DECISION RECORD/FONSI

EA CO-030-U93-17
SAN JUAN/ SAN MIGUEL RMP AMENDMENT, FOR THE PROPOSED AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN AND SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA ON THE SAN MIGUEL RIVER

DECISION

The decision is to adopt the proposed plan amendment, for Public Lands on the San Miguel River, and tributaries, upstream of the old townsite of Pinon, within the Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area of the Montrose District. The amendment would designate 32,641 acres of Public Land as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Within the SRMA, 20,964 acres would also be designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Decisions on land use allocations coincide with the designations, and include: off highway vehicle closures and restrictions, development of two or three campgrounds, restrictions on camping in certain areas, identification of forest management areas, closure of the river bottom areas to the sale of sand and gravel, identification of those areas suitable for major utilities, trail and interpretive sign development, the protection of riparian systems, and the continuation of livestock grazing on currently used ranges.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the analysis of potential impacts contained in the environmental assessment completed for this proposal, I have determined that the environmental impacts are not expected to be significant and therefore an environmental impact statement is not required.

RATIONALE

Alternatives Considered

Two alternatives were considered: 1) Designation of Public Lands on the San Miguel River, including the tributary streams, from Deep Creek to the old town of Pinon, as a Special Recreation Management Area. Within this area, the public lands between Placerville and the confluence of Horsefly Creek, would be designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. 2) Retention of the original land use plan decisions was considered as the no-action alternative.

Management Considerations

The riparian system of the San Miguel River contains

examples of a riparian plant community that is rare within Colorado, and some portions of that community are considered pristine. The rapid growth of unregulated recreation within the canyon has begun to noticeably damage the riparian plant communities, scenic values of the area, and create some potential health hazards from human waste disposal. The proposal provides BLM with land use decisions that facilitate effective management of the recreation activity and allow protection of the high quality riparian environment. The management of the ACEC/SRMA will also be compatible with the Unaweep-Tabaguache Scenic and Historic Byway.

Public Involvement

BLM received an ACEC nomination from the Nature Conservancy in 1989. Internal scoping resulted in a modified ACEC proposal being presented to the public in March of 1991. All persons, who participated in the original RMP, and who expressed interest in participating in the amendment were notified by mail to request comments. The proposal was also presented to the public in an open house in Placerville, Colorado, on April 3, 1991. The comment period for this segment lasted 30 days until April 29, 1991. Comments were generally favorable, and only a few modifications to the original proposal resulted. A second round of public comment was initiated on November 10, 1992 to solicit comments on the proposed ACEC. This period lasted 60 days. Comments received raised no substantial issues that would preclude adoption of the proposed amendment.

APPROVED BY:

Dave Strunk ACTING

Bob Moore
Colorado State Director

2/23/93
Date

Attachments: EA #CO-030-U93-17
Comments and Responses, ACEC

S A V E

UNCOMPAHGRE RESOURCE AREA COPY

SAN JUAN/SAN MIGUEL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT; SAN MIGUEL RIVER ACEC AND SRMA

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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PURPOSE AND NEED

In November of 1989, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) submitted a public nomination for an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) on the middle San Miguel River, from Placerville to Horsefly Creek. Included within their proposal were Leopard, Specie, Beaver, and Saltado Creeks and adjacent uplands. In summary, this nomination requested the ACEC designation, restriction of vehicle use in the riparian forests, removal of campsites along the river, development of a campground and interpretive kiosk, prohibition of livestock grazing upstream of Norwood Bridge, development of vehicle parking areas for day use visitors, and fishery habitat improvement. A later addition suggested determining if the River is suitable habitat for river otters, and, if so, reintroducing them.

