edition) and operating procedures, including allowing cross-country pipelines.

Administrative access on resource roads would be allowed with no restrictions.

Plugging and Reclamation Operations – When wells are determined to have no commercial value, they must be plugged according to regulations at 43 CFR 3162.3-4 and 3164.1, Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 (effective May 7, 2007), and Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 that cover minimum requirements for plugging operations for federal wells and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book. All federal wells are required to have an approved plugging plan prior to initiating the work to plug the well (Appendix O.3).

Reclamation would follow BMPs and standard operating procedures (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time. Previously disturbed sites (i.e., current wells with final abandonment notices with less than 100% reclamation) would be allowed to reclaim naturally.

Alternative B

Seismic Operations – Planned off-road seismic operations must demonstrate that proposed transportation

and exploration methods would minimize the potential for creating new roads or trails. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter. Seismic operations would follow the current regulations, including 43 CFR 3150 and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book.

Drilling Operations – The BLM would limit spacing to no more than four well locations/sites per section, subject to other siting criteria (i.e., visual resources, sensitive wildlife species and slope/soil concerns). Changes, exceptions or modifications would be allowed in the interest of maximizing the extraction of the natural gas resource.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices, BMPs (Appendix K) and standard operating procedures, including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and USFS, referred to as the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The objective would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The objective would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Administrative access on resource roads for natural gas operations would be allowed with no restrictions.

Production Operations, Facilities and Equipment – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book, 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security) and No. 5 (Measurement of gas); and BMPs (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Pipeline placement and construction would follow standards consistent with the Gold Book (BLM and USFS, the 4th Edition) and operating procedures, including allowing cross-country pipelines.

The BLM would require operators to utilize BMPs and wildlife mitigation on all gas compressors for noise control (Appendix K and Appendix R.1). Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre (total surface

disturbance) would not be allowed on BLM land. Pumping units would be allowed, provided all noise producing mechanisms could be mitigated to acceptable levels for wildlife considerations (Appendix R.1). Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment and water disposal pits would be allowed.

Water disposal would follow current regulations and standard operating procedures (43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 7 (Disposal of produced water)). Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with sloped berms into the pit. All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps where necessary. For wells in the Monument, only two trips per month would be authorized to transport water off site. Exceptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via a pipeline to an approved facility, disposal pits (including tanks) or in an approved water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Administrative access on resource roads would be allowed with no restrictions.

Plugging and Reclamation Operations – When wells are determined to have no commercial value, they must be plugged according to regulations at 43 CFR 3162.3-4 and 3164.1, Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 (effective May 7, 2007), and Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 that cover minimum requirements for plugging operations for federal wells and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book. All federal wells are required to have an approved plugging plan prior to initiating the work to plug the well (Appendix O.3).

Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures and BMPs (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time. When reclamation activities could cause more surface disturbance and natural reclamation is possible, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The reclamation standards would minimize erosion and establish native vegetation.

Alternative C

Seismic Operations – Seismic operations (vehicle activity) would be restricted to designated roads. Exceptions would be authorized on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the degree of data needed to identify the resource and the operator's ability to mitigate surface disturbance. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter. Gravity-type surveys would be allowed on road and only via foot off-road. Seismic operations would follow the current regulations, including 43 CFR 3150 and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book.

Drilling Operations – The BLM would be consistent with the state spacing requirements and current Board Orders for the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain Gas Fields. Currently, one well is allowed per half section within the Leroy Gas Field and one well per section is allowed within the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field. Each field contains multiple exceptions for additional wells to be drilled per half section/sections or location exceptions. Changes, exceptions or modifications are allowed to maximize the extraction of the natural gas resource.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices, BMPs (Appendix K) and standard operating procedures, including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and USFS, referred to as the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The goal would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The goals would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Vehicle activity would be restricted to designated roads. Exceptions would be authorized on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the degree of data needed to identify the resource and the operator's ability to mitigate surface disturbance.

Production Operations, Facilities and Equipment – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book, 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security) and No. 5 (Measurement of gas); and BMPs (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Pipeline locations would be restricted to existing disturbance or the least intrusive disturbance.

The BLM would require operators to utilize BMPs and wildlife mitigation on all gas compressors for noise control (Appendix K and Appendix R.1). Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre (total surface disturbance) would not be allowed on BLM land. Pumping units would be allowed, provided all noise producing mechanisms could be mitigated to acceptable

levels for wildlife considerations (Appendix R.1). Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment and water disposal pits would be allowed.

Water disposal would follow current regulations (43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 7 (Disposal of produced water)) and standard operating procedures. Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with sloped berms into the pit. All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps where necessary. For wells in the Monument, only two trips per month would be authorized to transport water off site. Exceptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via a pipeline to an approved facility, disposal pits including tanks or in an approved water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Vehicle activity would be restricted to designated roads. Exceptions would be authorized on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the degree of data needed to identify the resource and the operator's ability to mitigate surface disturbance.

Plugging and Reclamation Operations – When wells are determined to have no commercial value, they must be plugged according to regulations at 43 CFR 3162.3-4 and 3164.1, Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 (effective May 7, 2007), and Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 that cover minimum requirements for plugging operations for federal wells and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book. All federal wells are required to have an approved plugging plan prior to initiating the work to plug the well (Appendix O.3).

Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures. When reclamation activities could cause more surface disturbance and natural reclamation is possible, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The reclamation standards would minimize erosion and establish native vegetation.

Alternative D

Seismic Operations – Only helicopter-supported seismic activities would be allowed in specific areas. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter. Gravity-type surveys would be allowed on road and only via foot off-road. Seismic operations would follow the current regulations, including 43 CFR 3150 and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book.

Drilling Operations – The BLM would be consistent with current state spacing requirements and current Board Orders for the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain Gas Fields. Currently, one well is allowed per half section within the Leroy Gas Field and one well per section is

allowed within the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field. Each field contains multiple exceptions for additional wells to be drilled per half section/sections or location exceptions.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices, BMPs (Appendix K) and standard operating procedures, including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and USFS, referred to as the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The goals would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The goals would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts, and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

Production Operations, Facilities and Equipment –

Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book, 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security) and No. 5 (Measurement of gas); and BMPs (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Pipeline placement and construction would be restricted to existing disturbance or access roads.

The BLM would require operators to utilize BMPs and wildlife mitigation on all gas compressors for noise control (Appendix K and Appendix R.1). Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre (total surface disturbance) would not be allowed on BLM land. Pumping units would be allowed, provided all noise producing mechanisms could be mitigated to acceptable levels for wildlife considerations (Appendix R.1). Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment and water disposal pits would be allowed.

Water disposal would follow current regulations and standard operating procedures (43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 7 (Disposal of produced water)).

Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with no berms into the pit (vertical sides) reducing surface disturbance. All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps. For each well there would be a limit of no more than five barrels of water per day. For wells in the Monument, no water would be transported via tanker. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via a pipeline to an approved facility, disposal pits including tanks, or in an approved water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

Plugging and Reclamation Operations – When wells are determined to have no commercial value, they must be plugged according to regulations at 43 CFR 3162.3-4 and 3164.1, Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 (effective May 7, 2007), and Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 that cover minimum requirements for plugging operations for federal wells and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book. All federal wells are required to have an approved plugging plan prior to initiating the work to plug the well (Appendix O.3).

