

# Bureau of Land Management VERNAL FIELD OFFICE

## AND Record of Decision Approved Resource Management Plan



OCTOBER 2008

# BLM Mission

To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands  
for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.



Bureau of Land Management

BLM-UT-PL-09-003-1610

UT-080-2005-71



## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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IN REPLY REFER TO:  
1610  
(UT-935)

Dear Reader/Interested Party:

I am pleased to announce that, after several years of hard work and collaborative efforts, the Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan (Approved RMP) is complete. This document will provide guidance for the management of over 1.7 million acres of public land and 3.9 million acres of Federal mineral estate administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah, and a small portion of Grand Counties in Northeast Utah.

The attached Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved RMP have been prepared in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The ROD/Approved RMP is available to members of the public and will be sent to pertinent local, State, Tribal and Federal government entities. The Approved RMP finalizes the proposed decisions presented in the Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that was released on August 22, 2008 and subject to a 30-day protest period that ended on September 22, 2008. Fourteen protest letters with standing were received. The protests were reviewed by the BLM Director in Washington, D.C. After careful consideration of all points raised in these protests, the Director concluded the responsible planning team and decision makers followed all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and pertinent resource considerations in developing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Minor adjustments or points of clarification are incorporated into the Approved RMP in response to issues raised in the protest process and final BLM review. These minor changes are discussed in the ROD under the section titled *Notice of Modifications and Clarifications*, but the protest review did not result in any significant changes from the Proposed RMP.

The approval of this ROD by the Department of the Interior (DOI) Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management serves as the final decision by the DOI for all land use planning and implementation-level decisions described in the attached Approved RMP. Implementation of land use plan decisions (e.g., oil and gas development, and land and realty decisions) will not be undertaken without suitable further NEPA analysis, including all appropriate public involvement and any hearings available to the public.

Notification of the approval of this ROD/Approved RMP will be announced via local news releases and on the Vernal Field Office website at:

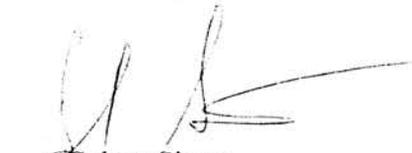
<http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/vernal/planning.html>

Hard copies and CD-ROM versions of the ROD/Approved RMP may be obtained by contacting the Vernal Field Office by phone at (435)781-4400, or at the following address:

Vernal Field Office  
170 South 500 East  
Vernal, Utah 84078

The BLM is pleased to provide this copy of the Vernal Field Office ROD/Approved RMP for your reference. We greatly appreciate all who contributed to the completion of this Approved RMP, including the State of Utah and county governments of Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah and the Ute Indian Tribe that were our Cooperating Agencies on this plan over the years, as well as other Federal agencies that worked closely with us to complete this important effort. We also appreciate the extensive public involvement during this time by groups, organizations, and individuals. Public input informed and improved the planning documents and we hope you will continue to work with us as we implement the decisions in this Approved RMP.

Sincerely,



Selma Sierra  
Utah State Director

**VERNAL FIELD OFFICE  
RECORD OF DECISION  
AND  
APPROVED  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

October 2008

*Prepared by:*  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Vernal Field Office  
Vernal, Utah

*Cooperating Agencies:*  
State of Utah  
Daggett County  
Duchesne County  
Uintah County  
Ute Indian Tribe

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
AML	Abandoned Mine Land
AMLIS	Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System
AMR	Appropriate Management Response
AMS	Analysis of the Management Situation
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA)
ARPA	Archeological Resource Protection Act (of 1979)
AUM	Animal unit month
BA	Biological Assessment
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practice
BO	Biological Opinion
BOR	(United States) Bureau of Reclamation
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (of 1980)
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CRBSCA	Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act
CSU	Controlled Surface Use
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DOE	Department of Energy
DOI	(United States) Department of the Interior
EA	Environmental Assessment
EAR	Environmental Analysis Record
EIA	Equine Infectious Anemia
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPCA	Energy Policy and Conservation Act (of 1975)
ERMA	Extended Recreation Management Area
ESA	Endangered Species Act (of 1973)
ES&R	Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act (of 1976)
FMP	Fire Management Plan
FMU	Fire Management Units
FO	Field Office
GAP	Geographical Analysis Program
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HA	Herd Area
HLI	Healthy Lands Initiative
HMA	Herd Management Area
IBLA	Interior Board of Land Appeals

IMP	Interim Management Policy
ISA	Instant Study Area (Wilderness Study Area)
LTA	Land Tenure Agreement
LUP	Land Use Plan
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MFO	Moab Field Office
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (of 1990)
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act (of 1969)
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NNL	National Natural Landmark
NO <sub>x</sub>	Nitrogen Oxides
NOA	Notice of Availability (published in the <i>Federal Register</i> )
NOI	Notice of Intent (published in the <i>Federal Register</i> )
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSO	No Surface Occupancy (a stipulation on an oil and gas lease)
O&G	Oil and Gas
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
ORV	Outstandingly Remarkable Values
PEIS	Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
PFC	Proper Functioning Condition (of riparian/wetland areas)
PFO	Price Field Office
PM	Particulate Matter
RI	Range Improvement
R&I	Relevance and Importance
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purposes (Act of 1926)
RAC	Resource Advisory Committee
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (1976)
RFD	Reasonably Foreseeable Development
RMEF	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
RHS	Rangeland Health Standards
RMP	Resource Management Plan (BLM land use plan under FLPMA)
RMZ	Recreation Management Zone
ROD	Record of Decision
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
ROW	Right of Way
SEIS	Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SITLA	(Utah) School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SRP	Special Recreation Permit
T&E	Threatened and/or Endangered (species as per ESA of 1973)
TCP	Traditional Cultural Properties

TGA	Taylor Grazing Act
TMP	Travel Management Plan
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UAC	Utah Administrative Code
UDAQ	Utah Department of Air Quality
UDEQ	Utah Division of Environmental Quality
UDLF	Utah Division of Lands and Forestry
UDOGM	Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining
UDWR	Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
UGS	Utah Geological Survey
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USC	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDI	United States Department of Interior
USFS	United States Forest Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VFO	Vernal Field Office
VPA	Vernal Planning Area
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WAFWA	Western Association for Fish and Wildlife Agencies
WRFO	White River Field Office
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River(s) (Act of 1973)
WUG	Western Utility Group
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface

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## RECORD OF DECISION

### A. INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision (ROD) approves the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) proposal to manage the public lands within the Vernal Field Office as presented in the attached Resource Management Plan (RMP). This RMP was described as the Proposed Plan in the August 2008 Proposed Vernal RMP and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) [USDI-BLM-2008] – with minor adjustments and clarifications which are explained later in this ROD. This ROD provides the background on development of the plan and rationale for approving the decisions contained in the Proposed Plan, and describes the clarification and/or modifications made to address protests received on the plan. The attached Vernal Field Office (VFO) RMP (also referred to as the Approved RMP) includes the actual decisions.



**Vernal Planning Area**

### **Purpose and Need for the Plan**

#### **Purpose**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires that the BLM "develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land-use plans" (43 United States Code [USC] 1712 [a]). The BLM has determined it is necessary to revise existing land-use plans (LUP) and prepare a new RMP for the VFO based on a number of new issues that have arisen since preparation of the existing plans. In general, the purpose of this RMP is to provide a comprehensive framework for public land management within the jurisdiction of the VFO and its allocation of resources pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate of FLPMA. In addition, the purpose of this plan revision is as follows:

- To consolidate the existing LUPs and its amendments
- To reevaluate, with public involvement, existing conditions, resources, and uses, and reconsider the mix of resource allocations and management decisions designed to balance uses and the protection of resources pursuant to FLPMA and applicable law
- To resolve multiple-use conflicts or issues between resource values and resource uses. The resulting Approved RMP will establish consolidated guidance and updated goals, objectives, and management actions for the public lands in the decision area. The Approved RMP will be comprehensive in nature and will address issues that have been identified through agency, interagency, and public scoping efforts
- To disclose and assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the reasonably foreseeable future actions resulting from the management actions in the Approved RMP and draft alternatives pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), its implementing regulations, and other applicable laws

- The Approved RMP will coordinate the management of federal subsurface mineral estates with private landowners, the Ute Indian Tribe, or other nonfederal surface owners.

### **Need**

A revision to the *Book Cliffs (1985)* and *Diamond Mountain (1994)* RMPs is necessary because there have been significant alterations in light of new information and changed resources. Circumstances and policies relevant to the future management of public lands and allocation of resources under the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate have also changed. The BLM completed detailed evaluations of the *Book Cliffs RMP* and the *Diamond Mountain RMP* in March 2001 and determined that both plans needed revision by publishing in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct land-use planning for the Vernal Field Office.

Changes in the laws, policies, and regulations directing public land resource management and new information and resource data need to be considered to better manage the public lands. Visitation to the region has grown. Population growth and increased need for resource development has occurred, while concern for the environment has also increased. In addition to traditional consumptive uses (e.g., oil and gas development, mining, and livestock grazing), there is now an increased interest in uses that emphasize aesthetic values such as open space and increased recreational opportunities. These often conflicting uses need to be addressed in terms of how they affect local communities; national, regional, and state interests; and ecosystem health. Additionally, policy guidance has resulted in the initiation or completion of local and national plans, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recovery plans, and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEISs) that have changed land management direction in the VFO since the Book Cliffs RMP was written.

### **Vernal Planning Area**

The VFO is located in the northeast corner of Utah and administers lands within Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties, plus a small portion of Grand County. The VFO also has Native American Trust responsibilities for the Ute Indian Tribe and allotted mineral trust lands located within these counties.

Most of the land that the BLM manages is in the eastern and southern portions of the planning area and is generally characterized by habitats associated with the Uinta Basin and Colorado Plateau. Other agencies that manage land in the vicinity of the VFO include the United States Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Park Service (NPS), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA), Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), and Utah Division of Lands and Forestry (UDLF). Additional lands are held in private ownership or in trust by the United States for the Ute Indian Tribe or for individual Native Americans.

The Diamond Mountain portion of the planning area includes BLM-administered lands and minerals in Daggett and Duchesne counties and a portion of Uintah County northwest of the Green River. The Vernal Approved RMP is responsible for the administration of public land in Browns Park and the Diamond Mountain Plateau for the Little Snake Field Office in Colorado. The Little Snake Field Office administers public land in Browns Park for some resources,

including fire-suppression, under agreement between both offices. Administration of these agreed-upon resources is in accordance with the Vernal and Little Snake resource management plans.

The Book Cliffs portion of the planning area is located in northeastern Utah. It is bounded by the Utah–Colorado state line on the east, the Book Cliff Mountains to the south, the Green River to the west, and Blue Mountain to the north. The Book Cliffs area includes public land and minerals in Uintah and Grand counties. The VFO boundary officially ends at the Uintah County line; however, a small portion of the public lands in Grand County of the Moab Field Office (MFO) are administered by the VFO under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

A small number of grazing allotments straddle the Utah–Colorado border. An MOU is in place between the White River Field Office (WRFO) in Colorado and the VFO, where each office, depending on the allotment boundaries, administers livestock grazing for the other office.

Resources within the Vernal Planning Area (VPA) include botanical (including listed and non-listed sensitive species), cultural resources, fisheries, mineral resources, paleontological resources, rangeland, recreational resources, riparian resources, visual resources, water resources, wetlands, wild horses, wilderness, and wildlife.

Land-use and economic resources include building stone, Gilsonite, livestock grazing, oil and gas, phosphate, rights-of-way, tar sands, and woodland products. Opportunities for camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, sightseeing, and viewing historic sites provide public enjoyment, as well as additional revenues to businesses in and adjacent to the VPA.

Unique features within the planning area include the Book Cliffs, an area rich in resources with abundant management opportunities:

- Browns Park—which provides crucial big game winter range and a high density of cultural and historical sites
- Nine Mile Canyon—with its rock art as well as the high density of cultural and historical sites
- Pariette Wetlands—which provide habitat for over 100 species of wildlife
- Red Mountain—with its high mountain vistas and plentiful recreational opportunities
- White and Green Rivers—with their high value scenery and riparian ecosystems

There are over 5.5 million acres within the boundary of the VFO, of which 1.7 million acres (approximately 31 percent) are BLM-managed surface lands. The VFO administers energy-related mineral activities on 3.9 million acres of federal mineral lands (including 1.3 million acres of USFS lands) and post-lease mineral operations on Indian trust mineral lands. The 1.9 million acres of BLM-managed mineral estate includes the split estate mineral lands within the Hill Creek Extension (comprises 188,500 acres of mineral estate underlying Indian trust surface). This large block of federal mineral estate within the Hill Creek Extension of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation has not been previously analyzed for oil and gas leasing. This issue has been addressed as part of the Approved RMP.

Ownership of federal land formerly managed by the U.S. Department of the Navy, and more recently, by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), was transferred to the Ute Indian Tribe. The BLM managed certain resource programs for the DOE on these 47,978 acres. The Approved RMP will not analyze management of these programs.

Land ownership patterns within both the Diamond Mountain and Book Cliffs planning areas range from large blocks of BLM-administered public lands to small, privately owned blocks. This is complicated by lands where the BLM administers a percentage of the minerals, while other owners hold the remaining interests in the land and/or minerals. Land ownership, surface administration, and mineral management responsibilities within the VPA are shown in Figure 1a and described in the table below.

**Land Ownership in the VPA and the Surrounding Area**

<b>Federal</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
BLM Vernal Field Office	1,697,039	30.75%
BLM Moab Field Office	28,473	0.52%
Forest Service (USFS)	1,248,651	22.63%
National Park Service (NPS)	50,113	0.91%
Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	10,898	0.20%
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)	3,046	0.06%
Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (Indian Trust Lands for the benefit of the Ute Indian Tribe and Allottees)	846,669	15.34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,884,889</b>	<b>70.39%</b>
<b>State of Utah</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)	32,210	0.58%
School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA)	377,969	6.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>410,179</b>	<b>7.43%</b>
<b>Private</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,223,791</b>	<b>22.17%</b>
<b>Total Acreage in Vernal Planning Area</b>	<b>5,518,859</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Decisions and actions of the Approved RMP will only apply to BLM lands or BLM mineral estate where there is a split in ownership. In the case of split estate lands, such as lands within the planning area that are split between the BLM and the Uintah and Ouray Indian Tribe, actions affecting the surface must be coordinated with the surface owner. Undertakings conducted on lands not wholly or partly administered by the BLM (for example, fractional interest lands) are subject to the laws, regulations, conditions, and policies of the relevant land management agency or other landowner.

**B. OVERVIEW OF THE ALTERNATIVES**

Four alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, were analyzed in detail in the Vernal Field Office Draft RMP/EIS (USDI-BLM 2005). In October 2007, a Supplement to the Draft RMP/EIS (USDI-BLM 2007) analyzed a fifth alternative to further address Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. The Vernal Field Office Proposed RMP/FEIS (USDI-BLM

2008) combined all five alternatives into one document with the Proposed RMP. The alternatives were developed to address major planning issues and to provide direction for resource programs influencing land management. All alternatives incorporated the *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* developed in conjunction with the Utah Resource Advisory Council (RAC) as base standards for assessing land health. All decisions under any of the alternatives would comply with federal laws, rules, regulations, and policies. Mitigation has been incorporated in the development of all alternatives.

On January 14, 2005, the BLM published a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft RMP/EIS in the *Federal Register* to announce and solicit public comment for a 90-day period on the alternatives, as well as the impacts and effects of those alternatives on the human environment. The original NOA for the Draft RMP/EIS released January 2005 was augmented with a NOA published in the *Federal Register* on December 13, 2005, providing the public with information on ACECs considered in the Draft RMP/EIS and requesting public comments on the ACECs. This NOA published information about each existing and potential ACEC as required in 43 CFR 1610.7-2. This initiated a 60-day public comment period.

The BLM published the NOA for the *Supplement to the Vernal Field Office Draft RMP/EIS for Non-WSA lands with Wilderness Characteristics* for public review and a 90-day public comment period in the *Federal Register* in October 2007. The VFO Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS presented Alternative E which provided specific management actions to protect, preserve, and maintain the wilderness characteristics of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. This new alternative ensured that:

- (1) Consideration was given to wilderness characteristics.
- (2) An appropriate range of alternatives was considered for these lands.
- (3) An adequate analysis was prepared from which to base future land use decisions.

Each alternative emphasized a different combination of resource uses, allocations, and restoration measures to address issues and resolve conflicts among uses, so program goals were met in using a variety of approaches across the alternatives. However, each alternative allowed for some level of support of all resources present in the planning area. The alternatives differed in how fast the goals would be met, the degree to which they would be met, the emphasis placed on certain programs and activities, and whether active or passive management would occur. Management decisions for programs not tied to major planning issues and/or mandated by law often contain minor or no differences in management decisions between alternatives.

Alternative D (the No Action Alternative) is the continuation of the Book Cliffs (1985) and Diamond Mountain (1994) Resource Management Plans and is provided as a baseline for comparison. Alternative E is considered the environmentally preferable alternative, offering the most intensive, active management for protection of the area's natural and biological values and favors natural systems over commodities development, including protecting all non-WSA lands BLM found to have wilderness characteristics. Alternative C is similar to Alternative E, but does not offer specific management to protect non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. Alternative B emphasizes commodity development, provides the greatest economic benefit from mineral development, and imposes the fewest restrictions on public land uses. Alternative A, (the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS and largely the baseline for the Proposed Plan in

the PRMP/FEIS) best achieves a balance between environmental protection and use of public land resources. General overviews of these alternatives and comparisons among them are provided below.

### **Alternatives Considered in Detail**

#### **Alternative A (Draft RMP/EIS Preferred Alternative)**

Alternative A was selected as the BLM's Preferred Alternative in the Vernal Draft RMP/EIS. This alternative represents the mix and variety of management actions, based on BLM's analysis and judgment, which best resolve the resource issues and management concerns while accommodating BLM's values, programs, and policy. As a result of public comment, internal review, and cooperating agency coordination on the Draft RMP/EIS, Alternative A was modified to become the Proposed Plan and analyzed in the Final EIS. With minor adjustments and clarification, upon signature of this Record of Decision, it becomes the Approved RMP.

#### **Alternative B**

Alternative B emphasizes commodity production and human activities. Commodity production and human activities would be less constrained in Alternative B than in other alternatives. Other than Alternative D, Alternative B provides more opportunities for motorized recreation, and is the least restrictive to OHV use and all surface disturbing activities (including oil and gas leasing). Alternative B designates eight areas as ACECs, two suitable Wild and Scenic River segments, and there are no acres managed as non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. Alternative B does not provide sufficient restrictions on uses to protect important natural resources. For these reasons, this alternative did not achieve the balance between resource protection and resource use that provided enhancement of resource use and conditions. The rationale for not selecting Alternative B is outlined below for the major management actions.

**Lands and Realty:** In Alternative B, 55,808 acres (all within seven WSAs) are managed as exclusion areas for rights-of-way, and there are no acres managed as avoidance areas for rights-of-way. The exclusion areas for WSAs are non-discretionary, and not identifying any acres of avoidance areas is not sufficient to adequately protect the important natural resources listed below:

- Some highly sensitive visual resources
- Heavily used recreation areas
- Pronghorn antelope kidding habitat
- Bighorn sheep rutting and lambing habitat
- Mule deer migration and fawning habitat
- Rocky Mountain elk calving habitat
- Raptor nesting sites
- All the relevant and important values in potential ACECs

**Livestock Grazing:** Alternative B (see Figure 9, PRMP/FEIS) would extend the grazing Seasons of Use as follows:

- 05/19 through 10/07 for area 2
- 05/31 through 11/01 for area 3
- 04/25 through 05/26 and 11/01 through 12/31 for area 4
- 04/10 through 05/26 and 11/01 through 12/31 for area 5

- 10/26 through 05/08 for area 6
- 05/20 through 12/01 for area 7

Under this alternative, these timing restrictions on livestock grazing are not sufficient to protect:

- Pronghorn antelope kidding habitat
- Bighorn sheep rutting and lambing habitat
- Mule deer migration and fawning habitat
- Rocky Mountain elk calving habitat
- Raptor nesting habitat
- Greater sage-grouse breeding habitat

**Minerals:** Alternative B manages oil and gas leasing and other surface disturbing activities with the following stipulations:

- Unavailable – 52,550 acres
- Open (subject major constraints such as No Surface Occupancy [NSO]) – 42,053
- Open (subject to moderate constraints such as Timing Limitations[TLs]/Controlled Surface Use [CSU]) – 706,281 acres
- Open (subject to standard terms and conditions) – 1,113,116 acres

Alternative B is the least restrictive to oil and gas leasing and other surface disturbing activities. Alternative B has the most acreage open subject to standard terms and conditions. Although the oil and gas restrictions are more conducive to development, they are not sufficient to protect all the important resources identified within the planning area. In particular, the stipulations in Alternative B are not sufficient to protect:

- Highly sensitive visual resources
- Heavily used recreation areas
- Migration, lambing, and rutting habitats for mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk, and pronghorn antelope
- Relevant and important values in potential ACECs

**Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:** There are no acres in Alternative B that manage non-WSA lands to protect, preserve, and maintain their wilderness characteristics. Therefore, all the wilderness characteristics values identified in these areas could be potentially adversely affected.

**Recreation:** Alternative B establishes three Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) which are managed for outstanding scenic vistas; riparian, fisheries, and special status resource values; water quality; water based recreation; wildlife viewing opportunities; hunting; comprehensive trail system for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and OHV use; camping; high-value cultural resources; historic interpretation; protection of geological formations, and facility development.

In Alternative B, heavily used recreation areas such as Browns Park, Nine Mile Canyon, and the White River would not be managed as SRMAs and consequently there would be no Recreation Management Zones for recreation management. As a result, recreation use and opportunities would not be proactively or adequately managed, resulting in continued degradation of the

resources in these heavily used areas. Alternative B does not provide for the full range of recreational activities known to occur in the planning area nor for the businesses that depend on these activities.

**Special Designations – ACECs:** Alternative B would designate eight of the areas found to have relevant and important values as ACECs. The management prescriptions detailed under Alternative B are not sufficient to protect most of the relevant and important values of other potential ACECs not designated under this alternative. This is because proposed management decisions are not restrictive enough under this alternative to be protective.

**Special Designations – Wild and Scenic Rivers:** Alternative B recommends two of the eligible river segments as suitable for potential designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers. However, Alternative B would not provide adequate protection for any of the other river segments found to have Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs). For example, the ORVs of scenic and cultural values of Nine Mile Creek would not be protected in Alternative B because proposed management decisions are not restrictive, resulting in adverse impacts from oil and gas development and other surface disturbing activities.

**Travel Management:** Alternative B designates:

- 5,434 acres open to OHV travel
- 1,659,901 acres limited to OHV travel
- 60,187 acres closed to OHV travel

While this alternative accommodates many motorized travel opportunities, it conflicts with areas used for primitive recreation and thus does not provide a travel plan that meets the needs of all recreational users.

**Wildlife:** Alternative B provides the least protection for wildlife habitats by using the least amount of crucial habitat for various species and the minimum timing limitations. The timing limitations imposed in Alternative B are shorter and cover less acreage than necessary for sustaining the species. Alternative B does not identify any Best Management Practices for raptors or raptor habitat, and as a whole, does not provide sufficient protection for wildlife habitats.

In summary, Alternative B was not selected primarily because it does not best achieve the mix of multiple uses necessary to fully implement the mandate of FLPMA. Adoption of this alternative would result in adverse impacts to wildlife, loss of primitive recreation opportunities, reduced focus on recreational opportunities through SRMA management, and would provide no management of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. Relevant and important values and outstandingly remarkable values in potential ACECs and eligible wild and scenic river segments would be at risk.

## **Alternative C**

Alternative C emphasizes protection of wildlife habitats, natural resources, ecosystems, and landscapes, but does not protect, preserve and maintain any non-WSA lands for their wilderness characteristics. Commodity production and human activities would be more constrained. Except for Alternative E, this alternative provides more opportunities for non-motorized recreation. In

addition to Alternative E, Alternative C protects areas for sensitive resources, designates all potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and makes all eligible river segments suitable for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River system. It is also restrictive to OHV use and surface disturbing activities (including oil and gas leasing). There are many uses that are overly restricted by the decisions in this alternative. The rationale for not selecting Alternative C is outlined below for the major management actions.

**Lands and Realty:** In Alternative C, 55,808 acres (all within seven WSAs) are managed as exclusion areas for rights-of-way, and it does not manage any acres as avoidance areas for rights-of-way. The exclusion areas for WSAs are non-discretionary, and identifying no acres of avoidance areas is not sufficient to adequately protect the important natural resources listed below:

- Highly sensitive visual resources
- Heavily used recreation areas
- Pronghorn antelope kidding habitat
- Bighorn sheep rutting and lambing habitat
- Mule deer migration and fawning habitat
- Rocky Mountain elk calving habitat
- Raptor nesting sites
- Relevant and important values in potential ACECs

**Livestock Grazing:** Alternative C (see Figure 10a, PRMP/FEIS) would reduce the grazing Seasons of Use allowed as follows:

- 05/19 through 10/07 for area 2
- 06/15 through 08/31 for area 3
- 10/01 through 03/01 (fall/winter) for area 4
- 10/01 through 03/01 (fall/winter) for area 5
- 10/01 through 03/01 (fall/winter) for area 6
- 10/01 through 11/30 (fall) for area 7

Alternative C was not selected because the timing restrictions are unnecessarily restrictive.

**Minerals:** Alternative C manages oil and gas leasing and other surface disturbing activities with the following stipulations:

- Unavailable – 228,246 acres
- Open (subject major constraints such as No Surface Occupancy [NSO]) – 58,670
- Open (subject to moderate constraints such as Timing Limitations[TLs]/Controlled Surface Use [CSU]) – 768,466 acres
- Open (subject to standard terms and conditions) – 858,619 acres

Alternative C is overly restrictive to oil and gas development and other surface disturbing activities, especially in areas with high development potential for oil and gas. Except for Alternative E, it has the least amount of acreage open to oil and gas leasing. The acreage included in the Closed and No Surface Occupancy stipulation totals 15 percent of the acreage in the planning area that would be essentially unavailable to oil and gas development and other surface disturbing activities. The timing and controlled surface use stipulations in Alternative C

would add another 40 percent of the planning area in which oil and gas development would be prohibited during certain times and subject to specified conditions for construction. Timing and controlled surface use restrictions add to the cost of development. In total, about 55 percent of the planning area would be subject to restrictions above standard terms and conditions for development. This is not in compliance with Energy Policy and Conservation Act because it would not provide reasonable access or minimize impediments to oil and gas leasing and development as Congress directed.

Alternative C provides the second least amount of ad valorem tax revenue (\$20 million) as well as the least amount of federal gross annual royalty revenue (\$511.2 million) and county annual royalty revenue (\$454.4 million) of any of the action alternatives because of these restrictions on mineral development.

**Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:** Alternative C does not manage non-WSA lands to protect, preserve, and maintain their wilderness characteristics. Therefore, all the wilderness values identified in these areas could be potentially adversely affected.

**Recreation:** Alternative C identifies six potential SRMAs to be managed primarily for undeveloped recreational opportunities. The SRMAs contain outstanding scenic vistas; riparian, fisheries, and special status resource values; water quality; water based recreation; wildlife viewing opportunities; hunting; comprehensive trail system for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and OHV use; camping; high-value cultural resources; historic interpretation; protection of geological formations; and facility development.

No Recreational Management Zones (RMZs) or Focus Areas were identified in Alternative C for the heavily used recreation areas such as Blue Mountain, Browns Park, Book Cliffs, Fantasy Canyon, Nine Mile Canyon, and the White River. As a result, recreation use and opportunities would not be proactively or adequately managed resulting in continued degradation of the resources in these areas. Recreation opportunities would not be adequately managed in these heavily used areas. Alternative B does not provide for the full range of recreational activities known to occur in the planning area nor for the businesses that depend upon these activities.

**Special Designations – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern:** Alternative C designates 13 areas determined to have relevant and important values as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). Management of six of these potential ACECs in Alternative C is unnecessary to protect the relevant and important (R&I) values.

For example, the relevant and important (R&I) values of the White River ACEC are unique geological formations, high value scenery, and riparian ecosystem. These R&I values are protected in Alternative C by closing most of the public lands along the river canyon to oil and gas leasing or alternately allowing leasing with NSO stipulations. Some of the river segment would be managed as a SMRA providing primitive recreation activities such a floating, primitive camping, fishing, hiking, and wildlife viewing. Much of the river corridor would be closed to disposal of sand, gravel, and building stone. Most of the river canyon would be managed Visual Resources Management (VRM) Class II for retention of the characteristic landscape. Surface disturbance would be prohibited within floodplains and 100 meters of riparian zones. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. Furthermore, compliance with endangered species and

cultural resource protection laws would continue to afford protection of those elements of the ACEC relevant and important values.

In another example, the relevant and important value for the Coyote Basin ACEC is due to the existence of an important white-tailed prairie dog complex. It is protected in Alternative C through VRM Class II objectives, limiting OHV travel to designated routes, and limiting surface disturbance associated with oil and gas leasing through controlled surface which would protect habitat for the white-tailed prairie dogs.

In addition, some of the ACECs overlay WSAs. The multiple special designation layering is duplicative and unnecessary where relevant and important values are protected through IMP management.

**Special Designations – Wild and Scenic Rivers:** Alternative C recommends as suitable all eight river segments found eligible for potential designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers. Many of the river segments found suitable in Alternative C include scenery and recreation attributed to water related resources as Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs). Scenery and non-motorized recreational activities, especially non-boating activities, are more amenable for management by other means, such as SRMAs, WSAs and non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. As a consequence, Alternative C would impose unnecessary restrictions that provide no additional management protections that are not otherwise available through existing or alternative management options.

**Travel Management:** Alternative C designates:

- 5,434 acres open to OHV travel
- 1,353,529 acres limited to OHV travel
- 366,559 acres closed to OHV travel
- 4,707 miles of routes to OHV travel

While this alternative accommodates many motorized travel opportunities, it is overly restrictive in the amount of acres closed to motorized use, and therefore does not meet the needs of all recreational users, such as cross-country motorized travel.

**Wildlife:** Alternative C provides the maximum protection for wildlife habitats by using the most inclusive habitats for various species. In addition, Alternative C is the most restrictive to uses within these broader habitats. The timing limitations imposed in Alternative C are longer and cover larger acreages than are necessary for sustaining the species.

In summary, Alternative C would not provide adequate or balanced consideration of existing uses such as motorized recreational activities, economic land uses such as rights-of-way, energy corridors, or access to mineral development. Adoption of this alternative could also preclude the consideration of possible future development of renewable energy resources. This Alternative is inconsistent with existing state and local county plans; conflicts with the intent of federal legislation including Energy Policy and Conservation Act and the Energy Policy Act, and it does not give adequate consideration to local needs, customs and culture.

### **Alternative D (No Action)**

Alternative D is referred to as the No Action Alternative. This alternative would have continued present management practices defined in the existing land use plans. Direction contained in existing laws, regulations, and policies would have continued to be implemented, sometimes superseding provisions of the Book Cliffs (1985) and Diamond Mountain (1994) Resource Management Plans. For example, the Book Cliffs RMP allows for oil and gas leasing in WSAs. This was superseded by law in 1986, and all WSAs are now closed to oil and gas leasing. Alternative D was not selected because it does not meet the purpose and need for the management of public lands under the jurisdiction of the VFO. The decisions in the 1985 and 1994 RMPs are largely based on outdated information. Equally important, these decisions do not meet changing uses, trends, and conditions that have occurred since that time. The existing land use plans do not address many recent issues, nor do they address the increased levels of controversy some existing issues are facing. Special status species, including threatened and endangered species, are not fully addressed within the parameters of Alternative D. Alternative D designates 787,859 acres as open to OHV use. This large open acreage within the planning area results in unacceptable resource damage which is contrary to BLM policy. Alternative D continues designation of eight ACECs but does not consider any new areas as ACECs. The No Action Alternative did not consider non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics to protect and preserve their wilderness characteristics, nor does it consider suitability designation for eligible river segments.

### **Alternative E**

Alternative E, as analyzed and described in the Supplement to the Draft RMP/EIS was based on Alternative C of the Draft RMP/EIS. Alternative E provided management to protect, preserve and maintain non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. Alternative E is recognized as the environmentally preferable alternative. This Alternative emphasized protection of all non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, and proposed very restrictive management in these areas. The natural succession of ecosystems would be allowed to proceed in these and other select management areas. This alternative strongly emphasizes maintenance of watershed conditions, species viability, properly functioning ecosystems, and a reduction of habitat fragmentation. It also includes designation of ACECs and determinations for wild and scenic river suitability, while still providing for resource uses in other parts of the VFO, including mineral and energy development and motorized recreation use. Alternative E is the same as Alternative C, except that it adds a protective management prescription in 25 areas that comprise non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

**Lands and Realty:** In Alternative E, 330,654 acres are managed as exclusion areas for rights-of-way. Alternative E would be overly restrictive on rights-of-way and oil and gas development. In light of direction provided by the Energy Policy Act, to provide reasonable access and minimize impediments, this alternative would constrain necessary infrastructure to develop oil and gas resources.

**Minerals:** Alternative E manages oil and gas leasing and other surface disturbing activities with the following stipulations:

- Unavailable – 360,037 acres
- Open (subject major constraints such as No Surface Occupancy [NSO]) – 47,629

- Open (subject to moderate constraints such as Timing Limitations [TLs]/Controlled Surface Use [CSU]) – 680,570 acres
- Open (subject to standard terms and conditions) – 818,891 acres

Alternative E is overly restrictive to oil and gas development and other surface disturbing activities, especially in areas with high development potential for oil and gas. It has the least amount of acreage open to oil and gas leasing. The acreage included in the Closed and No Surface Occupancy stipulation totals 21 percent of the acreage in the planning area that would be essentially unavailable to oil and gas development and other surface disturbing activities. The timing and controlled surface use stipulations in Alternative E would add another 36 percent of the planning area in which oil and gas development would be prohibited during certain times and subject to specified conditions for construction. Timing and controlled surface use restrictions add to the cost of development. In total, about 57 percent of the planning area would be subject to restrictions above standard terms and conditions for development. The Energy Policy and Conservation Act provides policy directing BLM to minimize impediments to oil and gas leasing and development, and this alternative does not meet these policy objectives as directed by Congress.

Alternative E provides the least amount of ad valorem tax revenue (\$19.6 million) as well as the least amount of federal gross annual royalty revenue (\$502.4 million) and county annual royalty revenue (\$446.6 million) than any other action alternative because of these restrictions on mineral development.

**Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:** Alternative E manages 277,596 acres to protect, preserve, and maintain their wilderness characteristics. These acres are closed to mineral leasing and development, rights-of-way, woodcutting, and all other surface disturbing activities. In addition, management of non-WSA lands to preserve their wilderness characteristics would preclude potentially beneficial actions such as fuels and vegetation treatments and other healthy land initiatives, wildlife and range improvements, and the construction of recreation facilities. Many of the areas managed to protect wilderness characteristics in Alternative E have conflicts with high development potential areas for oil and gas. Some of this acreage is also currently leased for oil and gas, thereby make impractical the protection of wilderness characteristic values. The management of all the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics in Alternative E is overly restrictive on other resources and uses of the public lands.

**Travel Management:** Alternative E designates:

- 5,434 acres open to OHV travel
- 1,326,024 acres limited to OHV travel
- 392,818 acres closed to OHV travel
- 4,654 miles of routes to OHV travel

While this alternative accommodates many motorized travel opportunities, it is overly restrictive in the amount of acres closed to motorized use. Many of these lands could remain open to OHV use on designated routes without impacting other resources.

Rationale for not selecting this alternative for Livestock Grazing, Recreation, ACECs, WSRs, and wildlife would be the same as rationale for not selecting Alternative C because they are essentially the same decisions under both alternatives.

In summary, Alternative E would not provide adequate or balanced consideration of existing uses such as motorized recreational activities, economic land uses such as rights-of-way, energy corridors or access to mineral development. Adoption of this alternative could also preclude consideration of possible future development of renewable energy resources. Valid existing rights within some of the wilderness characteristics areas would make managing these areas for their wilderness values impractical. This Alternative is inconsistent with existing state and local plans; conflicts with the intent of federal legislation including Energy Policy and Conservation Act and the Energy Policy Act, and it does not give adequate consideration to local needs, customs and culture.

### **Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis**

Several organizations and individuals provided components of alternatives and management actions as possible ways of resolving individual resource management issues and conflicts. However, none of the submittals addressed the BLM's purpose and need (outlined in Chapter 1) and multiple-use requirements as identified in the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). These submissions were considered during alternative development; however, none provided the full range of protections required. The following alternatives and management options were considered as possible ways of resolving resource management issues and conflicts but were eliminated from detailed analysis because they were unreasonable or not practical as a result of technical, legal, regulatory, or policy issues.

#### **No Grazing Alternative**

An alternative that proposes to make the entire planning area unavailable for grazing would not meet the purpose and need of this Approved RMP. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that agencies study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. No issues or conflicts have been identified during this land-use planning effort which requires the complete elimination of grazing within the planning area for their resolution. Where appropriate, removal of livestock and adjustments to livestock use have been incorporated into the alternatives on an allotment or area basis to address issues identified in this planning effort. Since the BLM has considerable discretion through its grazing regulations to determine and adjust stocking levels, seasons-of-use, and grazing management activities, and to allocate forage to uses of the public lands in RMPs, the analysis of an alternative to entirely eliminate grazing is not needed.

An alternative that proposes to make the entire planning area unavailable for grazing would also be inconsistent with the intent of the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA), which directs the BLM to provide for livestock use of BLM lands; to adequately safeguard grazing privileges; to provide for the orderly use, improvement, and development of the range; and to stabilize the livestock industry dependent upon the public range. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires that public lands be managed on a "multiple use and sustained yield basis" (FLPMA Sec. 302(a) and Sec. 102(7)) and includes livestock grazing as a principal or major use

of public lands. While multiple-use does not require that all lands be used for livestock grazing, complete removal of livestock grazing on the entire planning area would be arbitrary and would not meet the principle of multiple use and sustained yield.

Livestock grazing is and has been an important use of the public lands in the planning area for many years and is a continuing government program. Although the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidelines for compliance with NEPA require that agencies analyze the No Action Alternative in all EISs, for purposes of this NEPA analysis, the No Action Alternative is to continue the status quo, which includes livestock grazing (CEQ Forty Most Asked Questions, Question 3). For this reason and those stated above, a no grazing alternative for the entire planning area has been dismissed from further consideration in this RMP/EIS.

### **Livestock Grazing Adjustments Alternative**

During scoping and comment on the Draft EIS, it was suggested that the BLM consider adjustments to livestock numbers, livestock management practices, and the kind of livestock grazed on allotments within the VFO to benefit wildlife and protect and promote land health, including soils, hydrologic cycles, and biotic integrity.

The BLM's policy regarding adjustments to the levels of livestock use authorized is to monitor and inventory range conditions under existing stocking levels and make adjustments to livestock use as indicated by this data to help assure that standards for rangeland health and resource objectives are met. Regulations at 43 CFR 4130.3-1 require that the terms and conditions under which livestock are authorized "ensure conformance with the provisions of subpart 4180" (*BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*) and further that "authorized livestock grazing use shall not exceed the livestock carrying capacity of the allotment." It would be inappropriate and unfeasible to estimate and allocate the available forage, design-specific management practices, and determine if changes to the kind of livestock are necessary for each allotment in the VFO or in the area as a whole in the RMP/EIS. Such changes would not be supportable considering the type and amount of data required and the analysis necessary to make such changes.

According to BLM policy, decisions regarding authorized livestock use levels and the terms and conditions under which they are managed are implementation decisions (Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), Appendix C, p. 15). The BLM assesses rangeland health, conducts monitoring and inventories, and evaluates this data on a periodic basis, normally on an allotment and/or watershed basis. After NEPA analysis, necessary changes to livestock management and implementation of *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* are implemented through a proposed decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.1. These decisions determine the exact levels of use by livestock in conformance with the RMP and to meet resource objectives and maintain or enhance land health. For these reasons this alternative has been dismissed from further consideration in this RMP/EIS.

### **No Leasing Alternative**

During scoping and/or the comment period for the Draft RMP/EIS, commenters suggested that the BLM should address a "No Leasing Alternative" because the No Leasing Alternative is the equivalent of the No Action Alternative that must be analyzed in all EISs.

The No Leasing Alternative in an RMP revision is actually an action alternative because where lands have already been leased, the no action for NEPA purposes continues to allow for (honor) valid existing rights. Proposing a No Leasing Alternative would require revisiting existing leases and either buying them back from the lessee or allowing them to expire on their own terms. The first option (buying back) is outside the scope of any RMP. This is a political decision that the BLM has no authority to undertake in planning. As a result, the BLM does not regularly include a No Leasing Alternative. The second option (lease expiration) would occur to some degree under any alternative.

The purpose and need for the RMP is to identify and resolve potential conflicts between competing resource uses rather than to eliminate a principle use of the public lands in the VFO Area. Leasing of the public lands for oil and gas exploration and production is required by the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, and the BLM's current policy is to apply the least restrictive management constraints to the principal uses of the public lands necessary to achieve resource goals and objectives. A field office-wide No Leasing Alternative would be an unnecessarily restrictive alternative for mineral exploration and production on the public lands.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA Section 102 [E]) requires that agencies "study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources." No issues or conflicts have been identified during this land-use planning effort that requires the complete elimination of oil and gas leasing within the planning area for their resolution. The BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) requires that LUPs identify areas as open or unavailable for leasing.