BLM began internal scoping of this proposal during the summer of 1990. Internal scoping included examining the values of the area for ACEC status, and determining whether the existing land use decisions, on adjacent public lands, would support management of the proposed ACEC. The interdisciplinary team (see Appendix C) concluded that resource values in the area, and the conflicts that were developing there, principally from increasing recreation use, warranted pursuing the ACEC designation. Documentation of the relevance of the area for ACEC designation is presented in Appendix D. The team also concluded that the existing RMP decisions for the remainder of the river corridor from Deep Creek to Piñon were not adequate to promote successful management of the proposed ACEC. In fact, without considering the ACEC, it was apparent that management of the area has not been facilitated by the existing land use decisions. Although the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (RMP) did emphasize management of the riparian systems within the corridor, none of the other land use decisions for the area supported that emphasis. Because of this, there has been a lack of progress in management of the riparian systems. Additionally, the RMP did not provide any management direction or resource allocations for the 2,800 acres acquired in the Carsten's land exchange which was completed in 1989. As a result, in addition to TNC's petition, the ACEC proposal was expanded to include all public land from Deep Creek to Piñon. The team believed that the best way to provide cohesive, integrated management of the area would be to designate the entire river corridor area as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), comprised of 32,641 acres of public land. The SRMA would include the proposed ACEC (20,964 acres of public land), which would emphasize preservation of the quality riparian ecosystems, scenic values, and intensified recreation management. The team's intent would be to develop an integrated activity plan for the area that would consider all the resources managed on public land. Figure 1, on the following page, shows the general location of the proposed ACEC and SRMA, and their relationship to the San Miguel River, and major tributaries.

The preliminary proposal was presented to the public in an open house, in Placerville, on April 3, 1991. Although the public comment period closed on April 29, 1991, comments were received and considered as late as June 3, 1991. The proposed action presented here is a result of public and agency comments, and the evolution of the proposal during preparation of the environmental assessment (EA).

The plan amendment boundary encompasses about 152,307 acres of land, 43,011 acres of which are public land, 8,612 are National Forest, 98,157 are privately owned, and 2,527 are state owned. Although non-BLM lands are included within the amendment boundary, land use decisions analyzed in this process do not pertain to lands that are not in public ownership. Detailed maps of the amendment area are presented in Appendix E.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the proposed amendment to the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (RMP), which would designate a portion of the San Miguel River corridor as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Also described is the no action alternative which consists of continuation of the current management of the area, according to the land use decisions in the existing RMP.

Oil and gas leasing decisions would not be changed, in either alternative, from those appearing in the Record of Decision for the Oil and Gas Leasing and Development Environmental Impact Statement, 1991, and therefore, no discussion of impacts to oil and gas activities are presented. A map showing the current restrictions to oil and gas development is included in Appendix E, and a table showing the acres of each restriction is located in Appendix A.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would designate that portion of the San Miguel River, from Placerville to Horsefly Creek, and its tributaries as an ACEC, and the area from Deep Creek to Piñon as a SRMA. The SRMA would consist of three management areas; one area, identified as L_1, constitutes the ACEC, and the two remaining tracts, identified as C_1, form the remainder of the SRMA. The primary emphasis of the C_1 areas would be for management of recreation resources, and protection of riparian and scenic values. Within the ACEC (L_1 area) the primary emphasis would be protection of unique riparian resources, protection of scenic values, and recreation management. Maps showing the areas can be found in Appendix E. Figure 1 shows the general relationship of the management areas to each other and the SRMA.

Detailed management guidance for the two new management areas is presented in Appendix A. From the original RMP, portions of the General Management Area (G), Land Disposal Areas (H), Livestock Management Area (A), winter big game areas (BDEW), and Eagle Concentration Area (BE) would be retained within the amendment area boundary. None of the decisions for those areas would be altered by this proposal. The specific management guidance for these areas is presented in Appendix A. Table 2 in Appendix A shows the acreage for each management unit, of the proposed action, within the amendment area.

In order to clear up mapping voids in the amendment area, slight shifts were made in the boundaries of those original RMP management units that were retained. The primary units affected were management units A, and BDEW, in the San Miguel River Canyon downstream of Clay Creek.

Public Lands in the amendment area would be classified into one of two categories for disposal and multiple use management purposes. Category 1 lands are those for which a land use decision has been made that they meet the criteria for a public sale pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). These lands were identified as "H" areas in the original RMP, and have been retained in the proposed action. Category 2 lands are all remaining Public Lands in the existing land base in the amendment area. Lands in this category would be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis through exchange, boundary adjustment, Recreation and Public Purposes Act applications, or other appropriate statute or authority. No land disposal would occur without site specific analysis of the public benefits and impacts of the disposal.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative consists of continuation of the current management. Appendix A contains copies of the 1985 land use decisions that pertain to the amendment area. Acreage for the management areas, A, BDEW, BE, BAR, ES, EF, G, H, and J, is also contained in a Table 1 in Appendix A.

The units each emphasize particular resource values. Area A emphasizes livestock management. The area is open to major utilities, forest product disposal, OHV use, and allows wildlife habitat management that does not conflict with livestock management goals. Riparian and aquatic habitats on priority streams were to receive special management consideration. Several of the livestock management areas, specifically those in the Beaver and Saltado Creek areas, are not high priority areas for management within the range program.