The reclamation standards would attempt to recapture an area's pre-disturbance appearance. When the disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre, the area would be recontoured and revegetated.

Alternative E

Seismic Operations – Only helicopter-supported seismic activities would be allowed in specific areas. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter. Gravity-type surveys would be allowed on road and only via foot off-road. Seismic operations would follow the current regulations, including 43 CFR 3150 and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book.

Drilling Operations – The BLM would reduce spacing in specific areas where necessary from two wells per section to one well per section. Changes, exceptions or modifications would be allowed.

Although applying the referenced conditions of approval would effectively eliminate the potential for new surface disturbance on the leases within the Monument, drilling operations (surface disturbance) could be allowed for those wells proposed to be drilled outside of the Monument on the non-West HiLine leases. Drilling operations would follow current regulations for those wells proposed to be drilled outside of the Monument. This would include 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended

practices, BMPs (Appendix K) and standard operating procedures including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and USFS, referred to as the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

In reference to those wells outside of the Monument on the non-West HiLine leases, only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The goals would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The goals would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

Production Operations, Facilities and Equipment – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book, 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security), No. 5 (Measurement of gas), and No. 7 (Disposal of produced water); and BMPs (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Pipeline placement and construction would be restricted to existing disturbance or access roads.

The BLM would require operators to utilize Best Available Control Technology (BACT) on all gas compressors for nitrogen oxide emissions. The BLM would also require operators to utilize BMPs and wildlife mitigation on all gas compressors for noise control (Appendix K and Appendix R.1). Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre (total surface disturbance) would not be allowed on BLM land. Pumping units would be allowed, provided all noise producing mechanisms could be mitigated to acceptable levels for wildlife considerations (Appendix R.1). Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment and water disposal pits would be allowed.

Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with no berms into the pit (vertical sides). All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps. For each well there would be a limit of no more than five barrels of water per day. For wells in the Monument, no water would be transported via tanker.

The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via pipeline, disposal pits including tanks, or in a water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

Plugging and Reclamation Operations – When wells are determined to have no commercial value, they must be plugged according to regulations at 43 CFR 3162.3-4 and 3164.1, Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 (effective May 7, 2007), and Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 that cover minimum requirements for plugging operations for federal wells and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book. All federal wells are required to have an approved plugging plan prior to initiating the work to plug the well (Appendix O.3).

The reclamation standards would attempt to recapture an area's pre-disturbance appearance. When the disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre, the area would be recontoured and revegetated.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Seismic Operations – All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife, soils, and visual resource mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter along with the BMPs discussed in Appendix K. Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time. Gravity-type surveys would be allowed on road and only by foot off-road.

Vibroseis-type vehicles would be required to stay on existing approved roads. If the existing road system is not adequate to conduct a survey, shallow drill holes (5 to 15 foot shot holes) would be allowed for the remaining part of the survey using helicopter and ground support (via foot).

Vehicle activity would be restricted to designated roads. Exceptions could be authorized on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the degree of data needed to identify the resource, the operator's ability to mitigate surface disturbance, and if the activity would not interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by the Monument Proclamation. Seismic operations would follow the current regulations, including 43 CFR 3150 and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book.

Drilling Operations – Spacing would remain consistent with state spacing requirements and current Board Orders for the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain Gas Fields. Proposals for increased well densities would be allowed for up to one well site per quarter section, subject to siting criteria (i.e., visual resources, sensitive wildlife

species and slope/soil concerns). Any more than one well per quarter section would be directionally drilled from an existing active well location in the quarter section.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices, BMPs (Appendix K) and standard operating procedures including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and USFS, referred to as the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The objectives would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The objectives would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts, and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

Production Operations, Facilities and Equipment – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book, 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security), No. 5 (Measurement of gas), and No. 7 (Disposal of produced water); and BMPs (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time.

Prior approval would be required for pipeline installation; compressor installation; water disposal pits including any future increase in size; pumping unit installation; well workovers, that include but are not limited to redrilling, deepening a well, and performing casing repairs or plugbacks; portable tanks for well testing; or other surface disturbance. Prior notification would be required for well cleanout, to replace or repair tubing, recompleting the well in the same interval, and/or routine well stimulation.

Portable tanks for well testing, as required by the BLM, would be temporary (60 to 90 days) and designed to meet VRM objectives in the area including painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings.

Pipeline placement and construction would be restricted to existing disturbance or the least intrusive disturbance (existing roads).

The BLM would require operators to utilize BMPs and wildlife mitigation on all gas compressors for noise control (Appendix K and Appendix R.1). If feasible, large gas compressors or pumping units (long-term noise producers) would be located outside the Monument.

Gas compressors, pumping units and production infrastructure would be located where they minimize noise and visual impacts and comply with VRM objectives established for the area. The VRM objectives provide standards for the design and development of projects.

Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with berms into the pit. All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps and/or netting where necessary. For wells in the Monument, only two trips per month would be authorized to transport water off site. Exceptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via pipeline to an approved facility, disposal pits including tanks, or in an approved water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits. For construction and heavy trucks related to production, this alternative would restrict equipment that exceeds 49dB from being within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks between 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. between March 1 and June 15.

Plugging and Reclamation Operations – When wells are determined to have no commercial value, they must be plugged according to regulations at 43 CFR 3162.3-4 and 3164.1, Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 (effective May 7, 2007), and Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 that cover minimum requirements for plugging operations for federal wells and the 4th Edition, 2006 Gold Book. All federal wells are required to have an approved plugging plan prior to initiating the work to plug the well (Appendix O.3).

Reclamation efforts would follow BMPs and standard operating procedures (Appendix K). Other BMPs could be considered and implemented if new techniques or new technology develop over time. In some areas, disturbed surfaces (i.e., current wells with final abandonment notices with less than 100% reclamation) would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The intent of the reclamation standards would be to minimize erosion and establish native vegetation.

Access and Transportation

The alternatives in this section address the transportation system, including access to and within the Monument and the use of backcountry airstrips by recreationists and commercial users.

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Access

The BLM's goal is to manage legal and physical access to and within the Monument to provide opportunities for diverse activities.

Alternative A (Current Management)

The BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements with willing landowners for administrative and public use. The BLM would cooperate with MFWP and private landowners to improve recreation access. This may involve participation in block management or developing access agreements with willing private landowners.

New resource roads for natural gas operations would be open to public access.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument Manager.

Alternative B

The BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements with willing landowners where no legal public access exists to or within the Monument or where additional access is needed to meet management objectives (Map F). The BLM would cooperate with MFWP and private landowners to improve recreation access. This may involve participation in block management or developing access agreements with willing private landowners.

The BLM would coordinate with the CMR National Wildlife Refuge to improve recreation access to the east side of the Monument from the James Kipp Recreation Area. The BLM would also coordinate with Blaine County and the Fort Belknap Community Council to improve recreation access across the Cow Island and Timber Ridge roads in the northeast area of the Monument.

New resource roads for natural gas operations would be open to public access.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument Manager.

Alternative C

The BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements with willing landowners where no legal public access exists to or within the Monument (Map F). The

BLM would cooperate with MFWP and private landowners to improve recreation access. This may involve participation in block management or developing access agreements with willing private landowners.