Given the potential range of decisions available in the Draft RMP/EIS, the analyzed alternatives include no leasing for certain areas, but a field office-wide No Leasing Alternative is not necessary in order to resolve issues and protect other resource values and uses.

As mentioned in the "No Grazing Alternative" discussion, a No Leasing Alternative should not be confused with the No Action Alternative for purposes of NEPA compliance. Leasing as well as no leasing on the public lands has previously been analyzed in several NEPA documents. In 1973, the Department of Interior published the Final EIS on the Federal Upland Oil and Gas Leasing Program (USDI, 1973). The Proposed Action was to lease federal lands for production of oil and natural gas resources. Alternatives included the No Action Alternative, which at initiation of the program was the No-Leasing Alternative. To supplement that EIS, the BLM prepared a series of environmental assessments (EAs, then referred to as Environmental Analysis Records, or EARs), including the Vernal District Oil and Gas Program Environmental Analysis Record (EAR) of 1975, which addressed oil and gas leasing for the public lands in the VFO area. Alternatives again included the No Action or No Leasing alternative. The outcome was a category system for leasing that categorized all public and USFS lands into four groups:

- Open to leasing with standard lease stipulations
- Special stipulations to address special concerns
- No surface occupancy
- No leasing

Since completion of the EAR in 1975, oil and gas leasing in the VFO area has been an ongoing federal program under the established categories.

The CEQ (Section 1502.14[d] of NEPA) requires the alternatives analysis in an EIS to "include the alternative of no action." CEQ Forty Most Asked Questions, Question 3 goes on to say that:

“. . . Section 1502.14(d) requires the alternatives analysis in the EIS to "include the alternative of no action." There are two distinct interpretations of "no action" that must be considered, depending on the nature of the proposal being evaluated. The first situation might involve an action such as updating a land management plan where ongoing programs initiated under existing legislation and regulations will continue, even as new plans are developed. In these cases "no action" is "no change" from current management direction or level of management intensity. To construct an alternative that is based on no management at all would be a useless academic exercise. Therefore, the "no action" alternative may be thought of in terms of continuing with the present course of action until that action is changed. Consequently, projected impacts of alternative management schemes would be compared in the EIS to those impacts projected for the existing plan. In this case, alternatives would include management plans of both greater and lesser intensity, especially greater and lesser levels of resource development.

The second interpretation of "no action" is illustrated in instances involving federal decisions on proposals for projects. "No action" in such cases would mean the proposed activity would not take place, and the resulting environmental effects from taking no action would be compared with the effects of permitting the proposed activity or an alternative activity to go forward."

Therefore, the No Action Alternative is to continue the status quo, which is to lease under the oil and gas stipulations (formerly categories) established in the Diamond Mountain RMP and the Book Cliffs RMP.

## **C. RESULTS OF PROTEST PERIOD**

The BLM received 16 protest letters with standing during the 30-day protest period provided for the proposed land use plan decisions contained in the Vernal Proposed RMP/Final EIS in accordance with 43 CFR Part 1610.5-2. Of these, 13 presented valid protest points. Protesting parties with valid protests included:

Twelve Letters from Organizations: Utah Rivers Council; Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States; Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership; Western Watersheds Project, Inc.; Uintah Mountain Club; Uintah County Commission; Questar Exploration and Production Company; Anadarko Petroleum Corporation; Department of Wildland Science – Utah State University; National Trust for Historic Preservation; National Outdoor Leadership School Rocky Mountain, Outdoor Industry Association; Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, The Wilderness Society (TWS), Sierra Club - Utah Chapter, Center for Native Ecosystems.

One Letter from Individual: Jane and Jim Perkins

Protest issues were varied. Numerous protests centered on whether or not BLM followed the NEPA regulations in completing the land use planning effort. Issues specifically related to a lack of detailed impact analysis for numerous resources, lack of an adequate range of alternatives, and a lack of opportunities for public involvement. Other issues identified that the land use plan did not meet FLPMA's multiple use mandate or give priority to the designation of ACECs. In addition, protests declared that BLM did not adequately analyze effects of planning actions on air quality or appropriately analyze impacts of climate change. Some protestors did not feel that their comments and/or submitted information provided on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS were satisfactorily responded to in the Proposed Plan/Final EIS.

Detailed information on protest response can be found on the BLM Washington Office Website at: [http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/planning/protest\\_resolution.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/planning/protest_resolution.html)

The BLM Director addressed all protests without making significant changes to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Five issues within the protests letters were granted, however, none resulted in modifications to the decisions in the Approved RMP. Two issues resulted in an Errata Clarification to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS:

- (1) To correct some Geographic Information System (GIS) data on a map from Alternative A
- (2) To correct language cited in the response to comments.

One issue resulted in a clarification to an Appendix, and one resulted in the inclusion of additional references in the References section of the document. Minor adjustments and clarifications were made and have been explained in the *Notice of Modifications and Clarifications* section later in this ROD.

The last of the granted protest issues identified recommendations for potential designation of two ACECs which were overlooked during the planning process. The BLM has reviewed its administrative record and found that comments submitted in February 2006 (during a comment period for gathering input on potential ACECs) did include recommendations for designating ACECs to protect Graham's penstemon and Pariette cactus habitat. These recommendations were mistakenly overlooked. Because the BLM did not review or consider the recommendations in accordance with BLM 1613 Manual, the protest is granted and these recommended areas will be considered at the earliest opportunity as part of the next planning process conducted in the Field Office. Until such time as a plan amendment or revision to consider these ACECs is completed, the following measures are being (and will continue to be) implemented to mitigate impacts to the sensitive plant species from submitted projects with proposed surface disturbance:

- (1) Within suitable habitat, site-specific inventories will be conducted to determine occupancy. The inventories will be conducted for lands within 300 feet of proposed surface-disturbance.
- (2) In suitable habitat, the project infrastructure will be designed to minimize impacts.
- (3) Within occupied habitat, the project infrastructure will be designed to avoid direct disturbance and to minimize indirect impacts to populations and individual plants. The nearest proposed surface disturbance to a plant will be at least 300 feet away.

## D. THE DECISION

The decision is hereby made to approve the attached plan as the Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) for management of public lands that are administered by the BLM's Vernal Field Office (see Approved RMP). The Approved RMP replaces public land decisions in the *Book Cliffs RMP* approved in May 1985 and the *Diamond Mountain RMP* approved in December 1994, and amendments thereunto.

The Approved RMP was prepared under the authorities of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 in accordance with BLM planning regulations (43 CFR Part 1600). An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for this RMP in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

The Approved RMP is nearly identical to the Proposed Plan presented in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Management decisions and guidance for public lands under the jurisdiction of the Vernal Field Office are presented in the Approved RMP. All decisions covered by the ROD are either land use planning decisions or implementation decisions.

The Approved RMP emphasizes an appropriate multiple-use balance of protection and restoration of the natural and cultural resources while providing for resource use, extraction, and enjoyment. The Approved RMP is considered the appropriate plan of action when taking into consideration the social, economic, and natural environment. The Approved RMP supports the six broad policy goals for all Federal plans, programs, and policies:

- (1) Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
- (2) Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.
- (3) Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences
- (4) Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice.
- (5) Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.
- (6) Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

### **What the Decision/RMP Provides**

Land use plan decisions include goals, objectives, land use allocations, and management actions.

**Goals** are the broad statements of desired outcomes, and are usually not quantifiable.

**Objectives** are specific desired conditions, usually quantifiable and measurable, and may have timeframes for achievement.

**Land use allocations** specify locations within the planning area that are available or not for certain uses. These include decisions such as what lands are available for livestock grazing, mineral material use, oil and gas leasing, and locatable mineral development, what lands may be available for disposal via exchange and/ or sale, and what lands are open, closed, or limited to motorized travel (please note that all acreages presented in the Approved RMP are estimations even when presented to the nearest acre).

**Management actions** include those provisions that help in meeting the established goals and objectives and include measures that will be applied to guide day-to-day activities on public lands, including but not limited to best management practices (BMPs), design features, guidelines, and stipulations.

The primary management decisions in the Approved RMP are to:

- Designate seven Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and manage according to the special management prescriptions identified for each area.
- Designate two river segments as suitable for consideration as part of the National Wild and Scenic system, and manage such segments to protect the free flowing nature and outstandingly remarkable values.
- Protect, preserve, and maintain the wilderness characteristics on non-Wilderness Study Area (WSA) lands for 106,178 acres in 15 areas.
- Conduct proactive cultural resource inventories under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
- Place BLM-administered lands in fire management categories.
- Designate areas as Limited, Closed, or Open to off-highway vehicle use:
  - ♦ Designate 1,640,725 acres as limited to off-highway vehicle use.
  - ♦ Designate 78,595 acres as closed to off-highway vehicle use.
  - ♦ Designate 6,202 acres in four areas as open to cross-country off-highway vehicle use.
- Determine which lands are available or unavailable to mineral leasing:
  - ♦ Make an estimated 1.7 million acres of the 1.9 million acres of federal mineral estate available for oil and gas leasing.
  - ♦ Make an estimated 750,131 acres available for oil and gas leasing under standard lease terms.
  - ♦ Make an estimated 890,280 acres available subject to Controlled Surface Use or Timing Limitation stipulations.
  - ♦ Make an estimated 86,789 acres are available subject to No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations.
  - ♦ Make approximately 190,434 acres unavailable for oil and gas leasing.
- Recommend withdrawing approximately 22,814 acres from locatable mineral entry.
- Delineate seven Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) and identify special recreational management zones.
- Allocate to wildlife 4,232 active Animal Unit Months (AUMs) of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and 4,026 active AUMs of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF).
- Designate WSAs as VRM Class I, and close WSAs to all OHV use.

- Wild horses will be gathered and removed from the Hill Creek and the Winter Ridge Herd Areas. Forage will be allocated during the life of the plan until the horses have been removed. The Bonanza, Hill Creek, and the Winter Ridge Herd Area designations will continue, but there will be no management for horses.
- Designate 106,178 acres as right-of-way avoidance areas.
- Designate 55,808 acres as rights-of-way exclusion areas.
- Designate the following visual resource management classes:
  - ♦ VRM Class I 57,776 acres
  - ♦ VRM Class II 259,734 acres
  - ♦ VRM Class III 759,977 acres
  - ♦ VRM Class IV 642,450 acres

This ROD serves as the final decision establishing the land use plan decisions outlined in the Approved RMP and is effective on the date it is signed. No further administrative remedies are available to the public for these land use plan decisions.

### **What the Decision/RMP Does Not Provide**

The Approved RMP does not contain decisions for the mineral estates of land administered by the BLM Vernal Field Office for Forest Service lands located in the planning area, for lands under the jurisdiction of other Federal agencies, or for private or State-owned lands and minerals.

Although private or state lands are shown on Figures 1a-20a, decisions for the surface estate only apply to BLM managed lands.

- The Approved RMP does not affect valid existing rights.
- It does not create new wilderness or designate new Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs).
- Existing WSAs continue to be managed under the *Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review*.
- Withdrawal recommendations are not effective until Congress or the Secretary of the Interior takes action.
- “Closed routes” are not closed for administratively approved activities.
- The Approved RMP does not adjudicate, analyze, or otherwise determine the validity of claimed rights-of-way. However, the State of Utah’s statutory policy is to “use reasonable administrative and legal measures to protect and preserve valid existing rights-of way granted by Congress under R.S. 2477,” (Utah Code 63J-4-401(7)(b)). The BLM is committed to working with the State to develop potential options to recognize existing rights-of-way in accordance with Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2008-174 and 2008-175. BLM recognizes that it would be beneficial to meet and discuss Non-Binding Determinations and Recordable Disclaimer of Interest options which would result in the BLM documenting its position in its official records, after public notification and involvement. BLM will work with the State and counties to set priorities for specific roads. It is BLM’s intent to work toward an outcome that is in the interest of the general public and the State of Utah.
- The Approved RMP does not affect terms of existing leases, commercial recreation permits, or other permits issued by the BLM.

In addition, many decisions are not appropriate at this level of planning and are not included in the ROD. Examples of these types of decisions include:

- **Statutory requirements:** The Approved RMP will not change the BLM's responsibility to comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
- **National policy:** The Approved RMP will not change BLM's obligation to conform with current or future National policy.
- **Funding levels and budget allocations:** These are determined annually at the national level and are beyond the control of the Field Office.

### **Implementation Decisions**

#### **Route Designation Implementation Decisions**

While the designation of areas as Open, Closed, or Limited to off-highway vehicle use is a land use planning decision, the proposed route designations for motorized wheeled travel in the planning area included the Proposed RMP/Final EIS are implementation decisions.

The route designations described in the Travel Management section of the Approved RMP and identified on Figure 15a are effective upon issuance of this Record of Decision. All area designations are complete upon signature of the ROD in accordance with 43 CFR 8342.2(b).

Designation of specific vehicle routes for the Approved RMP was undertaken by addressing the purpose and need for the routes and weighing the purpose and need against potential resource conflicts. Routes were not designated in the Approved RMP where it was determined that the routes have no purpose and need or where resource conflicts outweighed the purpose and need. Interdisciplinary team meetings were held to evaluate all routes on BLM administered lands within the planning area for the Travel Management Plan (TMP). Representatives of the cooperating agencies were invited to attend and were present at the meetings. The route evaluation process resulted in the designation of 4,860 miles of vehicle routes in the Approved RMP. The TMP will be further refined within one to five years from the approval of the ROD. The same interdisciplinary team process will be followed for revising the baseline inventory.

In the seven Wilderness Study Areas (55,808 acres), no ways are designated open for motorized use.

In the Approved RMP, a total of about 104 miles of routes are designated within areas specified as non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. These routes provide access to destination points which include overlooks, primitive camping areas, and provide access to grazing improvements. These routes were found not to have a detrimental effect on the wilderness characteristics in the area because travel on them is very light and the topographical relief found in the area provides terrain masking which makes them largely unnoticeable.

Very few comments were submitted on the Travel Management Plan (TMP) in the Draft RMP/EIS or Supplement to the Draft RMP/EIS that suggested additions, deletions, and modifications to the proposed travel areas for the Preferred Alternative. The Approved RMP identifies that specific designated routes may be modified through subsequent implementation planning and project planning on a case-by-case basis and based on site specific documentation with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). However, the route designation process

entailed the analysis of hundreds of route segments covering nearly 1.7 million acres. Due to the magnitude of this effort, it is not reasonable to begin immediately making modifications to the route system. Modifications to the route system in the Approved RMP will not be considered until implementation of the travel portion of the plan has been substantially completed which includes mapping, signing, monitoring, and evaluation. The process for considering route modifications will be detailed in the Implementation Plan developed for the RMP after completion of the ROD.

A specific decision to keep the Chipeta Canyon road open is made in the Approved RMP. This road provides access to the Chipeta cabin. The cabin is used by BLM personnel and provides temporary overnight living accommodations when they are working in the area (i.e., monitoring grazing allotments, wildlife studies and surveys, etc.) The cabin area may be developed in the future for recreational renting to the public. It is essential to maintain access to the cabin for these purposes.

The travel management plan provides an appropriate route system to allow access for recreation use on public lands while still protecting sensitive resources.

### **Grazing Implementation Decisions**

According to BLM policy, decisions regarding authorized livestock use levels and the terms and conditions under which they are managed is an implementation-level decision based on monitoring and inventory of range conditions and evaluation of such data. Changes in livestock management from the planning level are, therefore, minimal. The Approved RMP does include six implementation-level decisions regarding the Seasons of Use for areas 2 through 7 as depicted on Figure 7a. The changes in the Seasons of Use for the Approved RMP allow the greatest flexibility to manage livestock while at the same time provide sufficient restrictions to protect:

- Bighorn sheep rutting and lambing habitat
- Mule deer migration and fawning
- Pronghorn antelope kidding habitat
- Raptor nesting
- Rocky Mountain elk calving habitat
- Sage grouse breeding

## **E. NOTICE OF MODIFICATIONS & CLARIFICATIONS**

Modifications and clarifications were made to the Approved Plan based on the review and resolution of the protest letters, as well as from internal review by the BLM. The modifications or clarifications to the decisions are provided below.

### **Modifications**

As a result of protests on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and continued internal review, BLM made the following modifications to the Proposed RMP. As described below, these modifications are not considered significant changes. The Approved Plan includes these modifications:

- (1) The following items been added to the List of References in the Approved RMP. Information reviewed from these references did not altar any big game wildlife management decisions in the Approved RMP:
  - ♦ Sawyer, H., R. Nielson, D. Strickland, and L. McDonald. 2005. 2005 Annual Report. Sublette Mule Deer Study (Phase II): Long-term monitoring plan to assess potential impacts of energy development on mule deer in the Pinedale Anticline Project Area. Western Ecosystems Technology, Inc. Cheyenne, WY.
  - ♦ Sawyer, H., R. M. Nielson, F. Lindzey, and L. L. McDonald. 2006. Winter Habitat Selection of Mule Deer Before and During Development of a Natural Gas Field. *Journal of Wildlife Management*. 70(2): 396-403.
  - ♦ Watkins, B. E., C.J. Bishop, E. J. Bergman, A. Bronson, B. Hale, B. F. Wakeling, L. H. Carpenter, and D. W. Lutz. 2007. Habitat Guidelines for Mule Deer: Colorado Plateau Shrubland and Forest Ecoregion. Mule Deer Working Group, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.
- (2) The section under the Greater sage-grouse stipulation (at page K-49 of the PRMP/FEIS) which states, "no permanent facilities or structures would be allowed within two miles when possible" has been changed to a Controlled Surface Use (CSU) stipulation rather than NSO. This change made been made in Appendix K of the Approved RMP (Page K-12) and is only a minor clarification in the Approved RMP since the prescription will remain the same.
- (3) Graham's penstemon and Pariette cactus potential ACECs: The BLM has reviewed its administrative record and found that comments submitted in February 2006 (during a comment period for gathering input on potential ACECs) did include recommendations for designating ACECs to protect Graham's penstemon and Pariette cactus habitat. These recommendations were mistakenly overlooked. Because the BLM did not review or consider the recommendations in accordance with BLM 1613 Manual, these recommended areas will be considered at the earliest opportunity as part of the next planning process conducted in the VFO.

The following measures are currently (and will continue to be) implemented to mitigate impacts to the sensitive plant species from submitted projects with proposed surface disturbance:

- (1) Within suitable habitat, site-specific inventories will be conducted to determine occupancy. The inventories will be conducted for lands within 300 feet of proposed surface disturbance.
- (2) In suitable habitat, the project infrastructure will be designed to minimize impacts.
- (3) Within occupied habitat, the project infrastructure will be designed to avoid direct disturbance and to minimize indirect impacts to populations and individual plants. The nearest proposed surface disturbance to a plant will be at least 300 feet away.

### **Clarifications**

The following clarifications and minor corrections made to the information included in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS are reflected in the attached Approved RMP:

- (1) Under Management Decision **MCA—3**: The fourth and sixth bullets (Recreational and Wildlife) references have been added to cross-tracked decisions of the Approved RMP.

- (2) Under Management Decision **FIRE—6**: Reference to the USFWS has been added for clarification.
- (3) Under Management Decision **FIRE—7**: Clarification and Figure references have been added to the decision.
- (4) Under Management Decision **FIRE—10**: The NFPORS acronym has been spelled out.
- (5) Under Management Decision **LAR—21**: Reference to LAR—20 has been added for clarification.
- (6) Under Management Decision **GRA—10**: The Figure reference has been added.
- (7) Under Management Decision **WC—2**: It has been clarified that the decision only pertains to the 106,178 acres of wilderness characteristics lands.
- (8) Under Management Decision **WSA—5**: It has been clarified that WSAs are closed to OHV travel.
- (9) Under the References section: The Trinity Consultants' July 2005 Report has been added.

### **Errata to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS**

- (1) As a result of protest issues brought forward and granted, the response to comments LR21 and SS47 in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is changed to clarify that the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and Clean Air Act must be met whether or not leases pre-date the acts. The BLM must meet the requirements for protection of threatened and endangered species, not “try to resolve resource conflicts”.
- (2) Figure 30 in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS (Alternative A – Special Designations) did not provide the correct coverage for Bitter Creek, Coyote Basin, White River, or Browns Park potential ACECs due to a GIS error. The correct coverage is depicted in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS on Figure 22.

## **F. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS IN SELECTING THE APPROVED RMP**

The BLM is tasked to provide multiple use management for public lands by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and numerous other laws and regulations that govern the management of public lands. Due to the diversity of community needs and stakeholders affected by management of BLM lands, there has been both support and opposition to certain components of the Proposed Plan. BLM's objective in choosing Alternative A as the Preferred Alternative, and later using it as the base for the Proposed Plan (with minor modifications selected from the range of alternatives) was to address these diverse needs and concerns in a balanced manner and provide a practical and workable framework for management of public lands. The BLM is ultimately responsible for preparing a plan consistent with its legal mandates that reflects its collective professional judgment, and incorporates the best from competing viewpoints and ideas. The Approved RMP (the Proposed Plan as clarified and modified in consideration of public comments and internal review) provides a balance between those reasonable measures necessary to protect the existing resource values and the continued public need for use of public lands within the planning area. Both local and national interests were taken into account in

arriving at this balance. The practical application of decisions was considered in light of land ownership patterns and the degree of federal control over the resources in a given area.

Approval of a plan that provides a balance to meet both resource concerns and social and economic concerns in the planning area was a major factor in its selection. The Proposed Plan was selected because it proposed management that will improve and sustain properly functioning resource conditions while considering needs and demands for existing or potential resource commodities and values. In the end, resource use is managed by integrating ecological, economic, and social principles in a manner that safeguards the long term sustainability, diversity and productivity of the land.

### **All Surface Disturbing Activities**

Stipulations for oil and gas leasing and other surface disturbing activities are referred to throughout the Approved RMP and provide protection to resource values or land uses by establishing authority for delay, site changes, or the denial of operations. The stipulations apply, where appropriate and practical, to all surface-disturbing activities associated with land-use authorizations, permits, and leases issued on BLM lands. As a result, protections for resource values are applied in a consistent manner to all activities. The stipulations are subject to exceptions, modifications, and waivers that are a means of adapting the stipulations to meet changing circumstances. The stipulations in the Approved RMP, along with the exceptions, modifications, and waivers, are provided in Appendix K.

### **Air Quality**

BLM does not have regulatory control over air quality issues, either on public lands or on Tribal or state lands. BLM relies on the agency with jurisdiction over air quality to set regulatory standards and criteria to protect the air quality in a particular area. Once these standards are established, BLM references them in its permitting documents and ensures that all permitted activities on public lands refer to the appropriate agency's standard. With this regulatory framework in place the Approved RMP, by necessity, does not make any air quality decisions. Instead, the Approved RMP references standards set by the State of Utah (Appendix O). Where the State of Utah standards are inapplicable (e.g., over Tribal lands), BLM will work with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ensure that the appropriate federal standards are included or referenced in permitting documents. Finally, the Approved RMP establishes goals and objectives for air quality that reflect the standards set by the State or the EPA.

The Approved RMP allows the VFO to ensure that authorizations granted to use public lands and the BLM's own management programs comply with and support applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and implementation plans pertaining to air quality.

### **Cultural Resources**

BLM has completed the formal Section 106 consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The July 17, 2008, letter from the SHPO concurred with BLM's recommendation of No Adverse Effect from any actions proposed in the PRMP/FEIS (see

Appendix P). The Approved RMP will reduce imminent threats to significant cultural resources from natural and human-caused deterioration or potential conflicts with other resources.

Native American organizations were invited to participate at all levels of the planning process for the Vernal RMP. As part of the RMP/EIS scoping process, by letter dated in November 2002, Utah State Director initiated consultation for land-use planning with 37 tribal organizations. In the letter, the BLM requested information regarding any concerns the organizations might have within the planning areas, specifically requested input concerning the identification and protection of culturally significant areas and resources located on lands managed by the Vernal Field Office, and offered the opportunity for meetings. Between January 2003 and December 2003, all 37 tribal organizations were contacted to determine the need for additional or future consultation for the study areas identified in the consultation letter. Meetings were arranged when requested.

In consulting with tribes or tribal entities, the BLM emphasized the importance of identifying historic properties having cultural significance to tribes (commonly referred to as Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs)). The BLM held meetings with four tribal governments between January 19, 2003, and April 28, 2003, but no TCPs were identified. The BLM was represented at most of these meetings by the Field Office manager and archaeologist. During these meetings, tribal organizations were invited to be a cooperating agency in the development of the land-use plan. The Ute Indian Tribe was granted cooperating agency status.

Based on telephone conversations, correspondence, and meetings, 12 Native American governments requested to be contacted for future projects in the Vernal Field Office. Three governments said that they did not need to be contacted for future projects and 16 governments did not respond to the initial consultation letter or telephone calls.

### **Fire Management**

The Fire Management decisions in the Approved RMP provided goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines that ensure compliance with applicable laws, rules, regulations and policies.

A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-compliant Fire Management Plan (FMP) was completed for the VPA in 1998. The FMP reflects the goals and objectives for vegetation management and fire's role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and is incorporated into the Approved RMP. The FMP was updated in 2005 and will be signed once the ROD has been signed for the VFO. The Approved RMP allows the VFO to support the goals and objectives of the FMP.

### **Forage**

In 1989, the BLM and the State of Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) identified a need to pursue alternatives to restore and maintain properly functioning ecosystems in the Upper Book Cliffs area. These needs included wildlife and livestock forage and primitive outdoor experiences. Privately owned ranches in the Upper Book Cliffs became available for purchase. The Nature Conservancy and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation were able to purchase two ranches in the area. The BLM and the UDWR reached agreement at that time for the allocation

of the AUMs from the two ranches to be allocated to wildlife, while other grazing permittees on the allotments would continue to graze in accordance with their permitted use. The Approved RMP allocates the active livestock AUMs permitted to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) (4,232) and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) (4,026) to wildlife. The change of AUMs from livestock to wildlife and the resulting management of the canyon bottoms and riparian zones will help improve the lands and maintain the *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* for the area. For this reason, the overall change of 8,250 AUMs from livestock to wildlife provides for improved wildlife herd management within the Book Cliffs area while providing appropriate forage for livestock.

### **Lands and Realty Management**

The Approved RMP allows several utility corridors of varying widths which provide ample opportunities and flexibility for the upgrading, addition, and expansion of utility needs (see Figure 6a). The Approved RMP provides a viable energy corridor for oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines as well as electricity transmission and distribution facilities as specified by the West-Wide Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS and the Energy Policy Act of 2005. At the same time, the decision still affords protection for natural resources by limiting surface disturbance to within the various corridor widths, especially in sensitive areas.

The Approved RMP designates 55,808 acres as exclusion areas (all within seven WSAs, which is a non-discretionary decision). In addition, 106,178 acres distributed across 15 areas of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics will be managed as ROW avoidance areas. These exclusion and avoidance areas are in lands with sensitive natural resources such as:

- Highly sensitive visual resources,
- Heavily used recreation areas,
- Pronghorn antelope kidding habitat,
- Bighorn sheep rutting and lambing habitat,
- Mule deer migration and fawning
- Rocky Mountain elk calving habitat,
- Raptor nesting

The designation of exclusion and avoidance areas in the Approved RMP provides a balance between granting rights-of-way and protecting important natural resources.

According to Section 102(a) of FLPMA, all public lands will be retained in Federal ownership unless it is determined that disposal of a particular parcel will serve the national interest. Furthermore, Section 203(a) of FLPMA provides for sale of public lands if one of the following criteria is met:

- (1) The tract is difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of the public lands and is not suitable for management by another Federal agency;
- (2) Such tract was acquired for a specific purpose and the tract is no longer required for that or any other Federal purpose; or
- (3) Disposal of such tract will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development that cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land.

The public lands in the Vernal Field Office that have been identified for consideration for disposal by sale in the Approved RMP meet one or more of these criteria.

A prerequisite for entering into the exchange of Federal for non-Federal lands is the BLM determination that such an exchange is in the public interest. To make this determination, general criteria have been developed in the Approved RMP for both disposal of Federal lands and acquisition of non-Federal lands. Every exchange proposal during the life of the Approved RMP will meet the criteria for disposal and acquisition. The value(s) of acquisition must outweigh the value(s) of disposal for the proposal to be in the public interest and an exchange to be considered.

### **Livestock and Grazing Management**

The Approved RMP responds to issues related to managing for healthy rangelands and riparian and upland vegetation while still providing for livestock grazing and fish and wildlife habitat by making most of the planning area available for livestock grazing, as long as *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* continue to be met. This resulted in a narrow range of alternatives that were considered in the land use planning process.

According to BLM policy, decisions about season of use, stocking densities, forage allocation, and utilization are made using *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* during the grazing permit renewal process. These are implementation-level decisions based on monitoring and inventory of range conditions and evaluation of such data. Changes in specific livestock management practices are, therefore, minimal in the Approved RMP.

The planning decisions made in the Approved RMP are limited to whether an allotment is available or not available for grazing during the life of the plan. The 160 allotments within the VFO designated for livestock grazing encompass approximately 1,691,116 acres of BLM land. On seven allotments (Marshall Draw, Red Creek Flat, Rye Grass, Sears Canyon, Taylor Flat, Warren Draw South, and Watson-Diamond Mountain with a total of 37,127 acres), cattle are permitted on a temporary, non-renewable basis; however, such use is discretionary.

The Approved RMP provides the best balance in allowing grazing to occur while protecting important natural and cultural resources.

### **Minerals and Energy Resources**

The Vernal Planning Area is entirely within the Uinta Basin which is recognized nationally for oil and gas resources. The Uinta Basin is the highest oil and gas producing area in the State of Utah. A significant portion of this production is derived from federally administered lands. As specified as in the Energy Policy and Conservation Act and BLM policy, the oil and gas leasing stipulations in the Approved RMP are the least restrictive necessary to protect sensitive resource values while allowing for development.

The Approved RMP specifies restrictions for permitted activities to resolve concerns regarding the impacts of these uses. These conditions apply not only to oil and gas leasing, but also apply, where appropriate, to all other surface disturbing activities associated with land-use authorizations, permits, and leases, including other mineral resources. For example, rights-of-way exclusion and avoidance areas are consistent with areas closed to oil and gas leasing or with a no surface occupancy stipulation, respectively.

The Approved RMP manages oil and gas leasing and other surface disturbing activities with the following stipulations:

- Unavailable – 190,434 acres
- Open (subject major constraints such as No Surface Occupancy [NSO]) – 86,789 acres
- Open (subject to moderate constraints such as Timing Limitations[TLs]/Controlled Surface Use [CSU]) – 890,280 acres
- Open (subject to standard terms and conditions) – 750,131 acres

As stated above, 190,434 acres are unavailable to oil and gas leasing. These include:

- 53,058 acres that lie within 6 WSAs (Book Cliffs Mountain Browse ISA, Bull Canyon, Daniels Canyon, Diamond Breaks, West Cold Springs and Winter Ridge)
- 2,750 acres of Flume Canyon WSA in the Moab Field Office administered by the Vernal Field Office (48,050 acres of Flume Canyon WSA are administered by the Moab Field Office)
- 99,498 acres that lie within 14 non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics – This acreage figure does not include 6,680 acres located in the White River non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics area that will be open to leasing but subject to major constraints (NSO).
- 35,128 acres within the Hill Creek Extension – These lands are federal mineral estate/tribal trust surface that are considered to be sensitive cultural and wildlife lands by the Ute Tribe. The VFO and the Ute Tribe collaboratively delineated this acreage.

Wilderness Study Areas are closed to oil and gas leasing by law and constitute a non-discretionary decision. Non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics (in all but the White River) are closed to oil and gas leasing by a discretionary decision because it is not reasonable to apply a no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation. The discretionary closed areas involve large blocks of land where oil and gas resources are physically inaccessible by current directional drilling technology from outside the boundaries. This is an example of applying the least restrictive stipulation necessary to protect resources while allowing for oil and gas development.

Sensitive resources protected by the application of a no surface occupancy stipulation in the Approved RMP include, but are not limited to:

- 0.25-mile zone around Greater sage-grouse leks
- High use recreation areas such as Pelican Lake
- The White River non-WSA lands managed to protect, preserve and maintain their wilderness characteristics
- Some Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (Lears Canyon, Nine Mile Canyon, and Pariette)

These NSO areas (86,789 acres) include many of the better known landscapes found in the Vernal Planning Area. An NSO stipulation is the least restrictive necessary to protect the important resources within these areas from surface disturbing activities.

Those resources that can be protected by timing limitations or controlled surface use stipulations in the Approved RMP include wildlife habitat, sensitive soils, and visual resources. Timing limitation and controlled surface use stipulations are also applied in the Approved RMP to protect special status species as well as BLM considered sensitive species. The stipulations for special status species were developed in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and are non-discretionary based on law and policy.

The timing limitation stipulations in the Approved RMP are applied to crucial big game wildlife and raptor habitats identified by the BLM and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. The areas with timing limitations are open to oil and gas leasing and other surface disturbing activities but will be closed during identified timeframes that are important to the health of the species such as winter range and birthing periods, unless a waiver, exception or modification to the stipulation applies.

Timing limitation stipulations have also been applied in the Approved RMP to protect sensitive soils from surface disturbing activities during times when these soils are susceptible to erosion. Surface disturbing activities in sensitive soils during wet periods can cause deep rutting and runoff problems which lead to increased erosion. In addition, a controlled surface use stipulation is applied in the Approved RMP to protect fragile soils on steep slopes from erosion. This stipulation prohibits construction on slopes greater than 30 percent unless an engineering plan can demonstrate that erosion on these slopes will be prevented.

A controlled surface use stipulation in the Approved RMP is applied to areas managed with VRM Class II objectives to protect these sensitive viewsheds. This stipulation protects high quality visual resources, including segments of the Lower and Upper Green River, the White River non-WSA land with wilderness characteristics, and the majority of the Red Mountain-Dry Fork and Nine Mile Canyon ACECs. A controlled surface use stipulation is also applied to the lands surrounding Dinosaur National Monument to protect viewsheds from key observation points within the Monument. The controlled surface use stipulation for VRM II areas requires that the level of change to the landscape be low. Activities can be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer.

The timing limitation and controlled surface use stipulations in the Approved RMP allow for oil and gas development and other surface disturbing activities while providing protection for wildlife habitats, sensitive soils, and high quality visual resources. These stipulations are the least restrictive necessary for the protection of these resources.

The Approved RMP provides for a substantial amount of mineral revenue based on estimated oil and gas production while protecting the most important resources within the planning area. Additionally, the stipulations imposed in the Approved RMP will not unreasonably interfere with the potential development of mineral resources. High development potential areas for these mineral resources are generally not located where development is precluded (NSO and Closed

areas). Therefore, the Approved RMP provides the best balance between protection of resources and commodity use and development.

In 2002, the BLM prepared a projected reasonable foreseeable development (RFD) scenario to project environmental impacts across a 15-year period. This RFD was reviewed in 2008 for oil and gas development and BLM determined during this review that the RFD only projects environmental impacts for up to five years. Development projections included in-depth reviews of potential for occurrence, past well production, current well production, and future potential for production. During this planning effort (beginning with public meetings in 2001 and 2002 for scoping purposes through the notification in the *Federal Register* on January 14, 2005, of the availability of the Draft RMP/EIS), the RFD scenario, which is a planning tool and not a prediction or limit to development, did not track completely with the pace of development in the Uinta Basin. The BLM has carefully monitored industry trends and surmises that the RFD used as an analytical tool in this planning effort can be considered accurate up to approximately five years from the time this Record of Decision (ROD) is signed. Within the next five-year timeframe, the BLM will monitor the impacts to resources of continued development in the VPA and ensure that the impacts disclosed in the Proposed RMP analysis are not exceeded by the pace of development.

### **Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics**

Impacts on uses as a result of focused management, such as the protection, preservation and maintenance of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, were disclosed in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, and considered in conjunction with impacts to resource values such as the nationally recognized and high production of oil and gas resources. There are 106,178 acres within 15 areas (Beach Draw, Bourdette Draw, Bull Canyon, Cold Spring Mountain, Daniels Canyon, Dead Horse Pass, Diamond Breaks, Diamond Mountain, Lower Flaming Gorge, Moonshine Draw, Mountain Home, Stuntz Draw, Vivas Cake Hill, White River, and Wild Mountain) that are carried forward for protection of their wilderness characteristics. All areas except for White River are unavailable for oil and gas leasing. The White River area is managed with an NSO stipulation, and no waivers, exceptions or modifications for oil and gas leasing will apply. All are considered avoidance areas for rights-of-way.

Most of the areas are managed for wilderness characteristics because they are adjacent to lands that are already being managed for wilderness values in the Dinosaur National Monument and WSAs. These areas include: Beach Draw, Bull Canyon, Cold Spring Mountain, Daniels Canyon, Dead Horse Pass, Diamond Breaks, Diamond Mountain, Moonshine Draw, Stuntz Draw, and Vivas Cake Hill. The size and proximity to other lands managed for wilderness values make them more suitable for effectively protecting, preserving, and maintaining their wilderness characteristics. In addition, managing these areas for wilderness characteristics (which is discretionary) is compatible with other management actions in the Approved RMP. Thus, all areas are managed for primitive recreation opportunities which coincide perfectly with managing these areas for wilderness characteristics.

All areas except for White River have only low to moderate potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources. The White River has high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources, and is therefore managed under a NSO stipulation. This still allows for the oil and gas

resources to be extracted without surface disturbance. This continues to protect the wilderness characteristics of the area.

The VFO received information from the public on non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics that total 277,596 acres. About 171,418 acres of these lands in all or parts of 11 areas that were found to have wilderness characteristics during the inventory reviews but were not selected for management of those characteristics in the Approved RMP. The reasons for this decision were varied and complex. Those areas were not selected because they are considered to have high potential for oil and gas resources and currently have a large portion of the lands leased. The table below explains why each area was not carried forward:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Rationale for Not Being Carried Forward</b>
Bitter Creek	33,488	The area is considered high potential for oil and gas (O&G) development. 23,569 acres (70%) of the total area is currently leased for O&G development. Wilderness characteristics could not be protected, preserved or maintained.
Cripple Cowboy	13,603	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 11,519 acres (85%) of the total area is currently leased to O&G development. Wilderness characteristics could not be protected, preserved or maintained.
Desolation Canyon	63,118	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 41,949 acres (66%) of the total review area is currently leased to O&G development. Wilderness characteristics could not be protected, preserved or maintained.
Hells Hole Canyon	2,709	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 2,260 acres (83%) of the total area is currently leased for O&G. Wilderness characteristics could not be protected, preserved or maintained.
Hideout Canyon	1,113	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 154 acres (14%) of the total area is currently leased for O&G. Interest in leasing for this area remains high.
Lower Bitter Creek	11,417	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 8,039 acres (70%) of the total area is currently leased for O&G. Wilderness characteristics could not be protected, preserved or maintained.
Mexican Point	1,277	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 635 acres (50%) of the total area is currently leased for O&G. Interest in leasing for this area remains high.
Rat Hole Ridge	11,367	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 8,288 acres (73%) of the total area is currently leased for O&G. Wilderness characteristics could not be protected, preserved or maintained.
Sweet Water Canyon	6,994	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 5,143 acres (74%) of the total area is leased for O&G. Wilderness characteristics could not be protected, preserved

Name	Acres	Rationale for Not Being Carried Forward
		or maintained.
Wolf Point	11,802	The area is considered high potential for O&G development. 7,999 acres (68%) of the total area is currently leased for O&G. Wilderness characteristics could not be protected, preserved or maintained.

The White River non-wilderness land with wilderness characteristics will be retained but with a reduction in acreage to 6,680 acres and with an NSO stipulation. The acres not retained are considered to have high potential for oil and gas development with significant interest in additional leasing.

The Approved RMP provides the best balance in allowing for uses to occur while providing for protection of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

In future references, lands managed in the Approved RMP as non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics will be referred to as BLM natural areas. This change does not represent a new designation or a new decision. Rather, BLM wants to recognize these discretionary decisions with a better, simpler reference. Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas are formal designations that are managed in a prescribed manner. To avoid confusing these official designations with discretionary agency decisions, BLM has chosen a new reference to distinguish between formal designations (e.g., Wilderness Areas) and a discretionary management category (BLM natural areas). According to the Approved RMP, BLM natural areas will be managed to protect, preserve, and maintain values of primitive recreation, the appearance of naturalness, and solitude.

**Recreation: Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)**

The Approved RMP responds to recreation issues by providing Special Recreation Management Areas for visitors who come to the Vernal planning area. These visitors come from all over the nation, as well as the world, to specifically enjoy the attractions in the planning area. These visitors engage in an array of non-motorized and motorized recreation activities, many of which conflict with each other. Recreational activities include backpacking, boating (canoeing, kayaking, and rafting), camping, dirt biking, enjoying natural and cultural features, fishing, four-wheel driving, hiking, horseback riding, hang gliding, hunting, mountain biking, OHVing, rock climbing, and scenic driving, among others.

The Vernal economy does derive some benefit from recreation-based businesses. About 6 percent of the employment in Vernal is directly related to the leisure and hospitality business sector, with 998 jobs in that sector (source: State of Utah, Governor’s Office of Economic Development, 2008). Commercial outfitters, through special recreation permits, provide services for many activities including rafting, hiking, climbing, four wheel driving, OHVing, horseback riding, hunting, and mountain biking. Maintaining a wide variety of recreational opportunities is important to the Vernal economy and the businesses that are dependent upon them.