The BE, BDEW, and BAR areas are wildlife habitat emphasis areas. BE is managed for wintering bald eagles, BDEW for wintering big game, and BAR for riparian habitat values. The area is open for forest product disposal, and nonconflicting livestock grazing.

Major utilities are generally excluded, but not prohibited, depending on the impacts of the proposal. The wildlife management areas are open to OHV use.

EF and ES areas are minerals management areas. Within the amendment area the ES area is a nine acre tract identified for sale of dimension stone, and the EF area provides protective management of the unique fossils in the Placerville area. These areas allow OHV use, forest product disposal, livestock grazing, and limited wildlife habitat management. Protection of the fossils was to be handled on a case-by-case basis.

The G areas are general management areas that are open to OHVs and most other land uses, under The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

Forest management is emphasized in the J management areas. They are open to OHV use, livestock grazing, major utilities (in woodland areas), and limited wildlife habitat management. Riparian and aquatic habitats are to be protected.

Land disposal is the emphasis for the H areas, and investments of public funds for management is to be extremely limited. The areas are open to all uses subject to FLPMA guidelines.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

GENERAL LOCATION

The amendment area is located in the San Miguel River drainage, between the towns of Telluride and Naturita, and includes about 132,000 acres in San Miguel County, and about 20,000 acres in Montrose County, in southwestern Colorado. Figure 2 shows the general location of the amendment area. The upstream boundary is approximately at Deep Creek, about 9 miles upstream of Placerville. The downstream boundary is at the old town of Piñon, about 10 miles upstream from Naturita. On the north the area is bounded primarily by the Uncompahgre National Forest, and on the south primarily by private lands. Included within the amendment area are 38 miles of the San Miguel River Canyon, and 133 miles of tributary streams.

PHYSICAL SETTING

The area is located on the boundary between the San Juan Mountains and the Uncompahgre Plateau. Elevations range from 9,000 feet, on the rim of Big Bear Creek Canyon, to 5,980 feet, near Piñon. Most of the lands within the amendment area are located within the canyons formed by the San Miguel River and its tributaries. A minor amount of the area is located above the canyon rims.

CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY

A general description of the area's climate, and air quality, can be found in the Draft San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan

and Environmental Impact Statement. One weather station exists within the amendment area, at the town of Placerville. Average annual precipitation, for the years 1971 to 1990, was 22 inches (Colorado Climate Center, 1991). No data on temperatures is available from this station. Generally the weather is typical of high mountain valleys in the southern Rockies, with cold, moist winters and warm, dry summers.

TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USES

The amendment area is typical of Colorado Plateau geology. It consists of gently dipping sedimentary rocks, where erosion has produced innumerable escarpments and structural benches. Relief is the result of the incision of deep, steep sided canyons below moderately flat terrain.

Within the amendment area, land uses on public land include mining, livestock grazing, recreation, wildlife habitat, rights-of-way, and woodland harvest. Private land uses vary with their location in the canyon. Upstream of Placerville, private lands are being devoted primarily to housing and recreational ranchettes. Downstream of Placerville, the uses remain primarily rural in nature with livestock grazing, and agricultural activity, on private land, being the dominant uses.

MINERAL RESOURCES

COAL

Coal is found in the Dakota sandstone in the form of poor quality, thin, flaggy, and discontinuous carbonaceous shale. It is not minable, and the area is rated by BLM as having low potential for coal production.

OIL, GAS, AND GEOTHERMAL

Although oil and gas are known to occur in most of the sedimentary formations which underlie the amendment area, the area has low oil and gas development or production potential. Within a 15 mile radius of the area, 44 dry oil wells, and 9 holes with gas shows have been drilled. No production has ever occurred. At present, the entire amendment area is open for oil and gas leasing, with seasonal stipulations imposed for wintering eagles and wintering big game in some areas, no surface occupancy restrictions for raptor nests and raptor roosts, and special restrictions for steep slopes (Colorado Oil and Gas Leasing and Development, Record of Decision, 1991). The acreage effected by each of these restrictions is presented in Appendix A, Table 3.

Geothermal waters occur at Lemon Hot Springs in Placerville. The water temperature is moderate and has no potential for power production. No geothermal leases exist within the amendment area and BLM rates the area as having low to moderate potential for geothermal production. At present, the entire amendment area is

open for geothermal leasing, with seasonal stipulations for wintering eagles and wintering big game in some areas.