The BLM would coordinate with the CMR National Wildlife Refuge to improve recreation access to the east side of the Monument from the James Kipp Recreation Area. The BLM would also coordinate with Blaine County and the Fort Belknap Community Council to improve recreation access across the Cow Island and Timber Ridge roads in the northeast area of the Monument.

The BLM would restrict general public use of new resource roads to natural gas operations. These determinations about public access to specified areas via such roads would be based on resource conditions and made in site-specific environmental assessments. No additional road access would be granted to the public in the Ervin Ridge WSA.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument Manager.

Alternative D

The BLM would not attempt to acquire new or additional public access. The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and private landowners to maintain current recreation access.

On new resource roads to natural gas operations, the BLM would restrict public access to all sensitive areas. The public use and permanent status of new resource roads would be addressed in a site-specific environmental assessment.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument Manager. The BLM could designate specific closed roads for use by individuals with disabilities, based on demand or on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative E

The BLM would not attempt to acquire new or additional public access. The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and private landowners to maintain current recreation access.

New resource roads for natural gas operations would be closed to public access.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument Manager. The BLM could designate specific closed roads for use by individuals with disabilities, based on demand or on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

The BLM would coordinate with state agencies and county governments to improve public access to BLM land. Easements or fee acquisition opportunities would only be considered with willing landowners to enhance the values of the Monument and provide public access to or within the Monument, or additional public access to meet management objectives, including dispersed recreation use (Map F).

The BLM would consider building or rerouting roads as necessary for additional public access to large blocks of BLM land. The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and private landowners to improve recreation access. This may involve participation in block management programs or developing access agreements with willing private landowners.

The BLM would coordinate with the CMR National Wildlife Refuge to improve recreation access to the east side of the Monument from the James Kipp Recreation Area. The BLM would also coordinate with Blaine County and the Fort Belknap Community Council to improve recreation access across the Cow Island and Timber Ridge roads in the northeast area of the Monument.

New resource roads to natural gas operations would be closed for public access, unless shown to meet management objectives through a site-specific environmental assessment.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument Manager. If the need arises, the BLM could identify specific designated closed roads as access for individuals with disabilities.

BLM Road System

The BLM's goal is to provide access to state and federal land and reasonable access for private landowners while protecting the features of the Monument. This includes access for administrative needs and authorized uses of industry and government agencies.

The BLM's goal is to manage legal and physical public access to and within the Monument to provide opportunities for diverse recreation activities (motorized and non-motorized) while considering the surrounding regional recreation opportunities in north-central Montana. The Monument is a relatively small but significant part of this region and cannot provide opportunities for all recreational activities on all BLM land while protecting the objects for which it was designated.

Public use of private roads that provide access to BLM land in the Monument must be negotiated with the individual landowners.

The State of Montana provides access to BLM land with seven road segments that cross state land and are currently designated open for public travel (Chapter 3, Montana DNRC Roads (State Land)). All other State of Montana road segments that provide access to BLM land are currently closed to motorized travel unless covered by a public access easement. The six easements granted by the State of Montana (DNRC) are shown in Table 3.20.

A road is a linear route segment that can be created by the passage of vehicles (two-track); constructed; improved; or maintained for motorized travel. The following specifications were used to determine which routes would be inventoried for the Monument transportation plan:

Motorized travel is not considered cross-country (off road) on BLM land when:

- The motorized vehicle travels on constructed roads that are maintained by the BLM. Constructed roads are often characterized with cut and fill slopes.
- Motorized vehicle use is defined as clearly evident, two-track routes with regular travel and continuous passage of motorized vehicles over a period of years. A two-track is where perennial vegetation is devoid or scarce, or where wheel tracks are continuous depressions in the soil yet evident to the casual observer and are vegetated.

BLM roads are classified into three categories (collector, local and resource roads) and are assigned to one of five maintenance levels. The transportation alternatives include these BLM classifications and maintenance levels as described in Tables 2.25 and 2.26.

Table 2.25 BLM Road Classifications	
Collector Roads	These Bureau roads normally provide primary access to large blocks of land, and connect with or are extensions of a public road system. Collector roads accommodate mixed traffic and serve many uses. They generally receive the highest volume of traffic of all the roads in the Bureau road system. User cost, safety, comfort, and travel time are primary road management considerations. Collector roads usually require application of the highest standards used by the Bureau. As a result, they have the potential for creating substantial environmental impacts and often require complex mitigation procedures.
Local Roads	These Bureau roads normally serve a smaller area than collectors, and connect to collectors or a public road system. Local roads receive lower volumes, carry fewer traffic types, and generally serve fewer uses. User cost, comfort, and travel time are secondary to construction and maintenance cost considerations. Low volume local roads in mountainous terrain, where operating speed is reduced by effect of terrain, may be single-lane roads with turnouts. Environmental impacts are reduced as steeper grades, sharper curves, and lower design speeds than would be permissible on collector roads are allowable.
Resource Roads	These Bureau roads normally are spur roads that provide point access and connect to local or collector roads. They carry very low volume and accommodate only one or two types of use. Use restrictions are applied to prevent conflicts between users needing the road and users attracted to the road. The location and design of these roads are governed by environmental compatibility and minimizing Bureau costs, with minimal consideration for user cost, comfort, or travel time. This includes two-track roads.

Table 2.26 BLM Road Maintenance Levels	
Maintenance Level 1	<p>This level is assigned to roads where minimum maintenance is required to protect adjacent lands and resource values. These roads are no longer needed and are closed to traffic. The objective is to remove these roads from the transportation system.</p> <p>Minimum Maintenance Standard – Emphasis is given to maintaining drainage and runoff patterns as needed to protect adjacent lands. Grading, brushing/tree removal, or slide removal is not performed unless roadbed drainage is being adversely affected, causing erosion. Closure and traffic restrictive devices are maintained.</p>
Maintenance Level 2	<p>This level is assigned to roads where the management objectives require the road to be opened for limited traffic. Typically, these roads are passable by high-clearance vehicles and include two-track roads.</p> <p>Minimum Maintenance Standard – Drainage structures and/or suitable material (e.g., rock or gravel) are to be installed and/or maintained as needed to control runoff, erosion, sedimentation, and rutting. Grading is conducted only in specific locations as necessary to correct drainage problems and erosion. Brushing/tree removal is conducted as needed to allow administrative access. Slides may be left in place provided they do not adversely affect drainage. Known sinkholes would be repaired where they present a safety hazard.</p>
Maintenance Level 3	This level is assigned to roads where management objectives require the road to be open seasonally or year-round for commercial, recreation, or high volume administrative access. Typically, these roads are natural or aggregate surfaced, but may include low use bituminous surfaced roads. These roads have defined cross sections with drainage structures (e.g., rolling dips, culverts, or ditches). These roads may be negotiated by passenger cars traveling at prudent speeds. User comfort and convenience are not considered a high priority.