The seven Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) designated in the Approved RMP are in areas where high recreation use is currently occurring. Each of the SRMAs will manage for the type and range of recreational activities and opportunities that lie within a given SRMA:

- Blue Mountain SRMA (42,729 acres) will be managed for OHV use, special recreational activities (e.g., hang gliding, rock climbing), and competitive events.
- Browns Park SRMA (18,490 acres) will offer a wide variety of land and water opportunities.
- Fantasy Canyon SRMA (69 acres) will offer opportunities for self-guided touring and hiking.
- Nine Mile SRMA (44,168 acres) will be managed to protect high-value cultural values and scenic quality.
- Pelican Lake SRMA (1,014 acres) will offer water-based recreational opportunities.
- Red Mountain-Dry Fork SRMA (24,285 acres) will continue to provide opportunities for OHV and non-motorized trail activities.
- White River SRMA (2,831 acres) will offer water-based recreational opportunities.

In addition, each SRMA provides management direction for recreation uses as well as protection of the cultural and natural resources found in the SRMA. The SRMAs designated in the Approved RMP enable the BLM to more actively manage the intensity, diversity, and potential incompatibility of recreation uses while protecting the resources that visitors come to enjoy.

The Book Cliffs will not be designated as an SRMA. The Book Cliffs area is heavily developed with oil and gas projects and a majority of it is currently leased for oil and gas development. Unlimited and unconfined recreation will continue without management attention afforded through an SRMA. In order to protect high-value, old-growth pinyon pines, special management actions include the following:

- Enhancing habitat utilizing forest manipulation and tree spraying' restricting woodcutting around old growth pinyon
- No surface occupancy (NSO) for old growth pinyon pine area

The Approved RMP provides the greatest range of recreational opportunities while reducing user conflicts, providing recreation business opportunities, and protecting resources.

### **Special Designations: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)**

Other management decisions in the Approved RMP prevented the need to designate some areas as ACECs because adequate protection was already in place. In some instances, such as Main Canyon, WSAs overlay the potential ACEC and management under the *Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review* (IMP) more than adequately protects the relevant and important (R&I) values of the potential ACEC. If the WSAs are released from wilderness consideration, the Approved RMP states that all activities inconsistent with the goals and objectives of the Approved RMP will be deferred until a plan amendment is completed. Any plan amendment will have to provide protection to the relevant and important values identified.

The Approved RMP designates seven ACECs that were found to have relevance and importance values which were not protected with standard BLM management options. The seven ACECs total 131,700 acres. These ACECs are in areas where special management was required to

protect the R&I values of the ACEC. The following table provides a list of the ACECs designated in the Approved RMP, their R&I values, and acreage:

ACEC Carried Forward in the Approved RMP	R&I Values	Acres
Browns Park	high value scenery, wildlife habitat, cultural and historic resources	18,490
Lears Canyon	relict plant communities	1,375
Lower Green River Corridor	riparian habitat, scenery	8,470
Nine Mile Canyon	cultural resources, high quality scenery, special status species	44,168
Pariette Wetlands	special status bird and plant habitat, wetlands ecosystem	10,437
Red Creek Watershed	watershed	24,475
Red Mountain-Dry Fork	relict plant communities, high value archaeological and paleontological sites, watershed, crucial deer and elk habitat	24,285

Special management for the above ACECs is identified in the Approved RMP to protect the relevant and important (R&I) values. For example, the Pariette Wetlands are managed to protect the R&I special status bird and plant habitat as well as wetlands ecosystem values. Management actions include a NSO stipulation for oil and gas leasing and other surface disturbing activities, excluding land treatments, OHVs limited to designated routes, and avoidance for ROWs. These special management actions are necessary to protect the R&I values. Establishing the Pariette Wetlands as an ACEC gives priority to managing the resource values identified in this area.

The following table provides a list of the potential ACECs that were not designated or reduced in size in the Approved RMP, their relevance and importance values, and planning decisions that protect those values.

Potential ACEC not Designated in Approved RMP	Relevance & Importance Values	Management Protection Provided in the Approved RMP
Bitter Creek (147,425 acres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>old growth forest and watershed</li> <li>cultural and historic resources</li> <li>ecosystem for wildlife and migratory birds</li> </ul>	<p>The BLM identified old growth forest, significant cultural and historic resources, important watershed, and critical ecosystem for wildlife and migratory birds as relevant and important values for the Bitter Creek Potential ACEC. The BLM determined that special management attention is not required to protect the potential ACEC because standard management prescriptions are sufficient to protect the relevant and important values from risk of degradation.</p> <p>The old growth pinyon juniper identified as a relevant and important value for the Bitter Creek ACEC will be protected by limiting leasing for oil and gas development to no surface occupancy for the old growth pinyon pine</p>

Potential ACEC not Designated in Approved RMP	Relevance & Importance Values	Management Protection Provided in the Approved RMP
<p>Bitter Creek (147,425 acres)</p> <p>(continued)</p>		<p>area (160 acres). These management actions will preserve pinyon pine habitat, with indirect positive benefits to wildlife that use that type of habitat. Additionally, these management actions will also result in decreased fire risk and improved water quality in streams in the Bitter Creek Watershed.</p> <p>Cultural and historic resources for this area are protected by law, regulation, and policy. Burial sites, associated burial goods, and sacred items are protected in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA). Should National Register-eligible cultural resources be found during an inventory, impacts to them would generally be reduced by cultural site avoidance. If the BLM determines that cultural resource sites cannot be avoided, the BLM will initiate consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to develop a program for mitigation base on agreed upon stipulations after consultation between Vernal FO, the SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.</p> <p>The important watershed values are protected by extensive prescriptions on riparian areas. Such areas are managed to preclude surface disturbing activities which will protect natural systems by precluding new surface disturbing activities within active flood plains, wetlands, public water reserves or 100 meters of riparian areas. The BLM will manage to achieve proper functioning condition (PFC) as a minimum acceptable riparian goal for riparian/wetland areas. The BLM would utilize mitigation measures to achieve these goals including, but not limited to: (1) keeping construction of all new stream crossings to a minimum; (2) Designing and constructing stream crossings with culverts to allow fish passage, where needed; (3) Requiring the design and construction of all stream crossings to ensure minimal impacts to riparian and aquatic habitat; and (4) relocating existing routes out of riparian areas where feasible or necessary to restore watershed and riparian stability. Additionally, a variety of management actions with regard to livestock grazing will be implemented to meet riparian goals and objectives as outlined in the <i>BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland</i></p>

Potential ACEC not Designated in Approved RMP	Relevance & Importance Values	Management Protection Provided in the Approved RMP
<p>Bitter Creek (147,425 acres)</p> <p>(continued)</p>		<p><i>Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management</i> including fencing, herding, change of livestock class, temporary closures, and/or change of season for livestock grazing.</p> <p>Migratory birds are protected in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act as well as Executive Order 13186 (Responsibilities of Federal Agencies To Protect Migratory Birds), which incorporates conservation measures for the protection of migratory birds, as outlined in the Utah Partners-In-Flight Avian Conservation Strategy and other scientific information, into all surface-disturbing activities.</p> <p>Appendix K describes various surface stipulations to be used during surface-disturbing activities to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat. As described in Appendix K Table 1, these stipulations include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closed or no surface occupancy (NSO), controlled surface use (CSU) and timing limitations (TL) for special status species.</li> <li>• TL, CSU, and NSO raptor buffers as well as habitat mitigation to protect raptor nesting areas and foraging habitat; TL for antelope fawning areas; crucial elk calving and deer fawning habitat; deer migration corridors; and TL and CSU for crucial deer and elk winter range.</li> </ul> <p>Special status species are also protected through compliance with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The BLM will manage all listed Threatened and Endangered (T&amp;E) plant species and the habitats upon which they depend in such a manner as to conserve and recover these species to the point where protection under the ESA is no longer necessary. In collaboration with the USFWS, DWR, and other partners, develop and implement habitat management plans or conservation strategies for sensitive species. As additional data are collected over the life of the RMP, land managers would continually re-evaluate population and habitat status. Management emphasis would be to accumulate ecological information and distributional data to enhance the BLM's ability to protect, conserve, recover, and manage these species in the future. The BLM would continue to implement the specific goals and</p>

Potential ACEC not Designated in Approved RMP	Relevance & Importance Values	Management Protection Provided in the Approved RMP
<p>Bitter Creek (147,425 acres)</p> <p>(continued)</p>		<p>objectives of all Recovery Plans, Conservation Plans and Strategies, and activity level plans. Recovery Plan revisions or new Recovery Plans would also be implemented. The BLM also provides specific lease notices for oil and gas development and conservation measures for each of species on Utah’s Threatened and Endangered Species List. See Appendix L.</p> <p>Based on the prescriptions outlined above, the relevant and important values identified for the Bitter Creek potential ACEC will continue to be adequately protected under the Approved RMP.</p>
<p>Browns Park (34,231 acres not designated)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high value scenery</li> <li>• wildlife habitat</li> <li>• cultural and historic resources</li> </ul>	<p>The 34,231 acres not designated as an ACEC in the Approved RMP will continue to have the relevant and important values protected. VRM Class II objectives protect 27,141 acres of the area not designated; VRM Class I objectives in West Cold Spring WSA (3,200 acres) and Diamond Breaks WSA (3,900 acres) protect the remainder of the acreage with R&amp;I values. In addition, motorized OHV travel is limited to designated roads; this will also help reduce the impacts to visual resources, cultural resources and wildlife habitat. Although the area is judged as low potential for oil and gas, 20,154 acres are closed to leasing, 1,230 acres are under a no surface occupancy stipulation and 12,850 acres are under a controlled surface use or timing limitation to protect crucial mule deer and elk winter ranges.</p> <p>Cultural and historic resources are protected by law, policy, and procedure. Prior to approval of actions which may affect cultural resources, Class II inventories and consultation with SHPO will occur.</p> <p>Riparian areas, as discussed under Bitter Creek (above), are managed to preclude surface disturbing activities within riparian areas which will protect natural systems.</p> <p>Thus, the relevant and important values will continue to be protected.</p>
<p>Coyote Basin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• white-tailed prairie dog complex</li> </ul>	<p>In the Approved RMP, limiting OHV travel to designated routes, and applying oil and gas leasing with controlled surface use will limit surface disturbance that will protect</p>

Potential ACEC not Designated in Approved RMP	Relevance & Importance Values	Management Protection Provided in the Approved RMP
(124,161 acres)		<p>habitat for the white-tailed prairie dogs.</p> <p>The Black-footed ferret experimental reintroduction occurs within Coyote Basin. The ferret lives in prairie dog burrows and feeds on the prairie dog. The prairie dog is afforded protection as a consequence of the ferret recovery plan.</p> <p>Special status species for this area are protected by law, policy, and procedure. Thus, the relevant and important values will continue to be protected.</p>
<p>Four Mile Wash (50,280 acres)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high value scenery</li> <li>• riparian ecosystem</li> <li>• special status fish</li> </ul>	<p>The high value scenery riparian ecosystem and special status fish species are all directly attributed to the river corridor. In the Approved RMP impacts to scenery in Four Mile Wash are restricted by VRM Class I (1,551 acres) and Class II (13,012 acres), objectives, limiting OHV travel to designated routes, and oil and gas leasing with NSO in the river corridor.</p> <p>The remaining acres located outside of the river corridor are VRM Class III and IV areas, considered to have moderate to high potential for oil and gas resources, and currently have a large portion of the lands leased. These areas are located above the canyon rim and do not contain high quality scenic values. VRM Class III and IV areas will be managed with timing limitations and controlled surface use and standard stipulations. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are used as appropriate to reduce visual impacts (i.e, masking, well site location, painting, etc.). Riparian areas are managed to preclude surface disturbing activities which will protect natural systems. Riparian areas, as discussed under Bitter Creek (above), are managed to preclude surface disturbing activities within riparian areas which will protect natural systems.</p> <p>The BLM will continue to work with USFWS and others to ensure that plans and agreements are updated as necessary to reflect the latest scientific data. Recovery plans have been finalized for bonytail, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, and razorback sucker). The Endangered Species Act protects the endangered fish. Thus, the relevant and important values will continue to be protected.</p>

Potential ACEC not Designated in Approved RMP	Relevance & Importance Values	Management Protection Provided in the Approved RMP
<p>Lower Green River Expansion (1,700 acres)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high value scenery</li> <li>• riparian ecosystem</li> </ul>	<p>Impacts to scenery in the Lower Green River Expansion are restricted by VRM Class II objectives (1,700 acres), limiting OHV travel to designated routes, and oil and gas leasing with NSO in the river corridor. Riparian areas are managed to preclude surface disturbing activities within the riparian areas which will protect natural systems. Thus, the relevant and important values will continue to be protected.</p>
<p>Main Canyon (100,915 acres)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural and historic resources</li> <li>• riparian ecosystem</li> <li>• natural systems</li> </ul>	<p>Cultural and historic resources are protected by law, policy, and procedure. Prior to approval of actions which may affect cultural resources, Class II inventories and consultation with SHPO will occur.</p> <p>Riparian areas are managed to preclude surface disturbing activities within riparian areas which will protect natural systems. Thus, the relevant and important values will continue to be protected.</p>
<p>Middle Green River (6,768 acres)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high value scenery</li> <li>• riparian ecosystem</li> </ul>	<p>Impacts to scenery in the Middle Green River are restricted by VRM Class II objectives (6,768 acres), limiting OHV travel to designated routes, and oil and gas leasing with NSO in the river corridor.</p> <p>Riparian areas are managed to preclude surface disturbing activities within riparian areas which will protect natural systems. Thus, the relevant and important values will continue to be protected.</p>
<p>Nine Mile Canyon (37,000 acres)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural resources</li> <li>• high quality scenery</li> <li>• special status species</li> </ul>	<p>Cultural and historic resources in this area are protected by law, policy, and procedure.</p> <p>The relevant and important values of scenery only apply within the Nine Mile Canyon itself and are protected by VRM Class II objectives from canyon rim to canyon rim within the river corridor. OHV travel is limited to designated routes, which protects all of the relevant and important (R&amp;I) values. The canyon bottom is NSO to protect the R&amp;I values of cultural, visual, and special status species. Because scenic R&amp;I values are not attributed to areas above the rim, there is no need to restrict oil and gas leasing for visual purposes. In this area above the canyon rim:</p>

Potential ACEC not Designated in Approved RMP	Relevance & Importance Values	Management Protection Provided in the Approved RMP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 26,797 acres would be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.</li> <li>• Approximately 209 acres would be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as TLs and CSU.</li> <li>• Approximately 17,162 acres would be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as NSO stipulations.</li> </ul> <p>Special status species are also protected through compliance with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The BLM will manage all listed T&amp;E plant species and the habitats upon which they depend in such a manner as to conserve and recover these species to the point where protection under the ESA is no longer necessary. In collaboration with the USFWS, DWR, and other partners, develop and implement habitat management plans or conservation strategies for sensitive species. As additional data are collected over the life of the RMP, land managers would continually re-evaluate population and habitat status. Management emphasis would be to accumulate ecological information and distributional data to enhance the BLM's ability to protect, conserve, recover, and manage these species in the future. The BLM would continue to implement the specific goals and objectives of all Recovery Plans, Conservation Plans and Strategies, and activity level plans. Recovery Plan revisions or new Recovery Plans would also be implemented. The BLM also provides specific lease notices for oil and gas development and conservation measures for each of species on Utah's Threatened and Endangered Species List. See Appendix L.</p> <p>Thus, the relevant and important values will continue to be protected.</p>
<p>White River (47,130 acres)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high value scenery</li> <li>• riparian ecosystem</li> <li>• unique geologic</li> </ul>	<p>Because the high value scenery is attributed to the river corridor itself and will be protected by VRM II, there are no R&amp;I values beyond the river corridor. VRM Class II areas correspond to either no leasing or NSO stipulations for oil and gas leasing.</p> <p>Impacts to scenery in the White River are restricted by VRM Class II objectives (15,913 acres). This includes</p>

Potential ACEC not Designated in Approved RMP	Relevance & Importance Values	Management Protection Provided in the Approved RMP
	<p>formation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• historic area</li> </ul>	<p>6,680 acres that are part of the White River non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics and 2,831 acres which are part of the White River SRMA. For oil and gas leasing, the VRM Class II area would be protected with NSO (13,243 acres) in the river corridor. OHV travel would be limited to designated routes. The remaining acres outside those mentioned above have a VRM Class III or IV.</p> <p>The geological formation (Goblin City) and historic area are located within the river corridor and likewise managed with VRM Class II. Cultural and historic areas (including Goblin City) are protected by law, policy, and procedure. The only current access to Goblin City is via a hiking trail that begins at the primitive camp site located next to the river.</p> <p>The remaining acres consist of VRM Class III and IV areas, are considered to have high potential for oil and gas resources, and currently have a large portion of the lands leased. VRM Class III areas will be managed with timing limitations and controlled surface use (4,359 acres) and standard stipulations (3,554 acres). VRM Class IV areas will also be managed with timing limitations and controlled surface use (392 acres) and standard stipulations (22,776 acres). BMPs are used as appropriate to reduce visual impacts (i.e, masking, well site location, painting, etc.)</p> <p>Riparian areas, as discussed under Bitter Creek (above), are managed to preclude surface disturbing activities within riparian areas which will protect natural systems. Thus, the relevant and important values will continue to be protected.</p>

**Special Designations: Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs)**

Under the Approved RMP, two river segments of the Green River totaling approximately 52 miles of river are carried forward as suitable for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System in order to protect the free-flowing nature and outstandingly remarkable values associated with the river segments, subject to valid existing rights. The Upper Green River segment (22 miles) extends from Little Hole to the Utah State line. The Lower Green River segment (30 miles) extends from the public land boundary south of Ouray to the Carbon County

line. There is a tentative classification of "Scenic" for both river segments. The Upper and Lower Green River will largely be protected from disturbance related to mineral development by either being closed to mineral leasing or by no surface occupancy stipulations.

Both suitable river segments will be in a limited or closed OHV category, with most of the segments limited to designated routes. Outstandingly remarkable values will be protected by limiting OHV use to designated routes or closing river corridors to OHV use. The Upper Green River segment is entirely protected with a Class II VRM category. The Lower Green River is protected with both Class I and II VRM categories.

Eligible river segments that were not carried forward as suitable in the Approved RMP were found not suitable for a myriad of reasons. For example, unless public land is somehow involved in a proposed land use, BLM has no control of potential modifications of the shoreline or other development (including development related to the perfection of water rights) on non-public lands. State and local governments were not in favor of additional segments being determined to be suitable for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

For those river segments that are not recommended suitable for wild and scenic river designation under the Approved RMP, many other prescriptions will still afford protection to the river corridor, and associated outstandingly remarkable values. For example:

- Surface disturbance restrictions in riparian zones and floodplains will protect river shoreline and water quality.
- Actions proposed to protect riparian obligate and aquatic wildlife species and their habitat will protect river values.
- Vegetation treatments implemented to restore riparian and upland vegetation communities will enhance watershed health, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, and recreation settings and experiences.

In addition, BLM looks forward to working with the State of Utah, local and tribal governments, and other federal agencies during the next phase of the Wild and Scenic River process. BLM will work cooperatively with the above entities in a statewide study to reach consensus regarding recommendations to Congress for the inclusion of rivers into the NWSR system. BLM will also continue to work with affected local, state, federal, and tribal partners to identify in-stream flows necessary to meet critical resource needs, including values related to the subject segments, so that they may be identified for inclusion into future recommendations to Congress.

### **Vegetation**

The Approved RMP gives priority to riparian vegetation where surface disturbing activities are precluded within 100 meters of riparian areas. The Approved RMP provides specifications for Desired Future Conditions for vegetation resources to ensure ecological diversity, stability, and sustainability. Due to the persistent drought conditions in this region over the past several years, criteria for restricting activities during these drought conditions are provided in the Approved RMP. The Approved RMP reiterates the BLM's policy to control noxious weed species and to prevent the infestation and spread of invasive species. The Approved RMP emphasizes the reestablishment and restoration of vegetated areas during project activities using native seed

mixes wherever possible. The requirements of related Executive Orders, regulation, and policy will be met in the Approved RMP regarding noxious weeds and invasive plants.

### **Travel: Roads and Trails**

The Approved RMP responds to the issue of OHV use by designating all BLM lands as open, closed, or limited. Out of about 1.73 million acres within the planning area:

- 6,202 acres are open to cross-country travel
- 78,595 acres are closed to motorized travel
- 1,640,725 acres are limited to designated routes

Areas open to OHV travel (6,202 acres) in the Approved RMP are located in four areas:

- Red Wash (1,901 acres)
- Twelve Mile Bench (2,656 acres)
- Jensen Hills (931 acres)
- Buckskin Hills (714 acres)

These areas have been traditionally used by OHV recreation users for several years. Manageability is limited due to the surface land owner pattern. Because the areas are fairly well defined and small in size, there is little potential for additional resource damage.

Areas closed to OHV travel (78,595 acres) include:

- All WSAs and the Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Instant Study Area (ISA)
- White River area (SRMA, river corridor)
- Lears Canyon ACEC
- Nine Mile Acquired Area
- The upper portion of the Lower Flaming Gorge non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics

The five WSAs and the one Instant Study Area are managed as exclusion areas for rights-of-way. As a result, the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation will be enhanced and the potential for impairment of wilderness values by motorized activities is eliminated.

The limited area (1,640,725 acres) in the Approved RMP pertains to the majority of the planning area. The Approved RMP responds to travel management and access issues by providing a network of transportation routes within the limited designation that tie into roads administered by the counties, National Park Service, the Forest Service, State of Utah, Ute Tribe, and private land owners. The Limited designation in the Approved RMP replaces the large amount of area currently available for cross-country travel within the planning area. As a result, the Approved RMP provides a substantial amount of protection to natural (vegetation, soils, scenery, riparian, and wildlife) and cultural resources by essentially eliminating cross-country travel which is detrimental to these resources. The Approved RMP allows for motorized access and opportunities within the Limited designation while still providing protection for sensitive resources and non-motorized recreation users.

The areas designated in the Approved RMP as open, limited, and closed provide the best balance between OHV opportunities and protection of sensitive resources. OHV travel would be limited to designated routes or closed except for managed open areas.

### **Visual Resource Management**

The Vernal Field Office is home to nationally recognized scenery in northeastern Utah. These settings attract thousands of visitors each year who come to Vernal to enjoy the landscape. Scenic attractions in the Vernal planning area include Desolation Canyon, Fantasy Canyon, Goblin City, John Jarvie Historical Site, Nine Mile Canyon, and the Green and White River corridors. The Approved RMP provides protection for these and other scenic attractions, thus safeguarding the visitation and tourism industry, which is a significant contributor to the Vernal economy. At the same time, VRM class objectives of III and IV are applied as necessary to allow for exploration, development, and associated infrastructure to support oil and gas resources in high potential areas in accordance with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, while protecting sensitive resources, where appropriate.

### **Wildlife and Fisheries Resources**

The Approved RMP responds to issues regarding wildlife by providing restrictions to uses in crucial wildlife habitat areas. BLM uses the State Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) crucial habitat boundaries to apply these restrictions because UDWR is the entity with jurisdiction and expertise over wildlife in Utah. The crucial habitat identified in the Approved RMP for deer, elk, bighorn sheep and other big game species is the result of the State's combination of two previous UDWR categories of habitat – “critical” and “high value”. The State uses the term “crucial” habitat as a trigger to initiate a close examination of proposed projects in order to determine the appropriate management response. BLM and the State recognize that some of the land within the defined area, depending on season and timing, may not support the respective species for various reasons. The BLM will coordinate with the State on issues related to crucial habitat to determine stipulations necessary to address impacts to the subject wildlife species. Following consultation, the BLM may grant an exception, modification, or waiver. BLM and the State will execute a protocol to implement this provision.

In addition, protective management measures have been developed in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the UDWR to protect all the special status species within the planning area, including those that are threatened or endangered.

Informal Section 7 consultation, as directed by the Endangered Species Act, subsequent regulations, and BLM policy, was conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) throughout the development of the RMP. The BLM submitted a Biological Assessment (BA) and requested initiation of formal consultation on August 22, 2008. The USFWS responded with a Biological Opinion (BO) on October 24, 2008, completing the formal Section 7 consultation process. The BO concurred with the determinations made in the BA regarding potential effects on listed threatened and endangered species located within the planning area. The BO cover letter is in this Record of Decision (ROD) as Appendix N and the entire BO is on the attached CD. The BA and the BO contain committed conservation measures that have been incorporated into the ROD and will be a part of the implementation of the Approved RMP. These are

committed measures that will be included as part of the proposed action of any subsequent site specific activities authorized by the RMP. Should any changes be made in any of the conservation measures identified in the BA and BO, Section 7 consultation with USFWS will be re-initiated.

The BLM, in coordination with the USFWS developed the majority of these committed conservation measures as part of a programmatic Section 7 consultation that was completed in 2007. Some modifications and additional measures were developed during the consultation process specific to the Vernal RMP. All site specific level actions potentially impacting listed species or their critical habitat will implement these measures. Incorporating these measures will ensure that the BLM is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and will meet necessary management and recovery goals. If BLM determines that any deviations, modifications, or waiver of these conservation measures may be necessary on a given project, re-initiation of Section 7 consultation with USFWS will be necessary. BLM notes that the Biological Opinion (Appendix N and attached CD), provides a number of recommended conservation measures that are beyond the scope of this Approved RMP, but may be considered in tiered consultation with this programmatic opinion when project-specific analysis is conducted in the future. These recommended conservation measures are optional measures, additional to the committed mitigation contained in the Approved RMP, that BLM will consider at the appropriate time and as deemed necessary to manage and recover listed and candidate plant and animal species occurring within the planning area.

The Approved RMP also incorporates resource protection measures and recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs) to maintain, protect, and enhance habitats that will support a diversity of non-listed sensitive fish, wildlife, and plant species. The intent of these measures is to achieve and maintain suitable habitat for desired population levels and distribution within the area covered by the RMP. The BLM will continue to work cooperatively with UDWR (which has jurisdiction over sensitive wildlife species) to maintain and establish crucial habitat management strategies as reflected in the Approved RMP. These species are managed as necessary to protect them and their habitat from loss in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), BLM management guidelines, and policy contained in the 6840 Manual.

The Approved RMP provides the least restrictive stipulations necessary to protect wildlife species while still allowing for resource uses.

## **G. CONSISTENCY AND CONSULTATION REVIEW**

Consistency of the Approved RMP with other local, State, Tribal and federal plans and policies (which sometimes conflict amongst themselves) was also considered as a factor in selection of the Approved RMP. The Approved RMP is consistent with plans and policies of the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management, other federal agencies, state government, and local governments to the extent that the guidance and local plans are also consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of federal law and regulation applicable to public lands. Chapter 5 of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS provides a full discussion of consistency with all involved entities.

### **Governor's Consistency**

The Governor's Office did not identify any inconsistencies concerning state or local plans, policies, and programs following the 60-day Governor's Consistency Review of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS (initiated August 22, 2008, in accordance with planning regulations at 43 CFR Part 1610.3- 2(e), and concluded on October 24, 2008).

### **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 Consultation**

The Vernal Field Office has completed its consultation on the Proposed RMP Final EIS with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A letter was received from the Utah SHPO on July 17, 2008, after reviewing BLM's decisions in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. In the letter, the SHPO concluded that the decisions in the Proposed RMP will have no adverse affects on historic properties. Because there has been no appreciable change between the Proposed RMP and the Approved RMP, no further SHPO consultation is required and all decisions in the Approved RMP will have no adverse affects on historic properties. The letter of concurrence from the SHPO is found in Appendix P.

### **Native American Consultation**

The BLM has engaged in consultation with Native American representatives throughout the planning process. Native American consultation is an ongoing process that will continue after the ROD is signed.

The RMP/EIS scoping process was initiated in November 2002 when the BLM Utah State Director mailed letters to 37 tribal organizations. All 37 tribes were contacted by an ethnographer under contract on behalf of BLM to (1) ensure that the appropriate tribal contact had received the consultation letter, and (2) determine the need for additional or future consultation for the study areas identified in the consultation letter. Meetings were arranged when requested. Of the 37 organizations contacted, four requested meetings to discuss the traditional cultural resources study.

Based on telephone conversations, correspondence, and meetings made by the ethnographer:

- 12 Native American tribes requested to be contacted for future projects in the Vernal Field Office.
- 3 Native American tribes said that they did not need to be contacted for future projects.
- 5 Native American tribes did not specify the need for future consultation.
- 16 Native American tribes did not respond to the initial consultation letter or telephone calls.
- 1 Native American tribe requested to be contacted for future projects in the Price Field Office.

Based on the consultation with all tribes for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, BLM was not provided any additional information in developing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

In addition, the Ute Indian Tribe has participated in the Vernal RMP as a Cooperating Agency. The Tribe filed protest on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS concerning split estate mineral issues in the Hill Creek Extension. The protest was denied by the BLM Director because it did not present any protest issues that resulted in a change to the Approved RMP.

### **Section 7 Consultation under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)**

Informal Section 7 consultation, as directed by the Endangered Species Act (ESA), subsequent regulations, and BLM policy, was conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) throughout the development of the RMP. Formal consultation with the USFWS was initiated on August 22, 2008. As required by Section 7(a) of the ESA, the Vernal Field Office prepared a Biological Assessment (BA) to evaluate the listed species in its planning area. The BA analyzed the potential impacts on six endangered, two threatened, and one candidate species which could result from implementing management actions authorized under the proposed land use plan for the Field Office. The Vernal Field Office determined that some of the proposed actions "may affect, and are likely to adversely affect" the listed species and "may affect" designated critical habitat. The USFWS prepared a Biological Opinion (BO), in which they concurred with BLM's determination on October 24, 2008, and is included in Appendix N and attached CD. The USFWS further determined that implementation of the RMP, including committed mitigation measures, would not jeopardize the existence of any of the listed species.

## **H. MITIGATION MEASURES**

Measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm were built into the Approved RMP where practicable. Many of the standard management provisions will minimize impacts when applied to activities proposed in the planning area. The *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* (see Appendix F) will be used as the base standards to assess the health of BLM lands in the planning area. Best management practices (BMPs) will be used (when applicable) for a number of uses including livestock grazing, forest activities, mining, oil and gas development, and other surface disturbing activities (see Appendices A and B). Additional measures to mitigate environmental impacts may also be developed during subsequent NEPA analysis at the activity level planning and project stages. Throughout the decisions in the Approved RMP, mitigation was used as a means to avoid and minimize environmental harm.

## **I. PLAN MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring is the repeated measurement of activities and conditions over time. Evaluation is a process in which the plan and monitoring data are reviewed to see if management goals and objectives are being met and if management direction is sound. Monitoring data gathered over time is examined and used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are meeting stated objectives, and if not, why. Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or what changes need to be made in management practices to meet objectives.

The two types of monitoring that are tied to the planning process include implementation and effectiveness monitoring. Land use plan monitoring is the process of:

- (1) Tracking the implementation of land use planning decisions
- (2) Collecting and assessing data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use planning decisions.

The two types of monitoring are described below:

- (1) **Implementation Monitoring:** Implementation monitoring is the most basic type of monitoring and simply determines whether planned activities have been implemented in the manner prescribed by the plan. Some agencies call this compliance monitoring. This monitoring documents BLM's progress toward full implementation of the land use plan decision. There are no specific thresholds or indicators required for this type of monitoring.
- (2) **Effectiveness Monitoring:** Effectiveness monitoring is aimed at determining if the implementation of activities has achieved the desired goals and objectives. Effectiveness monitoring asks the question: Was the specified activity successful in achieving the objective? This requires knowledge of the objectives established in the RMP as well as indicators that can be measured. Indicators are established by technical specialists in order to address specific questions, and thus avoid collection of unnecessary data. Success is measured against the benchmark of achieving desired future conditions established by the plan.

Regulations at 43 CFR 1610.4-9 require that the proposed plan establish intervals and standards, as appropriate, for monitoring and evaluation of the plan, based on the sensitivity of the resource decisions involved. Progress in meeting the plan objectives and adherence to the management framework established by the plan is reviewed periodically. CEQ regulations implementing NEPA state that agencies may provide for monitoring to assure that their decisions are carried out and should do so in important cases (40 CFR 1505.2(c)). To meet these requirements, the BLM will review the plan on a regular schedule in order to provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and provide information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation.

Land use plan evaluations will be used by BLM to determine if the decisions in the RMP, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, are still valid. Evaluation of the RMP will generally be conducted every five years per BLM policy, unless unexpected actions, new information, or significant changes in other plans, legislation, or litigation triggers an evaluation. Land use plan evaluations determine if decisions are being implemented, whether mitigation measures are satisfactory, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, whether there is new data of significance to the plan, and if decisions should be changed through amendment or revision. Evaluations will follow the protocols established by the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated. Specific monitoring and evaluation needs are identified by resource/uses throughout the Approved RMP.

The monitoring plan is included for each resource under Management Decisions in the Approved RMP.

## J. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

### **Introduction**

The public participation process for the RMP/EIS has been ongoing throughout the development of the RMP/EIS and will continue to the Record of Decision. It includes a variety of efforts to identify and address public concerns and needs. In addition to formal public participation activities, informal contacts occur frequently with public land users, industry, and interested persons through meetings, field trips, telephone calls, or letters. All public participation applicable to the RMP/EIS has been documented and analyzed as part of the planning process and kept on file in the Vernal Field Office.

One of the BLM's primary objectives during development of the Vernal Field Office RMP was to understand the views of various publics by providing opportunities for meaningful participation in the resource management planning process. The following summarizes the efforts made by the VFO to involve the public. In-depth information on these efforts is included in both the Draft Vernal Field Office RMP/EIS and the Proposed Vernal Field Office RMP/Final EIS in Chapter 5, *Consultation and Coordination*.

### **Scoping and Notice of Intent to Plan (NOI)**

This planning process began in March 2001 with the publication in the *Federal Register* of a Notice of Intent to plan (NOI). The NOI announced the BLM's intent to conduct land-use planning for the public lands administered by the Vernal Field Office by preparing an RMP and associated EIS. The NOI began what is known as the scoping process and invited the general public as well as Federal, State, and local government agencies and Indian tribes to identify potential issues and submit concerns regarding the intended planning effort.

The scoping period began on March 12, 2001 and ended December 31, 2001. In order to solicit public input regarding the development and scope of RMP/EIS alternatives, five scoping meetings were held throughout Utah in late October and early November 2001. Information obtained during the public scoping and information obtained by BLM and submitted by cooperating agencies, other federal, state and local agencies, and Indian tribes is utilized to form the scope of the RMP/EIS. Scoping meetings were held at the following locations:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Duchesne, Utah	October 17, 2001
Vernal, Utah	October 18, 2001
Salt Lake City, Utah	October 25, 2001
Manila, Utah	November 1, 2001
Green River, Utah	November 8, 2001

In addition to the NOI, BLM conducted additional outreach for specific program information, including by mailing directly to a BLM-maintained mailing list several planning bulletins to solicit specific information regarding issues such as public meetings, dates, travel planning, fluid mineral leasing, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), Wild and Scenic River segments (WSR), and wilderness characteristics. The BLM-maintained mailing list for this

planning effort has been and will continue to be reviewed and updated until the BLM issues the PRMP/FEIS and ROD.

**Notice of Availability (NOA) of Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed Plan Final EIS**

In January 2005, the BLM filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) its Draft RMP/Draft EIS for the Vernal Field Office. On January 14, 2005 the BLM and EPA published a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register*; the later date marked the beginning of the formal 90-day public review comment period. The Draft RMP/Draft EIS states that BLM is revising its current land-use plan and proposes several alternative ways of managing public lands within the Vernal Planning Area. The Draft RMP/Draft EIS was designed to provide a comprehensive look at the impacts to natural and cultural resources from various planning alternatives. The formal 90-day public comment period ended on April 4, 2005. The BLM notified approximately 990 individuals regarding the release of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. Also, provided hard copies and CDs of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS directly to cooperating agencies, other federal, state, and local agencies, tribal representatives, the Utah BLM Resource Advisory Committee members Hard copies and CDs also were made available to the public, and the Draft RMP/Draft EIS was placed on the BLM's website. The Vernal FO received approximately 360 letters, emails and faxes on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS.

On December 13, 2005, the BLM published in the *Federal Register* a NOA of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS to list proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and specific associated resource use limitations for public lands in Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah and Grand Counties, Utah. They provided a 60-day comment period on the potential ACECs. The comment period ended February 11, 2006. The Vernal FO received approximately 2,094 letters, emails and faxes on the ACEC Notice of Availability.

On May 24, 2007, the BLM published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS. The Supplement to the Draft RMP/Draft EIS presents an analysis of the effects of managing non-Wilderness Study Area (WSA) lands with wilderness characteristics in a protective manner. On October 5, 2007, the BLM and EPA published a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*; for the Supplement to the Draft RMP/Draft EIS the date marked the beginning of the formal 90-day public review comment period. The comment period ended on January 3, 2008. The VFO received approximately 191 letters, emails and faxes on the Supplemental EIS.

On August 22, 2008, the BLM and the Environmental Protection Agency published of Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* which announced the publication of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The public was informed of the availability of the Proposed RMP/FEIS via news releases, the planning website and the RMP mailing list. The Proposed RMP/FEIS as well as all the background documents were available on the Vernal RMP planning website. A 30-day protest period commenced on August 22, 2008 and ended on September 22, 2008. In addition, a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review period ran concurrently with the first half of the protest period. In-depth information on these efforts is included in both the Vernal Draft RMP/Draft EIS and Vernal Proposed RMP/FEIS in Chapter 5, *Consultation and Coordination*.

### **Mailing List**

As directed by 43 CFR 1610.2(d), the BLM has established and maintained a list of "individuals and groups known to be interested in or affected by a resource management plan." This list was initially developed by the Vernal Field Office mailing list and supplemented/updated throughout the planning process. Scoping meeting participants were given the option to be added to the mailing list. In addition, individuals were able to add themselves to the project mailing list by registering on the project website, as well as through requests to be placed on the mailing list by contacting the BLM.

The mailing list was used during the distribution of postcards and updates throughout the planning process. Postcards were mailed to the entire list, announcing the availability of the Draft RMP/EIS, Supplemental Draft RMP/Draft EIS, and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. There are currently over 1,400 individuals, organizations, and agencies included on the mailing list.

### **Public Meetings**

During the 90-day public comment period, the BLM held public meetings in five cities in two states in an effort to inform the interested and affected public about the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. The table below lists the open house locations and dates. The open houses were geared to provide information to the public on the content of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS as well as to provide guidance on commenting on the document and answer questions. Each open house included a visual presentation that provided an overview of the planning process and a comparison of major elements contained in the alternatives. Attendees were then encouraged to visit with BLM representatives and managers regarding questions or concerns about the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. The public was provided with the opportunity to submit written comments at the open houses.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Vernal, Utah	February 8, 2005
Duchesne, Utah	February 9, 2005
Manila, Utah	February 10, 2005
Grand Junction, Colorado	February 22, 2005
Salt Lake City, Utah	February 25, 2005

Public meetings were not held on the release of the ACEC NOA or Supplemental Draft RMP/Draft EIS.

### **Website**

Information regarding the Vernal land-use plan was made available to the public on a website found at <http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/vernal/planning.html>.

The website serves as a virtual repository for documents related to development of the Vernal RMP including news releases and bulletins, background documents, schedule, the land-use planning process, preliminary issues, maps (figures), photos, and the draft and final RMP/EIS. The documents are available in .pdf format to ensure that they are available to the widest range

of users. During the scoping period, the website allowed members of the public to add themselves to the project mailing list or to submit comments/concerns to be considered in the scoping process. In addition, during the public comment period on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, the website served as one of the ways in which the public could submit comments.

### **Continuing Involvement**

The BLM will continue to actively seek the views of the public, using techniques such as news releases and web-site information to ask for participation and inform the public of new and ongoing project proposals, site-specific planning, and opportunities and timeframes for comment. The BLM will also continue to coordinate, both formally and informally, with the numerous federal, state, tribal, and local agencies and officials interested and involved in the management of public lands in Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah Counties and a portion of Grand County within the planning area.

## **K. AVAILABILITY OF THE PLAN**

- Copies of the Record of Decision and the Vernal Approved Resource Management Plan are available by request from the following locations:

BLM Vernal Field Office  
170 South 500 East  
Vernal, Utah 84078

- By contacting the Vernal field Office by phone at:

(435) 781-4400

- Or on the Vernal Field Office website at:

<http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/vernal/planning.html>

**APPROVAL**

In consideration of the foregoing, I approve the Record of Decision for the Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Stephen Allred", is written over a horizontal line.

C. Stephen Allred  
Assistant Secretary – Land and Minerals Management  
Department of the Interior

OCT 3 1 2008

Date

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## APPROVED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

### A. INTRODUCTION

This Approved RMP replaces the Book Cliffs RMP approved in May 1985 and the Diamond Mountain RMP approved in December 1994 and is now the base land use plan for public lands administered by the BLM's Vernal Field Office. The Approved RMP adopts the management described in Proposed Plan and the Management Common to All Alternatives section presented in the Proposed Vernal Field Office RMP/Final EIS (USDI-BLM 2008), with adjustments as described in the *Notice of Minor Modification* and *Clarification* sections of the ROD.