LOCATABLE MINERALS

Gold bearing deposits occur as riverbed and terrace deposits in the San Miguel River area. The younger and most extensive gravel deposits, are alluvium of the San Miguel River, and are principally of volcanic origin. Placer gold deposits have been mined from 1878 through 1940 with a few short operations in the 1980's. Most of this activity took place on the terrace gravels or high bars which are located 100 to 200 feet above the River. One mining operation at Specie Creek was active in 1987 and 1988, and has not yet been reclaimed. Another is proposed for the area above the junction of Leopard Creek and the San Miguel River.

Lode claims occur in the upper part of the Pony Express member of the Wanakah formation. The ore occurs in galena and pyrite. Most of the production from these deposits occurred from 1890 through 1910.

Weekend recreational miners are common on the San Miguel during the summer months. They use small suction dredges and attempt to remove the "flour" gold from the river sediments.

Uranium and vanadium were mined from the Entrada sandstone between 1910 and 1920, and from 1940 through 1944. No production of these minerals is currently occurring.

BLM rates the amendment area as having low to moderate potential for the production of locatable minerals. With the exception of the lands acquired in the Carsten's exchange, the entire amendment area is open for the location of mining claims under the 1872 Mining Law. Within the amendment area, there are approximately 116 mining claims (BLM 5/11/92 Mining Claim Microfiche).

SALEABLE MINERALS

Saleable minerals include dimension stone, sand, gravel, and riprap. BLM rates the amendment area as having low potential for the production of saleable minerals. Dimension stone is found where the Cutler, Dolores, and Dakota formations outcrop. A few sales of dimension stone have occurred upstream and downstream of the proposed ACEC, but production has been limited.

Sand and gravel occur in the alluvial materials of the San Miguel and its tributaries, both in the stream channels and on the canyon terrace deposits. Gravel mining has occurred in the San Miguel River in the past and one unreclaimed mining site near Specie Creek has not yet recovered from the mining activity which occurred over 20 years ago. Within the last decade BLM has not sold any sand or gravel permits within the amendment area, but the entire area is open to the disposal of saleable materials.

LANDS

There are 43,011 acres of BLM land, 98,157 acres of private land, 2,527 acres of state land, and 8,612 acres of forest service lands located within the amendment boundary. There is a total of 152,307 acres within the plan amendment boundary area. A land exchange, completed in 1989, resulted in 2,800 acres of private land entering public ownership, and 2,400 acres of public land entering private ownership.

The area is traversed by state highways 62 and 145, both of which are designated scenic byways. A number of smaller county roads are also found in the amendment area.

The area has many rights-of-ways including powerlines, aerial and buried telephone lines, natural gas pipelines, and county and State highways. Major utilities (Defined in the original RMP, as pipelines 6 inches or larger and powerlines exceeding 115 kV) are represented by two overhead powerlines and two natural gas pipelines. The powerlines, a 230 kV and a 345 kV cross the San Miguel River between Beaver and Saltado Creeks. One natural gas distribution pipeline crosses the San Miguel River at Beaver Creek, and continues upstream to Telluride. A larger Rocky Mountain Natural Gas pipeline crosses the River about three miles upstream of Piñon. The planned TransColorado Gas Transmission Pipeline would cross the River approximately three miles upstream of Piñon. With the exception of about 300 acres of commercial forest, the entire area is open to major utilities.

San Miguel Power Association has a planned upgrade of their transmission line between Nucla and Telluride. The existing 69 KV line, which crosses Beaver and Saltado Creeks, is being operated over capacity, and plans are to replace it with a 115 KV line. San Miguel Power Association has also proposed an upgrade of 5.7 miles of distribution line from Sawpit upstream. The growth in the area upstream of Placerville has overloaded the existing line.

One major irrigation ditch, the Calamity Ditch, is located within the amendment area. It withdraws water from the San Miguel River at about Horsefly Creek and parallels the river downstream to Piñon.

Remnants of old narrow gage railways are found along the San Miguel and Leopard Creek. The old rail beds are generally in poor condition with the exception of the section from Sawpit upstream to near Vanadium, which is used as a road.

The San Miguel Project, which was proposed in the 1950's, is no longer being considered for construction by the Bureau of Reclamation. The original proposal would have placed a dam on the San Miguel River near Beaver Creek.