Table 2.26 BLM Road Maintenance Levels	
	<p>Minimum Maintenance Standard – Drainage structures and/or suitable material (e.g., rock or gravel) are to be installed and/or maintained as needed to control runoff, erosion, sedimentation, and rutting. Grading is conducted only in specific locations as necessary to correct drainage problems and erosion or when ruts in excess of 3 inches are present within the roadbed. Brushing/tree removal is conducted as needed to improve sight distance. Slides adversely affecting drainage would receive high priority for removal; otherwise they will be removed on a scheduled basis. Known sinkholes would be repaired where they present a safety hazard.</p>
Maintenance Level 4	<p>This level is assigned to roads where management objectives require the road to be open all year (except may be closed or have limited access due to snow conditions) and to connect major administrative features (recreation sites, local road systems, administrative sites, etc.) to county, state, or federal roads. Typically, these roads are single or double lane, aggregate or bituminous surface, with a higher volume of commercial and recreational traffic than administrative traffic.</p> <p>Minimum Maintenance Standard – The entire roadway is maintained at least annually, although a preventative maintenance program may be established. Problems are repaired as discovered. These roads may be closed or have limited access due to snow conditions.</p>
Maintenance Level 5	<p>This level is assigned to roads where management objectives require the road to be open all year and are the highest traffic volume roads of the transportation system. None of the BLM roads in the Monument are assigned to this category.</p> <p>Minimum Maintenance Standard – The entire roadway is maintained at least annually, although a preventative maintenance program may be established. Problems are repaired as discovered. These roads may be closed or have limited access due to snow conditions.</p>

Alternative A (Current Management)

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner, administrative, and public travel.

All existing BLM roads would remain open, unless previously restricted through the West HiLine RMP, the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP or completed watershed plans.

Existing roads would remain open to all forms of motorized and mechanized use.

Road System Criteria – Existing roads would be designated open yearlong, unless they were previously designated open seasonally (limited) or closed under a resource management plan or watershed plan (Table 2.27 and Map 4).

Road Classification and Maintenance – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and one of five maintenance levels that reflect the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.28). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

Table 2.27 BLM Roads Open Yearlong, Seasonally, or Closed Alternative A (Current Management)	
<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	524
Open Seasonally (Limited)	68
<i>Winter Range/Bighorn Sheep</i>	1
<i>Wildlife Habitat Security</i>	67
Closed	13
<i>Erosion</i>	1
<i>Recreation</i>	1
<i>Spur Road</i>	9
<i>Wildlife</i>	2
Total	605

The Cow Island and Knox Ridge roads would remain classified as collector roads (15 miles). The Bullwhacker, Lower Two Calf, Middle Two Calf and Timber Ridge roads would remain classified as local roads (34 miles). All other roads would be classified as resource roads (556 miles).

The Cow Island road would remain at a Level 4 maintenance category (7 miles). The Knox Ridge, Bullwhacker, Lower Two Calf, Middle Two Calf,

Table 2.28 Road Classification and Maintenance Level – Alternative A (Current Management)						
Road Classification	Miles	Maintenance Level (miles)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Collector	15	0	0	8	7	0
Local	34	0	0	34	0	0
Resource	556	13	518	25	0	0
Total	605	13	518	67	7	0

Timber Ridge, Butch Camp, DeWeese, Heller Bottom, James Kipp Recreation Area, Spencer Cow Camp, Wood Bottom, Woodhawk Bottom, and Woodhawk Trail roads would remain at a Level 3 maintenance category (67 miles). All other roads designated as open would remain at a Level 2 maintenance category (518 miles).

Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads

– Emergency travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue or law enforcement vehicle.

For administrative purposes travel off road and on closed roads would be authorized for federal, state and county agencies, lessees and permittees. Administrative purposes would remain limited to those activities necessary to administer a permit or lease.

Some examples of administrative purposes include:

- Gas or electric utilities monitoring a utility corridor for safety conditions or normal maintenance.
- Livestock permittees building or maintaining fences and water facilities, delivering salt or supplements, moving livestock, checking wells and pipelines, or other activities directly associated with the implementation of a grazing permit or lease.
- Agency personnel involved in prescribed fire, noxious weed control, surveying and monitoring.
- Where possible, agency personnel performing administrative functions would post a sign or notice in the area they are working. This is necessary to identify for the public the function the employees are authorized to perform.
- Natural gas activities associated with exploration, development, production, and reclamation.

Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, for the retrieval of a tagged big game animal. In the WSAs, game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may not pull off existing roads for camping.

Signing – Existing directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where needed.

Alternative B

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open to public travel, unless closed to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM's objectives would be to evaluate roads based on erosion, identified wildlife species habitat and the need for the road (type of use and need for access). This may include closing or rerouting roads that impact wildlife or soils (e.g., highly erosive soils, weeds). The BLM reserves the option to build new roads if necessary to access blocks of BLM land.

Roads that are open yearlong or seasonally would be open to all forms of motorized and mechanized use. Some closed roads could be designated as limited to mechanized (e.g., mountain bike) use through site-specific planning and environmental review.

Road System Criteria – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative B are listed in Table 2.29. These factors were applied to the existing roads to determine the roads that would be open yearlong or seasonally (limited) in the Monument (Table 2.30 and the Alternative B Transportation Maps available on the BLM website at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/lewistown_field_office/um_rmp_process.html). The road system could be modified if vehicle use patterns or resource conditions change. Modifications to the road system would be based on the management guidance under this alternative and changes would be addressed through a travel plan with public participation.

Table 2.29
Factors Applied to Existing Roads to Determine if Open Yearlong or Seasonally

<i>Road System Criteria</i>	<i>Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
Spur Roads	Open.			Some resource roads (usually < 1 mile) that do not provide access to specific sites would be closed.	Closed.	Some resource roads (usually < 1 mile) that do not provide access to specific sites would be closed.
Parallel/Redundant Roads	Open.			Some resource roads that provide access to the same area would be closed.	Closed.	Some resource roads that provide access to the same area would be closed.
Erosion	Open.		Some resource roads that are unsuitable due to erosion problems would be closed.	Some resource roads that are unsuitable due to erosion problems would be closed.	Closed.	Some resource roads that are unsuitable due to erosion problems would be closed.
Vehicle Ways in WSAs	Open.		Vehicle ways that have reclaimed naturally would be closed.	Vehicle ways would be closed.		Vehicle ways that have reclaimed naturally would be closed.
Greater Sage-Grouse	Open.	For resource roads 1/4 mile from an active lek, a seasonal closure would be implemented from March 1 to June 15.	For resource roads 1/4 mile from an active lek, a seasonal closure would be implemented from March 1 to June 15. For resource roads located within winter habitat, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31.	For some resource roads that are 2 miles from an active lek, a seasonal closure would be implemented from March 1 to June 15. For some resource roads located within winter habitat, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31.	For resource roads that are 1/4 mile from an active lek, a yearlong closure would be implemented. For resource roads located within winter habitat, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31.	Open.