### B. CONSIDERATION OF OTHER BLM PLANS AND POLICIES

Management of federal and state lands immediately adjacent to public land administered by the BLM was considered in the formulation of the Approved RMP and land-use allocations. As cooperating agencies in development of the Vernal Field Office RMP, Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne counties have evaluated consistency with appropriate county plans as the Proposed Plan/Final EIS has been developed. The Ute Indian Tribe and the State of Utah also had cooperating agency status in the development of the Vernal Field Office RMP. The main major planning documents, management plans and implementation plans of other federal, state, local, and tribal governments considered in development of the RMP are listed below. (*Note*: This may not be a complete list.)

#### County Land Use Plans

Daggett County, Utah	Daggett County General Plan
Duchesne County, Utah	Duchesne County General Plan
	Duchesne County Public Land Implementation Plan
Grand County, Utah	Grand County General Plan
Uintah County, Utah	Uintah County General Plan
	Uintah County Plan for Management of the Book Cliffs Resource Area Ordinance No. 9-25-2000A, Wild Horse Habitat on Public Land
Garfield County, Colorado	Garfield County General Plan
Moffat County, Colorado	Moffat County General Plan
Rio Blanco County, Colorado	Rio Blanco County General Plan
Sweetwater County, Wyoming	Sweetwater County General Plan

**State of Utah Plans**

Division of State Parks and Recreation, Steinaker and Red Fleet State Plans

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1999. Uintah Basin Water Plan

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2001. Utah's Water Resources: Planning for the Future

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2003. State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

**Other Federal Plans**

Ashley National Forest Land-Use Plan

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Dinosaur National Monument Plan

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Ouray National Wildlife Refuge Plan

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Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge Plan

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Price BLM Field Office RMP

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Moab BLM Field Office RMP

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Green River BLM Wyoming Field Office RMP

---

Little Snake BLM Colorado Field Office RMP

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White River BLM Colorado Field Office RMP

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Park City Management Framework Plan (Salt Lake City Field Office BLM Utah)

**Activity Plans**

1979. Desolation & Gray Canyons on the Green River—River Management Plan

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1988–1989. John Jarvie Historic District Site Management Plan, completed in 1988 and amended in 1989

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1996. Green River Management Plan; Joint Management Plan; VFO and Ashley National Forest

**Habitat Management Plans**

1979. Myton Habitat Management Plan

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1983. Diamond Mountain/Ashley Creek Habitat Management Plan

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1987. Browns Park Habitat Management Plan

**Endangered Species Recovery Plans**

1983. Northern States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan
- 
1987. The Recovery Implementation Plan for the Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin
- 
1999. Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Plan Amendment
- 
1990. Bonytail Chub Recovery Plan
- 
1990. Humpback Chub Recovery Plan
- 
1990. Uinta Basin Hookless Cactus Recovery Plan
- 
1991. Colorado Squawfish Recovery Plan
- 
1999. Razorback Sucker Recovery Plan
- 
1995. Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan
- 
1995. Draft Ute Ladies-tresses Recovery Plan
- 
2003. Conservation and Research Plans for Four Plant Species in Northeastern Utah (White River Beardtongue, Goodrich Beardtongue, Graham Beardtongue, and Horseshoe Milkvetch)

**Existing Environmental Impact Statements**

1983. Uinta Basin Synfuels Development EIS
- 
1983. Wild and Scenic River Study, Green and Yampa Rivers EIS
- 
1984. Utah Combined Hydrocarbon Leasing Regional EIS
- 
1985. PR Spring Combined Hydrocarbon Lease Conversion EIS
- 
1990. Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness EIS
- 
2005. Final Wind Energy Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)
- 
2005. Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for Castle Peak and Eight Mile Flat Oil and Gas Expansion Project
- 
2008. Westwide Energy Corridor (WWEC) PEIS/ROD

**Documents Incorporated by Reference**

1991. Final Environmental Impact Statement Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States and associated Records of Decision. BLM Wyoming State Office, Casper Wyoming (BLM-WY-ES-91-036-4320)
- 
2007. Final Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and associated Record of Decision. USDI, Bureau of Land Management (FES 07-21)
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2007. Final Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report. USDI, BLM (FES 07-21)

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Since the start of this RMP revision, Congress enacted the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Section 369 of the Energy Policy Act requires the Secretary of Interior to "complete a programmatic environmental impact statement for a commercial leasing program for oil shale and tar sands resources on public lands, with an emphasis on the most geologically prospective lands within each of the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming." On December 13, 2005, the BLM published a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* initiating a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to support a commercial oil shale and tar sands leasing program on federal lands in these three states. Since that time, the scope of the PEIS has been revised. The BLM is no longer using the PEIS as the document that supports the NEPA requirements for leasing. Given that the development technologies for *in situ* production of oil shale are just emerging, there is a lack of information regarding resource use and associated impacts. Consequently, the BLM has changed this document to a resource allocation document that identifies the BLM-managed lands for which applications to lease oil shale and tar sands resources will be accepted in the future. However, although applications will be accepted, additional NEPA analysis will be performed before any leasing of the area will be considered.

The President's comprehensive National Energy Policy, issued in May 2001, directed the Secretary to: "...examine land status and lease stipulation impediments to federal oil and gas leasing, and review and modify those where opportunities exist (consistent with the law, good environmental practice and balanced use of other resources)."

In April 2003, the BLM specified four EPCA integration principles as follows:

- Environmental protection and energy production are both desirable and necessary objectives of sound land management practices and are not to be considered mutually exclusive priorities.
- The BLM must ensure the appropriate amount of accessibility to energy resources necessary for the nation's security while recognizing that special and unique non-energy resources can be preserved.
- Sound planning will weigh the relative resource values consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
- All resource impacts, including those associated with energy development and transmission, will be mitigated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

The VFO is located partially within the Uinta–Piceance oil and gas basin, one of seven areas identified as priority basins in the EPCA inventory. The VFO and their contractors conducted an extensive review of the inventory data regarding energy resources within the planning area. That data is profiled in the Proposed Vernal RMP and consists primarily of two types of information as outlined in EPCA: 1) data on oil and gas resources (volumetric data), and 2) data on leasing constraints. This data is considered an important part of the BLM's administrative record for the RMP.

The EPCA volumetric data is documented in the Affected Environment section of the Vernal Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The BLM also considered many other sources of energy-related data, including United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Utah Geologic Survey (UGS) information, industry information, as well as some academic work completed on oil and gas

plays and areas with potential for occurrence of mineral resources. This information is part of the more detailed Mineral Potential Report prepared in support of the planning effort.

In 2002, the BLM prepared a projected reasonable foreseeable development (RFD) scenario to project environmental impacts across a 15-year period; this RFD has been modified (2008) for oil and gas development only to project environmental impacts for up to 5 years. Development projections included in-depth reviews of potential for occurrence, past well production, current well production, and future potential for production. During the pendency of this planning effort (beginning with public meetings in 2001 and 2002 for scoping purposes through the notification in the *Federal Register* on January 14, 2005, of the availability of the Draft RMP/EIS), the RFD scenario, which is a planning tool and not a prediction or limit to development, did not track completely with the pace of development in the Uinta Basin. The BLM has carefully monitored industry trends and believes that the RFD used as an analytical tool in this Proposed RMP can be considered accurate up to approximately 5 years from the time the Record of Decision (ROD) is signed.

Within the next 5-year timeframe, the BLM will monitor the impacts to resources of continued development in the VPA and ensure that the impacts disclosed in this Proposed RMP are not exceeded by the pace of development.

The BLM also conducted additional support work regarding energy-related management and energy benefits in the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS), as well as the Socioeconomic Baseline Report; these characterize the significant beneficial impacts of energy and mineral development for the Uinta Basin.

Also, as part of EPCA, a review was provided outlining existing leasing constraints within the focus areas.

Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (designation of West-wide energy corridors) is being implemented via the current development of an interagency, Programmatic EIS (PEIS). The Final PEIS could amend numerous RMPs in the western U.S., providing decisions that will address numerous energy corridor-related issues, including the use of existing corridors (with enhancements and upgrades), identification of new corridors, supply and demand considerations, and compatibility with other corridor and project planning efforts.

In the event there are inconsistencies or discrepancies between previously Approved RMPs and this Approved RMP, the decisions contained in the Approved RMP will be followed. The Vernal Field Office will continue to tier to statewide, national, and programmatic EISs and other NEPA and planning documents, as well as consider and apply Best Management Practices or other management protocols contained in other planning documents after appropriate site-specific analysis.

All future resource authorizations and actions will conform to, or be consistent with the decisions contained in this Approved RMP. All existing operations and activities authorized under permits, contracts, cooperative agreements or other authorizations will be modified, as necessary, to conform with this plan within a reasonable timeframe. However, this plan does not repeal valid existing rights on public lands. A valid existing right is a claim or authorization that takes precedence over the decisions developed in this plan. If such authorizations come up for review and can be modified, they will also be brought into conformance with the plan.

While the Final EIS for the Vernal Field Office RMP constitutes compliance with NEPA for the broad-scale decisions made in this Approved RMP, the BLM will continue to prepare Environmental Assessments (EAs) and Environmental Impacts Statements (EISs) where appropriate as part of implementation level planning and decision-making.

## **C. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Plan implementation is a continuous and active process. Decisions presented in the *Management Decisions* section of this Approved RMP are of three types: Immediate, One-Time, and Long-Term.

***Immediate Decisions:*** These decisions go into effect upon signature of the Record of Decision and Approved RMP. These include decisions such as the allocation of lands as available or unavailable for oil and gas leasing, ACEC designations, and OHV designations. Immediate decisions require no additional analysis and provide the framework for any subsequent activities proposed in the planning area. Proposals for actions such as oil and gas leasing, land adjustments, and other allocation-based actions will be reviewed against these decisions/allocations to determine if the proposal is in conformance with the plan.

***One-Time Decisions:*** These types of decisions include those that are implemented after additional site-specific analysis is completed. Examples are implementation of the recommendations to withdraw lands from locatable mineral entry, or development of a habitat management plan, or a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) plan. One-time decisions usually require additional analysis and are prioritized as part of the BLM budget process.

***Long-Term Guidance/Life of Plan Direction:*** These decisions include the goals, objectives, and management actions established by the plan that are applied during site-specific analyses and activity planning. This guidance is applied whether the action is initiated by the BLM or by a non-BLM project proponent. Long-term guidance and plan direction is incorporated into BLM management as implementation level planning and project analysis occurs (for example, as a result of the watershed assessment process or receipt of a land use application).

Priorities for implementation of "one-time" RMP decisions will be based on several criteria, including:

- Current and projected resource needs and demands
- National and Statewide BLM management direction and program emphasis and funding

### **General Implementation Schedule of "One-Time" Actions**

Decisions in this plan will be implemented over a period of years depending on budget and staff availability. After issuing the ROD/Approved Plan, BLM will prepare an Implementation Plan that establishes tentative timeframes for completion of "one-time" actions identified in the Approved Plan. Most of these actions require additional analysis and site specific activity planning. This schedule will not include the decisions which are effective immediately upon approval of the plan (usually allocations), or the actions which describe the ongoing management that will be incorporated and applied as site-specific proposals are analyzed on an ongoing basis.

This schedule will assist BLM managers and staff in preparing budget requests and in scheduling work. However, the proposed schedule must be considered tentative and will be affected by future funding, changing program priorities, non-discretionary workloads, and cooperation by partners and external publics. Periodic review of the plan will provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and provide information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation.

### **Maintaining the Plan**

Land use plan decisions and supporting information can be maintained to reflect minor changes in data, but maintenance is limited to refining, documenting, and/or clarifying previously approved decisions. Some examples of maintenance actions include:

- Correcting minor data, typographical, mapping, or tabular data errors
- Refining baseline information as a result of new inventory data (e.g., changing the boundary of an archaeological district, refining the known habitat of special status species or big game crucial winter ranges, or adjusting the boundary of a fire management unit based on updated fire regime condition class inventory, fire occurrence, monitoring data, and/or demographic changes)
- Applying an existing oil and gas lease stipulation to a new area prior to the lease sale based on new inventory data (e.g., apply an existing protective stipulation for sage-grouse to a newly discovered sage-grouse lek).

The BLM expects that new information gathered from field inventories and assessments, research, other agency studies, and other sources will update baseline data and/or support new management techniques, best management practices, and scientific principles. Adaptive management strategies may be used when monitoring data is available as long as the goals and objectives of the plan are met. Where monitoring shows land use plan actions or best management practices are not effective, minor modifications or adjustments may occur without amendment or revision of the plan as long as assumptions and impacts disclosed in the analysis remain valid and broad-scale goals and objectives are not changed.

Plan maintenance will be documented in supporting records. Plan maintenance does not require formal public involvement, interagency coordination, or the NEPA analysis required for making new land use plan decisions.

### **Changing the Plan**

The Approved RMP may be changed, should conditions warrant, through a plan amendment or plan revision process. A plan amendment may become necessary if major changes are needed or to consider a proposal or action that is not in conformance with the plan. The results of monitoring, evaluation of new data, or policy changes and changing public needs might also provide the impetus for an amendment. Generally, an amendment is issue-specific. If several areas of the plan become outdated or otherwise obsolete, a plan revision may become necessary. Plan amendments and revisions are accomplished with public input and the appropriate level of environmental analysis conducted according to the Council on Environmental Policy procedure for implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

## D. PLAN EVALUATION

Evaluation is a process in which the plan and monitoring data are reviewed to see if management goals and objectives are being met and if management direction is sound. Land use plan evaluations determine if decisions are being implemented, whether mitigation measures are satisfactory, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, whether there is new data of significance to the plan, and if decisions should be changed through amendment or revision. Monitoring data gathered over time is examined and used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are meeting stated objectives, and if not, why. Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or to identify what changes need to be made in management practices to meet objectives.

BLM will use land use plan evaluations to determine if the decisions in the RMP, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, are still valid in light of new information and monitoring data. Evaluation of the RMP will generally be conducted every five years, unless unexpected actions, new information, or significant changes in other plans, legislation, or litigation triggers an evaluation. The following estimated evaluation schedule will be followed for the Vernal Field Office RMP:

- September 2013
- September 2018
- September 2023
- September 2028

Evaluations will follow the protocols established by the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) or other appropriate guidance in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated.

## E. MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

This section of the Approved RMP presents the goals and objectives, land use allocations, and management actions established for public lands managed by the BLM's Vernal Field Office. These management decisions are presented by program area. Not all types of decisions were identified for each program. For instance, only *Goals* and *Objectives* were identified in the *Abandoned Mine Lands Section*, and thus only *Goals* and *Objectives* are described in that section. A Monitoring Plan is provided in Appendix Q and describes for each program how the program management decisions will be tracked to ensure implementation

Data used in development of the Approved RMP are dynamic. The data and figures used throughout the Approved RMP are for land use planning purposes and will be refined as site-specific planning and on-the-ground implementation occurs. Updating data is considered plan maintenance which will occur over time as the RMP is implemented (see Section C of the Approved Plan).

**Note:** All acreages presented in the Approved RMP are estimations, even when presented to the nearest acre.

This section organizes the resources in the same sequence as were Tables 2.1.1 through 2.1.27 of the Proposed RMP/EIS. For ease of identification into the future, each program area has an identified abbreviation and each decision in that program is numbered in coordination with the abbreviation. The following table lists the program name with its abbreviation:

Management Common to All Decisions—**MCA**  
Abandoned Mine Lands—**AML**  
Air Quality—**AQ**  
Cultural Resources—**CUL**  
Fire and Fuels Management—**FIRE**  
Forage—**FOR**  
Lands and Realty—**LAR**  
Livestock and Grazing—**GRA**  
Minerals and Energy Resources—**MIN**

- Leasable Minerals—**MLE**
- Locatable Minerals—**MLO**
- Saleable Minerals and Mineral Materials—**MSA**

Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics—**WC**  
Paleontological Resources—**PAL**  
Rangeland Improvements—**RNI**  
Recreation Resources—**REC**

- Special Recreation Management Area—**SRMA**
- Trail Maintenance and Development—**TMD**

Riparian Resources—**RIP**  
Soil and Water Resources—**SOLW**  
Special Designations: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern—**ACEC**  
Special Designations: Wild and Scenic Rivers—**WSR**  
Special Designations: Wilderness Study Areas—**WSA**  
Special Status Species—**SSS**  
Travel Management: Roads and Trails—**TRC**  
Vegetation—**VEG**  
Visual Resources Management—**VRM**  
Wild Horses—**WHB**  
Wildlife and Fisheries—**WL**  
Woodlands and Forest Resources—**WDF**

Figures depicting the management decisions are located behind the Approved RMP for easy reference.

## **MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL DECISIONS (MCA)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*, described below, apply to all resource programs and authorized activities:
  - (1) Upland soils exhibit permeability and infiltration rates that sustain or improve site productivity, considering the soil type, climate, and landform.
  - (2) Riparian and wetland areas are in properly functioning condition. Stream channel morphology and functions are appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.
  - (3) Desired species, including native, threatened, endangered, and special-status species, are maintained at a level appropriate for the site and species involved.
  - (4) The BLM will apply and comply with water quality standards established by the State of Utah (R317-2) and the Federal Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts. Activities on BLM lands will support the designated beneficial uses described in the Utah Water Quality Standards (R317-2) for surface water and groundwater.
- Joint monitoring and evaluation strategies will be implemented by the BLM and permittees to measure progress in accordance with *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* based on site-specific conditions. Site-specific conditions must be documented in order to warrant modification of prescriptions.
- The BLM recognizes that not all activities authorized by implementation of the Approved RMP will comply with *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*. All authorized activities will require reclamation and rehabilitation actions to ensure sustainability and productivity of the site.
- Assure that counties and others, such as Native American tribes whose interests might be affected have a sufficient opportunity for productive participation in the BLM's planning and resource management decision-making.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### *Climate Considerations*

#### **MCA-1**

The BLM will continue to regularly monitor and evaluate climatic and vegetative data. This data will be shared and compiled with other land managing agencies of the VPA. Using a cooperative and collaborative approach, should the analysis of such data reveal a substantial shift (either upward or downward) in both the timing and level of production of native rangelands, either planning-area-wide or on specific sites within the VPA, the BLM will initiate actions to ensure any permitted/allowed use of such resources will not adversely affect the long-term productivity of such areas.

*Education, Interpretation, and Research*

**MCA-2**

The BLM will work with its partners, including local school districts and universities to develop a variety of opportunities to promote education, research, and interpretation on public lands.

*Fire, Drought, and Natural Disasters*

**MCA-3**

The BLM will coordinate Appropriate Management Responses (AMRs) with affected parties where natural resources may be impacted by fire, drought, insects and diseases, or natural disasters. A variety of emergency or interim actions may be necessary to minimize land health degradations, such as:

- Increased mitigation measures to ensure reclamation
- Limitations on energy field activities
- Reduced forage allocations
- Restrictions on recreational uses (see the Recreation section in MCA-4)
- Reductions in the number of livestock
- Changes to wildlife management (see the Wildlife Management section in MCA-4)

**MCA-4**

Current *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* will be incorporated, as appropriate, across all resource programs as a minimum. Management prescriptions in the form of constraints to use, terms and conditions, and stipulations may be needed to sustain rangeland health and viability. Management prescriptions will consider the following:

- Livestock Grazing – Use will be allowed in both quantity and timing that will not result in a downward shift in rangeland health. The BLM will work cooperatively to affect a grazing strategy specific to a grazing permittee’s individual grazing allotment(s), and make changes to the grazing authorizations as appropriate within the limits of the existing permit and in accordance with the grazing regulations. In the case of drought, the last recourse for the BLM will be to temporarily close the range, or portions of it, to livestock grazing.
- Off Highway/Road Vehicles (OHV) – OHV use during period of prolonged dryness will be further restricted to existing routes; or, if site-specific conditions warrant, closure to OHVs will be implemented to minimize vehicle-induced injury or damage to rangeland and/or woodlands and forest and to minimize the potential of spark caused fires.
- Recreation – During periods of prolonged dryness or drought, the BLM, in cooperation with local and state fire management agencies, will limit campfires to established fire rings or fully contained fires. The last resort will be to close the public lands to campfires of any kind.
- Surface-disturbing Activities – These will be closely monitored to ensure compliance with authorizations/permits, conditions of approval, or terms and conditions. Actions minimizing new surface disturbance allowed by regulations, as well as actions insuring successful reclamation, will be of paramount concern. During periods of drought, the BLM will require additional actions such as changes to standard seed mix compositions, amounts of seed, and method of application. Methods to ensure

- successful revegetation following disturbance may include hydro-mulching, installation of drip irrigators, or fencing to exclude ungulate grazing/browsing.
- Wild Horse Management – Wild or feral horses will be gathered and removed. Forage allocation has been allocated until removal.
  - Wildlife Management – During periods of prolonged dryness or drought, to the extent that wildlife grazing ungulate populations cannot be sustained due to competition for water and available forage, the BLM will enter into discussions with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) regarding herd numbers and overall management options to ensure that rangeland health is maintained and to address the effects of drought.

*Integrated Pest Management*

**MCA-5**

Appropriately manage noxious and invasive weeds and prevent introduction of new invasive species through the implementation of a comprehensive weed program per national guidance and local weed management plans, including coordination with partners; prevention and early detection; education; inventory and monitoring; and using the principles of integrated pest management.

**MCA-6**

All projects that involve ground-disturbing activities shall incorporate best management practices (BMPs) for control of weeds with an emphasis on prevention.

**MCA-7**

Use of pesticides and herbicides shall comply with the applicable federal and state laws. Pesticides and herbicides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior.

**MCA-8**

Prior to the use of pesticides, project proponents shall obtain from the Authorized Officer written approval of Pesticide Use Proposal, which is a plan showing the:

- The type and quantity of material to be used
- The pest(s) to be controlled
- The method of application
- The location of storage and disposal of containers
- Any other information deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer

Emergency use of pesticides shall be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer prior to use. In addition, within 24 hours of any pesticide application, a Pesticide Application Record must be completed. A similar procedure is required for the release of biological control agents.

*Management Prescriptions*

**MCA-9**

The VPA includes a wide array of geographical landscapes and ecosystems. The expansive nature of the RMP mandates a broad scale of decision-making.

*Surface Stipulations Applicable to All Surface Disturbing Activities*

**MCA-10**

Surface stipulations (including exceptions, modifications, and waivers) are found in Appendix K and will be applied to all land use authorizations, permits, and leases issued on BLM-administered lands.

## **ABANDONED MINE LANDS (AML)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- In conformance with the BLM’s long-term strategies and National Policies regarding Abandoned Mine Lands (AML), this RMP recognizes the need to work with our partners toward identifying and addressing physical safety and environmental hazards at all AML sites on public lands. In order to accomplish this long-term goal, the following criteria will be established to assist in determining priorities for site and area mitigation and reclamation.
- The criteria that will be used to establish physical safety hazard program priorities are:
  - ♦ AML physical safety program’s highest priority will be the cleaning up of those AML sites where:
    - A death or injury has occurred
    - The site is situated on or in immediate proximity to developed recreation sites and areas with high visitor use.
    - Upon formal risk assessment, a high or extremely high risk level is indicated.
  - ♦ AML will be factored into future recreation management area designations, land-use planning assessments, and all applicable use authorizations.
  - ♦ The site is presently listed or is eligible for listing in the Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System (AMLIS).
  - ♦ AML hazards shall be, to the extent practicable, mitigated or remediated on the ground during site development.
- The criteria used to establish water-quality-based AML program priorities are:
  - ♦ The state has identified the watershed as a priority based on:
    - One or more water laws or regulations
    - Threat to public health or safety
    - Threat to the environment
  - ♦ The project reflects a collaborative effort with other land managing agencies.
- The project will be funded by contributions from collaborating agencies.
- These priorities will be maintained and updated as needed in the state AML strategy.
- The BLM Utah State Office will continue to consult and collaboratively work together with the State of Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (UDOGM) concerning the Abandoned Mine Land program.

## **AIR QUALITY (AQ)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Ensure that authorizations granted to use public lands and the BLM’s own management programs comply with and support applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and implementation plans pertaining to air quality.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **AQ-1**

Prescribed burns will be consistent with the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ) permitting process and timed to minimize smoke impacts.

#### **AQ-2**

The BLM is required to be in compliance with all local, state, federal and tribal air quality regulations and will do so with Utah regulations, including Utah Administrative Code (UAC) Regulations as determined applicable by the State of Utah.

#### **AQ-3**

The BLM will be in compliance with sections R307-205-3 and R307-205-4 of the UAC that deal with fugitive dust and offer some dust abatement mechanisms.

#### **AQ-4**

UAC R446-1, the best air quality control technology, provided by the Utah Division of Air Quality (UDAQ), will be applied as needed to meet air quality standards.

#### **AQ-5**

The BLM will comply with UAC Regulations R307-205-5 through R307-205-7, which prohibit the use, maintenance, or construction of roadways without taking appropriate dust abatement measures. Compliance will be obtained through special stipulations as a requirement on new projects and through the use of dust abatement control techniques in problem areas.

#### **AQ-6**

The BLM will comply with the current Smoke Management Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the BLM, USFS, and UDAQ. The MOA (in accordance with UAC regulation R446-1-2.4.4), requires reporting size, date of burn, fuel type, and estimated air emissions from each prescribed burn.

#### **AQ-7**

The BLM will continue to work cooperatively with state, federal, and tribal entities in developing air quality assessment protocols to address cumulative impacts and regional air quality issues.

#### **AQ-8**

The BLM will continue to work cooperatively with the Utah Airshed Group to manage emissions from wildland and prescribed fire activities.

**AQ-9**

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are enforced by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality (UDEQ-DAQ), with EPA oversight. Special requirements to reduce potential air quality impacts will be considered on a case-by-case basis in processing land use authorizations.

**AQ-10**

The BLM will utilize BMPs and site specific mitigation measures, when appropriate, based on site specific conditions, to reduce emissions and enhance air quality. Examples of these types of measures can be found in the Four Corners Air Quality Task Force Report of Mitigation Options, November 1, 2007. A copy of the State of Utah letter regarding air quality mitigation strategies may be found in Appendix O.

**AQ-11**

Project specific analyses will consider use of quantitative air quality analysis methods (i.e. modeling), when appropriate as determined by the BLM, in consultation with state, federal, and tribal entities.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES (CUL)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Preserve and protect a representative array of significant cultural resources, including but not limited to traditional cultural properties, traditional use areas, rock art, and ceremonial sites, and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.
- Preserve and protect cultural resources in accordance with existing laws, regulations, and Executive Orders (EO), in consultation with designated contacts from Native American tribes and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations.
- Preserve and conserve cultural resources by conducting activities in a way that protect values and provide for the following benefits:
  - ♦ Conservation for future use
  - ♦ Education
  - ♦ Interpretation
  - ♦ Public use
  - ♦ Research

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **CUL-1**

Protect burial sites, associated burial goods, and sacred items in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA).

#### **CUL-2**

Evaluate cultural resources according to National Register criteria (36 CFR Part 60.4) and assign cultural resources to appropriate use categories as the basis for management decisions.

#### **CUL-3**

Encourage public/volunteer involvement in the management of cultural resources by establishing site stewardship and other programs.

#### **CUL-4**

Specific plans will be developed for culturally sensitive areas unless included in other integrated activity plans. Such plans will include protective measures, Native American consultation, and regulatory compliance. These plans will also include but not be limited to:

- Developing a site monitoring system
- Identifying sites in need of stabilization, restoration, and protective measures (e.g., fences, surveillance equipment)
- Developing research designs for selected sites/areas
- Designating sites/areas for interpretive development
- Identifying areas for cultural inventory where federal undertakings are expected to occur
- Developing specific mitigation measures

The plan will designate sites, districts, landmarks, and landscapes that will be nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

**CUL-5**

Limit land-disturbing activities within selected Native American traditional cultural and religious sites for continued use by tribes. Traditional cultural sites will be selected in consultation with interested Native American tribes and communities.

**CUL-6**

Consult with Native American tribes for the protection of areas and items of traditional life-ways and religious significance that includes but is not limited to burials, rock art, traditional use areas, religiously active areas, and sacred sites.

**CUL-7**

Pursue appropriate National Register designation, including but not limited to currently eligible sites under current policy and guidance.

**CUL-8**

Conduct an inventory according to professional standards commensurate with the land-use activity, environmental conditions, and the potential for cultural resources.

**CUL-9**

Proactively reduce hazardous fuels or mitigate the potential hazard around archaeological and cultural sites that are susceptible to destruction by fire from prescribed fire activities.

**CUL-10**

Conduct consultation process to identify both the resource management concerns and the strategies for addressing them through an interactive dialogue with appropriate Native American communities.

**CUL-11**

Reduce or eliminate imminent threats from natural or human-caused deterioration or conflict with other resource uses.

**CUL-12**

Identify priority geographic areas for new field inventory based upon a probability for unrecorded significant resources.

**CUL-13**

Ensure that all authorizations for land and resource use will comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, consistent with and subject to the goals and objectives identified at the beginning of this section for the proactive use of cultural properties in the public interest.

**CUL-14**

The BLM, in coordination with the appropriate county, will continue to identify, evaluate, and nominate historic routes for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places.

**CUL-15**

When new sites are discovered, interim protection may be applied, if warranted.

**CUL-16**

Provide for legitimate field research by qualified scientists and institutions.

**CUL-17**

Allow for reconstruction, stabilization, maintenance, and interpretation of selected sites for public enjoyment and education.

**CUL-18**

Continue to implement, maintain, and revise as necessary the Nine Mile Canyon Recreation/Cultural Management Plan that includes developing interpretive facilities at appropriate archeological and cultural sites at Nine Mile Canyon in cooperation with the Price Field Office (PFO), the Nine Mile coalition team, and the counties. Promote collaborative partnerships to assist in meeting management goals and objectives for cultural resources.

**CUL-19**

Should National Register–eligible cultural resources be found during an inventory, impacts to them will be mitigated, generally through avoidance. If it is determined the cultural resources cannot be avoided; consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will be initiated. A program on mitigation will be developed via consultation between VFO, the SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

**CUL-20**

VFO will continue to allocate cultural sites, including ethnographic properties, to one of six management categories:

- Conservation
- Discharged
- Experimental
- Public
- Scientific
- Traditional

**CUL-21**

Implement regular patrols as feasible to monitor and protect known cultural sites.

**CUL-22**

Establish and implement protective measures for sites, structures, objects, and traditional use areas that are important to Native American tribes with historical and cultural connections to the land, in order to maintain the view shed, intrinsic values, and the auditory, visual, and aesthetic settings of the resources. Protection measures for undisturbed cultural resources and their natural setting will be developed in compliance with regulatory mandates and Native American consultation.

**CUL-23**

Nominate eligible sites, districts, landscapes, and traditional cultural properties for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Manage National Register listed and eligible sites for their local, regional, and national significance.

**CUL-24**

On- and off-site interpretive facilities will be developed at appropriate archeological, historical, and cultural sites in a manner that will not adversely impact the site.

*John Jarvie Historic Site*

**CUL-25**

Revise the 1989 plan for John Jarvie Historic Site to provide for:

- Maintaining the integrity of the National Historic District through reconstruction, stabilization and restoration of important cultural features, and the elimination or separation of other features that are not culturally significant
- Providing adequate protection and management of site
- Managing the site for public education and enjoyment by developing educational and interpretive programs and keeping the site open for public viewing during normal visitor use periods

*Uinta Foothills Area*

**CUL-26**

The Uinta Foothills area will be open for oil and gas leasing, subject to timing and controlled surface-use stipulations or No Surface Occupancy (NSO) to protect cultural sites that include lithic scatters, burials, tool manufacturing sites, structures, and rock shelters.

**CUL-27**

OHV travel in the Uinta Foothills area will be limited to designated routes to protect cultural sites that include lithic scatters, burials, tool manufacturing sites, structures, and rock shelters.

*Little Hole and Devils Hole Areas*

**CUL-28**

The Little Hole and Devils Hole areas will be open for oil and gas leasing, subject to Controlled Surface Use (CSU) stipulations to protect cultural sites that include lithic scatters, burials, tool manufacturing sites, structures, and rock shelters.

**CUL-29**

OHV travel in the Little Hole and Devils Hole areas will be limited to designated routes to protect cultural sites that include lithic scatters, burials, tool manufacturing sites, structures, and rock shelters.

*Upper Willow Creek Area*

**CUL-30**

The Upper Willow Creek area of the Book Cliffs will be open for oil and gas leasing, subject to timing limitations to protect crucial big game habitat and Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

stipulations to protect high-density cultural sites that include pictographs, petroglyphs, burials, and storage crypts, and to preserve the unique representation of the Archaic Period of the area.

**CUL-31**

OHV travel in the Upper Willow Creek area of the Book Cliffs will be limited to designated routes to protect high-density cultural sites that include pictographs, petroglyphs, burials, and storage crypts and to preserve the unique representation of the Archaic Period of the area.

*Four Mile Wash Area*

**CUL-32**

The Four Mile Wash area will be open for oil and gas leasing, subject to timing limitations to protect crucial big game habitat and Controlled Surface Use (CSU) or No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations to protect traditional sacred properties.

**CUL-33**

OHV travel in the Four Mile Wash Area will be limited to designated routes to protect traditional sacred properties.

*Non-WSA Land with Wilderness Characteristics*

**CUL-34**

Excavation of cultural sites in non-WSA lands that are managed for wilderness characteristics will be permitted when compatible with the goals and objectives for management of the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

## **FIRE AND FUELS MANAGEMENT (FIRE)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Firefighter safety and public safety will be the first priority in every fire management activity. Property values and critical resource values will be the next priority.
- The primary goal and objective of fire management is to help restore natural systems to their proper functioning condition by restoring fire to its legitimate role in the ecosystem, including managing wildland fire for other resource benefits.
- For Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas, the objective will be to reduce hazardous fuels adjacent to these at-risk areas through mechanical, prescribed fire, or chemical treatments, or a combination thereof. The BLM will develop WUI Projects in partnership with the State of Utah, the Ute Indian Tribe, and Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah, and Grand Counties.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **FIRE-1**

The BLM will attempt to restore natural fire regimes in fire dependent/adapted ecosystems primarily through the use of prescribed fire and managed wildland fire. Where social and/or resource constraints preclude or limit the use of fire, mechanical and/or chemical treatments will be used.

#### **FIRE-2**

The Fire Management Plan (FMP) has been updated and amended to meet the direction and objectives of the Approved RMP. The FMP has been revised to comply with the Interagency Template for Fire Management Plans and identifies Fire Management Units (FMUs) that describe the mix of management activities that can be used to meet the desired future conditions and land use objectives.

#### *Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation*

#### **FIRE-3**

Following any wildland fire event, the BLM will select an Interdisciplinary Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) team that will evaluate any burned areas to determine if ES&R treatments are needed. ES&R treatments will follow the procedures outlined in the BLM Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook (H-1742-1, 02/12/2007). If the interdisciplinary team determines that ES&R treatments are necessary, the team will develop an ES&R plan with site-specific measures designed to minimize resource losses, both on-and off-site, following the wildfire. Consideration will be given to sensitive resource values in preparation of the ES&R plan, including WSAs, special emphasis areas, critical soils, cultural resources, and special status species habitat. ES&R treatments may include, but will not be limited to seeding, seedbed preparation practices, fencing, chemical applications, water retention structures, and control of livestock, and wildlife grazing. Site-specific ES&R plans will be tiered to the existing Normal Fire Year Rehabilitation Plan for the VPA. Criteria for developing ES&R actions are determining:

- Areas where the risk of imminent soil loss is high
- Areas that contain T&E Species or state sensitive species habitat

- Areas that contain municipal watersheds
- Areas where there is a high potential for invasive species establishment

*Hazardous Fuels*

**FIRE-4**

Hazardous fuel reduction activities will be implemented primarily through the use of prescribed fire and managed wildland fire. In some cases, chemical and/or mechanical treatments will be used in conjunction with fire. Where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of fire, mechanical and/or chemical treatments will be used.

**FIRE-5**

Criteria for developing hazardous fuel reduction priorities will consist of the following:

- Areas of Fire Regime Condition Class 2 and 3
- Areas where the potential risk of losing keystone ecosystem species is present
- Areas where threats to private/public property exist

**FIRE-6**

All fire-management planning activities will comply with the National Fire Plan, including the streamlined USFWS Section 7 Consultation procedures.

**FIRE-7**

Fire Management Categories (Figure 2a), Fire Regimes (Figure 3a), and Fire Condition Classes (Figure 4a) for the VPA have been designated and mapped. The Fire Management Plan (FMP) will be updated and amended to meet the direction of the Vernal RMP and adjusted to meet the Department of the Interior’s Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

**FIRE-8**

In partnership with the State of Utah, the Ute Indian Tribe, and the counties, the BLM will develop WUI Projects.

**FIRE-9**

The VPA is divided into fire management categories. Fire suppression activities and the Appropriate Management Response (AMR) will be implemented through the guidance developed under the ABCD polygons as outlined in BLM Land-Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1).

Criteria used in development of the categories were determined through an Interdisciplinary Team of resource specialists. Criteria for each category is described below:

- Category A – Areas where unplanned fire is not desired at all. This category includes the salt desert shrub vegetation type where the risk of cheatgrass invasion is high following fire events. Also included are the major river corridors where fire results in the loss of Fremont cottonwood, a keystone species in present decline. Other constraints to fire management activities include cultural resource sites, high recreational use, and highly developed oil and gas fields.
- Category B – Areas where unplanned fire is not desired because of current conditions. Prescribed fire use is allowed to obtain resource management objectives;

mechanical/chemical treatments will be utilized where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of prescribed fire. This category includes the five identified WUI areas for the VFO, including adjacent urban interfaces, cultural resources, crucial deer winter range, and crucial Greater sage-grouse habitat. Within this habitat, Wyoming sagebrush is identified as a keystone species, which has been in a continual state of decline due to widespread drought and invasive species encroachment.

- **Category C** – Areas where wildland fire is desired. Prescribed fire is allowed and may be extensive to obtain resource management objectives; mechanical/chemical treatments will be utilized where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of prescribed fire. This category contains the pinyon-juniper vegetation type, along with aspen/Douglas fir, mountain browse, and non-crucial areas of sagebrush. Other constraints to fire management activities include a limited amount of oil and gas development, non-crucial Greater sage-grouse habitat, a limited amount of T&E species habitat, and a limited amount of cultural resources.
- **Category D** – Areas where wildland fire is desired, and there are few or no constraints for its use. This category contains non-crucial Greater sage-grouse habitat, a limited amount of T&E species habitat, non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, and a limited amount of cultural resources.

Category	Hazardous Fuel Targets			Wildland Fire Use Targets	Allowable Wildland Fire Acres Burned per Decade
	Prescribed Fire (acres)	Mechanical (acres)	Chemical (acres)	Acres	Acres
<b>A</b>	1,000	5,000	5,000	0	2,100
<b>B</b>	19,570	10,000	10,000	0	21,000
<b>C</b>	82,738	20,000	20,000	75,000	151,500
<b>D</b>	53,117	0	0	30,000	30,000

*Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)*

**FIRE-10**

WUI areas within the VFO area have been identified in the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS). These are communities/developed areas that are located within the vicinity of federal lands and are at risk from potential wildland fire events. Hazardous fuels adjacent to these at-risk areas will be reduced through mechanical, prescribed, or chemical fire or a combination of these treatments. The priority areas identified for WUI projects are Browns Park, Deadman Bench, Deep Creek, Diamond Mountain, and Dry Fork.

*Other*

**FIRE-11**

Prescribed burning will be allowed for approximately 156,425 acres per decade.

**FIRE-12**

The use of prescribed fire in non-WSA lands that are managed for wilderness characteristics will be permitted for forest, woodland, and vegetation treatments, and for reduction of fuels, when compatible with the goals and objectives for management of the areas.

**FIRE-13**

Fire lines and other surface disturbances will be rehabilitated following completion of the burning operation.

**FIRE-14**

Wildfire suppression operations will be permitted in non-WSA lands that are managed for wilderness characteristics.

**FIRE-15**

Fire lines and other surface disturbances will be rehabilitated following completion of suppression operations.

## **FORAGE (FOR)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Maintain or improve the total forage resource using techniques that are compatible with the use and development of other resources and that will maintain, meet, or make substantial progress towards meeting *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **FOR-1**

Monitoring will be used in all localities to determine the amount of forage available for livestock, wildlife, and wild horses until the wild horses are gathered and removed. Results of monitoring will be used to adapt management strategies to prevent deterioration of rangelands, to achieve desired resource conditions, and to meet other resource objectives.

#### **FOR-2**

Any adjustment in forage assignments in all localities to either livestock or wildlife will be based on analysis of monitoring data, including long-term vegetation trend, actual use, climate, and utilization. Additionally forage will not be allocated in areas where forage production is less than 25 pounds per acre, which equates to 32 acres per AUM. Areas that are seldom or never grazed by livestock due to physical factors such as slopes greater than 50% and areas that are in excess of four miles from water will not be included in the livestock forage allocation. An exception for areas in excess of four miles from water will be if water is hauled or the area will be grazed when snow is on the ground. Adjustments will involve permittees and will be implemented through documented mutual agreement or decision.