The San Miguel Water Conservancy District is still considering the proposed San Miguel Canyon Project. The project is proposed for a site due north of Redvale. The tentative proposal is for a pump storage hydroelectric facility. The project would require 2

reservoirs; water from the upper reservoir, to be located on the top of Wrights Mesa, would be released to generate electricity during peak demand periods. There are no immediate plans to construct the dam or file for the permits necessary to begin the process.

Most of the lands in the canyon bottom, between Placerville and the town of Piñon were withdrawn under Powersite Classification in 1925. An estimated 12,040 acres remain withdrawn. Withdrawals within the proposed ACEC total 8,600 acres, and an additional 3,440 acres in the remainder of the proposed SRMA. These withdrawals have not yet been reviewed or modified.

WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

WATER RESOURCES

The primary stream within the amendment area is the San Miguel River, which is a tributary of the Dolores River. A complete list of streams on public land in the amendment area, and their lengths, can be found on the stream/riparian table in Appendix B. The San Miguel's headwaters are located in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado. It flows northwesterly for over 80 miles and drops 7,940 feet in that distance, for an average river slope of 1.9 percent. The river drains 660 square miles of watershed at the lower boundary of the amendment area, and 1,550 square miles at the confluence with the Dolores River.

The average annual precipitation in the San Miguel Basin is 24 inches per year, and varies from a low of under 12 inches at the Rivers lower terminus to over 50 inches at the headwaters. Fifty to sixty percent of the annual precipitation falls as snow. The remainder occurs as rainfall during spring frontal storms and in the late summer and fall as high-intensity, short duration storms.

Except for a few small man-made impoundments, the River flows uncontrolled from the headwaters through the amendment area. Mean annual flow varies from 150 cfs (cubic feet per second), at the upper portion of the amendment area to approximately 250 cfs at the lower boundary (see figure 2). Baseflows in the River occur from October through March. Spring runoff usually peaks in early June. High flows of short duration are common in response to high intensity storm events in August and September. The Calamity Ditch, which diverts water from the River near Horsefly Creek, results in a sharp drop in summer flows in the lower reaches of the River within the amendment area.

The tributary streams exhibit runoff patterns that are similar to those of the San Miguel. These streams are characterized by steep gradients, large channel substrates, and extreme valley confinement due to the steep narrow canyons. Road development along Leopard, Fall, Big Bear, and Specie Creeks has further confined these streams and increased the stream gradient, resulting in accelerated channel and bank erosion, and in more severe cases the undercutting and mass wasting of steep sideslopes. These streams have poorly

functioning floodplains, which results in physical damage on-site and off-site to riparian systems, higher sediment yields, and higher flood peaks. Flood caused damage to the roads which confine the streams has been common. The streams, such as Beaver, Saltado, and Horsefly Creeks, which do not have roads within their canyon bottoms do not exhibit the maladies described above. The San Miguel River has been modified only slightly by the existing highway and bridges. Confinement of the river channel by the highway is limited to a small number of areas, and does not seem to have had significant effects on river channel geometry.

The primary groundwater aquifer is associated with the alluvium, found in varying thicknesses and depths along the entire river course. It is connected to the adjacent river and is responsible for maintaining river flows during the baseflow period. Depending on the thickness of the alluvium, water yields can reach 1,000 gallons per minute. Water quality should closely resemble that of the San Miguel River at Baseflows, due to the connection between the two.

Instream flows have been established with the State Water Conservation Board for the San Miguel River, downstream as far as Fall Creek. The DOW has filed for an instream flow in the river downstream as far as Beaver Creek. Instream flows also exist for Big Bear Creek, Fall Creek, and Leopard Creek (Colorado Water Conservation Board). Instream flows are pending for Beaver and Saltado Creeks.

WATER QUALITY

Heavy metals, released from local geology by natural weathering and from historic mining practices, are found in high concentrations in the headwaters of the San Miguel River. Downstream of Telluride, these concentrations decrease due to dilution from tributary streams, and biological and geochemical reactions.

Total dissolved solids (TDS) increase progressively downstream. This is especially true in the lower reaches of the study area where saline soils contribute salts to the tributary drainages. Average TDS concentrations range between 300 to 400 parts per million in the San Miguel River.

Sediment yields vary from year to year depending on the amount and rate of snowfall and the number, location, and intensity of rainfall events. Sediment yields range from less than 0.1 to 0.5 acre feet per square mile per year, with most of the sediment coming from the steep sideslopes of the San Miguel Canyon.