Table 2.29
Factors Applied to Existing Roads to Determine if Open Yearlong or Seasonally

<i>Road System Criteria</i>	<i>Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
<i>Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas</i>	Open.	For some resource roads that are located within bighorn sheep lambing areas, a seasonal closure would be implemented from April 1 to June 15 on a case-by-case basis.		For some resource and local roads that are located within bighorn sheep lambing areas, a seasonal closure would be implemented from April 1 to June 15 on a case-by-case basis.		Open.
<i>Mule Deer and Elk Winter Range</i>	Open.		For some resource roads that are located within mule deer and elk winter range, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31 on a case-by-case basis.	For some resource roads that are located within mule deer and elk winter range, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to May 15.		For some resource roads that are located within mule deer and elk winter range, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31 on a case-by-case basis.
<i>Wildlife Habitat Security and Game Retrieval</i>	Some roads would have a seasonal road closure during the big game hunting season, but would be available for game retrieval.		Some resource roads could be closed from September 1 to November 30 to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season. Game retrieval would be allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and for 3 hours after sunset.	Some resource roads could be closed from September 1 to November 30 to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season. Game retrieval would be allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Some resource roads could be closed from September 1 to November 30 to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season.	Some resource roads could be closed from September 1 to November 30 to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season. Game retrieval would be allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
<i>Designated Sensitive Species</i>	Open.	A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests. The season would be determined based on the species of raptor.		A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource and local roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests. The season would be determined based on the species of raptor.	A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource, local and collector roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests. The season would be determined based on the species of raptor.	A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests that have been active for the last 5 nesting seasons. The season

<p>Table 2.29 Factors Applied to Existing Roads to Determine if Open Yearlong or Seasonally</p>						
<i>Road System Criteria</i>	<i>Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
						would be determined based on the species of raptor.
<i>Bald Eagle</i>	Open.	A seasonal closure (February 1 to May 31) would be implemented on some resource roads that are 1/2 mile from active bald eagle nests.				A seasonal closure would be implemented from February 1 to May 31 on some resource roads that are 1/2 mile from active bald eagle nests.
<i>Invasive Weeds</i>	Open.		Temporary resource road closures would be implemented in highly infested areas.	Temporary resource and local road closures would be implemented in highly infested areas.		Temporary resource road closures would be implemented in highly infested areas.

Table 2.30 BLM Roads Open Yearlong, Seasonally, or Closed Alternative B	
<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	477
Open Seasonally (Limited)	96
<i>Winter Range</i>	6
<i>Wildlife Habitat Security</i>	47
<i>Bighorn Sheep Lambing</i>	43
Closed	32
<i>Parallel Road</i>	1
<i>Recreation</i>	2
<i>Spur Road</i>	29
Total	605

Road Classification and Maintenance – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.31). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

The BLM would install cattleguards as needed or where appropriate on roads that are designated open yearlong.

Closed roads would be allowed to reclaim naturally.

Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue or law enforcement emergency purposes.

For administrative purposes travel off road and on closed roads for BLM, other federal, state and county agencies, lessees and permittees would be authorized. Administrative purposes would remain limited to those activities necessary to administer a permit or lease. Some examples of administrative purposes are discussed in Alternative A.

Big game retrieval would be allowed on some identified closed roads (administrative roads that may be closed to the public or roads that are open seasonally).

Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, for the retrieval of a tagged big game animal. In the WSAs, game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may pull off designated open roads no more than 300 feet for camping and must use the most direct route to the site to minimize resource damage. Site selection must be completed by non-motorized or non-mechanized means.

Signing – Existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to prevent resource damage, safety or visitor confusion. Roads open to motorized and mechanized travel would be signed. Closed roads would not be signed unless necessary to prevent resource damage.

Alternative C

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open to public travel, unless closed to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM's objectives would be to retain roads to access recreation sites, gas well sites, major range improvement projects, backcountry airstrips and access to areas commonly used for dispersed recreation (geological areas and trailheads). The BLM would reduce the number of roads in wildlife habitat, in areas considered unsuitable due to erosion and slope, and if unique geologic formations, cultural sites or riparian areas are being degraded. The BLM reserves the option to build new roads if necessary to access blocks of BLM land.

Table 2.31 Road Classification and Maintenance Level – Alternative B						
Road Classification <i>Miles</i>		<i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	15	0	0	8	7	0
Local	34	0	0	34	0	0
Resource	556	32	499	25	0	0
Total	605	32	499	67	7	0

Roads that are open yearlong or seasonally would be open to all forms of motorized and mechanized use. Some closed roads could be designated as limited to mechanized (e.g., mountain bike) use through site-specific planning and environmental review.

Road System Criteria – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative C are listed in Table 2.29. These factors were applied to the existing roads to determine the roads that would be open yearlong or seasonally (limited) in the Monument (Table 2.32 and the Alternative C Transportation Maps available on the BLM website at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/lewistown_field_office/um_rmp_process.html). The road system could be modified if vehicle use patterns or resource conditions change. Modifications to the road system would be based on the management guidance under this alternative and changes would be addressed through a travel plan with public participation.

Table 2.32 BLM Roads Open Yearlong, Seasonally, or Closed Alternative C	
Designation	Road Miles
Open Yearlong	439
Open Seasonally (Limited)	95
<i>Winter Range</i>	31
<i>Wildlife Habitat Security</i>	44
<i>Bighorn Sheep Lambing</i>	20
Closed	71
<i>Erosion</i>	3
<i>Parallel Road</i>	2
<i>Recreation</i>	2
<i>Redundant</i>	2
<i>Spur Road</i>	62
Total	605

Road Classification and Maintenance – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.33). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

The BLM would install cattleguards as needed on roads that are designated open year long.

Most closed roads would be allowed to reclaim naturally. On selected sections of the closed road, reclamation may include ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix or a mix approved by the Monument Manager.

Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement emergency purposes.

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. Permittees and lessees would be authorized to drive off road and on closed roads to administer their livestock grazing permits. Some examples of administrative purposes are discussed in Alternative A.

Big game retrieval would be allowed on identified closed roads from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and for 3 hours after the legal hunting time.

Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, for the retrieval of a tagged big game animal. In the WSAs, game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may pull off designated open roads no more than 150 feet for camping and must use the most direct route to minimize resource damage. Site selection must be completed by non-motorized or non-mechanized means.

Table 2.33 Road Classification and Maintenance Level – Alternative C						
Road ClassificationMiles		Maintenance Level (miles)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Collector	15	0	0	8	7	0
Local	34	0	0	34	0	0
Resource	556	71	461	24	0	0
Total	605	71	461	66	7	0

Signing – Existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to prevent resource damage, safety or visitor confusion. Roads open to motorized and mechanized travel would be signed. Closed roads would not be signed, unless necessary to prevent resource damage.

Alternative D

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open to public travel, unless closed to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM's objectives would be to retain roads if they serve a specific purpose (accessing recreation sites, gas well sites and major range improvement projects). Most roads that are not collector or local would be closed as would parallel roads. Roads along the middle of ridges would remain open, but most roads along the edge of rims and spur roads would be closed. The BLM reserves the option to build new roads if necessary to access blocks of BLM land.

Some roads could be limited to specific motorized and/or mechanized use through site-specific planning and environmental review.

Road System Criteria – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative D are listed in Table 2.29. These factors were applied to the existing roads to determine the roads that would be open yearlong or seasonally (limited) in the Monument (Table 2.34 and the Alternative D Transportation Maps available on the BLM website at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/lewistown_field_office/um_rmp_process.html). The road system could be modified if vehicle use patterns or resource conditions change. Modifications to the road system would be based on the management guidance

under this alternative and changes would be addressed through a travel plan with public participation.