#### **FOR-3**

Increases or reductions for all localities associated with joint monitoring of base allocations will be evaluated against the established grazing permits and UDWR herd unit objectives to determine needed adjustments to animal numbers, adjustments in seasons of use, etc. Unless specified elsewhere in the plan, changes in forage allocation will be as follows:

- When all other management options have been exhausted and it is determined that *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* are not being met, reductions will be made to the species of grazing animal shown to be causing the problem.
- If additional forage is determined to be available, it will be proportionally allocated to grazing animals according to their dietary need or will be allocated to watershed, riparian, or other resource values, unless specified elsewhere in the plan.
- Increases in available forage resulting from conservation practices, improved range condition, or development of improvements by the livestock permittee, DWR, or other organizations, will be credited to that entity unless specified elsewhere in the plan.

**FOR-4**

Should a permittee apply for reinstatement of suspended use in all localities, it will only be considered if:

- Adjustment of suspended use will follow policy, regulation, and guidelines
- The allotment/s is/are being grazed at full permitted use in order to adequately assess the carrying capacity of the range resource.
- Adequate monitoring data is in place to assess AUMs.
- A signed agreement is in place that outlines at least a subsequent five-year monitoring protocol.

**FOR-5**

AUMs will be adjusted downward for livestock, wildlife, or wild horses (or any combination thereof) in all localities when monitoring shows that rangeland objectives are not being met and that the long-term forage availability is not adequate to support the permitted uses.

**FOR-6**

If it is determined through monitoring that livestock grazing in all localities is beneficial to other resource values, it will be allowed on 16 miles of river corridor along the Upper Green River in Browns Park following an adequate evaluation and assessment. If such use is allowed, it will be of short duration and will not detract from recreation and/or riparian values along the river.

**FOR-7**

Grazing preference is retired on the following allotments:

- Marshall Draw
- Red Creek Flat
- Rye Grass
- Sears Canyon
- South Warren Draw
- Taylor Flat
- Watson

Applications for livestock grazing will only be approved on a non-renewable, short duration basis following an adequate evaluation and assessment to determine if it will enhance wildlife values.

**FOR-8**

When the Approved RMP becomes effective, the active AUMs permitted to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) (4,232) and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) (4,026) will be allocated to wildlife. Ranchers (grazing permittees) other than TNC and RMEF also have permits in the allotments where these AUMS are relinquished; they will continue to graze cattle in accordance with their permitted use.

**FOR-9**

Up to 50% utilization of forage on uplands for all localities will be allowed, unless otherwise specified by a management plan.

**FOR-10**

AUMs will be allocated for all localities as follows:

- 138,402 AUMs for livestock
- 104,865 AUMs for wildlife
- 2,340 AUMs for wild horses

*Bonanza Locality*

**FOR-11**

Sheep and/or cattle and pronghorn allocations will be reduced proportionately in the Bonanza locality if forage allocation reductions are needed to progress toward rangeland health. Pronghorn use will not be reduced below 502 AUMs.

**FOR-12**

If additional forage allocation is available, forage increases will be divided proportionately in the Bonanza locality between livestock and big game. Wildlife AUMs that are made available will go to pronghorn and deer.

**FOR-13**

The Bonanza Herd Area will not be managed for wild horses.

**FOR-14**

If forage allocation reductions are needed to progress toward rangeland health, sheep and/or cattle and pronghorn allocations in the Bonanza Herd Area will be reduced proportionately. Pronghorn use will not be reduced below 239 AUMs.

**FOR-15**

In the Bonanza locality if additional forage allocation is available, forage increases will be divided proportionately between sheep and wildlife. Wildlife AUMs that are made available will go to pronghorn and deer.

*Book Cliffs Locality*

**FOR-16**

1,325 unallocated AUMs in the Book Cliffs locality that were acquired by acquisition of private lands (Cripple Cowboy) will be reserved for watershed. Although wildlife and livestock will not be excluded from utilizing these lands in the Book Cliffs locality, no additional AUMs will be allocated to wildlife or livestock.

**FOR-17**

\*As a planning maintenance action, this decision was combined with FOR-16 in Dec. 2008.

**FOR-18**

The Winter Ridge Herd Area and Hill Creek Herd Management Area will not be managed for wild horses. Upon removal, the 2,340 AUMs no longer needed for wild horses will be allocated through a future planning process.

**FOR-19**

If monitoring shows that reductions are necessary because of wildlife and livestock conflicts, reductions in grazing use will be divided proportionately between livestock and big game in the Book Cliffs locality.

**FOR-20**

In the Book Cliffs locality outside of the Winter Ridge Herd Area and Hill Creek Herd Management Area, additional forage in cattle allotments will be allocated as follows:

- 60% of the additional forage will be allocated to reinstate suspended cattle AUMs and 40% of the additional forage will be allocated for wildlife
- After restoring all suspended AUMs, additional forage will be allocated proportionately between livestock and wildlife

**FOR-21**

In the Book Cliffs locality outside of the Winter Ridge Herd Area and Hill Creek Herd Management Area, additional forage in sheep allotments will be divided proportionately between sheep and big game.

**FOR-22**

In the Winter Ridge Herd Area and Hill Creek Herd Management Area, additional forage will be divided proportionately between livestock and big game. If big game does not need additional forage, it will be given to livestock.

*Blue Mountain Locality*

**FOR-23**

If monitoring indicates forage assignments cannot be met, then livestock permitted use and wildlife use will be reduced proportionately in the Blue Mountain locality. The first year livestock reductions will be made with an initial 10% adjustment. Five-year agreements will be developed and signed outlining the process for phased reductions to the desired level.

**FOR-24**

If in the Blue Mountain locality, additional AUMs are realized through management changes and/or livestock-oriented vegetation treatments will be divided proportionately between livestock and big game.

*Diamond Mountain Locality*

**FOR-25**

If monitoring indicates forage assignments cannot be met, then livestock and wildlife use will be reduced proportionately in the Diamond Mountain locality. The first year livestock reductions will be made with an initial 10% adjustment. Five-year agreements will be developed and signed outlining the process for phased reductions to the desired level.

**FOR-26**

In the Diamond Mountain locality, additional AUMs will be provided as follows:

- In the northern half of the Diamond Mountain locality (Diamond Mountain and Browns Park), additional AUMs will be provided to livestock until wildlife demands require them.

- In the southern half of the Diamond Mountain locality (Ashley Valley and Myton Bench), forage increases will be divided proportionately between livestock and big game on non-crucial wildlife areas.

## **LANDS AND REALTY MANAGEMENT (LAR)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Accommodate community growth and development when it is determined that it is in compliance with other goals and objectives of the plan.
- Improve management opportunities for resource protection, resource development, or administration of public lands.
- Process applications, permits, operating plans, mineral exchanges, leases, and other use authorizations for public lands in accordance with policy and guidance.
- Manage public lands to support goals and objectives of other resources programs, respond to public requests for land use authorizations, and acquire administrative and public access where necessary.
- Dispose of lands that are effectively unmanageable due to size, location, etc.
- Acquire lands that will enhance management objectives of this RMP.
- Give land exchanges with the State of Utah priority consideration to resolve inholding issues.
- Grant the State of Utah reasonable access to state lands for economic purposes, on a case-by-case basis, as per the State of Utah v. Andrus, October 1, 1979 (Cotter Decision).

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **LAR-1**

Consider new major communication sites on an as-needed basis.

#### **LAR-2**

Acquisitions, exchanges, easements, or disposals will be considered, using Land Tenure Adjustment (LTA) criteria on a case-by-case basis, between willing buyers and sellers.

#### **LAR-3**

The BLM will retain lands within its administrative jurisdiction, except where necessary to accomplish one or more of the following objectives:

- Improve management of natural resources through consolidation of federal, state and private lands
- Secure key property necessary to protect special status species including threatened and endangered species, promote biological diversity, increase recreational opportunities, and preserve archaeological, paleontological and historical resources

#### **LAR-4**

Implement specific acquisitions authorized by Acts of Congress by acquiring minimal non-federal lands or interest in lands.

#### **LAR-5**

When opportunities occur, acquire isolated tracts of non-federal land from willing sellers within special management areas to consolidate ownership and eliminate non-federal in-holdings.

## **LAR-6**

The following criteria will be used when evaluating proposed land use authorizations:

- Land use authorizations will not be approved in any designated exclusion areas.
- Land use authorizations in avoidance areas may be authorized provided they are considered consistent with the current management objectives; those that are not will either be rejected or will necessitate a plan amendment prior to approval.
- Habitat for listed T&E species will be retained in federal ownership. Exceptions may be considered in exchanges with the State of Utah and others with consultation and concurrence with the USFWS.

### *Disposals*

## **LAR-7**

Public lands within the VFO will be considered for disposal through methods such as sale, exchange, state indemnity selection, Airport and Airway Improvement Act, Color-of-Title Act, State Selections under the Enabling Act, Recreation and Public Purpose Act patent, other lesser-used authorities, or as directed by special legislation.

## **LAR-8**

All disposal actions will be coordinated with adjoining landowners, local governments, and current land users. Approximately 33,359 acres of public lands for disposal are identified on Figure 6a and Appendix S. Any lands to be disposed of by sale will follow the regulations found in FLPMA Section 203 and will require a plan amendment.

### *Easements*

## **LAR-9**

Acquire public access to approximately 70,700 public acres for recreational purposes in the following areas:

- High Priority: Allen Draw, Ashley Creek drainages, Jackson Draw, Moon Shine area, Nine Mile, Red Mountain, Red Mountain East and West, Spring Creek, Warren Draw, White River, Wild Mountain-South Pot Creek.
- Moderate Priority: Argyle Ridge, Ashley Creek Recreation Site, Blue Mountain, Dead Horse Draw, Horseshoe Bend, Hoy Mountain, Jensen Canyon, and Little Sulfur Canyon.
- Low Priority: East Nine Mile Canyon, Marshall Draw, Sears Canyon, and West Little Mountain.

### *Exchanges/Acquisitions*

## **LAR-10**

Public lands will be considered for disposal by exchange provided the exchange will result in more efficient federal management of the public lands. Land exchanges will be based on fair market value determined for the federal and non-federal lands as defined in Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Acquisitions and by current BLM policy.

## **LAR-11**

Non-federal lands (42,550 acres) will be considered for acquisition through exchange of suitable public land on a case-by-case basis where acquisition of the non-federal lands will contain resource values equal to or greater than the public lands being exchanged (see Figure 6a).

**LAR-12**

Exchanges with the State of Utah will be given a priority consideration. There are a significant number of state land sections administered by the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) scattered throughout the RMP area. Many of these state lands are in-holdings located within designated resource management areas identified in this RMP. SITLA has indicated their desire to exchange SITLA lands within these BLM management areas for BLM-administered lands elsewhere in the RMP area. The BLM recognizes the opportunity for mutually beneficial land tenure adjustments and will apply the RMP Land Tenure Adjustment Criteria.

**LAR-13**

Non-federal lands to be acquired through both Bureau- and public-initiated exchanges must be in the public interest and have at least one of the following characteristics:

- Acquisition will facilitate access to public lands and resources and/or contribute to a more efficient and manageable land ownership pattern.
- Acquisition will facilitate implementation of the RMP management actions.
- Acquisition of the non-federal lands will maintain or enhance public uses and values, with priority given to acquiring riparian/wetlands; lands with high recreation use and/or wildlife values; sensitive plant or animal habitat; and lands with significant cultural sites and/or paleontological localities or within other special designations.
- Acquisitions that will meet other conditions pursuant to FLPMA Section 206 or 43 CFR 2200.

**LAR-14**

Acquired lands will be managed in accordance with management objectives identified for adjacent lands unless resource considerations require a plan amendment.

*Fencing Requirements for Paved Highways*

**LAR-15**

All applications to pave routes will be evaluated in site-specific NEPA analysis to determine the need for fencing.

*Land Access*

**LAR-16**

Public access to the White River will be pursued at the mouth of Cowboy Canyon, Bonanza Bridge, and Wagon Hound Road.

**LAR-17**

An easement for the old Uintah Railroad bed from the Utah /Colorado line to Watson along Evacuation Creek will not be pursued.

**LAR-18**

Acquisition of Indian trust lands in Bitter Creek and Willow Creek will be pursued if the Ute Indian Tribe is willing.

### **LAR-19**

Acquisition of Indian trust lands near the confluence of South and Sweetwater Canyon will be pursued if the Ute Indian Tribe is willing.

#### *Land Tenure Adjustments (LTAs)*

### **LAR-20**

Land ownership changes will be considered on lands not specifically identified in the Approved RMP (Figure 6a) for disposal or acquisition if the changes are in accordance with resource management objectives and other RMP decisions, determined to be in the public interest, and will accomplish one or more of the following criteria:

- The changes are determined to be in the public interest. The public will benefit from land resources coming into public ownership, while at the same time accommodating the needs of local and state governments, including the needs for public purposes, community growth and the economy.
- The changes result in a gain of important manageable resources on public lands such as crucial wildlife habitat, significant cultural sites, mineral resources, water sources, listed species by habitat, or areas key to productive ecosystems.
- The changes ensure public access to lands in areas where access is needed and cannot otherwise be obtained.
- The changes will promote more effective management and meet essential resource objectives through land ownership consolidation.
- The changes result in acquisition of lands that serve regional or national priorities identified in applicable policy directives or legislation.

### **LAR-21**

If one or more of the above criteria (see LAR-20) are not met, proposed land ownership changes outside of designated transfer areas will not be approved or will require a plan amendment unless it was determined to be in the best interests of the affected landowners and the public.

### **LAR-22**

Non-federal lands located within sensitive areas will be acquired through donation, purchase, or land exchange. Land acquisitions will be negotiated from willing landowners.

### **LAR-23**

Acquire fee title or interest in non-federal lands with priority placed on lands with critical resource values (e.g., water rights, scenic easements, Greater sage-grouse leks).

### **LAR-24**

No lands acquired through land tenure adjustments will be classified or opened for agricultural entry or leasing in the RMP planning area.

#### *Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics*

### **LAR-25**

Non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics will be retained in federal ownership (106,178 acres).

**LAR-26**

Non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics will be managed as Rights-Of-Way avoidance areas.

*Other Methods of Acquisition*

**LAR-27**

In addition to acquiring non-federal lands through land exchanges, VFO will acquire lands by direct purchase utilizing programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), when funding is available, donation, or legal settlement. Such land will be vested in the U.S. in perpetuity unless otherwise directed by Bureau or Congressional policy.

*Recreation and Public Purpose Act (R&PP)*

**LAR-28**

Lands conveyed to state or local governments or non-profit organizations under the Recreation and Public Purpose Act (R&PP) Act may include those identified in LTAs. In addition, requests for lands other than those identified will be considered for disposal provided the proposed use will provide a greater public benefit than that which the current management provides, and that the action is otherwise consistent with this RMP. Examples may include, but are not limited to local government or non-profit recreational and public purpose facilities such as public shooting ranges, landfills, motocross, and racetracks.

**LAR-29**

All Recreation & Public Purposes (R&PP) lease areas will be unavailable for leasing or open to leasing subject to major constraints such as No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations.

*Rights-of-Way (ROWs)/Easements*

**LAR-30**

All future ROW applications involving projects that are less than the major project thresholds described above will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Future ROWs will be consolidated in corridors where reasonable and economically feasible.

**LAR-31**

Future ROWs that cross the Lower or Upper Green River will be placed in the Four Mile Bottom Area or at the Head of Little Swallow Canyon.

**LAR-32**

Generally, future ROWs will be located adjacent to existing routes and within existing R/W granted routes, when facilities are compatible, as much as possible.

**LAR-33**

Easements will be acquired from willing landowners to gain access to public lands.

**LAR-34**

Lands are also available for major water development ROWs on a case-by-case basis with special restrictions depending on the scope of the project and resource concerns identified during the processing of any project proposal in compliance with NEPA. Major ROW projects such as

hydroelectric dam and wind farm ROWs may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if the project is consistent with the goals and objectives or other land management prescriptions. If it is not in compliance with the land management prescriptions, then it will require a plan amendment.

**LAR-35**

Authorization of any right-of-way for wind or solar energy will incorporate BMPs as applicable and provisions contained in the Final Wind Energy Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) (June 24, 2005) and the joint PEIS.

*Sales*

**LAR-36**

Any lands to be disposed of by sale that are not identified in this RMP will require a plan amendment. Land sales will reserve all minerals as required by FLPMA except where sale of the mineral interests will not be consistent with the requirements of Section 209 FLPMA.

**LAR-37**

If the public lands have no known mineral values, the mineral estate will be disposed of pursuant to the authority of Section 209(b) of FLPMA.

**LAR-38**

In instances where the surface estate is already in private ownership and the mineral estate is reserved to the U.S., the surface owner may purchase the reserved mineral estate, provided that the criteria under 43 CFR 2720 are met.

**LAR-39**

Lands identified for consideration for disposal will be used for a variety of other authorized activities, based on the need for future community growth and development.

*Transportation/Utility Corridors*

**LAR-40**

This Approved RMP is consistent with existing right-of-way (ROW) corridors, including the Western Utility Group (WUG) updates to the Western Regional Corridor Study (Figure 6a), and will designate additional corridors subject to physical barriers, and sensitive resource values. Sensitive resource values include, but are not limited to:

- ACECs
- Areas possessing high scenic quality
- Cultural and paleontological resources
- Riparian areas
- Sensitive soils
- Threatened and endangered species habitat

**LAR-41**

These approved transportation/utility corridors are the preferred location for future major linear ROWs which meet the following criteria:

- Pipelines with a diameter greater than 20 inches
- Transmission lines (not distribution) with a voltage capacity of 69 kV or greater

- Paved routes or routes consisting of more than two lanes
- Significant canals, ditches, or conduits requiring a permanent width greater than 50 feet

#### **LAR-42**

Major linear ROWs meeting the above thresholds that are proposed outside of the preferred, designated corridors may require a plan amendment.

#### **LAR-43**

The Vernal Approved RMP will be consistent with decisions identified in the Westwide Energy Corridor (WWEC) PEIS/ROD.

#### *Trespass Resolution*

#### **LAR-44**

Intentional trespass resolution will be limited to removal and /or restoration as appropriate. Unintentional trespass resolution may include:

- Authorization under ROW grant, commercial/agricultural lease, or permit
- Disposal of the affected land through sale or exchange
- Removal, depending on the nature of the trespass

#### **LAR-45**

In all such trespass cases, administrative costs incurred by the BLM for investigating and resolving trespasses will be collected. All trespass incidents resolved by issuance of ROW grants, leases, or permits will be subject to payment by the holder/lessee/permittee of rent based on market value. Trespass cases resolved by land sales will be based on fair market value, and land exchanges will be completed on an equal value basis.

#### *Withdrawals*

#### **LAR-46**

Review existing withdrawals and classifications on BLM-administered lands on a case-by-case basis to determine their need and consistency with the intent of the withdrawals in accordance with section 204(l) of FLPMA, and recommend continuing, modifying, or terminating as applicable (Figure 6a).

#### **LAR-47**

Any lands becoming unencumbered by withdrawals or classifications will be managed according to the decisions made in this RMP. If the RMP has not identified management prescriptions for these lands, they will be managed in a manner consistent with adjacent or comparable public lands within the VPA. If the unencumbered lands fall within two or more management scenarios where future-planning criteria may not be clear, a plan amendment may be required.

#### **LAR-48**

The following areas are recommended for locatable mineral withdrawal:

- Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Instant Study Area (400 acres)
- Green River Scenic Corridor in Browns Park (8,208 acres)
- Lears Canyon relict vegetation areas (1,375 acres)

- White River non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics (6,720 acres)
- White River SRMA (2,831 acres)
- Developed and potential recreation sites (5,000 acres)

## **LIVESTOCK AND GRAZING MANAGEMENT (GRA)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Achieve appropriate utilization of the range by livestock and wildlife through management prescriptions and administrative adjustments.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### *Criteria for Changing Class of Livestock*

#### **GRA-1**

Requests from permittees to convert class of livestock will be handled as follows:

- On crucial deer winter ranges, cattle are preferred.
- In areas where fencing will be required, conversion will be contingent upon signed fence agreement and fences will be in place prior to issuance of permit to graze. The applicant(s) requesting the conversion will be responsible to fund the fencing and cattle guards/gates and to construct and maintain fences. (Consistent with Vernal District Grazing Advisory Board and Vernal BLM joint Rangeland Improvement (RI) Policy dated 12/08/1992).
- In areas where grazing will be along paved routes, evaluate and determine the need for fencing. Applicants will be required to fence the road if it is determined necessary to protect human and livestock health and safety.
- Areas with riverine/lotic systems may require additional management actions such as, but not limited to, fencing of streams.
- Prior to the authorization of any livestock conversions in WSAs, the impacts from any necessary rangeland improvements projects will be assessed. Conversions in WSAs will be made in compliance with H-8550-1 Interim Management Plan (IMP) Chapter 3 Guidelines for Specific Activities. The IMP is to direct activities within the WSAs until such time as Congress acts on the WSA designations.

#### *Grazing in River Corridors*

#### **GRA-2**

As opportunities arise, such as voluntary relinquishment, consider changes to livestock use to assure management objectives are met.

#### **GRA-3**

Where livestock conflicts with other uses of the river, mitigate through management or other actions.

#### **GRA-4**

Identify criteria for acceptable levels of livestock grazing use along river bottoms (see Riparian Resources decision).

#### **GRA-5**

If grazing is causing resource degradation, to the extent that *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* are not being met and progress is not being made, monitoring data show that livestock grazing is the most significant factor, and all other

options have been exhausted, close those riparian areas that do not satisfactorily respond to changes in management.

*Nine Mile Acquired Area*

**GRA-6**

Lands acquired by acquisition of properties in the Nine Mile Acquired Area will not be grazed to enhance riparian and watershed values.

*Relinquishment of Preference*

**GRA-7**

Voluntary relinquishments of grazing permits and preference, in whole or in part, by a permittee in writing to the BLM will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The BLM will not recognize as valid, relinquishments which are conditional on specific BLM actions and the BLM will not be bound by them. Relinquished permits and the associated preference will remain available for application by qualified applicants after the BLM considers if such action will meet *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* and is compatible with achieving LUP goals and objectives. Prior to re-issuance of the relinquished permit, the terms and conditions may be modified to meet LUP goals and objectives and/or site-specific resource objectives.

**GRA-8**

However, upon relinquishment, the BLM may determine through a site-specific evaluation and associated NEPA analysis, that the public lands involved are better used for other purposes. Grazing may then be discontinued on the allotment through an amendment to the existing LUP or a new LUP effort. Any decision issued concerning discontinuance of livestock grazing is not permanent and may be reconsidered and changed through future LUP amendments and updates.

**GRA-9**

Prior to approving changes in permitted seasons of use, the following will be mandatory:

- Compliance with the standards for range management (see *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*)
- Preparation, signature, and implementation of a monitoring plan
- Signature of permittee accepting the grazing management practices determined necessary by the Authorized Officer to approve the change
- Agreement by permittee to management practices that provide for the physiological requirements of desired plants

**GRA-10**

Requests from a permittee to change seasons of use will be a priority if all of the following criteria were met:

- Changes enhance or meet resource objectives contained in the Vernal RMP
- Allotment(s) are scheduled for assessment the same year a request is made
- Funding for the assessment is voluntarily provided by sources other than the BLM

**GRA-11**

Develop management plans and/or grazing agreements for livestock allotments to allow flexibility in grazing management which may include consolidation of allotments, change in

seasons of use, and reduction and/or consolidation of grazing allotments and pastures (Figure 7a).

**GRA-12**

Until all wild horses have been removed, livestock permittees with allotments within Herd Management Areas will be required to have a current health certificate, including documentation of annual vaccinations for infectious diseases for all horses, mules, or burros used in their grazing operation.

*Seasons of Use*

**GRA-13**

Livestock grazing will be allowed under the discretion of the VFO in Area 1.

**GRA-14**

Livestock grazing will be allowed from 6/1 through 10/31 or 5/1 with a deferment in Area 2.

**GRA-15**

Livestock grazing will be allowed from 5/1 through 12/31 in Area 3.

**GRA-16**

Livestock grazing will be allowed from 5/1 through 6/1 in Area 4.

**GRA-17**

Livestock grazing will be allowed from 5/1 through 6/1 and 10/1 through 2/28 in Area 5.

**GRA-18**

Livestock grazing will be allowed from 10/1 through 4/1 or 5/1 with a deferment in Area 6.

**GRA-19**

Livestock grazing will be allowed from 4/1 through 5/31 and/or 9/1 through 10/31 in Area 7.

**MINERALS AND ENERGY RESOURCES (MIN): LEASABLE MINERALS (MLE), LOCATABLE MINERALS (MLO), AND SALEABLE MINERALS AND MINERAL MATERIALS (MSA)**

**Goals and Objectives:**

- Meet local and national non-renewable and renewable energy and other public mineral needs.
- Support a viable long-term mineral industry related to energy development while providing reasonable and necessary protections to other resources.
- The following principles will be applied:
  - ♦ Encourage and facilitate the development by private industry of public land mineral resources in a manner that satisfies national and local needs and provides for economical and environmentally sound exploration, extraction and reclamation practices.
  - ♦ Process applications, permits, operating plans, mineral exchanges, leases, and other use authorizations for public lands in accordance with policy and guidance.
  - ♦ Monitor salable and leasable mineral operations to ensure proper resource recovery and evaluation, production verification, diligence, and inspection and enforcement of contract sales, common use areas, community pits, free use permits, leases and prospecting permits.
- The plan will recognize and be consistent with the National Energy Policy by:
  - ♦ Recognizing the need for diversity in obtaining energy supplies
  - ♦ Conserving sensitive resource values
  - ♦ Improving energy distribution opportunities

**Management Decisions:**

**Mineral and Energy Resources (MIN)**

**MIN-1**

In accordance with an UDEQ-DAQ letter dated June 6, 2008, (see Appendix O requesting implementation of interim nitrogen oxide control measures for compressor engines) the BLM will require the following as a Lease Stipulation and a Condition of Approval for Applications for Permit to Drill:

- All new and replacement internal combustion oil and gas field engines of less than or equal to 300 design-rated horsepower must not emit more than 2 grams of NO<sub>x</sub> per horsepower-hour. This requirement does not apply to oil and gas field engines of less than or equal to 40 design-rated horsepower.
- All new and replacement internal combustion oil and gas field engines of greater than 300 design rated horsepower must not emit more than 1.0 gram of NO<sub>x</sub> per horsepower-hour.

**MIN-2**

Mineral and energy resource exploration and development surface-disturbing activities will be allowed in the VPA unless precluded by other program prescriptions. The stipulations identified for surface-disturbing activities in Appendix K will generally apply to these activities.

*Alternative Energy*

**MIN-3**

The plan will recognize the opportunity for alternative energy development such as wind, solar, and geothermal. BMPs will be developed from PEISs such as ones completed or initiated for wind and solar energy.

**MIN-4**

Individual alternative energy proposals will be evaluated based on conformance with other program goals and objectives stated in the plan.

*Light and Sound*

**MIN-5**

The BLM will seek to minimize light and sound pollution within the VPA using the best available technology such as installation of multi-cylinder pumps, hospital sound-reducing mufflers, and placement of exhaust systems to direct noise away from noise sensitive areas (e.g., sensitive habitat, campgrounds, river corridors, and Dinosaur National Monument). Light pollution will be mitigated by using methods such as limiting height of light poles, timing of lighting operations (meaning limiting lighting to times of darkness associated with drilling and work over or maintenance operations), limiting wattage intensity, and constructing light shields. If a determination is made that natural barriers or view sheds will meet these mitigation objectives, the above requirements may not apply.

*Oil and Gas*

**MIN-6**

Approximately 53,111 acres within the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge will be closed to oil and gas leasing.

**MIN-7**

Mitigation of oil and gas impacts developed under the Approved RMP and applied to leases issued after the date of this RMP in the form of stipulations will adhere to the BLM's standard format. Stipulations necessary to protect the resource will contain provisions/criteria to allow for the waiver, exception, or modification of the stipulation if warranted.

**MIN-8**

The Approved RMP will provide for a variety of oil and gas operations and geophysical explorations. These activities will be allowed in the VPA unless precluded by other program prescriptions. The stipulations identified for surface-disturbing activities in Appendix K will generally apply to these activities.

**MIN-9**

Approximately 188,500 acres of split estate lands (federal minerals-Tribal surface) within the Hill Creek Extension of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation are included in the acreage figures found in the Oil and Gas Section. Further consultation with the Ute Indian Tribe resulted in identification of stipulations for the Hill Creek Extension.

**MIN-10**

Approximately 750,131 acres will be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.

**MIN-11**

Approximately 890,280 acres will be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints, such as TLs and CSU.

**MIN-12**

Approximately 86,789 acres will be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations.

**MIN-13**

Approximately 190,434 acres will be unavailable for leasing.

**MIN-14**

No geophysical exploration will be allowed in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics except that hand-carried geophone lines will be permitted.

*Combined Hydrocarbon Areas/Special Tar Sand Areas*

**MIN-15**

Management decisions regarding combined hydrocarbon areas/special tar sand areas are deferred to the PEIS that is being prepared.

**Leasable Minerals (MLE)**

*Gilsonite and Phosphate*

**MLE-1**

36,846 acres along 172 miles of Gilsonite veins will be available for prospecting, leasing, and development of Gilsonite (additional veins located through field study or prospecting not shown on Figure 9a will also be available if such are within "open" category lands).

**MLE-2**

76,208 acres will be open to phosphate prospecting, leasing, and development with standard and special stipulations within the phosphate occurrence areas.

**Locatable Minerals (MLO)**

**MLO-1**

Operations on lands open to mineral entry (as well as on claim locations that pre-date withdrawal) must be conducted in compliance with the 43 CFR 3809 and 3715 regulations. The three level of operations under these regulations include casual use, notice and, plan of operation. A plan will have to be filed for operations usually conducted under notice in:

- Areas in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and areas designated for potential addition to the system
- Designated ACECs
- Areas designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and administered by the BLM

- Areas designated as “closed” to OHV use as defined in 43 CFR 8340-5
- Any lands or waters known to contain federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or their proposed or designated crucial habitat
- National Monuments and National Conservation Areas administered by the BLM; see 43 CFR 3809.11(c)
- A plan must be submitted for any bulk sampling of 1,000 tons or more of presumed ore for testing (see 43 CFR 3809.11(b)).

**Saleable Minerals and Mineral Materials (MSA)**

**MSA-1**

All existing mineral material sites will be evaluated to determine continual need and to ensure that they are accommodating user needs.

**MSA-2**

Mineral material common use areas, community pits, free-use permits, competitive and non-competitive contract sales, and testing and sampling of mineral materials may be authorized by the BLM in “open” areas.

**MSA-3**

389,788 acres will be available for mineral material disposal with standard and special stipulations.

**MSA-4**

Close non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics to the disposal of mineral materials (106,178 acres).

## **NON-WSA LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS (WC)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Protect, preserve, and maintain the wilderness characteristics (i.e., appearance of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation or solitude) of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics (see Figure 12a).
- Manage these primitive and backcountry landscapes for their undeveloped character and provide opportunities for primitive recreational activities and experiences of solitude.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **WC-1**

Approximately 106,178 acres will be managed as non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics for the following areas:

- Beach Draw
- Bourdette Draw
- Bull Canyon
- Cold Spring Mountain
- Daniels Canyon
- Dead Horse Pass
- Diamond Breaks
- Diamond Mountain
- Lower Flaming Gorge
- Moonshine Draw
- Mountain Home
- Stuntz Draw
- Vivas Cake Hill
- White River
- Wild Mountain

#### **WC-2**

The 106,178 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics will be managed with the following common prescriptions:

- VRM Category II
- Closed to oil and gas leasing, except for the White River area which will be open to leasing, subject to major constraints, (NSO)
- Closed to solid mineral leasing
- Closed to disposal of mineral materials
- Closed to woodland product harvest
- Avoidance area for rights-of-way
- OHVs will be limited to designated routes, except for the upper portion of the Lower Flaming Gorge wilderness characteristics area, which will be closed.
- No motorized vehicles will be allowed to travel on a single path up to 300 feet from designated routes to access a camp.

- Retain public lands in federal ownership

**WC-3**

When compatible with the goals and objectives for management of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics:

- Permit vegetation and fuel treatments using prescribed fire, mechanical and chemical treatments, and other actions compatible with the Healthy Lands Initiative (HLI).
- Permit construction of wildlife water and livestock facilities, and minimal recreation facilities.

## **PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES (PAL)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Locate, evaluate, and manage paleontological resources, and protect them where appropriate.
- Facilitate suitable scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils.
- Ensure that significant fossils are not inadvertently damaged, destroyed, or removed from public ownership as a result of surface disturbance or land exchanges.
- Foster public awareness and appreciation of the area's paleontological heritage.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **PAL-1**

Recreational collectors may collect and retain reasonable amounts of common invertebrate and plant fossils for personal, non-commercial use. Surface disturbance must be negligible, and mechanized tools will not be used.

#### **PAL-2**

Vertebrate fossils may be collected only under a permit issued to qualified individuals. Vertebrate fossils include bones, teeth, eggs, and other body parts of animals with backbones such as dinosaurs, fish, turtles, and mammals. Vertebrate fossils also include trace fossils, such as footprints, burrows and dung.

#### **PAL-3**

Fossils collected under a permit remain the property of the federal government and must be placed in a suitable repository (such as a museum or university) identified at the time of permit issuance.

#### **PAL-4**

Lands identified for disposal or exchange will be evaluated to determine whether such actions will remove significant fossils from federal ownership. In areas where surface disturbance, either initiated by the BLM or by other land users, may threaten significant fossils, the BLM will follow its policy (see the Paleontological Resource Management Handbook H-8270-1) to assess any threat and mitigate damage.

#### **PAL-5**

The BLM will work with local communities, interest groups, individuals, and other agencies to enhance the public's understanding and enjoyment of paleontological resources.

#### **PAL-6**

Where scientifically significant fossils are threatened by natural hazards or unauthorized collection, the BLM will work with permittees and other partners to salvage specimens and reduce future threats to resources at risk.

#### **PAL-7**

Implement regular patrols as feasible to protect areas where unauthorized use may occur.

**PAL-8**

Modify the existing General Agreement between the VFO, the NPS, the Vernal Field House of Natural History, and the Friends of Paleontology Chapter to encourage protection of paleontological resources planning-area wide. The modified agreement will ensure proper storage and curation of paleontological resources and include methods to promote interpretation and education.

**PAL-9**

Areas with significant fossils will be identified through predictive modeling and broad-scale sampling. Assessment and mitigation will be required as needed in these areas.

**PAL-10**

Information on fossils and collecting rules will be provided to the public through websites, publications, and personal contacts.

**PAL-11**

Written and web-based information will be provided about fossils, hobby collecting, and local interpretive sites to promote visitor education.

**PAL-12**

Paleontological Resources Use permits will be issued for scientific study, promoting or supporting investigations in poorly known areas.

**PAL-13**

Collection of common invertebrate and plant fossils will be allowed for personal, non-commercial use.

**PAL-14**

Areas for hobby collection will be identified, publicized, and monitored.

**PAL-15**

Areas with rare and significant invertebrate and plant fossils will be closed to hobby collection.

**PAL-16**

Permit excavation of fossils in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, when compatible with the goals and objectives for management of the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

## **RANGELAND IMPROVEMENTS (RNI)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Restore, maintain, and/or improve rangeland conditions and productivity to maintain, meet or make substantial progress towards meeting *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* while meeting forage obligations in grazing permits and grazing preference decisions, as well as wildlife habitat.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **RNI-1**

Specific improvements to rangeland health will include, but are not limited to, vegetation treatments, fencing, spring development, reservoirs, guzzlers, pipelines, and wells.

#### **RNI-2**

Part or all of the following measures will be implemented to meet resource objectives for habitat enhancement:

- Fencing (69 Miles)
- Vegetation Treatment (34,640 Acres)
- Water Developments:
  - ♦ 812 Guzzlers/Reservoirs
  - ♦ Pipeline (38 Miles)
  - ♦ 51 Wells/Springs

#### **RNI-3**

Permit use of prescribed fire in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics for vegetation treatments, when compatible with the goals and objectives for management of the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. Rehabilitation of fire lines and other surface disturbances will follow completion of the burning operation.

#### **RNI-4**

Permit construction of rangeland improvements in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, when compatible with the goals and objectives for management of the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

**RECREATIONAL RESOURCES (REC): SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREAS (SRMA) AND TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT (TMD)**

**Goals and Objectives:**

- Ensure the continued availability of quality outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences that are not readily available from other sources; protect the health and safety of visitors; protect natural, cultural, and other resources; encourage public enjoyment of public lands; and enhance recreational opportunities.
- Work collaboratively with affected user groups and organizations, state and local officials, and other interested parties to provide for site-specific or area-specific comprehensive integrated activity level planning.
- Ensure there is a spectrum of recreation opportunities and settings through comprehensive integrated activity level planning. Such plans will include, but are not limited to the following:
  - ♦ Recreation use allocations
  - ♦ Group size or seasonal limitations
  - ♦ Opportunities for dispersed or organized camping, including large events
  - ♦ Facility development
  - ♦ Opportunities for interpretation or other signage
  - ♦ Campfire restrictions
  - ♦ Establish limits of acceptable change or other environmental indicators in order to provide for adaptive management.

**Management Decisions:**

**Recreation Resources**

**REC-1**

Continue to implement public education and environmental awareness programs such as Tread Lightly and the Leave No Trace.

**REC-3**

BLM lands within Dry Fork Canyon will be closed to the shooting of firearms.

**REC-4**

Areas not managed as SRMAs will be managed for dispersed recreational uses that require minimum facility development.

**REC-5**

Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis. All proposed applications for permits will be evaluated to determine compliance with the goals and objectives of this plan.

**REC-6**

Continue to implement the 1979 Green River Management Plan for Desolation and Gray Canyons to protect the Desolation Canyon National Historic Landmark within VFO and the

Upper Green Recreation Management Plan to provide appropriate use levels while protecting other resources.

**REC-7**

The Upper Green River from Little Hole to the Colorado state line will allow no surface-disturbing activities within line of sight up to one-half mile, whichever is closer, except within established corridors or unless related to recreational infrastructure support.

**REC-8**

All developed recreation sites within VFO will be closed to the shooting of firearms, closed to grazing, and all forms of surface-disturbing activities not directly related to recreation development.

**REC-9**

Special recreation permit holders using horses in connection with their operation within Herd Management Areas will be required to have them tested for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) until all wild horses have been gathered and removed from the area.

**REC-10**

Special recreation permit holders using horses from out of state will be required to test them for EIA per state law.

**REC-11**

If cave resources are identified on public lands, then the VFO will develop a cave management plan that results in appropriate management to protect them from damage.

**REC-12**

Maintain or expand infrastructure of all recreational sites, including, but not limited to, cabins, restrooms, campsites, and trail head development and ensure their safety for public use.

**REC-13**

Stabilize and preserve Chipeta, Moonshine, Rat Hole, and Trujillo cabins.

**REC-14**

BLM-contracted fixed wing and helicopter aircraft will not be authorized to fly over Dinosaur National Monument unless warranted by an emergency situation or approved in advance.

**REC-15**

The following recreation management guidelines were developed to help achieve and maintain healthy public lands as defined by the *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*. They are listed below with the standard that they apply to:

- Rangeland Health Standard 1
  - ♦ Upland soils exhibit permeability and infiltration rates that sustain or improve site productivity, considering the soil type, climate, and landform.
  - ♦ Designate areas for intensive recreational use or cross-country motorized travel where disturbance of soil and vegetation is acceptable, either because

impacts are insignificant and/or temporary or because the value of intensive use of the land outweighs whatever ecological changes may occur. Decisions on such designation shall take into account conflicts with other users as well as adverse effects on archaeological or historical sites, T&E species habitat, wildlife habitat, or social values such as beauty, solitude, and quiet.

- ♦ In all other areas, travel routes and other disturbances shall be kept to the minimum necessary to provide access and visitor facilities appropriate to the area. Through blocking, signing, and public education, unneeded travel routes shall be eliminated and rehabilitated and unplanned development of new ones discouraged.
- ♦ It may be necessary to manage some areas to be entirely free of planned travel routes.
- Rangeland Health Standard 2
  - ♦ Riparian and wetland areas are in properly functioning condition. Stream channel morphology and functions are appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.
  - ♦ Where feasible, and consistent with user safety, developed travel routes shall be located/relocated away from sensitive riparian and wetland areas.
  - ♦ Camping in riparian areas shall be avoided and must be managed, monitored, and modified as conditions dictate to reduce vegetation disturbance and sedimentation.
  - ♦ Stream crossings will be limited to the number dictated by the topography, geology, and soil type. Design any necessary stream crossings to minimize sedimentation, soil erosion, and compaction.
- Rangeland Health Standard 3
  - ♦ Desired species, including native, T&E and special status species, are maintained at a level appropriate for the site and species involved.
  - ♦ Protect against the establishment and/or spread of noxious or other weeds from intensive recreation, including the use of riding and pack animals, hiking, motorized, or other mechanized vehicles.
  - ♦ Conduct an educational campaign to inform recreational users about the damage caused by noxious weeds and how their spread can be minimized.
  - ♦ Where appropriate, apply restrictions, (i.e., do not permit surface-disturbing activities).
  - ♦ Protect wildlife and plant and/or habitat by:
    - Preserving connectivity and avoiding fragmentation.
    - Controlling recreational activities that will interfere with critical wildlife stages such as nesting, reproduction, or seasonal concentration areas.
    - Avoiding creation of artificial attractions such as the feeding of wild animals or improper disposal of garbage.
    - Where necessary, control recreational use by changing location or kind of activity, season, intensity, distribution, and/or duration in order to protect plant and animal communities, especially those containing special status species, including listed T&E or candidate species.