Although no data is available to assess the occurrence of biological pathogens in the amendment area, it is safe to assume that pathogens exist and could pose a health threat to those who consume untreated river and stream water.

SOILS

The geologic structures of the San Miguel River Canyon exhibit interbedded sandstone, shales, and siltstone, which result in highly variable soils ranging from sandy loam to clay loam. Rock outcrops usually occupy higher positions on the sideslopes in the form of escarpments. Due to the steep slopes, rock outcrops, and often fine soil textures, the area experiences rapid runoff and moderate to high soil erosion. The erosion rates are highest during high intensity rainfall events that occur in late summer and early fall. The eroded soils are deposited along the base of natural and man-made cuts (such as the highway cuts). Highway crews routinely clean culverts and other areas along the highway, by depositing the material in the river, creeks, or along the floodplain of these streams.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Most livestock operations within the amendment area are cow-calf operations. One ewe-lamb operation is located upstream of Placerville. There are 18 allotments in the amendment area, only one of which is a high priority for intensive management. Grazing preferences total 873 AUM's for the amendment area, and 75% of the active preference is within the proposed ACEC area. Grazing occurs from spring through fall on public lands. Two allotments, Horsefly Common and Uncompahgre Common are grazed in conjunction with allotments on the Uncompahgre National Forest. Most of the allotments consist of large acreage, with a small grazing preference that averages 48.5 AUM's per allotment. Topography, in the form of steep slopes and broken rims, places a major constraint on grazing use and results in the majority of the acreage in the allotments being unusable. Most grazing occurs on the mesa tops and the streambottom riparian areas.

There is no indication that current livestock grazing levels and methods are detrimental to the majority of the riparian systems in the amendment area. One known exception occurs on Saltado Creek, where livestock are concentrating to the detriment of the riparian system.

A corral, located on public land on the San Miguel River, just upstream of Specie Creek, is used by sheepherders as a truck loading and unloading point for access to grazing areas on private land and on the National Forest. Use of this corral has impacted riparian vegetation, and has aggravated some bank instability problems in the immediate vicinity of the corral.

The San Miguel Canyon is a designated livestock driveway.

RECREATION

The predominant recreation uses in the San Miguel River Canyon are motorized vehicle sightseeing, picnicking, rafting, fishing, and camping.

Two designated scenic byways traverse the amendment area. The San Juan Skyway, which follows State Highways 62 and 145 from Ridgway to Telluride, was designated in 1988. The Unaweep/Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway, designated in 1990, follows State Highways 141 and 145 between Placerville and Whitewater. Average traffic flow on the San Juan Skyway is estimated at 1,850 vehicles per day, and about half that amount on the Unaweep/Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway. Much of this traffic is associated with individuals enroute to Telluride as a destination. Traffic is expected to increase as the popularity of Telluride escalates, and as people become aware of the scenic byway. Studies completed on the San Juan Skyway have indicated that BLM can expect an annual increase in use of about 4-5% annually. Many of those driving the byway also make frequent stops to photograph scenery, fish, picnic, and hike.

BLM visitor patrols indicate that between 750 and 1,000 visitor days of use, associated with camping and/or hunting and fishing on BLM land, occurs annually within the San Miguel River corridor. During the summer the majority of campers are first time visitors who spend at least 2 to 4 days in the area. About half of these visitors spend some time fishing during their stay. Camping use peaks during the fall hunting seasons, and many of these visitors return every year for a stay of 7 to 14 days.

Camping use occurs on approximately 30 undeveloped and dispersed sites along the river corridor. All the sites have slowly been expanded over the past 10 years, impacting the riparian vegetation of the River and tributaries. Numerous vehicle paths have been created leading from Highway 145 to the river. Localized problems with soil compaction, tree cutting, trampling of vegetation, campfire rings and ashes, trash dumping, and disposal of human waste and trailer effluent have increased as the popularity of the area has attracted more visitors. One favored campsite for large campers and motor homes, upstream of the Specie Creek confluence, is heavily used all summer by individuals who remain in the area for extended periods, or return several times during the summer period.