Road Classification and Maintenance – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.35). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

Closed roads would be reclaimed with planned/designed reclamation. On selected sections of the closed road, reclamation may include ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix or a mix approved by the Monument Manager.

Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement emergency purposes.

Table 2.34 BLM Roads Open Yearlong, Seasonally, or Closed Alternative D	
<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	292
Open Seasonally (Limited)	44
<i>Winter Range</i>	20
<i>Wildlife Habitat Security</i>	14
<i>Bighorn Sheep Lambing</i>	5
<i>Sage-Grouse Habitat</i>	5
Closed	269
<i>Erosion</i>	6
<i>Other</i>	3
<i>Parallel Road</i>	30
<i>Recreation</i>	2
<i>Redundant</i>	10
<i>Spur Road</i>	200
<i>Wildlife</i>	18
Total	605

Table 2.35 Road Classification and Maintenance Level – Alternative D						
Road Classification <i>Miles</i>		Maintenance Level (miles)				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	15	0	0	8	7	0
Local	34	0	0	34	0	0
Resource	556	269	263	24	0	0
Total	605	269	263	66	7	0

The BLM, other federal, state and county agencies would be authorized to travel off road and on closed roads for administrative purposes. Seasonal use provisions for travel off road and on closed roads would be authorized for lessees and permittees as needed to administer the lease, with the development and use of an identification system. Some examples of administrative purposes are discussed in Alternative A.

Big game retrieval by motorized vehicles would be allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on specific designated closed roads (roads normally open only for administrative use).

Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, for the retrieval of a tagged big game animal. In the WSAs, game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may pull off designated roads no more than 10 feet for camping.

Signing – Existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to prevent resource damage, safety or visitor confusion. Roads open or closed to motorized and mechanized travel would be signed.

Alternative E

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open to public travel, unless closed to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM's objectives would be to retain collector and local roads, but most resource roads would be closed. However, resource roads currently maintained would remain open.

Some roads could be limited to specific motorized and/or mechanized use through site-specific planning and environmental review.

Road System Criteria – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative E are listed in Table 2.29. These factors were applied to the existing roads to determine the roads that would be open yearlong or seasonally in the Monument (Table 2.36 and the Alternative E Transportation Maps available on the BLM website at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/lewistown_field_office/um_rmp_process.html).

Road Classification and Maintenance – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate

management objectives (Table 2.37). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

Closed roads would be reclaimed with planned/designed reclamation. On selected sections of the closed roads, reclamation may include ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix or a mix approved by the Monument Manager.

Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement emergency purposes.

For administrative purposes travel for BLM, other federal, state and county agencies would be authorized on closed roads. Off-road travel would not be authorized. The BLM would provide permission on a case-by-case basis for administrative purposes by lessees and permittees to travel off road and on closed roads. Some examples of administrative purposes are discussed in Alternative A.

Big game retrieval by motorized vehicles would not be allowed on closed roads. Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed on closed roads to retrieve a tagged big game animal. Game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles could not pull off designated roads for camping.

Signing – New or existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. No open or closed road signs would be allowed.

Table 2.36 BLM Roads Open Yearlong, Seasonally, or Closed Alternative E	
<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	103
Open Seasonally (Limited)	4
<i>Wildlife Habitat Security</i>	2
<i>Bighorn Sheep Lambing</i>	2
Closed	498
<i>Erosion</i>	6
<i>Other</i>	3
<i>Parallel Road</i>	30
<i>Recreation</i>	2
<i>Redundant</i>	10
<i>Spur Road</i>	429
<i>Wildlife</i>	18
Total	605

<p align="center">Table 2.37 Road Classification and Maintenance Level – Alternative E</p>						
<p><i>Road Classification</i></p> <p><i>Miles</i></p>		<p><i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i></p>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	15	0	0	8	7	0
Local	34	3	0	31	0	0
Resource	556	495	38	23	0	0
Total	605	498	38	62	7	0

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private land would remain open for public, private landowner and administrative travel with the exception of two roads. One of the closed roads is impassable and is no longer used and the other road is currently limited to administrative access. There are 65 miles of BLM roads providing access to private land that would be designated open yearlong and 2 miles (two roads) that would be designated closed.

BLM roads to the boundary of state land would remain open for administrative travel including state leaseholders. These roads would also be open for public travel, if shown to meet Monument objectives. The BLM would coordinate with state agencies on roads open to the public that lead to or from state land. There are 80 miles of BLM roads providing access to state land.

The BLM's objectives would be to retain roads to access areas commonly used for dispersed recreation (hunting, geological areas, and trailheads), recreation sites (fishing reservoirs, scenic overlooks and historic homesteads), gas well sites, major range improvement projects, and backcountry airstrips.

The BLM would reduce the number of parallel and spur roads and some roads in areas with important wildlife habitat, in areas considered unsuitable due to erosion and slope, and where unique geologic formations, cultural sites or riparian areas are being degraded.

The BLM reserves the option to build new roads if necessary to access blocks of BLM land.

Roads that are designated open or limited (404 miles) would be open to all forms of motorized and mechanized use consistent with management objectives with the exception of 2 miles of roads identified as backcountry airstrips. The 2 miles of roads identified as backcountry airstrips would be limited to the landing of aircraft; however, the landing of aircraft would not be allowed on the other 402 miles of BLM roads. Some roads

designated as closed could be designated as limited to mechanized (e.g., mountain bike) use through site-specific planning and environmental review.

Road System Criteria – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative F are listed in Table 2.29. The objectives and factors were used to determine which roads in the Monument would be open yearlong (293 miles), open seasonally (111 miles), or closed (201 miles) (Map 5 and Table 2.38). The road system could be modified if vehicle use traffic patterns or resource conditions change. Modifications to the road system would be based on the management guidance under this alternative, including the factors listed in Table 2.38, and changes would be addressed through a travel plan update with public participation and environmental review.

Road Classification and Maintenance – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.39). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs. The BLM may perform maintenance or upgrades to control erosion, or if not possible, either reroute or close the road for erosion control.

The Cow Island, Timber Ridge, Knox Ridge, and James Kipp Recreation Area roads would be classified as collector roads (21 miles). The Wood Bottom, Bullwhacker, Middle Two Calf, Lower Two Calf, Woodhawk Bottom, and Woodhawk Trail roads would be classified as local roads (41 miles). All other roads would be classified as resource roads (543 miles).

The Cow Island and James Kipp Recreation Area roads would be assigned to a Level 4 maintenance category (8 miles). The Wood Bottom, Knox Ridge, Timber Ridge, Bullwhacker, Middle Two Calf, Lower Two Calf, Spencer Cow Camp, and Butch Camp roads would be assigned to a Level 3 maintenance category (56 miles). The remaining open roads would fall under the Level 2 maintenance category (340 miles). A Level 1 maintenance category would be assigned to the 201 miles of closed roads.