- Rangeland Health Standard 4
  - ♦ The BLM will apply and comply with water quality standards established by the State of Utah (R. 317-2) and the federal Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts. Activities on BLM lands will fully support the designated beneficial uses described in the Utah Water Quality Standards (R. 317-2) for surface water and groundwater.
  - ♦ Manage recreational uses in coordination with other uses on public lands to comply with applicable water quality standards by:
  - ♦ Identifying areas where recreational activities may seriously impair water quality.
  - ♦ Establishing thresholds for numbers, types, and duration of visitor use, and when those thresholds are reached, by developing facilities and/or possibly limiting or relocating use.
  - ♦ Monitor and control disposal of human or domestic animal waste, trash, and other pollutants to prevent serious impairment of water quality.

#### **REC-16**

Additional cabins for permitted/administrative use can be constructed at or near the existing Chipeta, Trujillo, Moonshine, Rat Hole, and Wolf Den cabins and at Westwater Point, Dick Canyon, and other locations.

#### **REC-17**

Permit construction of minimal recreation facilities in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, when compatible with the goals and objectives for management of the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

#### **REC-18**

The BLM will work in conjunction with the National Park Service to minimize noise and light pollution adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument using best available technology. Movement of operations to mitigate sound and light impacts will be required to be at least 200 meters from the Monument boundary unless otherwise designated by oil and gas leasing constraint or a determination is made that natural barriers or view sheds will meet these mitigation objectives.

#### **Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA)**

##### **SMRA-1**

Blue Mountain (42,729 acres) will be managed as an SRMA. An integrated activity plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. Recreation activities will be identified in the plan; these activities will include but are not limited to hang-gliding (competitive and special events), rock climbing, historic interpretation, and OHV use on designated routes.

##### **SMRA-2**

The non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics in the Blue Mountain SRMA will be managed for primitive and non-motorized/non-mechanized forms of recreation, and the settings required to support those types of activities and experiences.

### **SMRA-3**

Browns Park (18,490 acres) will continue to be managed as an SRMA. An activity management plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. In the recreation portion of the plan, the following uses will be emphasized:

- Camping
- Comprehensive trail system for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and OHV use
- Cultural and historic interpretation
- Facility development
- Fisheries
- Hunting
- Riparian
- Scenic vistas
- Special status species resource values
- Water based recreation
- Water quality
- Wildlife viewing opportunities

### **SMRA-4**

Fantasy Canyon (69 acres) will be managed as an SRMA. An activity management plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. In the recreation portion of the plan, the following uses will be emphasized:

- Guided or self-guided tours
- Health and human safety considerations
- Hiking
- Interpretation
- Protection of the unique geological formations

### **SMRA-5**

Nine Mile Canyon (44,168 acres) will continue to be managed as an SRMA. An activity management plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. In the recreation portion of the plan, protection of high-value cultural resources and scenic vistas will be emphasized.

### **SRMA-6**

Pelican Lake (1,014 acres) will continue to be managed as an SRMA. An activity management plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. In the recreation portion of the plan, water-based activities such as boating and fishing will be emphasized. The area will be open to oil and gas leasing subject to major constraints such as No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations and closed to mineral materials sales.

### **SRMA-7**

Red Mountain-Dry Fork (24,285 acres) will be managed as an SRMA to provide for maintenance and development of OHV or non-OHV trails, minimal facilities necessary for human health and safety, watershed values, relict vegetation communities, and crucial deer and elk winter habitat. An activity management plan for the SRMA will be developed to determine what areas are appropriate for day use only.

### **SRMA-8**

The White River (2,831 acres) will be managed as an SRMA from where the river exits the White River non-WSA land with wilderness characteristics and to where the river leaves Section 18, T10S, R23E. An integrated activity management plan will be developed and implemented consistent with overall management objectives. Recreational activities will be identified in the activity plan. These activities will include but are not limited to canoeing, rafting, primitive camping, and hiking. No Surface Occupancy (NSO) will be allowed within line of sight from the centerline, up to one-half mile either side of the river, whichever is less, from where the river enters Section 28, T10S, R23E, to where it leaves Section 18, T10S, R23.

### **SRMA-9**

The activity management plans to be developed for Blue Mountain, Fantasy Canyon, and Pelican Lake will address appropriate levels of use and facility development.

### **SRMA-10**

The Book Cliffs will not be managed as an SRMA. Unlimited and unconfined recreation will continue to be provided for in the Book Cliffs area.

### **Trail Maintenance and Development (TMD)**

#### **TMD-1**

Motorized camping vehicles will be allowed to travel off designated routes on a single path up to 300 feet to access an existing disturbed dispersed campsite, except in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics and WSA lands. In designated travel route areas, an activity level plan will be used to identify areas suitable for camping that will allow motorized vehicles to travel from those designated routes. The BLM will monitor dispersed camping activities and will work with user groups to address adverse environmental conditions if warranted. If use is such that undue environmental impacts are taking place, the BLM will close and rehabilitate damaged areas. If monitoring indicates that developed camping is needed, the BLM will evaluate the viability of developed campsites.

#### **TMD-2**

Where routes will remain available for motorized use within WSAs, such use will continue on a conditional basis. Use of the existing routes in the WSAs (“ways” when located within WSAs – see Glossary) will continue as long as the use of these routes does not impair wilderness suitability, as provided by the IMP (BLM 1995). If Congress designates the area as wilderness, the routes will be closed. In the interim, if use and/or non-compliance are found through monitoring efforts to impair the area’s suitability for wilderness designation, the BLM will take further action to limit use of the routes, or close them. The continued use of these routes, therefore, is based on user compliance and non-impairment of wilderness values.

#### **TMD-3**

Establish signed pull-off wildlife viewing areas along the Book Cliffs Divide Ridge Road.

#### **TMD-4**

Mountain bike use will be limited to designated roads and trails.

**TMD-5**

Atchee Ridge, Book Cliff Divide, and Seep Ridge Routes will be designated as BLM Back Country Byways. Appropriate interpretive and educational literature and signage will be developed.

**TMD-6**

Up to 400 miles of hiking, horseback riding, and mechanized (non-motorized) trails will be signed, improved, and/or developed in the following areas:

- Bitter Creek
- Boulevard Ridge
- Burnt Timber Canyon
- Centennial Book Cliffs Trail
- Chipeta Canyon
- Daniels Canyon
- Devils Hole
- Green River
- Dry Fork
- Ely/Rainbow Park
- Home Mountain
- Little Mountain
- Nine Mile
- Rat Hole Canyon
- Spitzenberg/Warren Ridge
- Taylor Canyon
- Westwater Point
- Willow Creek
- Yellow Pine
- Other additional trails

**TMD-7**

Up to 800 miles of motorized routes will be signed, improved, and/or developed.

**TMD-8**

OHV use for big game retrieval off designated routes will not be allowed.

## **RIPARIAN RESOURCES (RIP)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Maintain, restore, improve, protect, and expand riparian-wetland areas so they are in Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) and meet *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management* for their productivity, biological diversity, and sustainability, and achieve an advanced (late-climax seral stage) ecological status, except where resource management will require an earlier ecological status for such purposes as vegetation diversity.
- PFC is the minimum acceptable riparian goal. However, PFC may not provide the streamside and aquatic conditions to meet goals for other resources. These include, but are not limited to, fisheries habitat, migratory bird habitat, unique recreational values, and/or forage. Specific objectives and management actions such as those stated below will be implemented in order to meet riparian goals.
  - ♦ Maintain the natural configuration of all streams.
  - ♦ Stream bank damage caused by livestock shall be less than 10% of a stream segment within an allotment/pasture.
  - ♦ Site-specific plans, where appropriate, will be prepared in collaboration with affected livestock operators, the UDWR, the Central Utah Water Conservancy Districts, and other interested parties, agencies, or organizations to identify desired plant communities, establish specific management objectives, and recommend practices to be employed to achieve desired results.
  - ♦ Monitoring and evaluation strategies will be implemented to measure progress in accordance with *BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*.
- Certain situations may occur that will allow the BLM to modify specific grazing objectives set forth in this plan.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **RIP-1**

Appropriate management actions to meet riparian objectives will include but not be limited to:

- Change of livestock class
- Change of season
- Fencing
- Herding
- Temporary closures

#### **RIP-2**

Allow no new surface-disturbing activities within active flood plains, public water reserves, or 100 meters of riparian areas unless:

- There are no practical alternatives.
- Impacts will be fully mitigated.
- The action is designed to enhance the riparian resources.

**RIP-3**

Acquire and expand riparian-wetland areas through exchange, donation, or purchase as opportunities arise.

**RIP-4**

Restore and/or re-establish cottonwood, willow, and other riparian species along major riparian and other wetland areas.

**RIP-5**

Development of springs and seeps to improve livestock and wildlife distribution will be designed and constructed to protect ecological processes and functions.

**RIP-6**

Restrict or mitigate those surface-disturbing activities that will adversely affect wetlands.

**RIP-7**

Adjust livestock management practices on riparian areas that do not satisfactorily respond to improved grazing management after all other options have been pursued.

**RIP-8**

Where feasible, fence spring sources and any other areas that may need special protection (such as amphibian ecosystems) on a site-by-site basis.

**RIP-9**

The following mitigation measures will be included as applicable:

- Keep construction of all new stream crossings to a minimum. Stream crossings with culverts will be designed and constructed to allow fish passage, where needed. All stream crossings will be designed and constructed to keep impacts to riparian and aquatic habitat to a minimum.
- Relocate existing routes out of riparian areas where feasible or necessary to restore watershed and riparian stability.

**RIP-10**

As identified in the preliminary riparian inventory, maintain 295 miles and 3,674 acres of riparian areas currently in PFC. Improve 133 miles and 1,452 acres functioning at risk and 79 miles and 1,213 acres not in PFC.

**RIP-11**

The following management strategies will be employed in riparian areas that are not achieving proper functioning condition:

- Key streamside herbaceous riparian vegetation, where stream bank stability is dependent upon it, will have a minimum stubble height at the end of the growing season capable of trapping and assuring retention of sediment during high flows.
- Management actions will be based on residual stubble height or utilization of current year's growth at the end of the growing season.

- An initial management action will be to set a stubble height of 4 inches or 30% utilization on key species if riparian conditions in that reach are to be maintained and 6 inches or <20% utilization if riparian conditions need to be improved.
- This initial stubble height or utilization level will need to be monitored to verify if it provides for maintenance or improvement objectives, with adjustments in allowable utilization or stubble height being made as needed.

### **RIP-12**

Key herbaceous riparian vegetation in riparian areas, other than the stream banks, will not be grazed more to less than a minimum stubble height than will allow for the trapping and retention of sediment during high water events.

- Management actions will be based on residual stubble height or utilization of current year's growth at the end of the growing season. An initial management action that has been shown to obtain riparian goals is to set a stubble height of 4 inches or 30% utilization if riparian conditions in that reach are to be maintained and 6 inches or <20% utilization if riparian conditions need to be improved. This initial stubble height or utilization level will need to be monitored to verify if it provides for maintenance or improvement objectives, with adjustments in allowable utilization or stubble height being made as needed.

### **RIP-13**

Key riparian woody vegetation will not be browsed more than the amount that will allow for the adequate recruitment to maintain or recover the woody component. Specifically, more plants in the combined sprout and young categories will be managed for than in the combined mature and dead categories.

- Management actions will be based on utilization of the current annual twig growth that is within reach of the animals. An initial management action that has been shown to obtain riparian goals is to set a woody vegetation utilization level of 30%. The specific utilization will need to be monitored to verify if it provides for maintenance or improvement objectives, with adjustments in allowable utilization being made as needed.

## **SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES (SOLW)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Eliminate or reduce discharge of pollutants into surface waters and achieve water quality that provides protection and propagation of fish, amphibians, wildlife, livestock, and recreation in and on the water. Implement BMPs, as applicable, adopted by UDEQ to limit surface discharges into water. Implement BMPs, as applicable, adopted by Utah Division of Environmental Quality (“DEQ”) to limit surface discharges into water.
- Restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the area’s waters as required by the State of Utah’s and EPA’s water quality standards.
- Restore and maintain soil quality and long-term productivity through the implementation of applicable BMPs, guidelines for rangeland health and other soil protection measures.
- Reduce salinity loading where possible to accomplish the goals outlined in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act (CRBSCA).
- Design pipeline crossings through riparian areas and across stream channels to minimize impacts to these resources. Pipeline crossings of perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral stream channels will be constructed to withstand 100-year floods to prevent breakage and subsequent accidental contamination of runoff during high flow events. Guidance may be updated over the life of the plan, but current technical guidance and specific recommendations regarding surface and subsurface crossings can be found in Appendix B.
- Operate under the unified policy to protect water quality and aquatic ecosystems on federal lands (Unified Federal Policy for a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management). This policy guides protection of water quality and aquatic ecosystem health through the reduction of polluted runoff, the improvement of natural resources stewardship, and an increase in public involvement in watershed management on federal lands.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **SOLW-1**

Collaborate with the USFS, state, counties, Native American tribes, and the Division of Water Rights when possible to protect and enhance priority watersheds.

#### **SOLW-2**

Cooperate with states and Native American tribes to review processes for issuing and renewing use authorizations and licenses when these uses/licenses may affect watershed condition and water quality. Revise these processes if necessary to ensure that they address watershed protection, improvement, and monitoring and water quality compliance needs.

#### **SOLW-3**

Continue partnership with State of Utah, Daggett County, UDWR, USFS, Wyoming Fish and Game, and Rock Springs BLM to develop a watershed activity plan for Red Creek in Daggett County.

**SOLW-4**

Restore and protect water quality and severe and critical erosion areas by restricting or mitigating surface disturbance.

**SOLW-5**

Comply with standards identified in “The Surface Operating Standards for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development” (Gold Book) unless otherwise specified in the plan.

**SOLW-6**

The BLM will adhere to criteria outlined in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act.

**SOLW-7**

The BLM implements multiple types of water uses on public lands that require water rights from the State of Utah, such as livestock watering, wildlife watering and habitat, wild horse watering, recreation facilities, and fire suppression. The BLM will continue to implement actions to maintain its current water rights for these purposes, such as filing proofs of beneficial use, filing diligence claims, changing existing water rights to fit new uses and projects, and filing protests as necessary to protect existing BLM water rights. The BLM will also file for new water rights in accordance with and when allowed under state water law procedures. Situations in which the BLM will file for new water rights include locations where existing water rights are insufficient or not in place to support the water use, or when existing water rights cannot be changed to support the water use on public land.

**SOLW-8**

Work in partnership with the State of Utah and others to reduce potential effects of selenium loading on the Ouray National Wildlife Refuge and Pariette Wetlands.

**SOLW-9**

Ensure the physical presence and legal availability of water on public lands. Ensure that those waters meet or exceed established federal and state water quality standards for specific uses, and mitigate activities to prevent water quality and watershed degradation.

**SOLW-10**

Reduce sediment and salinity production on important watersheds and critical soils through intensive management and construction measures to reduce water degradation of the Green River, White River, and their tributaries.

**SOLW-11**

The State of Utah’s Non-Point Source Management Plan will be used as a standard to reduce potential non-point source of pollution impacts. Coordinate with the Utah Division of Water Quality as needed.

**SOLW-12**

On a case-by-case basis, major water developments will be permitted if they are consistent with the plan.

**SOLW-13**

Measures will be taken to identify and avoid biological soil crust areas when possible by considering the following factors:

- Disturbance type
- Duration
- Event
- Frequency
- Intensity
- Timing

Monitor on-going investigations regarding the values of biological soil crusts and relationships of other ecosystem parameters.

**SOLW-14**

Specific activities that will include biological crust considerations will be prescribed fire, post-fire management, invasive weed control, energy development, grazing, OHV use, and range improvement projects. Biological crusts will be considered along with all other resource values in site-specific NEPA analyses.

**SOLW-15**

The “Surface Operating Standards for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development” (Gold Book), will be used as a guide for surface-disturbing proposals on steep slopes/hillsides. Specific to oil and gas activities, steep hillsides shall be avoided in the construction of routes, pipelines, and flowlines. If surface-disturbing activities cannot be avoided on slopes 21-40%, an approved plan will be required prior to construction and maintenance that will include:

- An erosion control strategy
- GIS modeling
- Proper survey and design by a certified engineer

**SOLW-16**

For slopes greater than 40%, no surface disturbance will be allowed unless it is determined that it will cause undue or unnecessary degradation to pursue other placement alternatives.

**SOLW-17**

Old agricultural fields will be irrigated and existing ditches and diversion structures will be restored on acquired lands in Bitter Creek and Rat Hole Drainages. New ditches and diversion structures will be constructed, as well.

**SOLW-18**

Implement BMPs adopted by UDEQ to limit surface discharges into water.

**SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS: AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACEC)**

**Goals and Objectives:**

- Designate and manage areas as ACECs where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish and wildlife resources; or other natural system or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

**Management Decisions:**

**ACEC-1**

The proposed Bitter Creek area will not be designated as an ACEC.

**ACEC-2**

Browns Park (18,490 acres) will continue to be designated as an ACEC. A comprehensive integrated activity plan will be developed/implemented that will address protection of high-value scenic views, wildlife habitat, and cultural and historic resources. OHV use will be closed or limited to designated routes. Visual Resources will be managed as Class I and Class II.

For oil and gas leasing within Browns Park:

- Zero acres will be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.
- Approximately 3,137 acres will be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as TLs and CSU.
- Approximately 5,165 acres will be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as NSO stipulations.
- Approximately 10,188 acres will be unavailable for leasing.

**ACEC-3**

The proposed Coyote Basin area will not be designated as an ACEC.

**ACEC-4**

The proposed Four Mile Wash area will not be designated as an ACEC.

**ACEC-5**

Lears Canyon (1,375 acres) will continue to be designated as an ACEC. A comprehensive integrated activity plan will be developed/implemented that will address protection of relict vegetation. OHV use will be closed or limited to designated routes. Visual Resources will be managed as Class II.

For oil and gas leasing within Lears Canyon:

- Zero acres will be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.

- Zero acres will be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as TLs and CSU.
- 1,375 acres will be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as NSO stipulations.
- Zero acres will be unavailable for leasing.

#### **ACEC-6**

The Lower Green River Corridor (8,470 acres) will continue to be designated as an ACEC. No Surface Occupancy (NSO) will be allowed within line of sight or up to one-half mile from the centerline of the river, whichever is less. OHV use will be limited to designated routes. Visual Resources will be managed as Class II.

For oil and gas leasing within the Lower Green River Corridor:

- Zero acres will be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.
- Zero acres will be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as TLs and CSU.
- Approximately 8,470 acres will be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as NSO stipulations.
- Zero acres will be unavailable for leasing.

#### **ACEC-7**

The Lower Green River Expansion (1,700 acres) will not be designated as an ACEC. No Surface Occupancy (NSO) will be allowed within line of sight or up to one-half mile from the centerline of the river, whichever is less. OHV use will be limited to designated routes. Visual Resources will be managed as Class II.

#### **ACEC-8**

The proposed Main Canyon area will not be designated as an ACEC.

#### **ACEC-9**

The proposed Middle Green River area will not be designated as an ACEC.

#### **ACEC-10**

Nine Mile Canyon (44,168 acres) with a boundary along the upper rim will continue to be designated as an ACEC. The area will be managed to enhance cultural and special status plant species while enhancing scenic vistas, recreation, and wildlife resource values. A comprehensive integrated activity plan will be developed and implemented. OHV use will be limited to designated routes. Visual Resources will be managed as Class II and Class III.

For oil and gas leasing within Nine Mile Canyon:

- Approximately 26,797 acres will be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.
- Approximately 209 acres will be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as TLs and CSU.

- Approximately 17,162 acres will be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as NSO stipulations.
- Zero acres will be unavailable for leasing.

### **ACEC-11**

Pariette Wetlands (10,437 acres) will continue to be designated as an ACEC. A comprehensive integrated activity plan will be developed/implemented that will address protection of special status bird and plant species and habitat, wetlands ecosystem, waterfowl production, and soil. OHV use will be limited to designated routes. Visual Resources will be managed as Class III.

For oil and gas leasing within Pariette Wetlands:

- Zero acres will be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.
- Zero acres will be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as TLs and CSU.
- About 10,437 acres will be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as NSO stipulations.
- Zero acres will be unavailable for leasing.

### **ACEC-12**

The Red Creek Watershed (24,475 acres) will continue to be managed as an ACEC. A comprehensive integrated activity plan will be developed / implemented. Manage the watershed to continue the reduction of sedimentation into Red Creek, and the downstream Green River, by stabilizing channels and stream banks to lessen erosion, and by maintaining or increasing vegetation cover throughout the watershed and enhance wildlife habitat values. OHV use will be limited to designated routes. Visual Resources will be managed as Class II, Class III, and Class IV.

For oil and gas leasing within the Red Creek Watershed:

- Approximately 6,899 will be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.
- Approximately 12,362 acres will be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as TLs and CSU.
- Approximately 162 acres will be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as NSO stipulations.
- Approximately 5,052 acres will be unavailable for leasing.

### **ACEC-13**

The Red Mountain-Dry Fork Complex (24,285 acres) will continue to be managed as an ACEC. A comprehensive integrated activity plan will be developed / implemented. Special management attention will include maintenance and development of OHV or non-OHV routes, minimal facilities development necessary for human health and safety, and protection of watershed values, relict vegetation communities, and crucial deer and elk winter habitat. OHV use will be limited to designated routes. VRM will be managed as Class II, III, or IV.

For oil and gas leasing within the Red Mountain-Dry Fork Complex:

- Approximately 495 acres will be open to leasing subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.
- Approximately 21,802 acres will be open to leasing subject to moderate constraints such as TLs and CSU.
- Approximately 1,988 acres will be open to leasing subject to major constraints such as NSO stipulations.
- Zero acres will be unavailable for leasing.

**ACEC-14**

The proposed White River corridor area will not be designated as an ACEC.

## **SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS: WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS (WSR)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Determine eligibility and suitability for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **WSR-1**

Continue to manage previously recommended segments of the Upper Green and Lower Green Rivers to protect their outstandingly remarkable values and the tentative scenic classification until such time that a designation decision is made.

#### **WSR-2**

New river segments found suitable and recommended for designation will be managed in accordance with the Wild and Scenic River Act to prevent impairment of outstandingly remarkable values within line of sight up to one-quarter mile from high water mark on each side of the river not to exceed 320 acres per mile (see Appendix C).

#### **WSR-3**

The BLM will work with the State of Utah, local and tribal governments, and other federal agencies, in a statewide study, to reach consensus regarding recommendations to Congress for the inclusion of rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Besides applying consistent criteria across agency jurisdictions, the joint study will avoid subdividing of river segments in logical watershed units in the state. The study will evaluate, in detail, the possible benefits and effects of designation on the local and state economies, agricultural and industrial operations and interests, outdoor recreation, natural resources (including the outstandingly remarkable values for which the river was deemed suitable), water rights, water quality, water resource planning, and access to and across river corridors within, and upstream and downstream from the proposed segments(s). Actual designation of river segments will only occur through congressional action or as a result of Secretarial decision at the request of the Governor in accordance with provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (the Act). The BLM will work with the state, local, and tribal governments, and the agencies involved to coordinate its decision making on wild and scenic river issues and to achieve consistency wherever possible.

#### **WSR-4**

The BLM recognizes that water resources on most river and stream segments within the State of Utah are already fully allocated. Before stream segments that have been recommended as suitable under this Approved RMP are recommended to Congress for designation, the BLM will continue to work with affected local, state, federal, and tribal partners to identify in-stream flows necessary to meet critical resource needs, including values related to the subject segments(s). Such quantifications will be included in any recommendation for designation. The BLM will then seek to jointly promote innovative strategies, community-based planning, and voluntary agreements with water users, under state law, to address those needs.

#### **WSR-5**

Should designations occur on any river segment as a result of Secretarial or congressional action, existing rights, privileges, and contracts will be protected. Under Section 12 of the Act, termination of such rights, privileges, and contracts may happen only with the consent of the affected non-federal party. A determination by the BLM of eligibility and suitability for the inclusion of rivers on public lands to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System does not create new water rights for the BLM. Federal reserved water rights for new components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System are established at the discretion of Congress. If water is reserved by Congress when a river component is added to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, it will come from water that is not appropriated at the time of designation, in the amount necessary to protect features that led to the river's inclusion into the system. The BLM's intent will be to leave existing water rights undisturbed and to recognize the lawful rights of private, municipal, and state entities to manage water resources under state law to meet the needs of the community. Federal law, including Section 13 of the Act and the McCarren Amendment (43 U.S.C. 666), recognizes state jurisdiction over water allocation in designated streams. Thus, it is the BLM's position that existing water rights, including flows apportioned to the State of Utah interstate agreements and compacts, including the Upper Colorado River Compact, and developments of such rights will not be affected by designation or the creation of the possible federal reserved water right. The BLM will seek to work with upstream and downstream water users and applicable agencies to ensure that water flows are maintained at a level sufficient to sustain the values for which affected river segments were designated.

#### **WSR-6**

The segment of the Upper Green River from Little Hole to the Utah state line will continue to be managed as previously recommended as a suitable scenic segment to protect its outstandingly remarkable values. Management will include:

- Oil and Gas Leasing – Closed and NSO
- Mineral Materials – Closed
- OHV – Closed and limited to designated routes.
- VRM – Class II

#### **WSR-7**

The segment of the Lower Green River from the public land boundary south of Ouray to the Carbon County line will continue to be managed as previously recommended as a suitable scenic segment to protect its outstandingly remarkable values. Management will include:

- Oil and Gas Leasing – NSO
- Mineral Materials – Closed
- OHV – Limited to designated routes
- VRM – Class I and II

#### **WSR-8**

The segment of Argyle Creek between its headwaters and the Carbon County line will not be identified as suitable for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

**WSR-9**

The segment of Bitter Creek between the Utah state line and where it enters private property will not be identified as suitable for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

**WSR-10**

The segment of Evacuation Creek between the Utah state line and the White River will not be identified as suitable for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

**WSR-11**

The segment of the Middle Green River, between SR-45 and the boundary of the Ouray National Waterfowl Refuge will not be identified as suitable for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

**WSR-12**

The segment of Nine Mile Creek within Duchesne County between the Green River and the Duchesne County Line (13 miles) will not be identified as suitable for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

**WSR-13**

The segment of Nine Mile Creek within Duchesne County between the Carbon County line and its confluence with Gate Canyon will not be identified as suitable for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

**WSR-14**

The White River Segments A, B, and C will not be identified as suitable for designation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

## **SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS: WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS (WSA)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Preserve the wilderness character of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) until Congress designates them or releases them.
- Manage the existing WSAs listed below (55,808 acres) as directed in the Interim Management Policy (IMP) for Lands under Wilderness Review (H-8550-1) in a manner that does not impair their suitability for designation as wilderness. Allow temporary uses that create no new surface disturbance nor involve permanent placement of structures.
- Temporary, non-disturbing activities, as well as activities governed by valid existing rights, may generally continue in WSAs.
- WSAs include the following:
  - ♦ Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Instant Study Area (400 acres)
  - ♦ Bull Canyon (600 acres)
  - ♦ Daniels Canyon (2,496 acres)
  - ♦ Diamond Breaks (3,900 acres)
  - ♦ Flume Canyon (2,750 acres within the Vernal planning area)
  - ♦ West Cold Springs (3,200 acres)
  - ♦ Winter Ridge (42,462 acres)

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **WSA-1**

WSAs are right-of-way exclusion areas.

#### **WSA-2**

WSAs are closed to oil and gas leasing.

#### **WSA-3**

Fire activities and projects in WSAs will follow the IMP.

#### **WSA-4**

All WSAs will be managed as VRM Class I (55,808 acres).

#### **WSA-5**

WSAs are closed to OHV travel.

#### **WSA-6**

Should any WSA, in whole or in part, be released from wilderness consideration, such released lands will be managed in accordance with the goals, objectives, and management prescriptions established in this RMP, unless otherwise specified by Congress in its releasing legislation. The BLM will examine proposals in the released areas on a case-by-case basis, but will defer all actions that are inconsistent with RMP goals, objectives, and prescriptions, until it completes a land use plan amendment. (Because any released lands will continue to be managed consistent

with the prescriptions identified in this plan, unless and until the plan is amended, no separate analysis is required to address impacts to the released lands.)

## **SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES (SSS)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Conserve and protect special status species and enhance their habitats.
- Conserve and recover all state special status species, including federally listed species and the ecosystems on which they depend.
- Implement the management recovery measures necessary to increase populations of special status species, including federally listed animal species, and restore them to their historic ranges by enhancing, protecting, and restoring known and potential habitat and the ecosystems on which they depend.
- Mitigate or reduce long-term habitat fragmentation through avoidance and site-specific reclamation to return areas to productive levels.
- Manage all listed T&E plant and animal species and the habitats upon which they depend in such a manner as to conserve and recover these species to the point where protection under the ESA is no longer necessary.
- Manage non-listed sensitive species and the habitats upon which they depend in such a manner as to preclude the need to list them as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The guidance for this management is put forth in the BLM 6840 Manual.
- Implement the specific goals and objectives of recovery plans, conservation agreements and strategies, and approved activity level plans. The BLM will continue to work with USFWS and others to ensure that plans and agreements are updated as necessary to reflect the latest scientific data.
- Implement the direction contained in the Northwest National Fire Plan Project Design and Consultation Process and the Counterpart Regulations, including Alternative Consultation Agreements.
- Continue to work with USFWS and others to ensure that plans and agreements are updated as necessary to reflect the latest scientific data. Recovery plans have been finalized for six species:
  - ♦ Black-footed ferret (1999)
  - ♦ Mexican spotted owl (1995)
  - ♦ Bonytail (1990)
  - ♦ Colorado pikeminnow (1991)
  - ♦ Humpback chub (1990)
  - ♦ Razorback sucker (1999)
  - ♦ Two recovery plans were finalized for the peregrine falcon species and the bald eagle, which has been delisted.
- Implement the management necessary to increase populations of special status species, including federally listed animal species, and restore them to their historic ranges by enhancing, protecting, and restoring known and potential habitat.
- In cooperation with UDWR and USFWS, continue to implement the goals of the Black-footed Ferret Recovery Plan by augmenting existing population in the Snake John Wash area.

## **Management Decisions:**

### **SSS-1**

The BLM will continue to implement the specific goals and objectives of all recovery plans, conservation plans and strategies, and activity level plans. Recovery Plan revisions or new Recovery Plans will also be implemented.

### **SSS-2**

The BLM will continue to work with USFWS and others to ensure that plans and agreements are updated as necessary to reflect the latest scientific data. Recovery plans have been finalized for Uinta Basin hookless cactus, shrubby reed–mustard, and clay reed-mustard. A draft plan is being developed by the USFWS for Ute ladies’ tresses. A Conservation Plan has been prepared for Horseshoe milkvetch (*Astragalus equisolensis*), Goodrich beardtongue (*Penstemon goodrichii*), Graham beardtongue (*Penstemon grahamii*), and White River beardtongue (*Penstemon scarious* var. *albifluvis*).

### **SSS-3**

Where special status plant species, including listed T&E plant species, occur on public lands in the VPA, the BLM will collaborate with affected and or appropriate local, state, and federal agencies and researchers in the implementation of approved recovery plans and conservation strategies to protect, stabilize, and recover such species and their habitats. In addition to on-the-ground actions, strategies will be developed to provide public education on species at-risk, significance and importance of the species to the human and biological communities, and reasons for protective measures that will be applied to the lands involved. Continue or develop monitoring studies in order to determine population dynamics and trends.

### **SSS-4**

Continue and complete inventories and map current occupied and potential habitats for all listed and non-listed special status plant and animal species.

### **SSS-5**

Develop relevant species-specific plans utilizing USFWS guidelines where applicable. This may include habitat management plans, conservation agreements, or other suitable plans.

### **SSS-6**

In collaboration with the USFWS, UDWR, and other partners, develop and implement habitat management plans or conservation strategies for sensitive species.

### **SSS-7**

As additional data are collected over the life of the RMP, land managers will continually re-evaluate population and habitat status. Management emphasis will be to accumulate ecological information and distributional data to enhance the BLM’s ability to protect, conserve, recover, and manage these species in the future.

### **SSS-8**

The BLM will work with UDWR and other partners to implement conservation actions identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan (Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy) (UDWR,

2005), which identified priority wildlife species and habitats, assessed threats to their survival, and identified long-term conservation action needs (per WO IM 2006-114).

**SSS-9**

Collaborate with the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies to promote public education on species, their importance to the human and biological community, and reasons for protective measures that will be applied to the lands involved.

**SSS-10**

Conservation measures developed during the consultation on existing LUPs (June 2007) will be implemented as part of committed mitigation on new oil and gas leases. Appendix L contains lease notices developed from the conservation measures.

**SSS-11**

Enhance habitat and remove or control of non-native fish that threaten various life stages of the special status species fish.

**SSS-12**

The BLM will manage the black-footed ferret consistent with the 1999 Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Plan Amendment and those portions of the Cooperative Plan for the Reintroduction and Management of Black-footed Ferret in Coyote Basin, Uintah County, Utah that are consistent with the black-footed ferret plan amendment.

**SSS-13**

In conjunction with the USFWS and UDWR, participate in the development of a conservation plan for the white-tailed prairie dog.

**SSS-14**

Implement recovery plans actions for bonytail (1990), Colorado pikeminnow (1991), humpback chub (1990), and razorback sucker (1999).

**SSS-15**

Implement Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Colorado River cutthroat trout in the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming (signed April 2001), or more recent revisions of this agreement of which the BLM is a signatory. The following measures from the agreement will be implemented:

- Monitor vegetation with low level infra-red photography
- Continue macro-invertebrate sampling
- Fencing
- Stream bank stabilization
- Stream flow modifications
- Pursue in flow agreements

**SSS-16**

Per the Conservation Agreement/Conservation and Sportfishing Management Strategy for the Colorado River cutthroat trout, habitat will be provided, maintained and/or enhanced in Beaver,

Bitter, Crouse, Davenport, Jackson, Sears, Sweetwater Creeks, Tolivers, and Upper Willow (Browns Park), including tributaries for the reintroduction of Colorado River cutthroat trout.

**SSS-17**

Implement range-wide conservation agreement for bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), and roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*).

**SSS-18**

Implement the following mitigation measures for the yellow-billed cuckoo:

- Restore and conserve riparian areas and develop specific riparian vegetation objectives that will benefit bird species dependent on riparian areas
- Fence riparian areas to reduce or eliminate grazing pressure on young trees, especially willow and cottonwood.
- Apply rotation grazing or consider eliminating hot-season grazing in riparian areas to allow young trees to become established.
- Control or eliminate non-native plant species in riparian habitats.

**SSS-19**

Protect and restore cottonwood bottoms for Bald Eagle winter habitat along the Green and White rivers, at Pelican Lake, and at the Cliff Creek Bald Eagle roost site, as well as any new roost sites discovered in the future.

**SSS-20**

In cooperation with UDWR, maintain burrowing owl and short-eared owl nesting habitat and maintain/enhance prey-base habitat.

**SSS-21**

In cooperation with UDWR, maintain and enhance white-tailed prairie dog and other foraging habitat to provide primary food sources for the Ferruginous Hawk.

**SSS-22**

Implement the following mitigation measures for the Mexican spotted owl:

- Establish Protected Activity Centers (PACs) at all known Mexican Spotted Owl nest sites.
- Maintain habitat to support small mammal populations as a prey base for Mexican Spotted Owls in occupied and suitable owl habitats.
- Retain large down logs, large trees, and snags as prey habitats in occupied and suitable Mexican Spotted Owl habitats.

**SSS-23**

To enhance use by peregrine falcon, protect and enhance riparian habitat in Pariette Draw, as well as along the Green River, White River, Bitter Creek, and other drainages.

**SSS-24**

Raptor management will be guided by the use of *Best Management Practices for Raptors and Their Associated Habitats in Utah* (Utah BLM, 2006, Appendix A), utilizing seasonal and

spatial buffers, as well as mitigation, to maintain and enhance raptor nesting and foraging habitat, while allowing other resource uses.

**SSS-25**

No surface-disturbing activities within 0.25 mile of active Greater sage-grouse leks will be allowed year-round. No permanent facilities or structures will be allowed within two miles when possible.

**SSS-26**

No surface-disturbing activities within two miles of active Greater sage-grouse leks will be allowed from March 1 through June 15.

**SSS-27**

Within 0.5 mile of known active leks, the best available technology will be used to reduce noise, e.g., installation of multi-cylinder pumps, hospital sound-reducing mufflers, and placement of exhaust systems.

## **TRAVEL MANAGEMENT: ROADS AND TRAILS (TRC)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Establish working partnerships with local and state agencies, user groups, commercial providers, and other interested parties that will facilitate effective OHV program development, including the planning for and implementation of successful trail systems and use areas.
- Provide areas for OHV and motorized use, while protecting other resource values.
- The Approved RMP will comply with the BLM’s National OHV Policy.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **TRC-1**

In collaboration with interested parties, the BLM will make future route adjustments based on access needs, recreational opportunities, and natural resource constraints. These adjustments will occur only in areas with open and/or limited route designations and will be analyzed at the activity planning level.

#### **TRC-2**

The BLM, in preparing its RMP designations and its implementation-level travel management plans, is following policy and regulation authority found at:

- 43 CFR Part 8340
- 43 CFR Subpart 8364
- 43 CFR Subpart 9268

#### **TRC-3**

Where the authorized officer determines that OHVs are causing or will cause considerable adverse impacts, the authorized officer shall close or restrict such areas. The public will be notified.

#### **TRC-4**

The BLM will impose limitations on types of vehicles allowed on specific designated routes if monitoring indicates that a particular type of vehicle is causing disturbance to the soil, wildlife habitat, cultural or vegetative resources, especially by off-road travel in an area that is limited to designated routes.

#### **TRC-5**

Where routes will remain available for motorized use within WSAs, such use will continue on a conditional basis. Use of the existing routes in the WSAs (“ways” when located within WSAs — see Glossary) will continue as long as the use of these routes does not impair wilderness suitability, as provided by the IMP (BLM 1995). If Congress designates the area as wilderness, the routes will be closed. In the interim, if use and/or non-compliance are found through monitoring efforts to impair the area’s suitability for wilderness designation, the BLM will take further action to limit use of the routes, or close them. The continued use of these routes, therefore, is based on user compliance and non-impairment of wilderness values.

**TRC-6**

As per the State of Utah v. Andrus, October 1, 1979 (Cotter Decision), the BLM will grant the State of Utah reasonable access to state lands for economic purposes, on a case-by-case basis.

**TRC-7**

Nine Mile Canyon will continue to be managed as a National Backcountry Byway.

**TRC-8**

Crouse Canyon will be managed as a State of Utah Scenic Byway.

**TRC-9**

The Flaming Gorge–Uintas Scenic Byway and the Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway will be managed as National Scenic Byways.

**TRC-10**

The Chipeta Canyon Road will be open up to the Chipeta cabin.

**TRC-11**

Newly permitted routes will be obliterated and/or returned to their original condition when they no longer serve their permitted purpose or public interest.

**TRC-12**

Routes causing resource damage will be repaired by maintenance, upgrade, or realignment. BLM routes will be closed if none of the items mentioned above is economically feasible.

**TRC-13**

OHV travel will be limited to designated routes or closed except for managed open areas as follows:

- Acres that will be open to OHV travel: 6,202
- Acres that will be limited to OHV travel: 1,640,725
- Acres that will be closed to OHV travel: 78,595

The closed areas include:

- All WSAs and Instant Study Areas
- The White River area (SRMA, river corridor)
- The Lears Canyon ACEC
- The Nine Mile Acquired Area
- The upper portion of the Lower Flaming Gorge non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics

**TRC-14**

4,860 miles will be designated as OHV travel routes.

## **VEGETATION (VEG)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Ensure that management of native and naturalized plant species enhances, restores, and does not reduce the biological and genetic diversity of natural ecosystems.
- Maintain and/or enhance soil and watershed conditions and forage production.
- Achieve a desired ecological stage or desired plant community structure.
- Appropriately control and manage noxious weeds, poisonous and invasive plants, and insects.
- Protect special status plant species and their habitats.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **VEG-1**

Allow mechanical, fire, biological, or chemical control of noxious weeds and insect infestations within the resource planning area with restrictions to protect desired ground cover and water quality. Use the type of manipulation appropriate to and consistent with other land use objectives.

#### **VEG-2**

Continue implementation of noxious weed and invasive species control actions as per national guidance and local weed management plans in cooperation with state, federal, affected counties, adjoining private landowners and other partners or interests directly affected.

#### **VEG-3**

Utilize principles of integrated pest management for control and management of noxious weeds and invasive species. This includes prevention, control through mechanical, cultural, biological, and chemical methods.

#### **VEG-4**

Manage the vegetation to attain the ecological stage that will benefit wildlife in crucial habitat and livestock grazing. Manage vegetation in remaining areas that results in high vegetation species diversity.

#### **VEG-5**

Allow mechanical, fire, biological, cultural, or chemical methods for vegetation manipulation, using the type of manipulation appropriate to and consistent with other land use objectives, and incorporating standard operating procedures and BMPs, as applicable, to protect other resources.