Table 2.38 BLM Roads Open Yearlong, Seasonally, or Closed Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)	
<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	293
Open Seasonally (Limited)	111
<i>Winter Range</i>	21
<i>Wildlife Habitat Security</i>	69
<i>Winter Range/Habitat Security</i>	12
<i>Erosion</i>	7
<i>Other – Airstrips</i>	2
Closed	201
<i>Erosion</i>	13
<i>Other</i>	3
<i>Parallel Road</i>	37
<i>Recreation</i>	2
<i>Redundant</i>	10
<i>Spur Road</i>	135
<i>Wildlife</i>	1
Total	605

The BLM could install cattleguards as needed or where appropriate on roads that are designated open yearlong.

In the future, the BLM section of the PN road (5 miles) would be classified as a local road and assigned to a Level 3 maintenance category.

The BLM roads designated closed would either be allowed to reclaim naturally or selected segments may require ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix to control surface runoff. The Monument Manager could approve a different seed mixture to meet reclamation standards.

Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads
– Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement vehicle used for emergency purposes.

For administrative purposes travel would be authorized off road and on closed roads for BLM, other federal agencies, state and county agencies, lessees and permittees. Administrative purposes would be limited to those activities necessary to administer the permit or lease. Some examples of administrative purposes are discussed in Alternative A. If a segment of a closed road provides access to a facility and becomes impassable, maintenance could be authorized on a case-by-case basis. There could be some new surface disturbance from road maintenance activities.

Big game retrieval by motorized vehicles would be allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on 81 miles of seasonally closed roads (69 miles closed from September 1 through November 30, and 12 miles closed from September 1 through March 31).

Non-motorized/ non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, to retrieve a tagged big game animal. Game carts would not be allowed off road in the WSAs.

Outside of the WSAs, motorized or mechanized vehicles may park adjacent to a road to provide a reasonable safe distance for the public to pass. However, parking must be within 50 feet of a road. Parking would be encouraged at previously used sites.

In the WSAs, motorized or mechanized vehicles may only park immediately adjacent to a vehicle way or cherry stem road.

Signage – Existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to enhance safety or prevent resource damage or visitor confusion. Roads open to motorized and mechanized travel would be signed (small road number signs). Closed roads would not be signed unless necessary to prevent resource damage.

Table 2.39 Road Classification and Maintenance Level – Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)						
<i>Road Classification</i>		<i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	21	0	0	13	8	0
Local	41	0	5	36	0	0
Resource	543	201	335	7	0	0
Total	605	201	340	56	8	0

Aviation

The BLM's goal is to provide access for diverse recreation opportunities while protecting the features in the Monument.

Alternative A (Current Management)

The 10 existing backcountry airstrips would remain open (Table 2.40).

Commercial and private aircraft such as planes, helicopters, hot air balloons or ultralights would be allowed to land on the airstrips in the Monument. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

Alternative B

The existing airstrips would remain open (authorized) and additional airstrips could be allowed after environmental review (Table 2.40).

Commercial and private aircraft (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be allowed to land in the Monument. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

Alternative C

Seven airstrips would remain open for private aircraft (Table 2.40) (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights). Three of these airstrips would be restricted seasonally, based on wildlife habitat requirements or values for which the Monument was established. The Cow Creek, Left Coulee, Bullwhacker and Knox Ridge backcountry airstrips would be open yearlong. The Black Butte North and Woodhawk backcountry airstrips would be closed from December 1 to March 31. The

Ervin Ridge backcountry airstrip would be closed from December 1 to June 15.

Any commercial aircraft landing in the Monument (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be required to utilize only authorized backcountry airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply to the commercial use of airstrips. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

Alternative D

Six airstrips (selected to avoid clusters) would remain open for private aircraft (Table 2.40) (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights). Four of these airstrips would be restricted seasonally, based on wildlife habitat requirements or values for which the Monument was established. The Cow Creek and Knox Ridge backcountry airstrips would be open yearlong. The Left Coulee, Bullwhacker and Black Butte North backcountry airstrips would be closed from December 1 to March 31. The Ervin Ridge backcountry airstrip would be closed from December 1 to June 15.

Any commercial aircraft landing in the Monument (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be required to utilize only specific authorized backcountry airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply to the commercial use of airstrips. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

Alternative E

No airstrips would remain open (Table 2.40).

No aircraft (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be allowed to land in the Monument.

Table 2.40 Airstrips Open Yearlong, Seasonally, or Closed (by Alternative)						
<i>Airstrip</i>	<i>Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
Black Butte North	Open	Open	Seasonal	Seasonal	Closed	Open
Black Butte South	Open	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Bullwhacker	Open	Open	Open	Seasonal	Closed	Open
Cow Creek	Open	Open	Open	Open	Closed	Open
Ervin Ridge	Open	Open	Seasonal	Seasonal	Closed	Closed
Knox Ridge	Open	Open	Open	Open	Closed	Open
Left Coulee	Open	Open	Open	Seasonal	Closed	Open
Log Cabin	Open	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Roadside	Open	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Woodhawk	Open	Open	Seasonal	Closed	Closed	Seasonal

Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Six airstrips (selected to avoid clusters) would remain open for private aircraft (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) to provide opportunities for recreational backcountry activities such as camping, hiking, and sightseeing (Table 2.40 and Map 5). The landing of aircraft would only be allowed on these airstrips. The six airstrips are Black Butte North, Bullwhacker, Cow Creek, Knox Ridge, Left Coulee, and Woodhawk. Five of the airstrips would be open yearlong while the Woodhawk airstrip would be restricted seasonally to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season (September 1 to November 30).

The BLM would allow minimal hand maintenance of airstrips without prior approval, but maintenance would be limited to the area previously disturbed. The emphasis would be to keep the airstrips as backcountry airstrips, only suitable for landing aircraft equipped to use primitive airstrips. Mechanized maintenance, improvements, facilities or infrastructure (tie downs, wind socks, airstrip delineators, etc.) would require prior approval by the authorized officer.

All commercial aircraft landing in the Monument (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be required to utilize specific authorized backcountry airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply to the commercial use of these airstrips. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail

The following alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed study because they did not meet the vision, goals and management guidance provided by the Proclamation or were outside of the technical or legal constraints of developing a land use plan for BLM land and resources in the Monument.

Class I Airshed

An alternative to designate and manage the Monument as a Class I airshed was considered but eliminated from detailed study because the State of Montana has the delegated responsibility for management of the Clean Air Act, including requests to redesignate airsheds, which also requires action by the Environmental Protection Agency. The Monument is within Airshed 9 and is a Class II airshed. The BLM will comply with national and state air quality standards under all alternatives but does not have the authority to redesignate airsheds.

Reinventory the Monument Roadless Areas with Wilderness Characteristics (Bullwhacker)

An alternative to manage the Bullwhacker area for wilderness characteristics was considered but eliminated from detailed study because it was determined that there was not enough information to suggest that previous inventories of this area needed revision. A formal wilderness inventory of the Bullwhacker area was completed in 1979 and 1980. In 2003, a proposal was submitted by the public for the Bullwhacker area that provided a description of the resources in the area but did not include enough information to suggest that the 1979/1980 inventory needs revision.

In particular, the BLM required new information that would identify or demonstrate that Bullwhacker has wilderness characteristics or values not previously identified, or where change has occurred enhancing the area's wilderness characteristics. Much of the proposal BLM received in 2003 discussed how Bullwhacker would look in the future if managed differently (e.g., closing roads, letting roads rehabilitate, gas lines being removed as leases expire, etc.). An inventory describes what is currently on the ground, and not what could be. In the Draft RMP/EIS, the alternatives section examines various management options and the environmental consequences section describes what the impacts to all resources would be under the various management scenarios.

Public comment on the Draft RMP/EIS stated that BLM should take another look at the Bullwhacker area for wilderness study status or for wilderness characteristics. Though the BLM can no longer inventory for, and designate wilderness study areas, the BLM can manage areas for wilderness characteristics.

Based on the public comments received on the Draft RMP/EIS for the Bullwhacker area, the BLM reviewed and compared the previous inventory with the current road system, natural gas wells in the area, and other developments. Approximately 46,000 of BLM land in the Monument are within the original Bullwhacker inventory unit (MT-065-255) and another 3,000 acres are just west of the Monument (within the Lewistown Field Office). The Bullwhacker unit was inventoried in the late 1970s as part of the Montana Wilderness Inventory Process. In 1980 it was determined that Bullwhacker, while meeting the size criteria of wilderness characteristics, had too many man-made structures, such as roads from oil and gas developments. The inventory identified 45 vehicle ways, 57 reservoirs, gas lines, and 44 live or dry gas wells (BLM 1980). Since the original inventory the area has seen an increase in the number of roads and natural gas exploration and development. While the area is remote it still has numerous roads and

impacts created by natural gas operations. This comparison showed an additional 34 miles of roads, eight new natural gas wells, two additional active natural gas wells, and another seven miles of natural gas pipelines since the 1979/1980 inventory.

Based on the public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS, the Monument was also reviewed to identify areas with wilderness characteristics based on:

- At least 5,000 contiguous acres of BLM land without roads.
- The imprint of people's work must be substantially unnoticeable.
- An outstanding opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Though there were no areas greater than 5,000 acres without roads, 14 areas were identified with roads that did not completely separate the area. However, most of these areas contain numerous roads within them. Two of the larger areas are within Bullwhacker. The BLM interdisciplinary team reviewed these areas and concluded that most of the areas had too many developments to be considered for their wilderness characteristics under current management (e.g., roads, natural gas development, range improvements, etc.). The few areas that had a small amount of roads were thin, long polygons, which limited the opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation (in some areas, less than a mile in width).

Identifying areas with wilderness characteristics is based on what currently is on the ground, and not what could be in the future under different management alternatives. Alternative E in the Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS emphasizes the natural condition and places the most limitations on visitors and other activities. Subtle forms of resource management and monitoring would minimize intervention into natural processes. The Monument would be managed for opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

In summary, the BLM reviewed the Bullwhacker and other areas and concluded that there were no non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

Water Developments

An alternative to prohibit any new water developments was considered but eliminated from detailed study. Under the Proclamation, the “[l]aws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument.” Since livestock

grazing will continue within the Monument, the prohibition of new water developments would severely encumber practical management alternatives to address and improve resource conditions, including the objects for which the Monument was designated. However, under all alternatives, new water developments would only be considered if the development would improve resource conditions and protect the objects identified in the Proclamation.

Livestock Grazing

An alternative to identify lands as not available for livestock grazing was considered but eliminated from detailed study since livestock grazing was considered in the Standards for Rangeland Health assessment and implementation of Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in completed watershed plans and the grazing permit renewal process. The Proclamation does not require nor suggest that lands need to be identified as unavailable for grazing, and affirms the “[l]aws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument.” There was not a resource need to identify lands unavailable for livestock grazing. In those limited areas where a conflict may occur, Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management practices will continue to be followed to protect rangeland resources and, where necessary, to mitigate conflicts with Monument uses and values. Administrative actions will be implemented under existing regulations to ensure compliance with existing permit/lease requirements. These actions include monitoring and supervision of grazing use and enforcement in response to unauthorized use.

An alternative that would guarantee the current level of livestock grazing on BLM land forever was considered but eliminated from detailed study because the BLM does not have the authority to make such a guarantee. There is no authority that allows the BLM to guarantee livestock grazing beyond what is established in laws and regulations for any public land administered by the BLM. Therefore, an alternative that would guarantee grazing is not within the BLM's authority and is beyond the scope of this RMP.

An alternative that would reduce and/or phase out livestock grazing over time, including a buyout of grazing privileges, was considered but eliminated from detailed study since there is no documented need to reduce or phase out livestock grazing based on the Proclamation and Standards for Rangeland Health. There is no authority that provides for buying out BLM grazing privileges. Standards for Rangeland Health and resource management plans are the primary controlling factors in authorizing livestock grazing on the BLM land. Recent Standards for Rangeland Health

assessments and implementation of Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management have reviewed and addressed livestock grazing in the Monument. There has not been a documented need to reduce or phase out livestock grazing in the Monument.

Oil and Gas

An alternative to prohibit any further oil and gas exploration and development was considered but eliminated from detailed study because the 43 federal oil and gas leases in the Monument are considered to have valid existing rights based on the Proclamation, wherein it states, “The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. The Secretary of Interior shall manage development on existing oil and gas leases within the monument, subject to valid existing rights, so as not to create any new impacts that would interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by this proclamation.” Specific management for oil and gas is addressed under the range of alternatives for Natural Gas Exploration and Development consistent with the Proclamation.

Also under Alternative E, surface disturbance would not be allowed on any of the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases regardless if the land is inside or outside the Monument. This includes the entire leasehold (12,782 acres). APDs on these leases would not be processed. This alternative would also consider the environmental effects of not leasing the 12 West HiLine leases or the No Lease Alternative; a sub-alternative identified as Alternative E_{NL}.

Conditions of approval would be applied to surface-disturbing or disruptive activities for the 31 non-West HiLine oil and gas leases in the Monument (32,477 acres). The conditions of approval would not be subject to waivers, exceptions, and modifications. The conditions of approval would be applied at the activity level phase, after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource. Application of these conditions of approval would effectively eliminate any

surface disturbance on these leases in the Monument. Although applying the conditions of approval would effectively eliminate the potential for new surface disturbance on the leases within the Monument, drilling operations (surface disturbance) could be allowed for those wells proposed to be drilled outside of the Monument on the non-West HiLine leases.

Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River

Comments on the Draft RMP/EIS suggested several variations of the range of alternatives analyzed in the document for the use of motorized watercraft on the Upper Missouri River. The suggestions included, but were not limited to, closing only the wild and scenic segments of the river to motorized use, closing only the section of the river from McClelland/Stafford Ferry to the CMR boundary to motorized use, to limiting horsepower or restricting the speed of motorized watercraft. The range of alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS encompassed the suggested variations but none were outside of the range included in the document. It is not feasible or reasonable to include every variation as a separate alternative analyzed in detail.

Comparison of Alternatives

A summary comparison of all the alternatives discussed in Chapter 2 follows in Table 2.41. The topics are presented in the same order as above, under the four categories of Health of the Land and Fire; Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure; Natural Gas Exploration and Development; and Access and Transportation.

A summary comparison of the environmental consequences discussed in Chapter 4 also follows in Table 2.42. The summary tables provide a comparative form for defining the differences among the alternatives.