#### **VEG-6**

Continue implementation of noxious weed and invasive species control actions as per national guidance and local weed management plans in cooperation with state, federal, affected counties, adjoining private landowners and other partners or interests directly affected.

**VEG-7**

This decision was a duplicate of VEG-4.

**VEG-8**

Use of pesticides and herbicides shall comply with the applicable federal and state law. Prior to the use of pesticides, project proponents shall obtain from the Authorized Officer written approval of Pesticide Use Proposal, which is a plan showing the type and quantity of material to be used; pest(s) to be controlled; method of application; location of storage and disposal of containers; and any other information deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer. Emergency use of pesticides shall be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer prior to use. In addition, within 24 hours of any pesticide application, a Pesticide Application Record must be completed. A similar procedure is required for the release of biological control agents.

**VEG-9**

Manage the vegetation to attain the ecological stage that will:

- Ensure sustainability
- Meet authorized use allocations (livestock, wildlife).
- Ensure species diversity

**VEG-10**

Manage the following vegetative types to achieve the desired mix of seral stages, as outlined below:

Vegetation Type	Existing Seral Stages by Vegetation Type				Desired Seral Stages by Vegetation Type			
	% Late	% Mid	% Early	# Acres	% Late	% Mid	% Early	# Acres
Aspen	90	5	5	2,927	45	30	25	2,927
Black Sagebrush	70	20	10	241,416	80	15	5	241,416
Desert Shrub	65	10	25	351,766	80	15	5	351,766
Douglas Fir	80	15	5	137,997	60	20	20	137,997
Four Wing Salt Bush	75	15	10	145,012	55	30	15	145,012
Gardner’s Salt Bush	80	15	5	58,704	90	5	5	58,704
Greasewood	90	5	5	61,213	55	30	15	61,213
Mountain Browse	85	10	5	109,987	55	30	15	109,987
Mountain Sagebrush	70	20	10	78,000	55	30	15	78,000
Pinyon-Juniper	80	10	10	614,518	60	25	15	614,518
Riparian	75	15	10	8,974	90	5	5	8,974
Wyoming Sagebrush	75	20	5	377,817	55	30	15	377,817

Source: Steve Strong, VFO, 2002

**VEG-11**

In order to help control noxious weeds power washing will be required for permitted uses.

**VEG-12**

Users of BLM-administered land will be required to use certified weed-free feed such as hay, straw, mulch, hay cubes, pellets, and grain.

**VEG-13**

Restore or rehabilitate up to 200,000 acres of sagebrush-steppe habitat over the life of the plan. Such vegetation treatment plans will consider the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Guidelines for Management of Sage-grouse Populations and Habitats and State and Local Conservation Plans.

## **VISUAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (VRM)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Manage the public lands (see Figure 16a) in such a way as to preserve those scenic vistas, which are deemed to be most important:
  - ♦ In their impact on the quality of life for residents and communities in the areas.
  - ♦ In their contribution to the quality of recreational visitor experiences.
  - ♦ In supporting the regional tourism industry and segments of the local economy dependent on public land resources.
- Seek to complement the rural, agricultural, historic, and urban landscapes on adjoining private, state, and tribal lands by maintaining the integrity of background vistas on the public lands.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **VRM-1**

Maintain or improve the scenic quality of the landscape and design and mitigate visual intrusions consistent with the objectives established for the specific visual resource management classes outlined in the BLM Handbook – Visual Resource Inventory (H-8410-1).

#### **VRM-2**

Approximately 57,776 acres will be managed as VRM Class I. All WSAs and the Instant Study Area are included as VRM Class I.

#### **VRM-3**

Approximately 259,734 acres will be managed as VRM Class II.

#### **VRM-4**

Approximately 759,977 acres will be managed as VRM Class III.

#### **VRM-5**

Approximately 642,450 acres will be managed as VRM Class IV.

## **WILD HORSES (WHB)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Provide for interim management of wild horses (see Figure 17a) as the goals and objectives of the Approved RMP for gathering and removal is completed.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### *Bonanza Herd Area*

##### **WHB-1**

The Bonanza Herd Area will not be managed for wild horses. Any horses present on Federal lands are in trespass. The Bonanza Herd Area delineation will continue.

##### **WHB-2**

Gap fences will not be constructed.

##### **WHB-3**

Additional water developments will not be provided for wild horses.

##### **WHB-4**

Up to 15 reservoirs outside of, but in close proximity to, the Bonanza Herd Area (HA) boundary will not be fenced.

#### *Hill Creek Herd Area*

##### **WHB-5**

All wild horses will be removed. The Hill Creek Herd Area will be declared unpopulated, and the Herd Management Area (HMA) designation will be removed. The area will only be managed as an HA with no specific management plan for wild horses. Any horses present after the wild horses are removed are in trespass.

##### **WHB-6**

No horse grazing permits will be issued on public lands within the former HMA or immediate areas to grazing permittees, including the Ute Indian Tribe.

##### **WHB-7**

A Nation-to-Nation agreement with the Ute Indian Tribe and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with adjacent private property owners will be entered into for the gathering of and phasing out of wild and feral horses on federal lands.

##### **WHB-8**

A gathering plan will be prepared for the removal of wild horses that will be made available for adoption under the BLM's Adopt-A-Horse program.

*Winter Ridge Herd Area*

**WHB-9**

All wild horses will be removed and, the Winter Ridge Herd Area will be declared unpopulated. The area will only be managed as an HA with no specific management plan for wild horses. Any horses present after the wild horses are removed are in trespass.

## **WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES (WL)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Provide, maintain, enhance, and protect habitats for a diversity of fish and wildlife species within the VPA.
- Maintain, restore, enhance, and protect crucial habitats for all fish and wildlife species and restore degraded habitats. Manage for unfragmented blocks of continuous habitat that will provide the life cycle requirements of a variety of wildlife species.
- Identify species and habitats most in need of conservation.
- Coordinate with UDWR and other partners to accomplish the population and habitat goals and objectives of current, revised, and/or future big game Herd Management Plans that are consistent with and meet the goals and objectives of this LUP.

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **WL-1**

The BLM will consider habitat banking (i.e., off-site mitigation) as a method to compensate for habitat loss due to surface-disturbing activities.

#### **WL-2**

Coordinate with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to prepare an annual operating plan for predator control within the VPA.

#### **WL-3**

Enlist APHIS' continued support to provide predator control within the black-footed ferret reintroduction area and provide carnivore samples for on-going disease monitoring.

#### **WL-4**

The VFO will assist in implementing the strategic plan for Utah's Initiative on Blue Ribbon Fisheries by managing aquatic and riparian habitats along the Green River, from the Ashley National Forest border to the Colorado/Utah border, for a quality cold-water sport fishery and Pelican Lake for a quality warm water sport fishery. In addition, any aquatic and riparian habitats along other waters identified as Blue Ribbon Fisheries will be managed for quality sport fisheries. The VFO will implement this initiative to the extent consistent and appropriate with the Vernal RMP and other land use authorizations.

#### **WL-5**

Reduce habitat fragmentation (see Figure 19a) by requiring oil and gas field development plans and encouraging such activities as well clustering, multiple drilling from a single pad, utilization of existing routes and pipelines, and other measures to minimize surface impacts.

#### **WL-6**

In accordance with Executive Order 13186, incorporate conservation measures for the protection of migratory birds, as outlined in the Utah Partners-In-Flight Avian Conservation Strategy and other scientific information, into all surface-disturbing activities.

**WL-7**

Manage habitat to prevent the need for additional listing of species under the Endangered Species Act and to contribute to the recovery of those species already listed.

**WL-8**

The BLM will approach compensatory mitigation on an “as appropriate” basis where it can be performed on-site, and on a voluntary basis where it is performed off-site, or, in accordance with current guidance.

**WL-9**

Minor adjustments to crucial wildlife habitat boundaries (see Figure 18a) periodically made by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) will be accommodated through plan maintenance.

**WL-10**

Wildlife habitat improvement projects will require consultation with UDWR on job design, construction techniques, and project feasibility.

**WL-11**

Work with permittees to provide water to wildlife on all BLM water developments, including troughs, after livestock are removed from an allotment or pasture. Wildlife escape devices will be installed on all new and existing water troughs in the VPA.

**WL-12**

Existing Habitat Management Plans (e.g., Browns Park, Myton, and Diamond Mountain-Ashley Creek) will continue to be implemented and revised, and new ones will be developed as necessary.

**WL-13**

Develop antelope and upland game guzzlers on a case-by-case basis considering the effects to migratory birds, wildlife, and livestock.

**WL-14**

Encourage coordination with oil and gas companies to inform the BLM and USFWS of plans for workovers in order to protect species from disturbances during critical time periods.

**WL-15**

Do not allow activities that will result in adverse impacts to antelope from May 1 through June 30 on currently identified 7,800 acres of antelope fawning ground in Antelope Flat. This restriction does not apply if antelope are not present or if impacts will be mitigated through other management actions. This restriction also does not apply to maintenance and operations of existing facilities.

**WL-16**

Modify existing fences on public lands where wildlife are adversely affected. Work with other surface management agencies or surface owners toward modifying wildlife-restricting fences that border public lands to improve natural movement of wildlife.

**WL-17**

All applications to pave roads will be evaluated in the site-specific NEPA analysis to determine the need for fencing. Applicants receiving a ROW grant will be required to fence the road if it is determined necessary to protect human and livestock health and safety.

**WL-18**

In order to protect crucial elk calving and deer fawning habitat, exploration, drilling, and other development activity will not be allowed from May 15 through June 30. Maintenance of producing wells will be allowed.

**WL-19**

Activities that would result in adverse impacts to deer and elk within crucial winter range would not be allowed from December 1 through April 30.

- This restriction would not apply if deer and/or elk are not present, or if it is determined through analysis and coordination with UDWR that impacts could be mitigated
- Factors to be considered would include snow depth, temperature, snow crusting, location of disturbance, forage quantity and quality, animal condition, and expected duration of disturbance.

**WL-20**

Within crucial deer winter range, no more than 10% of such habitat will be subject to surface disturbance and remain un-reclaimed at any given time.

**WL-21**

Raptor management will be guided by the use of "Best Management Practices for Raptors and Their Associated Habitats in Utah" (Utah BLM, 2006, Appendix A), utilizing seasonal and spatial buffers, as well as mitigation, to maintain and enhance raptor nesting and foraging habitat, while allowing other resource uses.

**WL-22**

Cooperate with utility companies, UDWR, and USFWS to prevent electrocution of raptors.

**WL-23**

Spatial and temporal buffers applied to disturbances in the vicinity of nesting raptors will be tailored to the individual raptor species involved and based on factors such as line of sight distance between nest and disturbance, type and duration of disturbance, nest structure security, sensitivity of the species to disturbance, observed responses to related disturbances, and the amount of other disturbances already occurring in the vicinity.

**WL-24**

Pursue a partnership between industries, local governments, USFWS, UDWR, the BLM, USFS, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and others as appropriate to establish a raptor management fund to be utilized for raptor population monitoring and habitat enhancement.

**WL-25**

In consultation with UDWR, promote appropriate habitat enhancement to contribute to maintaining a healthy predator population within the existing suitable habitat, while considering human safety, economic concerns, and other wildlife species.

**WL-26**

Placement of bear bait on public land will require a permit.

**WL-27**

Improve or increase forage through vegetation treatments that will setback the seral stage of crucial use areas, and, if necessary, re-seed areas with a variety of native and adapted non-native plant species.

**WL-28**

It is preferred that surface-disturbing actions within crucial deer winter range will be located in pinyon juniper rather than browse where both vegetation types occur.

**WL-29**

Acquire and protect crucial wildlife habitat through sale or exchange.

**WL-30**

Establish new and maintain all existing guzzlers and other water sources to improve habitat and distribution in the VPA.

**WL-31**

No surface-disturbing activities will be allowed from April 15 through May 31 within McCook and Monument Ridge mule deer migration corridors (Figure 18a).

**WL-32**

For neotropical migratory birds, provide habitat for the cavity-nesting non-game wildlife species and other species that utilize standing snags during a portion of their life cycles.

**WL-33**

In cooperation with permittees, manage grazing to allow regeneration of riparian tree species and to protect natural water sources for the habitat of neotropical migratory birds.

**WL-34**

Prevent the spread of non-native plants, especially cheatgrass, salt cedar, and Russian olive to maintain and enhance the habitat of neotropical migratory birds.

**WL-35**

Strive for a dense understory with a reduction in salt cedar and improvement of cottonwood regeneration to maintain and enhance the habitat of neotropical migratory birds.

**WL-36**

Reintroduction of native fish and wildlife species into appropriate habitats will be accomplished through coordination with UDWR, counties, and interested publics through appropriate public

participation processes. Reintroductions will involve, but may not be limited to, native species such as Rocky Mountain big horn sheep, moose, bison, and Colorado River cutthroat trout, and wild turkey.

**WL-37**

Implement the guidelines outlined in the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Cooperative Agreement between the BLM, Diamond Mountain Resource Area, Vernal District and UDWR Northeastern Region (1993), and the Vernal District Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep Guidance Plan (1987).

**WL-38**

Allotments near current or potential Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep habitat, where future transplants are likely to occur, will be considered for conversion from domestic sheep grazing to cattle grazing, as cattle are the preferred livestock within 10 miles of bighorn sheep habitat areas. Conversion will only be done in cooperation with affected parties.

**WL-39**

Potential reintroduction of gray wolves will be made in consultation with the UDWR, USFWS, the Ute Indian Tribe, counties, and private landowners through the Resource Advisory Council process for public involvement. The BLM will follow the State of Utah's management plan for wolves (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Publication #05-17 Prepared by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and The Utah Wolf Working Group).

**WL-40**

Habitat and forage will be provided for the emigration and/or reintroduction of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the following areas:

- Ashley Gorge
- Beaver Creek/Willow Creek Area
- Big Brush Creek
- Browns Park/Green River Corridor that includes Red Creek Canyon
- Crouse Canyon
- Diamond Mountain ridgetops
- Goslin Mountain
- Island Park /Dry Fork area
- Little Brush Creek
- Nine Mile Canyon
- Richard's Mountain
- Sears Creek Canyon
- Teepee Mountain
- Toliver's Creek
- White River
- Upper Book Cliffs (Willow Creek drainage upstream from Wood Canyon and the Bitter Creek drainage upstream from the Sweetwater confluence)

Forage required for Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep will be included in the AUMs allocated for wildlife.

**WL-41**

The BLM will continue to work cooperatively with UDWR and other entities to revise and implement the Book Cliffs Bison Management Plan.

**WL-42**

Habitat and forage will be provided for the emigration and/or reintroduction of moose populations. Forage required for moose will be included in the AUMs allocated for wildlife.

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## **WOODLANDS AND FOREST RESOURCES (WDF)**

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Follow national BLM Forest Health and Forest Management Standards and Guidelines to assess conditions and guide management actions for the forest and woodland resource.
- Allow public utilization of forest and woodland species before/after vegetative treatments that will be conducted to achieve desired future conditions. Allow the utilization of forest and woodland species as a tool for vegetative treatments.
- Manage forests and woodlands for long-term healthy habitat for animal and plant species, forest and woodland health, and riparian restoration and enhancement. Provide for timber production where feasible and compatible with forest health and other resource management objectives.
- Restore productivity and biodiversity in forest, woodland, and riparian areas. Allow for the harvest of pinyon/juniper for fuel wood, biomass, posts, pinyon nuts, Christmas and ornamental live trees, and special forest products. Manage pinyon/juniper to control encroachment and to improve wildlife habitat, woodland health, and watershed conditions.
- Manage oak by sustaining and enhancing some of the trees in the older age classes in areas that are suitable for maintaining and increasing acorn yields. Manage aspen to maintain diversity of age classes and to allow for species reestablishment.
- Encourage utilization of woodland products, including biomass, from lands that will be converted to other resource uses and salvage of woodland products where compatible with other resource management objectives.
- Pursue partnerships to provide social and economic benefits to local residents, businesses, and future generations. Encourage stewardship contracting in some areas to achieve various resource management objectives.
- Identify, maintain, and restore forest and woodland old-growth stands to a pre-fire suppression condition. The VFO will adopt the USFS old-growth definitions and identification standards as per the USFS document “Characteristics of Old-Growth Forests in the Intermountain Region (April 1999).” In instances where the area of application in the previous document does not apply to specific species (for example, *Pinus edulis*), use the document, “Recommended Old-Growth Definitions and Descriptions, USDA Forest Service Southwestern Region, (Sept.1992).”

### **Management Decisions:**

#### **WDF-1**

Develop a forest and woodland management plan incorporating the goals and objectives listed below:

- Allow for reforestation of forest and woodland sites after disturbances, where needed for stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, and succession of ecosystems; restoration of native species; and seed sources lost in a stand replacement fire or other stand replacing events.
- Areas determined to need re-seeding will be treated with a variety of plant species that are desirable for wildlife habitat, livestock, and watershed management, while

maintaining vegetation species diversity. The use of site adapted native plant species is encouraged.

- Forests and woodlands will be managed using timber harvest and/or woodcutting in conjunction with pre-commercial thinning, prescribed fire, chaining and other techniques to achieve site-specific objectives of restoring and maintaining forest health, biodiversity, and wildlife habitat; insect and disease control; as a tool for hazard fuel reduction and WUI projects; riparian restoration and; and other resource management goals.
- Forest and woodland treatments and harvests will continue to be designed in accordance with silvicultural prescriptions. Irregular boundaries of treatment and harvest areas will be required to reduce the detrimental impacts to the scenic values.
- Pinyon-juniper and oak management will be implemented to maintain commodity production, enhance resource values, and reduce pinyon-juniper dominance. Priority areas for pinyon-juniper treatments will be aspen stands, productive grasslands, forested areas, and shrublands where loss of vegetative diversity is likely. The treatments will be conducted to provide a mosaic pattern to meet wildlife habitat requirements.
- Oak stands on suitable sites will be managed to maintain and increase the size, vigor and productivity of individual trees to increase acorn yields. Methods may include cutting, pruning, and burning.
- Aspen stands will be managed to maintain or enhance distribution, density, regeneration and sustainability, and to favor regeneration of aspen where deemed appropriate. Stands will be managed for maintenance or enhancement using a variety of methods, including harvest cutting or burning.
- Allow for the harvesting, cutting, and pruning, of forest and woodland species that are a hazard to public safety, private property, structures, and cultural resources.
- Allow for the collection of common native seed and non-barrel cacti, except in periods of low vegetative or seed production.

**WDF-2**

Allow for the maintenance and enhancement of relict stands, picnic areas, and other stands of special significance by methods such as chemical, mechanical, and prescribed fire.

**WDF-3**

Allow for the management of cottonwood and other species to restore, enhance, and maintain riparian vegetation.

**WDF-4**

Forests and woodlands will be managed to maintain and restore ecosystems to a condition in which biodiversity is preserved and occurrences of fire, insects, disease and other disturbances will not exceed levels normally expected in healthy forests and woodlands.

**WDF-5**

Relict stands will be maintained for biological and genetic diversity.

**WDF-6**

Forests and woodlands will be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment; use of forest, woodland, and certain vegetation products in areas specified for this use, and other areas will be allowed to meet RMP goals.

**WDF-7**

The National Healthy Forest Initiative will be implemented.

**WDF-8**

The National Fire Plan will be implemented by conducting treatments to reduce fuel loadings, fire severity, and restoring historical disturbance regimes. Materials from such treatments, including those from hazard fuel reduction projects and wildland urban interface projects will be utilized.

**WDF-9**

A proactive program of woodland management will be initiated for the salvage of forest and woodland products that are dead and/or dying due to fire, disease, insect-kill, or other disturbance with the management intent of promoting healthy forest and woodlands.

**WDF-10**

Up to 546,152 acres of forest and woodland will have treatments or be harvested.

**WDF-11**

No vegetation removal will occur in WSAs.

**WDF-12**

Special management actions for the old-growth pinyon area in Bitter Creek would include:

- Establishing a research/monitoring program
- Restricting wood-cutting around old-growth pinyon
- NSO for old-growth pinyon (160 acres)

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## GLOSSARY

**Activity Plan:** A type of implementation plan (see Implementation Plan); an activity plan usually describes multiple projects and applies best management practices to meet land use plan objectives. Examples of activity plans include interdisciplinary management plans, habitat management plans, recreation area management plans, and allotment management plans.

**Actual Use:** A report of the actual livestock grazing use certified to be accurate by the permittee or lessee. Actual use may be expressed in terms of animal unit months or animal months.

**Air Pollutant:** Any substance in the air that could, if in high enough concentration, harm humans, animals, vegetation, or material. Air pollutants may include almost any natural or artificial matter capable of being airborne, in the form of solid particles, liquid droplets, gases, or a combination of these.

**Air Quality:** The composition of air with respect to quantities of pollution therein; used most frequently in connection with “standards” of maximum acceptable pollutant concentrations.

**All-Terrain Vehicle:** A wheeled or tracked vehicle, other than a snowmobile or work vehicle, designed primarily for recreational use or for the transportation of property or equipment exclusively on undeveloped road rights of way, marshland, open country or other unprepared surfaces.

**Allotment:** An area of land where one or more individuals graze their livestock. Generally consists of public land, State land, and private land. Livestock grazing is regulated by BLM who determines the number of livestock, class of livestock, and season of use for each allotment through the land use planning process.

**Allotment Management Plan:** A document prepared in consultation with the lessees or permittees involved, which applies to livestock operations on the public lands or on lands within National Forests in the eleven contiguous Western States and which:

- prescribes the manner in, and extent to, which livestock operations will be conducted in order to meet the multiple-use, sustained-yield, economic and other needs and objectives as determined for the lands by the Secretary concerned; and
- describes the type, location, ownership, and general specifications for the range improvements to be installed and maintained on the lands to meet the livestock grazing and other objectives of land management; and
- contains such other provisions relating to livestock grazing and other objectives found by the Secretary concerned to be consistent with the provisions of this Act and other applicable law.

**Alluvium:** General term for clay, silt, sand, or gravel deposited in the bed of a stream during relatively recent geologic time, as a result of stream action.

**Alternative:** In an EIS, one of a number of possible options for responding to the purpose and need for action.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution:** Any process used to prevent, manage, or resolve conflicts using procedures other than traditional courtroom litigation or formal agency adjudication.

**Amendment:** The process for considering or making changes in the terms, conditions, and decisions of approved RMPs. Usually only one or two issues are considered that involve only a portion of the planning area.

**Animal Unit:**

- (1) Considered to be one mature cow or approximately 1,000 pounds, either dry or with calf up to six months of age, or their equivalent, based on a standard amount of forage consumed.
- (2) A standardized unit of measurement for range livestock that is equivalent to one cow, one horse, five sheep, five goats, or four reindeer, all over 6 months of age.

**Animal Unit Month:** The amount of dry forage required by one animal unit for one month based on a forage allowance of 26 pounds per day.

**Animals:** Any member of the animal kingdom, including without limitation any mammal, fish, bird, amphibian, reptile, mollusk, crustacean, arthropod, or other invertebrate, and includes any part, product, egg, or offspring thereof, or the dead body or parts thereof. As used here, the words “animals,” “fish or wildlife,” and “wildlife” are interchangeable.

**Annual (plant):** A plant whose life cycle is completed in 1 year or season.

**Aquifer:** Rock or rock formations (often sand, gravel, sandstone, or limestone) that contain or carry groundwater and act as water reservoirs.

**Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC):** Means areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

**Arid:** A term applied to regions or climates where lack of sufficient moisture severely limits growth and production of vegetation. The limits of precipitation vary considerably according to temperature conditions.

**Assessment:** The act of evaluating and interpreting data and information for a defined purpose.

**Authorized Officer:** The Federal employee who has the delegated authority to make a specific decision.

**Avoidance Areas:** Areas with sensitive resource values where rights-of-way and Section 302 permits, leases, and easements would be strongly discouraged. Authorization made in avoidance areas would have to be compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated and not is otherwise feasible on lands outside the avoidance area.

**Back Country Byways:** These roads generally do not meet full federal safety standards, meaning they are not wide enough, or graded enough, or level enough to be safe year-round, for passenger cars. They do, however, meet the highest standard of scenic, recreational and historical criteria.

**Beneficial Outcomes:** Also referenced as “Recreation Benefits”; improved conditions, maintenance of desired conditions, prevention of worse conditions, and the realization of desired experiences.

**Best Management Practices (BMPs):** A suite of techniques that guide, or may be applied to, management actions to aid in achieving desired outcomes. BMPs are often developed in conjunction with land use plans, but they are not considered a land use plan decision unless the land use plan specifies that they are mandatory. They may be updated or modified without a plan amendment if they are not mandatory.

**Big Game:** Any species of hooved wildlife that are hunted, such as elk, deer, desert bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, moose, bison, mountain goats and pronghorn antelope.

**Biological Assessment:** The document prepared by or under the direction of BLM concerning listed and proposed species and designated and proposed critical habitat that may be present in the action area and contains the BLM's determination of potential effects of the action on such species and habitat. Biological assessments are required for formal consultations and conferences on "major construction projects." They are recommended for all formal consultations and formal conferences and many informal consultations where a written evaluation of the effects of an action on listed or proposed species and on designated or proposed critical habitat is needed. Also referred to as a BA.

**Biological Opinion:** The document which includes:

- (1) The opinion of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' and/or the NOAA-Fisheries as to whether or not a Federal action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat
- (2) A summary of the information on which the opinion is based
- (3) A detailed discussion of the effects of the action on listed species or designated critical habitat.

Depending upon the determination of jeopardy or non-jeopardy, the biological opinion may contain reasonable and prudent alternatives, a statement of anticipated take of listed animals and conservation recommendations for listed plants. Also referred to as a BO.

**Biological Soil Crusts** (cryptogamic, cryptobiotic, microbiotic or microphytic soil crusts): Biological Soil Crusts are a complex mosaic of cyanobacteria, green algae, lichens, mosses, microfungi, and other bacteria. Cyanobacterial and microfungi filaments weave through the top few millimeters of soil, gluing loose particles together and forming a matrix that stabilizes and protects soil surfaces from erosive forces. These crusts occur in all hot, cool, and cold arid and semi-arid regions. They may constitute up to 70% of the living cover in some plant

communities; however, biological soil crusts have only recently been recognized as having a major influence in terrestrial ecosystems.

**Browse:**

- (1) The part of shrubs, half shrubs, woody vines, and trees available for animal consumption
- (2) To search for or consume browse

**California Puff (CALPUFF):** CALPUFF is an advanced non-steady-state meteorological and air quality modeling system adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as the preferred model for assessing long range transport of pollutants and their impacts involving complex meteorological conditions.

**Candidate Species:** Plant and animal taxa for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient information on their status and threats to support proposing the species for listing as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act but for which issuance of a proposed rule is currently precluded by higher priority listing actions. Separate lists for plants, vertebrate animals, and invertebrate animals are published periodically in the *Federal Register*.

**Carrying capacity:** The maximum population of a particular species a particular region can support without hindering future generations' ability to maintain the same population.

**Casual Use:** Mining activities that only negligibly disturb federal lands and resources. Casual use generally includes the collecting of geochemical, rock, soil, or mineral specimens using hand tools, hand panning, and non-motorized sluicing. It also generally includes use of metal detectors, gold spears, and other battery-operated devices for sensing the presence of minerals, and hand battery-operated dry washers. Casual use does not include use of mechanized earth-moving equipment, truck-mounted drilling equipment, suction dredges, motorized vehicles in areas designated as closed to off-road vehicles, chemicals, or explosives. It also does not include occupancy or operations where the cumulative effects of the activities result in more than negligible disturbance.

**Class I Area:** Under the 1977 Clean Air Act amendments, all international parks, parks larger than 6,000 acres, and national wilderness areas larger than 5,000 acres that existed on August 7, 1977. This class provides the most protection to pristine lands by severely limiting the amount of additional air pollution that can be added to these areas.

**Climax Plant Community (e.g. climax):** The final or stable biotic community in a successional series; it is self-perpetuating and in equilibrium with the physical habitat.

**Closed:** Generally denotes that an area is not available for a particular use or uses; refer to specific definitions found in law, regulations, or policy guidance for application to individual programs. For example, 43 CFR 8340.0-5 sets forth the specific meaning of “closed” as it relates to off-highway vehicle use, and 43 CFR 8364 defines “closed” as it relates to closure and restriction orders.

**Code of Federal Regulations (CFR):** A codification of the general and permanent rules published in the *Federal Register* by the executive departments and agencies of the federal government.

**Collaboration:** A cooperative process in which interested parties, often with widely varied interests, work together to seek solutions with broad support for managing public and other lands.

**Collaborative Partnership and Collaborative Stewardship:** Refers to people working together, sharing knowledge and resources, to achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks.

**Competition:** The interaction between organisms as a result of the removal or reduction of a common, required resource from the environment. Resources may include water, nutrients, light, oxygen, carbon dioxide, food and shelter.

**Community Recreation-Tourism Market:** A community or communities dependent on public lands recreation and/or related tourism use, growth, and/or development. Major investments in facilities and visitor assistance are authorized within SRMAs where BLM's strategy is to target demonstrated community recreation-tourism market demand. Here, recreation management actions are geared toward meeting primary recreation-tourism market demand for specific activity, experience, and benefit opportunities. These opportunities are produced through maintenance of prescribed natural resource and/or community setting character and by structuring and implementing management, marketing, monitoring, and administrative actions accordingly.

**Conditions of Approval:** Conditions or provisions (requirements) under which an Application for a Permit to Drill or a Sundry Notice is approved.

**Conformity or Conformance:**

- A resource management action shall be specifically provided for in the plan, or if not specifically mentioned, shall be clearly consistent with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the approved plan or plan amendment.
- That a proposed action shall be specifically provided for in the land use plan or, if not specifically mentioned, shall be clearly consistent with the goals, objectives, or standards of the approved land use plan.

**Conservation Agreement:** A formal signed agreement between the USFWS or NOAA-Fisheries and other parties that implements specific actions, activities, or programs designed to eliminate or reduce threats to, or otherwise improve the status of a species. Conservation agreements can be developed at a state, regional, or national level and generally include multiple agencies at both the state and Federal level, as well as Tribes. Depending on the types of commitments the BLM makes in a conservation agreement and the level of signatory authority, plan revisions or amendments may be required prior to signing the conservation agreement, or subsequently in order to implement the conservation agreement.

**Conservation Strategy:** A strategy outlining current activities or threats that are contributing to the decline of a species, along with the actions or strategies needed to reverse or eliminate such a decline or threats. Conservation strategies are generally developed for species of plants and animals that are designated as BLM Sensitive species or that have been determined by the Fish and Wildlife Service or NOAA-Fisheries to be Federal candidates under the Endangered Species Act.

**Consistency:** Means that the proposed land use plan does not conflict with officially approved plans, programs, and policies of Tribes, other Federal agencies, and state and local governments (to the extent practical with Federal law, regulation, and policy).

**Consultation:** Exchange of information and interactive discussion; when the “C” in consultation is capitalized it refers to consultation mandated by statute or regulation that has prescribed parties, procedures, and timelines (e.g. Consultation under National Environmental Policy Act or Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act).

**Contiguous:** Lands or legal subdivisions having a common boundary; lands having only a common corner are not contiguous.

**Cooperating Agency:**

- An eligible governmental entity that has entered into a written agreement with the BLM establishing cooperating agency status in the planning and NEPA processes. BLM and the cooperating agency will work together under the terms of the agreement. Cooperating agencies will participate in the various steps of BLM's planning process as feasible, given the constraints of their resources and expertise.
- Assists the lead Federal agency in developing an Environmental Analysis or Environmental Impact Statement. The Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA defines a cooperating agency as any agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise for proposals covered by NEPA. Any tribe of Federal, State, or local government jurisdiction with such qualifications may become a cooperating agency by agreement with the lead agency.
- Means any Federal agency other than a lead agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal (or a reasonable alternative) for legislation or other major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The selection and responsibilities of a cooperating agency are described in §1501.6. A State or local agency of similar qualifications or, when the effects are on a reservation, an Indian Tribe, may by agreement with the lead agency become a cooperating agency.

**Corridor:** A wide strip of land within which a proposed linear facility could be located.

**Council on Environmental Quality:** An advisory council to the President of the United States established by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. It reviews Federal programs for their effect on the environment, conducts environmental studies, and advises the president on environmental matters.

**Criteria:** Data and information that are used to examine or establish the relative degrees of desirability of alternatives or the degree to which a course of action meets an intended objective.

**Criteria pollutants:** Air pollutants designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as potentially harmful and for which ambient air quality standards have been set to protect the public health and welfare. The criteria pollutants are carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, hydrocarbons, and lead.

**Critical Habitat:**

- (1) the specific areas within the geographical area currently occupied by a species, at the time it is listed in accordance with the Endangered Species Act, on which are found those physical or biological features:
  - (i) essential to the conservation of the species, and
  - (ii) that may require special management considerations or protection, and
- (2) specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by a species at the time it is listed upon determination by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the NOAA-Fisheries that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species.

Critical habitats are designated in 50 CFR Parts 17 and 226. The constituent elements of critical habitat are those physical and biological features of designated or proposed critical habitat essential to the conservation of the species, including, but not limited to:

- (1) space for individual and population growth, and for normal behavior;
- (2) food, water, air, light, minerals, or other nutritional or physiological requirements;
- (3) cover or shelter;
- (4) sites for breeding, reproduction, rearing of offspring, germination, or seed dispersal; and
- (5) habitats that are protected from disturbance or are representative of the historic geographic and ecological distribution of a species.

**Criteria pollutants:** Air pollutants designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as potentially harmful and for which ambient air quality standards have been set to protect the public health and welfare. The criteria pollutants are carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, hydrocarbons, and lead.

**Cultural Resources:** Nonrenewable evidence of human occupation or activity as seen in any area, site, building, structure, artifact, ruin, object, work of art, architecture, or natural feature, which was important in human history at the national, state, or local level.

**Cultural Site:** Any location that includes prehistoric and/or historic evidence of human use, or that has important sociocultural value.

**Cumulative Impact:** The impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

**Designated Roads and Trails:** Specific roads and trails identified by the BLM (or other agencies) where some type of motorized vehicle use is appropriate and allowed either seasonally or year-long.

**Deferred-Rotation Grazing:** Any grazing system, which provides for a systematic rotation of the deferment among pastures.

**Deferment (deferred grazing, rotational deferred):** The delay of grazing to achieve a specific management objective. A strategy aimed at providing time for plant reproduction, establishment of new plants, restoration of plant vigor, a return to environmental conditions appropriate for grazing, or the accumulation of forage for later use.

**Desired Outcomes:** A type of land use plan decision expressed as a goal or objective.

**Desired Plant Community:** Of the several plant communities that may occupy a site, the one that has been identified through a management plan to best meet the plan's objectives for the site. It must protect the site as a minimum.

**Development Well:** A well drilled within the known or proven productive area of an oil field with expectation of producing oil or gas from the producing reservoir.

**Discretionary Closure:** Those lands where the BLM has determined that fluid minerals leasing, even with the most restrictive stipulations, would not adequately protect other resources, values, or land uses.

**Disturbance Zone:** Area of influence around a disturbance causing a change in animal behavior such as: leaving the area, increased stress, abandoning young, not breeding, and aberrant behavior.

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS):** The draft statement of the environmental effects of a major federal action which is required under Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act, and released to the public and other agencies for comment and review.

**Easement:** A right afforded a person or agency to make limited use of another's real property for access or other purposes.

**Ecological Balance:** The stability of an ecosystem resulting from interacting processes of its components.

**Ecological Site:** A kind of land with a specific potential natural community and specific physical site characteristics, differing from other kinds of land in their ability to produce distinctive kinds and amounts of vegetation and to respond to management. Ecological sites are defined and described with information about soil, species composition, and annual production.

**Ecological Site Description:** A written narrative of the description of soils, climate, vegetation, uses, and potential of a kind of land with specific physical characteristics to produce distinctive kinds and amounts of vegetation.

**Ecological Site Inventory:** A resource inventory that involves the use of soils information to map ecological sites and plant communities and the collection of natural resource and vegetation attributes. The sampling data from each of these soil-vegetation units, referred to as site write-up areas (SWAs), become the baseline data for natural resource management and planning.

**Ecosystem:** Includes all the organisms of an area, their environment, and the linkages or interactions among all of them; all parts of an ecosystem are interrelated. The fundamental unit in ecology, containing both organisms and abiotic environments, each influencing the properties of the other and both necessary for the maintenance of life.

**Effect:** Environmental change resulting from a proposed action. Direct effects are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place, while indirect effects are caused by the action but are later in time or further removed in distance, although still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems. Effect and impact are synonymous as used in this document.

**Eligible Cooperating Agency:**

- A Federal agency other than a lead agency that is qualified to participate in the development of environmental impact statements as provided in 40 CFR 1501.6 and 1508.5 or, as necessary, other environmental documents that BLM prepares, by virtue of its jurisdiction by law as defined in 40 CFR 1508.15, or special expertise as defined in 40 CFR 1508.26; or
- A federally recognized Indian tribe, a state agency, or a local government agency with similar qualifications.

**Endangered species:** Plant or animal species that are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant part of their range.

**Endemic species:** Plants or animals that occur naturally in a certain region and whose distribution is relatively limited to a particular locality.

**Environmental Assessment:** A concise public document that analyzes the environmental impacts of a proposed federal action and provides sufficient evidence to determine the level of significance of the impacts.

**Environmental Impact Statement:** A detailed written statement required by the National Environmental Policy Act when an agency proposes a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

**Environmental Justice:** The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socio-economic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of Federal, state, local, and Tribal programs and policies (see Executive Order 12898).

**Ephemeral Stream-Flow:** A stream that flows only in direct response to precipitation, and whose channel is above the water table at all times.

**Erosion:** The wearing away of the land/soil by water, wind, ice, or other geological agents. Often categorized into sheet erosion (even, overland flow), rill erosion (numerous but small channels), and gully erosion (less numerous but more major channels). Natural erosion is that which occurs under natural conditions (without the influence of man’s activities).

**Evaluation (plan evaluation):** The process of reviewing the land use plan and the periodic plan monitoring reports to determine whether the land use plan decisions and NEPA analysis are still valid and whether the plan is being implemented.

**Exclusion Area:** Areas with sensitive resource values where rights-of-way and 302 permits, leases, and easements would not be authorized.

**Exotic species:** Includes species introduced into an area that may have adapted to the area and compete with resident native (indigenous) species.

**Exploration Well:** A well drilled in the area where there is no oil or gas production (also known as wildcat well).

**Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA):** Public lands unit identified in land use plans containing all acreage not identified as a SRMA. Recreation management actions within an ERMA are limited to only those of a custodial nature.

**Fauna:** The vertebrate and invertebrate animals of the area or region.

**Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976:** Public Law 94-579. October 21, 1976, often referred to as the BLM’s “Organic Act,” which provides the majority of the BLM’s legislated authority, direction, policy, and basic management guidance.

**Federal Register:** A daily publication, which reports Presidential and Federal, Agency documents.

**Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS):** A revision of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement based on public and agency comments on the draft.

**Fire Management Plan:** A strategic plan that defines a program to manage wild land and prescribed fires and documents the fire management program in the approved land use plan; the plan is supplemented by operational procedures such as preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans, and prevention plans.

**Fisheries habitat:** Streams, lakes, and reservoirs that support fish populations.

**Flood Plain:** The land area adjacent to a stream which is periodically flooded; an important component of a riparian area.

**Fluid Minerals:** Oil, gas, and geothermal resources.

**Forage:**

- (1) All browse and herbaceous growth available and acceptable to grazing/browsing animals.
- (2) Vegetation eaten by animals, especially grazing and browsing animals.

**Formal Consultation:** A component of the consultation process under Section 7 of the ESA that commences with the BLM's written request for consultation after it has determined that its action may affect and is likely to adversely affect listed species or designated critical habitats.

**Fossil:** Mineralized or petrified form from a past geologic age, especially from previously living things.

**Fragmentation (habitat):** The break-up of a large land area (such as a forest) into smaller patches isolated by areas converted to a different land type.

**Fuel (fire):** Dry, dead parts of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation that can burn readily.

**Geographic Information System:** A computer system capable of storing, analyzing, and displaying data and describing places on the earth's surface.

**Goal:** A broad statement of a desired outcome. Goals are usually not quantifiable and may not have established time frames for achievement.

**Grandfather, to:** To exempt groups or individuals from provisions of laws or regulations because of preexisting conditions, such as exempting mining operations existing before new mining regulations are implemented from provisions of those new regulations.

**Grazing:** Consumption of forage from rangelands or pastures by livestock, wild horses and burros, or wildlife.

**Grazing System:** A specialization of grazing management which defines the periods of grazing and non-grazing. Descriptive common names may be used; however, the first usage of a grazing system name in a publication should be followed by a description using a standard format. This format should consist of at least the following: the number of pastures (or units); number of

herds; length of grazing periods; length of non-grazing periods for any given unit in the system followed by an abbreviation of the unit of time used. Examples of grazing systems are deferred grazing, deferred-rotation, rotation, rest-rotation, and short duration grazing.

**Groundwater:** Subsurface water that is in the zone of saturation. The top surface of the groundwater is the “water table.” Source of water for wells, seeps, and springs.

**Guidance:** Any type of written communication or instruction that transmits objectives, goals, constraints, or any other direction that helps the Field Managers and staff know how to prepare a specific resource management plan.

**Guidelines:** Actions or management practices that may be used to achieve desired outcomes, sometimes expressed as best management practices. Guidelines may be identified during the land use planning process, but they are not considered a land use plan decision unless the plan specifies that they are mandatory. Guidelines for grazing administration must conform to 43 CFR 4180.2.

**Habitat:**

- (1) The natural abode of a plant or animal that provides food, water, shelter, and other biotic, climatic and soils factors necessary to support life.
- (2) The natural environment of a plant or animal, including all biotic, climatic, and soil conditions, or other environmental influences affecting living conditions. The place where an organism lives.

**Herbaceous:**

- (1) Non-woody plant growth.
- (2) Green and leaf-like in appearance or texture; includes grasses, grass-like plants, and forbs, with little or no woody component.

**Herd Area (HA):** The geographic area identified as having been used by a herd as its habitat in 1971.

**Herd Management Area (HMA):**

- (1) Public land under the jurisdiction of the BLM that has been designated for special management emphasizing the maintenance of an established wild horse herd.
- (2) Areas established for wild and free-roaming horses and burros through the land use planning process. The Wild Free-roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 requires that wild free-roaming horses and burros be considered for management where they were found at the time Congress passed the Act. The BLM initially identified 264 areas of use as herd management areas.

**Herd Management Area Plan:** The area within the HA established for the maintenance of wild horse and/or burro herds. BLM considers the appropriate management level for the herd, the habitat requirements of the animals, the relationships with other uses of the public and adjacent private lands, and the constraints contained within (43 CFR 4710.3-1). The HMA does not

always include the complete acreage of an HA (and often does not), and depends on conditions surrounding each area.

**Impact:** A modification of the existing environment caused by an action (such as construction or operation of facilities).

**Impacts (or Effects):** Environmental consequences (the scientific and analytical basis for comparison of alternatives) as a result of a proposed action. Effects may be either direct, which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place, or indirect, which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable, or cumulative.

**Implementation Decisions:** Decisions that take action to implement land use plan decisions. They are generally appealable to Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA).

**Implementation Plan:** A site-specific plan written to implement decisions made in a land use plan. An implementation plan usually selects and applies best management practices to meet land use plan objectives. Implementation plans are synonymous with “activity” plans. Examples of implementation plans include interdisciplinary management plans, habitat management plans, and allotment management plans.

**Indian Tribe:** Any Indian group in the conterminous United States that the Secretary of the Interior recognizes as possessing tribal status.

**Indicator Species (key species):**

- (1) Species that indicate the presence of certain environmental conditions, seral stages, or previous treatment.
- (2) One or more plant species selected to indicate a certain level of grazing use.

**Indigenous:** Living or occurring naturally in an area; native, endemic people, flora, or fauna.

**Indirect effects:** Impacts that are caused by an action, but are later in time or farther removed in distance, although still reasonably foreseeable.

**Informal Consultation:** a component of the consultation process that includes all discussions, correspondence, etc., between the FWS and/or NMFS and the BLM agency or the designated non-Federal representative, prior to formal consultation, to determine if a proposed action may affect listed species or critical habitat and to use FWS and/or NMFS expertise, if necessary, to modify the proposed action to avoid potentially adverse effects.

**Interdisciplinary Team:** A group of individuals with different training, representing the physical sciences, social sciences, and environmental design arts, assembles to solve a problem or perform a task. The members of the team proceed to a solution with frequent interaction so that each discipline may provide insights to any stage of the problem and disciplines may combine to provide new solutions. The number and disciplines of the members preparing the

plan vary with circumstances. A member may represent one or more discipline or Bureau program interest.

**Intermittent or Seasonal Stream-Flow:** A stream that flows only at certain times of the year when it receives water from springs or from some surface source such as melting snow in mountainous areas.

**Invasive plants:** Plants that are not part of (if exotic), or are a minor component of (if native), the original plant community or communities that have the potential to become a dominant or co-dominant species on the site if their future establishment and growth is not actively controlled by management interventions, or are classified as exotic or noxious plants under state or federal law. Species that become dominant for only one to several years (e.g. short-term response to drought or wildfire) are not invasive plants.

**Invertebrate:** Small animals that lack a backbone or spinal column. Spiders, insects, and worms are examples of invertebrates.

**Land Classification:** A process for determining the suitability of public lands for certain types of disposal or lease under the public land laws or for retention under multiple use management.

**Land Use Allocation:** The identification in a land use plan of the activities and foreseeable development that are allowed, restricted, or excluded for all or part of the planning area, based on desired future conditions.

**Land Use Plan:** A set of decisions that establish management direction for land within an administrative area, as prescribed under the planning provisions of FLPMA; an assimilation of land-use-plan-level decisions developed through the planning process, regardless of the scale at which the decisions were developed. The term includes both RMPs and MFPs.

**Land Use Plan Decision:** Establishes desired outcomes and actions needed to achieve them. Decisions are reached using the BLM planning process in 43 CFR 1600. When they are presented to the public as proposed decisions, they can be protested to the BLM Director. They are not appeal able to Interior Board of Land Appeals.

**Landscape:** All the natural features such as grasslands, hills, forest, and water, which distinguish one part of the earth's surface from another part; usually that portion of land that the eye can comprehend in a single view, including all of its natural characteristics.

**Leaseable Minerals:** Those minerals or materials designated as leaseable under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. They include coal, phosphate, asphalt, sulphur, potassium, and sodium minerals, and oil, gas, and geothermal.

**Lease:**

- (1) A legal document that conveys to an operator the right to drill for oil, gas;
- (2) the tract of land, on which a lease has been obtained, where producing wells and production equipment are located.

**Lease Notice:** Provides more detailed information concerning limitations that already exist in law, lease terms, regulations, and operational orders. A Lease Notice also addresses special items the lessee would consider when planning operations, but does not impose new or additional restrictions.

**Lease Stipulation:** A modification of the terms and conditions on a standard lease form at the time of the lease sale.

**Lek:** An assembly area where birds, especially sage grouse, carry on display and courtship behavior.

**Limited:** Generally denotes that an area or roads and trails are available for a particular use or uses. Refer to specific program definitions found in law, regulations, or policy guidance for application to individual programs. For example, 43 CFR 8340.0-5 defines the specific meaning of “limited” as it relates to off-highway vehicle use.

**Limited (Areas or Trails)** Designated areas or trails where the use of off-road vehicles is subject to restrictions, such as limiting the number or types of vehicles allowed, dates and times of use (seasonal restrictions), limiting use to existing roads and trails, or limiting use to designated roads and trails. Under the designated roads and trails designation, use would be allowed only on roads and trails that are signed for use. Combinations of restrictions are possible, such as limiting use to certain types of vehicles during certain times of the year.

**Local Government:** Any political subdivision of the State and any general purpose unit of local government with resource planning, resource management, zoning, or land use regulation authority.

**Locatable Minerals:** Minerals subject to exploration, development, and disposal by staking mining claims as authorized by the Mining Law of 1872, as amended. This includes deposits of gold, silver, and other uncommon minerals not subject to lease or sale.

**Major Construction Activity:** A construction project (or other undertaking having similar physical effects) which is a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as referred to in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)).

**Management Decision:** A decision made by the BLM to manage public lands. Management decisions include both land use plan decisions and implementation decisions

**Management Opportunities:** A component of the analysis of the management situation; actions or management directions that could be taken to resolve issues or management concerns.

**Marsh (land):** Flat, wet, treeless land usually covered by water and dominated by marsh grasses, indigenous rushes, sedges, or other grass-like plants.

**Meadow (grassland, pasture, pastureland, rangeland):** A tract of grassland where productivity of indigenous or introduced forage is modified due to characteristics of the landscape position or hydrology. May be characterized as: hay meadow, native meadow, mountain meadow, wet meadow, or other designations.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Usually documents an agreement reached amongst federal agencies.

**Mineral:** Any solid or fluid inorganic substance that can be extracted from the earth for profit.

**Mineral Entry:** The filing of a claim on public land to obtain the right to any minerals it may contain.

**Mineral Estate:** The ownership of minerals, including rights necessary for access, exploration, development, mining, ore dressing, and transportation operations.

**Mineral Materials:** Materials such as common varieties of sand, stone, gravel, pumice, pumicite, and clay, that are not obtainable under the mining or leasing laws but that can be acquired under the Mineral Materials Act of 1947, as amended.

**Mineral Reserves:** Known mineral deposits that is recoverable under present conditions but is as yet undeveloped.

**Mineral Rights:** Mineral rights outstanding are third-party rights, as interest in minerals not owned by the person or party conveying the land to the United States. It is an exception in a deed that is the result of prior conveyance separating title of certain minerals from the surface estate.

**Mineral Withdrawal:** A formal order that withholds federal lands and minerals from entry under the Mining Law of 1872 and closes the area to mineral location (staking mining claims) and development.

**Minimize:**

- (1) To reduce the adverse impact of an operation to the lowest practical level.
- (2) Apply best available technology, management practices, and scientific knowledge to reduce the magnitude, extent, and/or duration of impacts.

**Mining Claim:** A parcel of land that a miner takes and holds for mining purposes, having acquired the right of possession by complying with the Mining Law and local laws and rules. A single mining claim may contain as many adjoining locations as the locator may make or buy. There are four categories of mining claims: lode, placer, mill site, and tunnel site.

**Mitigation:** Steps taken to:

- (1) avoid an impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;
- (2) minimize an impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation;

- (3) rectify an impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;
- (4) reduce or eliminate an impact over time by preserving and maintaining operations during the life of the action; and,
- (5) compensate for an impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

**Mitigation Measures:**

- (1) Methods or procedures that reduce or lessen the impacts of an action.
- (2) Means taken to avoid, compensate for, rectify, or reduce the potential adverse impact of an action.

**Monitoring (plan monitoring):** The process of tracking the implementation of land use plan decisions and collecting and assessing data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use planning decisions.

**Multiple Use:** The management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people; making the most judicious use of the lands for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; the use of some lands for less than all of the resources; a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historical values; and harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the lands and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or greatest unit output.

**National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS):** Standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency for the maximum levels of pollutants that can exist in the outdoor air without unacceptable effects on human health or the public welfare.

**National Environmental Policy Act of 1969:** An act that encourages productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment and promotes efforts to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; enriches the understanding or the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation, and establishes the Council on Environmental Quality.

**National Wild and Scenic Rivers:** Rivers designated in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that are classified in one of three categories, depending on the extent of development and accessibility along each section. In addition to being free flowing, these rivers and their immediate environments must possess at least one outstandingly remarkable value: scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historical, cultural, or other similar values.

**National Wild and Scenic Rivers System:** A system of nationally designated rivers and their immediate environments that have outstanding scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife,

historic, cultural, and other similar values and are preserved in a free-flowing condition (Wild and Scenic River Act).

**Native Species:** Species that historically occurred or currently occur in a particular ecosystem and were not introduced.

**Natural Community:** An assemblage of organisms indigenous to an area that is characterized by distinct combinations of species occupying a common ecological zone and interacting with one another.

**Natural Resources:** Water, soil, plants and animals, nutrients, and other resources produced by the earth's natural processes.

**Neotropical Migratory Birds:** Birds that travel to Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and Mexico during the fall to spend the winter and then return to the United States and Canada During the spring to breed. These birds include almost half of the bird species that breed in the United States and Canada.

**No Action Alternative:** The most likely condition to exist in the future if current management direction were to continue unchanged.

**No Surface Occupancy:** A fluid minerals leasing constraint that prohibits occupancy or disturbance on all or part of the lease surface to protect special values or uses. Lessees may exploit the fluid mineral resources under the leases restricted by this constraint through use of directional drilling from sites outside the area.

**No Surface Disturbance:** In general, this applies to an area where an activity is allowed so long as it does not disturb the surface.

**Noxious Weeds:** A plant species designated by Federal or State law as generally possessing one or more of the following characteristics: aggressive and difficult to manage; parasitic; a carrier or host of serious insects or disease; or nonnative, new, or not common to the United States.

**Objective:** A description of a desired condition for a resource. Objectives can be quantified and measured and, where possible, have established time frames for achievement.

**Off-Highway Vehicle (off-road vehicle):** Any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding:

- any nonamphibious registered motorboat;
- any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes;
- any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer, or otherwise officially approved;
- vehicles in official use; and
- any combat or combat support vehicle when used in times of national defense emergencies.

**One-Hundred-Year Flood:** A hydrologic event with a magnitude that has a recurrence interval of 100 years.

**Open:** Generally denotes that an area is available for a particular use or uses. Refer to specific program definitions found in law, regulations, or policy guidance for application to individual programs. For example, 43 CFR 8340.0-5 defines the specific meaning of “open” as it relates to off-highway vehicle use.

**Open (Areas and Trails):** Designated areas and trails where off-road vehicles may be operated, subject to operating regulations and vehicle standards or an area where all types of vehicle use is permitted at all times, subject to standards set forth in BLM Manuals 8341, 8343

**Open Range:**

- (1) Range which has not been fenced into management units
- (2) All suitable rangeland of an area upon which grazing is permitted
- (3) Untimbered rangeland
- (4) Range on which the livestock owner has unlimited access without benefit of land ownership or leasing

**Operator:** Any person who has taken formal responsibility for the operations conducted on the leased lands.

**Outstandingly Remarkable River Values:** Values among those listed in Section 1(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act are “scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historical, cultural, or other similar values. . . .” Other similar values which may be considered include botanical, hydrological, paleontological, or scientific. Professional judgment is used to determine whether values exist to an outstandingly remarkable degree (Wild and Scenic River Act).

**Overgrazing (overuse):** Continued heavy grazing which exceeds the recovery capacity of the community and creates a deteriorated range.

**Paleontological Resources (Fossils):** The physical remains of plants and animals preserved in soils and sedimentary rock formations. Paleontological resources are important for understanding past environments, environmental change, and the evolution of life.

**Paleontology:** A science dealing with the life forms of past geological periods as known from fossil remains.

**Particulate Matter (PM):** A complex mixture consisting of varying combinations of dry solid fragments, solid cores with liquid coatings, and small droplets of liquid. These tiny particles vary greatly in shape, size and chemical composition, and can be made up of many different materials such as metals, soot, soil and dust.

**Perennial:** A plant that lives for at least 2 or more years.

**Perennial Stream-flow:** A stream that flows continuously. Perennial streams are generally associated with a water table in the localities through which they flow.

**Period of Use:** The time of livestock grazing on a range area based on type of vegetation or stage of vegetative growth.

**Permit:** A revocable authorization to use public land for a specified purpose to for up to 3 years.

**Permitted Use:** The forage allocated by, or under the guidance of, an applicable land use plan for livestock grazing in an allotment under a permit or lease; expressed in Animal Unit Months.

**Petroglyph:** An image recorded on stone, usually by prehistoric peoples, by means of carving, pecking or otherwise incised on natural rock surfaces.

**pH:** A measure of how acidic or alkaline (basic) a solution is on a scale of 0 to 14 with 0 being very acidic, 14 being very alkaline, and 7 being neutral. The abbreviation stands for the potential of hydrogen.

**Pictograph:** A symbol that represents an object or a concept by illustration.

**Plan of Development:** A mandatory plan, developed by an applicant of a mining operation or construction project, that specifies the techniques and measures to be used during construction and operation of all project facilities on public land. The plan is submitted for approval to the appropriate Federal agency before any construction begins.

**Plan of Operations:** A plan for mining exploration and development that an operation must submit to BLM for approval when more than 5 acres a year will be disturbed or when an operator plans to work in an area of critical environmental concern or a wilderness area. A plan of Operations must document in detail all actions that the operator plans to take from exploration through reclamation.

**Planning Analysis:** A process using appropriate resource data and NEPA analysis to provide a basis for decisions in areas not yet covered by an RMP.

**Planning Area:** A geographical area for which land use and resource management plans are developed and maintained.

**Planning Criteria:** The standards, rules, and other factors developed by managers and interdisciplinary teams for their use in forming judgments about decision making, analysis, and data collection during planning. Planning criteria streamline and simplify the resource management planning actions.

**Plant community:** A vegetation complex, unique in its combination of plants, which occurs in particular locations under particular influences. A plant community is a reflection of integrated environmental influences on the site, such as soils, temperature, elevation, solar radiation, slope aspect, and precipitation.

**Population:** Within a species, a distinct group of individuals that tend to mate only with members of the group. Because of generations of inbreeding, members of a population tend to have similar genetic characteristics.

**Potential Natural Community (PNC):** The biotic community that would become established if all successional sequences were completed without interference by man under the present environmental conditions. Natural disturbances are inherent in development. PNCs can include naturalized non-native species.

**Preferred alternative:** The alternative identified in an EIS that has been selected by the agency as the most acceptable resolution to the problems identified in the purpose and need.

**Prescribed Fire:**

- (1) The introduction of fire to an area under regulated conditions for specific management purposes.
- (2) A management ignited wildland fire that burns under specified conditions and in predetermined area, and that produces the fire behavior and fire characteristics required to attain fire treatment and resource management objectives.

**Prey Base:** Populations and types of prey species available to predators.

**Principal or Major Uses:** Includes, and is limited to, domestic livestock grazing, fish and wildlife development and utilization, mineral exploration and production, rights-of-way, outdoor recreation, and timber production.

**Production Well:** A well drilled in a known field that produces oil or gas.

**Project Plan:** A type of implementation plan (see Implementation Plan). A project plan typically addresses individual projects or several related projects. Examples of project plans include prescribed burn plans, trail plans, and recreation site plans.

**Project Area:** The area of land upon which an operator conducts mining operations, including the area needed for building or maintaining of roads, transmission lines, pipelines, or other means of access.

**Properly Functioning Condition (PFC):** An attribute of a landform that indicates its ability to produce desired natural resources in a sustained way. When used to refer to a riparian area, expresses the ability of the ecosystem to dissipate energy, filter sediment, transfer nutrients, develop ponds and channel characteristics that benefit fish production, waterfowl, and other uses, improve water retention and ground-water recharge, develop root masses that improve streambank stability, and support greater biodiversity. In upland landforms, an indication of the ecosystem' ability to sustain the natural, biotic communities.

**Public:** Affected or interested individuals, including consumer organizations, public land resource users, corporations and other business entities, environmental organizations and other special interest groups and officials of State, local, and Indian tribal governments.

**Public Involvement:** The opportunity for participation by affected citizens in rule making, decision making, and planning with respect to the public lands, including public meetings or hearings held at locations near the affected lands, or advisory mechanisms, or such other procedures as may be necessary to provide public comment in a particular instance.

**Public Lands:** Any lands or interest in land owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, except lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf, and land held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos.

**Public scoping:** A process whereby the public is given the opportunity to provide oral or written comments about the influence of a project on an individual, the community, and/or the environment.

**Quarry:** An open or surface working, usually for the extraction of stone, slate, limestone, etc.

**Range Improvement:** An authorized physical modification or treatment which is designed to improve production of forage; change vegetation composition; control patterns of use; provide water; stabilize soil and water conditions; restore, protect and improve the condition of rangeland ecosystems to benefit livestock, wild horses and burros, and fish and wildlife. The term includes, but is not limited to structures, treatment projects and use of mechanical devices or modifications achieved through mechanical means.

**Range Improvement Funds (BLM):** A fund established by Congress in FLPMA comprised of 50 percent of the grazing fees collected by the U.S. Treasury. This fund is used for on-the-ground rehabilitation, protection, and improvement of the public lands that will arrest rangeland deterioration and improve forage conditions with resulting benefits to wildlife, watershed protection, and livestock production.

**Rangeland Improvement Projects:** Man-made manipulations and structures applied to or built upon rangelands for the purpose of improving productivity or ecosystem function; generally reseeding, weed control, water retention structures, stream channel structures, erosion control structures, fences, etc.

**Range Inventory:** (v.) The systematic acquisition and analysis of resource information needed for planning and for management of rangelands. (n.) The information acquired through range inventory.

**Rangeland (or Public Rangelands):** Deserts, grasslands, shrublands, mountains, canyons, forests, woodlands, and riparian areas, that support an understory or periodic cover of herbaceous and woody vegetation amenable to production of tangible products such as forage, wildlife habitat, water, minerals, energy, plant and animal gene pools, recreational, opportunities, and other vegetative products. Also valuable for the production of intangible products such as open space, natural beauty, and study of natural ecosystems. Rangeland includes revegetated naturally or artificially to provide a plant community that is managed similarly to natural vegetation.

**Rangeland Health:** The degree to which the integrity of the soil, the vegetation, the water, and air as well as the ecological processes of the rangeland ecosystem is balanced and sustained. Integrity is defined as: Maintenance of the structure and functional attributes characteristic of a particular locale, including normal variability.

**Raptor:** Bird of prey with sharp talons and strongly curved beaks such as hawks, owls, vultures, and eagles.

**Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario:** The prediction of the type and amount of oil and gas activity that would occur in a given area. The prediction is based on geologic factors, past history of drilling, projected demand for oil and gas, and industry interest.

**Record of Decision:**

- (1) A document signed by a responsible official recording a decision that was preceded by the preparing of an environmental impact statement.
- (2) A document separate from, but associated with, an Environmental Impact Statement, which states the decision, identifies alternatives (specifying which were environmentally preferable), and states whether all practicable means to avoid environmental harm from the alternative have been adopted, and, if not, why not.

**Recovery plan:** Identifies, justifies, and schedules the research and management actions necessary to reverse the decline of a species and ensure its long-term survival.

**Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS):** One of the existing tools for classifying recreation environments (existing and desired) along a continuum ranging from primitive, low-use, and inconspicuous administration to urban, high-use, and a highly visible administrative presence. This continuum recognizes variation among various components of any landscape's physical, social and administrative attributes; and resulting descriptions (of existing conditions) and prescriptions (of desired future conditions) define recreation setting character.

**Recreational River Areas:** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

**Recreation Settings:** The collective, distinguishing attributes of landscapes that influence, and sometimes actually determine, what kinds of recreation opportunities are produced.

**Relict:** A remnant or fragment of the climax plant community that remains from a former period when it was more widely distributed. Synonymous with pristine.

**Resource Area or Field Office:** A geographic portion of a Bureau of Land Management district. It is the administrative subdivision whose manager has primary responsibility for day-to-day resource management activities and resource use allocations and is, in most instances, the area for which resource management plans are prepared and maintained.

**Research Natural Area:**

- (1) An area where natural processes predominate and which is preserved for research and education. Research Natural Areas must meet the relevance and importance criteria of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and are designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

- (2) Special management areas designated either by Congress or by a public or private agency to preserve and protect typical or unusual ecological communities, associations, phenomena, characteristics, or natural features or processes for scientific and educational purposes. They are established and managed to protect ecological processes, conserve biological diversity, and provide opportunities for observation for research and education.

**Resource Advisory Council:** A council established by the Secretary of the Interior to provide advice or recommendations to BLM management.

**Resource Use Level:** The level of use allowed within an area. It is based on the desired outcomes and land use allocations in the land use plan. Targets or goals for resource use levels are established on an area-wide or broad watershed level in the land use plan. Site-specific resource use levels are normally determined at the implementation level, based on site-specific resource conditions and needs as determined through resource monitoring and assessments.

**Resource Management Plan:** A land use plan as described by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The resource management plan generally establishes in a written document:

- Land areas for limited, restricted or exclusive use; designation, including ACEC designation; and transfer from Bureau of Land Management Administration;
- Allowable resource uses (either singly or in combination) and related levels of production or use to be maintained;
- Resource condition goals and objectives to be attained;
- Program constraints and general management practices needed to achieve the above items;
- Need for an area to be covered by more detailed and specific plans;
- Support action, including such measures as resource protection, access development, realty action, cadastral survey, etc., as necessary to achieve the above;
- General implementation sequences, where carrying out a planned action is dependent upon prior accomplishment of another planned action; and
- Intervals and standards for monitoring and evaluating the plan to determine the effectiveness of the plan and the need for amendment or revision.

It is not a final implementation decision on actions which require further specific plans, process steps, or decisions under specific provisions of law and regulations.

**Revegetation:** Establishing or re-establishing desirable plants on areas where desirable plants are absent or of inadequate density, by management alone (natural revegetation) or by seeding or transplanting (artificial revegetation).

**Revision:** The process of completely rewriting the land use plan due to changes in the planning area affecting major portions of the plan or the entire plan.

**Right-of-Way:** A permit or an easement which authorizes the use of public lands for certain specified purposes, commonly for pipelines, roads, telephone lines, electric lines, reservoirs, etc.; also, the lands covered by such an easement or permit.

**Right-of-Way Corridor:** A parcel of land that has been identified by law, Secretarial order, through a land use plan or by other management decision as being the preferred location for existing and future right-of-way grants and suitable to accommodate one type of right-of-way or one or more rights-of-way which are similar, identical or compatible.

**Riparian:**

- (1) Referring to or relating to areas adjacent of water or influenced by free water associated with streams or rivers on geologic surfaces occupying the lowest position on a watershed.
- (2) Occurring adjacent to streams and rivers and directly influenced by water. A riparian community is characterized by certain types of vegetation, soils, hydrology, and fauna and requires free or unbound water or conditions more moist than that normally found in the area.

**Riparian Ecosystems:**

- Those assemblages of plants, animals, and aquatic communities whose presences can be either directly or indirectly attributed to factors that are water-influenced or related.
- Interacting system between aquatic and terrestrial situations identified by soil characteristics, and distinctive vegetation that requires or tolerates free or unbound water.

**Riparian – Properly Functioning Condition (PFC) for Lotic Areas:** Riparian/wetland areas are in PFC when adequate vegetation, landform, or woody debris is present to:

- dissipate high-energy water flow
- filter sediment, capture bedload, and aid floodplain development
- improve floodwater retention and groundwater recharge
- develop root masses that stabilize streambanks
- develop diverse fluvial geomorphology (pool and channel complexes) to provide habitat for wildlife
- support greater biodiversity

**Riparian--Properly Functioning Condition (PFC) for Lentic Areas:** Lentic riparian-wetland areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or debris is present to dissipate energies associated with wind action, wave action, and overland flow from adjacent sites, thereby:

- reducing erosion and improving water quality;
- filtering sediment and aid floodplain development;
- improving flood-water retention and ground-water recharge; and,
- developing root masses that stabilize islands and shoreline features against cutting action; restrict water percolation; develop diverse ponding characteristics to provide the habitat and the water depth, duration, and temperature necessary for fish production, water-bird breeding, and other uses; and support greater biodiversity.

**Riparian – Functioning at Risk (FAR):** Riparian-wetland areas are considered to be in functioning condition, but an existing soil, water, or vegetation attribute makes them susceptible to degradation.

**Riparian – Non-Functioning (NF):** Riparian-wetland areas that are clearly not providing adequate vegetation, landform, or large wood debris to dissipate stream energy associated with high flows, and thus are not reducing erosion, improving water quality, etc.

\*Though a comprehensive assessment of riparian functioning condition has not been conducted, the Vernal Field Office has identified four major invasive plants that are altering riparian communities. The BLM has identified tamarisk, Russian olive, tall whitetop, and Russian knapweed as plants that are changing the vegetation composition of the Green River System. Specifically, Russian olive and tamarisk are out-competing native cottonwoods and willows in the riparian zone. Cottonwood stands along the main river systems (the Green and the White) are becoming decadent with low recruitment of new trees.

**Riprap:** A layer, facing, or protective mound of rubble or stones randomly placed to prevent erosion, scour, or sloughing of a structure or embankment; also, the stone used for this purpose.

**Riverine:** A system of wetlands that includes all wetland and deep-water habitats contained within a channel that lacks trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, and emergent mosses or lichens.

**Roadless:** Refers to the absence of roads, which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.

**Rock Art:** Petroglyphs or pictographs.

**Saleable Minerals:** Common variety minerals on the public lands, such as sand and gravel, which are used mainly for construction and are disposed of by sales or special permits to local governments.

**Scenic Byways:** Highway routes, which have roadsides or corridors of special aesthetic, cultural, or historic value. An essential part of the highway is its scenic corridor. The corridor may contain outstanding scenic vistas, unusual geologic features, or other natural elements.

**Scoping:** The process of identifying the range of issues, management concerns, preliminary alternatives, and other components of an environmental impact statement or land-use planning document. It involves both internal and public viewpoints.

**Season-long Use:** Grazing throughout the growing period, with little or no effort to control the amount of distribution of livestock use in area/pasture/allotments.

**Seasonal Grazing:** Grazing restricted to one or more specific seasons of the year.

**Section 7:** The section of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, outlining procedures for interagency cooperation to conserve Federally listed species and designated critical habitats. Section 7(a)(1) requires Federal agencies to use their authorities to further the conservation of listed species. Section 7(a)(2) requires Federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting, or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. Other paragraphs of this section establish the requirement to conduct conferences on proposed species and candidate species; allow applicants to initiate early consultation; require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA-Fisheries to prepare biological opinions and issue incidental take statements. Section 7 also establishes procedures for seeking exemptions from the requirement of section 7(a)(2) from the Endangered Species Committee.

**Section 7 Consultation:** The various Section 7 processes, including both consultation and conference if proposed or candidate species are involved.

**Section 106 Compliance:** The requirement of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act that any project funded, licensed, permitted, or assisted by the Federal Government be reviewed for impacts to significant historic properties and that the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation be allowed to comment on a project.

**Sediment Yield:** The amount of sediment produced in a watershed, expressed in tons, acre feet, or cubic yards, of sediment per unit of drainage area per year.

**Seep:** Wet areas, normally not flowing, arising from an underground water source.

**Sensitive Lands:** Any areas recognized in BLM land use or activity plans where BLM has determined that a Plan or Operation to provide detailed review of project effects on unique, irreplaceable, or outstanding historical, cultural, recreational, or natural resource values, such as threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat.

**Sensitive species:** Plant or animal species susceptible or vulnerable to activity impacts or habitat alterations. Species that have appeared in the *Federal Register* as proposed for classification or are under consideration for official listing as endangered or threatened species.

**Seral Stage:** The development stages of an ecological succession. Seral state is synonymous with successional stage.

**Seral Community:** One or a series of biotic communities that follow one another in time on any given area. Seral community is synonymous with successional community.

**Significant:**

- (1) An effect that is analyzed in the context of the proposed action to determine the degree or magnitude of importance of the effect, whether beneficial or adverse. The degree of significance can be related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.
- (2) The description of an impact that exceeds a certain threshold level. Requires consideration of both context and intensity. The significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts, such as society as a whole, and the affected region,

interests, and locality. Intensity refers to the severity of impacts, which should be weighted along with the likelihood of its occurrence.

**Slope:** A slant or incline of the land surface, measured in degrees from the horizontal, or in the percent (defined as the number of feet or meters change in elevation per 100 of the same units of horizontal distance); may be further characterized by direction (exposure or aspect).

**Socioeconomic:** Pertaining to, or signifying the combination or interaction of social and economic factors.

**Soil:**

- (1) The unconsolidated mineral and organic material on the immediate surface of the earth that serves as a natural medium for the growth of land plants.
- (2) The unconsolidated mineral matter on the surface of the earth that has been subjected to and influenced by genetic and environmental factors of parent material, climate (including moisture and temperature effects), macro- and micro-organisms, and topography, all acting over a period of time and producing a product-soil that differs from the material from which it was derived in many physical, chemical, biological, and morphological properties and characteristics.

**Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA):** a public lands unit identified in land use plans to direct recreation funding and personnel to fulfill commitments made to provide specific, structured recreation opportunities (i.e., activity, experience, and benefit opportunities). Both land use plan decisions and subsequent implementing actions for recreation in each SRMA are geared to a strategically identified primary market—destination, community, or undeveloped.

**Special Status Species:** Includes the following:

- Candidate Species--species designated as candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or NOAA-Fisheries. A list has been published in the *Federal Register*.
- Endangered Species--any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
- Listed Species--Species officially listed as threatened or endangered by the Secretary of the Interior under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. A final rule for the listing has been published in the *Federal Register*.
- Proposed Species--species that have been officially proposed for listing as threatened or endangered by the Secretary of the Interior. A proposed rule for listing has been published in the *Federal Register*.
- Sensitive Species--those species designated by a State Director, usually in cooperation with the State agency responsible for managing the species and State Natural heritage programs, as sensitive. They are those species that:
  - ♦ could become endangered in or extirpated from a State, or within a significant portion of its distribution;
  - ♦ are under status review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or NOAA-Fisheries;

- ♦ are undergoing significant current or predicted downward trends in habitat capability that would reduce a species' existing distribution;
  - ♦ are undergoing significant current or predicted downward trends in population or density such that federal listed, proposed, candidate, or State listed status may become necessary;
  - ♦ typically have small and widely dispersed populations;
  - ♦ inhabit ecological refugia or other specialized or unique habitats; or,
  - ♦ are State listed but which may be better conserved through application of BLM sensitive species status.
- State Listed Species--Species listed by a State in a category implying but not limited to potential endangerment or extinction. Listing is either by legislation or regulation.
  - Threatened Species--any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

**Species:** Any species or subspecies of fish or wildlife or plants (and in the case of plants, any varieties), and any distinct population segment of any species of vertebrate fish or wildlife which interbreeds when mature.

**Species Diversity:** The number, different kinds of, and relative abundances of species present in a given area.

**Spring:** Flowing water originating from an underground source.

**Standard:** A description of the physical and biological conditions or degree of function required for healthy, sustainable lands (e.g., Land Health Standards). To be expressed as a desired outcome (goal).

**Stipulations:** Requirements that are part of the terms of a mineral lease. Some stipulations are standard on all Federal leases. Other stipulations may be applied to the lease at the discretion of the surface management agency to protect valuable surface resources and uses.

**Stock Pond (catchment, guzzler, trick tank):** A water impoundment made by constructing a dam or by excavating a dugout or both, to provide water for livestock and wildlife.

**Stocking Rate:** The relationship between the number of animals and the grazing management unit utilized over a specified time period. May be expressed as animal units per unit of land area (animal units over a described time period/area of land).

**Strategic Plan:** A plan that establishes the overall direction for the BLM. This plan is guided by the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, covers a 5-year period, and is updated every 3 years. It is consistent with FLPMA and other laws affecting the public lands.

**Succession:** The progressive replacement of plant communities on a site which leads to the potential natural plant community; i.e., attaining stability. Primary succession entails simultaneous succession of soil from parent material and vegetation. Secondary succession

occurs following disturbances on sites that previously supported vegetation, and entails plant succession on a more mature soil.

**Suspended Nonuse:** Temporary withholding of a grazing preference from active use.

**Sustainability:** The concept that natural processes are functioning in a way that assures the sustained yield or commodities and public values to the extent possible considering the capability of the land to do so.

**Sustained Yield:** The achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use.

**Take:** As defined by the Endangered Species Act, “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct.” The term applies only to fish and wildlife.

- harass as used in the definition of take means to commit an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavior patterns, which include but are not limited to breeding, feeding, or sheltering.
- harm as used in the definition of take means to commit an act which actually kills or injures wildlife. Such act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavior patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering.
- incidental take Any taking otherwise prohibited, if such taking is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out an otherwise lawful activity.

**Threatened Species:** A plant or animal species likely to become an endangered species throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the foreseeable future.

**Timing Limitation (Seasonal Restriction):** A fluid minerals leasing constraint that prohibits surface use during specified time periods to protect identified resource values. The constraint does not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities unless analysis demonstrates that such constraints are needed and that less stringent, project-specific constraints would be insufficient.

**Total Preference:** The total number of animal units of livestock grazing on public lands, apportioned and attached to base property owned or controlled by a permittee or lessee. The active preference and suspended preference are combined to make up the total grazing preference.

**Trend:** The direction of change in ecological status or in resource value ratings observed over time. Trend in ecological status is described as "toward" or "away from" the potential natural community or as "not apparent." Appropriate terms are used to describe trends in resource value ratings. Trends in resource value ratings for several uses on the same site at a given time may be

in different directions, and there is no necessary correlation between trends in resource value ratings and the trend in ecological status.

**Unallotted Lands:** Public lands open to grazing which currently have no livestock grazing authorized.

**Understory:** Plants that grow beneath the canopy of other plants. Usually refers to grasses, forbs, and low shrubs under a tree or shrub canopy.

**Undertaking:** A project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a Federal agency, including those carried out by or on behalf of a Federal agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; those requiring a Federal permit, license or approval; and those subject to State or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a Federal agency.

**Undesirable plants:** Species classified as undesirable, noxious, harmful, exotic, injurious, or poisonous under state or federal law, but not including species listed as endangered by the Endangered Species Act, or species indigenous to the planning area.

**User Day:** Any calendar day, or portion thereof, for each individual accompanied or serviced by an operator or permittee on the public lands of related waters; synonymous with passenger day or participant day.

**Utilization:** The proportion or degree of current year's forage production that is consumed or destroyed by animals (including insects). Utilization may refer either to a single plant species, a group of species, or the vegetation as a whole. Utilization is synonymous with use. This process requires a comparison of the amount of herbage left compared with the amount of herbage produced during the year.

**Valid Existing Rights:** Locatable mineral development rights that existed when the Federal Land Policy and Management Act were enacted on October 21, 1976. Some areas are segregated from entry and location under the Mining Law to protect certain values or allow certain uses. Mining claims that existed as of the effective date of the segregation may still be valid if they can meet the test of discovery of a valuable mineral required under the Mining Law. Determining the validity of mining claims located in segregated lands requires BLM to conduct a validity examination and is called a “valid existing rights” determination.

**Vascular plants:** Plants that have specialized tissues which conduct nutrients, water, and sugars along with other specialized parts such as roots, stems, and reproductive structures. Vascular plants include flowering plants, ferns, shrubs, grasses, and trees.

**Vegetation Manipulation Practices:** Practices that are directed at changing vegetation production, species composition, and erosion control. These practices include root plowing, seeding, pitting, chaining, prescribed fire, herbicide application, prescribed grazing and livestock exclusion.

**Vegetation Type:** A kind of existing plant community with distinguishable characteristics described in terms of the present vegetation that dominates the aspect or physiognomy of the area.

**Vertebrate:** An animal with a backbone. Fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals are vertebrates.

**Visual Resources:** The visible physical features of a landscape (topography, water, vegetation, animals, structures, and other features) that constitute the scenery of an area.

**Visual Resource Management Classes:** Categories assigned to public lands based on scenic quality, sensitivity level, and distance zones. There are four classes. Each class has an objective which prescribes the amount of change allowed in the characteristic landscape.

**Waiver:** Permanent exemption from a lease stipulation. The stipulation no longer applies anywhere within the leasehold.

**Water Quality:**

- (1) The chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of water with respect to its suitability for a particular use.
- (2) The interaction between various parameters that determines the usability or non-usability of water for on-site and downstream uses. Major parameters that affect water quality include: temperature, turbidity, suspended sediment, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, pH, specific ions, discharge, and fecal coliform.

**Watershed:**

- (1) A total area of land above a given point on a waterway that contributes runoff water to the flow at that point.
- (2) A major subdivision of a drainage basin.

**Weed:** A plant considered undesirable and that interferes with management objectives for a given area at a given point in time.

**Wetlands:**

- (1) Areas characterized by soils that are usually saturated or ponded (i.e., hydric soils, that support mostly hydrophytic plants).
- (2) Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstance do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands include habitats such as swamps, marshes, and bogs.

**Wild Horses and Burros:** All unbranded and unclaimed horses and burros using public lands as all or part of their habitat.

**Wild, Scenic or Recreational River:** The three classes of what is traditionally referred to as a “Wild and Scenic River.” Designated river segments are classified as wild, scenic and/or recreational, but the segments cannot overlap.

**Wilderness Characteristics:** Features of the land associated with the concept of wilderness that specifically deal with naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. These characteristics may be considered in land use planning when BLM determines that those characteristics are reasonably present, of sufficient value (condition, uniqueness, relevance, importance), and need (trend, risk), and are practical to manage (from IM-2003-275, Change 1, Considerations of Wilderness Characteristics in LUP, Attachment 1)

**Wilderness Study Area:** A roadless area or island of undeveloped federal land that has been inventoried and found to possess wilderness characteristics described under Title VI, Section 603 of FLPMA and Section 2C of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

**Wilderness:** A congressionally designated area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, that is protected and managed to preserve its natural conditions and that:

- (1) generally appears to have been affected mainly by the forces of nature, with human imprints substantially unnoticeable;
- (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation;
- (3) has at least 5,000 acres or is large enough to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and
- (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value.

**Wildfire:** Any unwanted wild land fire.

**Wildland Fire:** Any nonstructural fire, other than prescribed fire, that occurs in the wild land.

**Winter Range:** Range that is grazed during the winter months.

**Withdrawal:** Withholding an area of Federal land from settlement, sale, location, or entry, under some or all of the general land laws, for the purpose of limiting activities under those laws in order to maintain other public values in the area or reserving the area for a particular public purpose or program; or transferring jurisdiction over an area of Federal land, other than “property” governed by the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act, as amended (40 U.S.C. 472) from one department, bureau or agency to another department, bureau or agency.

**Woodland:** A land area occupied by trees; a forest, woods.

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- Appendix F: BLM Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management
- Appendix G: Overview of ACEC Relevance and Importance Values
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- Appendix I: Visual Resources Management (VRM) Class Objectives
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- Appendix K: Surface Stipulations Applicable to all Surface-Disturbing Activities
- Appendix L: Utah’s Threatened and Endangered Species Lease Notices for Oil and Gas Development and BLM-committed Conservation Measures
- Appendix M: Utah Public Lands Study—Key Social Survey Findings for Daggett, Duchesne and Uintah Counties
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