During the past 4 years, BLM has noticed an increase in overnight camping along the San Miguel River by people attending the summer festivals in Telluride. As these 3 to 5 day long events increase in popularity, more and more overflow camping is expected on public land within the corridor. At present there is only one forest service campground within a reasonable service radius of Telluride. Another Forest Service fee campground is being planned.
Whitewater rafting and kayaking are popular activities on the stretch of river from Vanadium to Naturita. The majority of the use occurs during the May and June spring runoff period. The most popular section for rafting is the section from Specie Creek to the Norwood Hill Bridge. Some additional rafting occurs from the Norwood Hill Bridge to Naturita. River gradients are relatively constant and steep, with big waves, numerous hazards, and dangerous rapids. The irrigation water diversion at Horsefly Creek may

require portaging on private land, and the landowner is not willing to grant access across his land.

Three commercial floatboat outfitters, and an additional outfitter, use the River corridor for guided float trips. Two of these also offer wade-walk fishing trips. Commercial permit use is highly dependent on flows and can range from only 20 visitor days per year in 1990, to 1,500 visitor days per year in 1992 (BLM,Recreation Use Records). Low water years offer more opportunity for wade-walk fishing trips, but this use constitutes only a small fraction of the fishing use on the River. Most kayakers are private parties.

Bicycle use has increased in the area, and plans have been proposed by the San Miguel County Trails Council to construct a mountain bike/hiking trail on the old railroad grade paralleling highways 62 and 145.

OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE USE (OHV)

Under the current Resource Management Plan (RMP), the entire amendment area is open for OHV use. The management prescription for the "B" management areas does not mention OHV use for most "B" areas, they are therefore open yearlong to OHV use.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The existing RMP does not provide any guidance for management of visual resources. The area is traversed by two scenic byways (see the Lands and Recreation descriptions), and is known for its scenic beauty.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Inventories have identified 206 prehistoric archaeological sites, and 10 historic sites. No sites have been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Four sites are potentially eligible. The majority of the amendment area was studied by the University of Colorado, and Fort Lewis College. The cultural affiliation of the sites has not been established.

FOREST RESOURCES

The forest resources in the amendment area consist of the cottonwood-birch-alder-spruce riparian forest, piñon-juniper on the steep slopes, spruce-fir on the higher elevation steep slopes, and ponderosa pine-aspen on the mesa top areas. Of these types, only the ponderosa pine and piñon-juniper forest types offer any commercial value. Three commercially valuable stands were identified as forest management areas in the original RMP. Three hundred twenty five acres of piñon-juniper, on the mesa top near the confluence of the San Miguel and Beaver Creek were part of the original forest management areas. Two other areas of ponderosa pine, located on the mesa top south of the confluence of Goodenough Gulch have commercial value. The site closest to Goodenough Gulch has no access.

Outside of the commercial timber resources described above, the primary uses for the remainder of the area include: Christmas trees, wildling transplants, posts, poles, firewood, and some piñon nut collection. The entire amendment area is open for sale and harvest of forest products. Demand for these products within the area has been low, and primarily for posts and poles.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

A list of endangered, threatened, candidate, and proposed species, with potential to occur in the amendment area, was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on October 9,1991. The Service concurred with the list on November 5,1991. Subsequently, due to new information, the Ute ladies tresses orchid, fringe tailed bat, goshawk, black tern, and the loggerhead shrike were added to the list by BLM. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the revised list on September 9, 1992.

PLANTS

The following plants, which occur in the region, were considered as having some potential to occur in the amendment area:

Spineless hedgehog cactus; Echinocereus triglochidiatus var. inermis (E)
Uinta Basin hookless cactus; Sclerocactus glaucus (T)
Clay-loving wild buckwheat; Eriogonum pelinophilum (E)
Grand Junction milkvetch; Astragalus linifolius (Cat 3C)
Kachina daisy; Erigeron kachinensis (Cat 2)
Colorado desert parsley; Lomatium concinnum (Cat 2)
Paradox Valley lupine; Lupinus crassus (Cat 2)
Dolores skeleton plant: Lygodesmia dolorensis (Cat 2)
Ladies tresses orchid: Spiranthes diluvialis (T)

As a result of a review of BLM inventory information, Colorado's Rare Flora (O'Kane, 1988), the final biological assessment for the Carsten's land exchange, and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service it was determined that habitat for all but one of these species did not exist within the amendment area. It is possible that the ladies tresses orchid (Spiranthes diluvialis), which is confined to riparian wetlands at elevations below 6,500', could occur in the riparian zones of the amendment area downstream of Norwood Hill. There are no known populations of this species on the western slope of Colorado, the known populations are located in Boulder and Jefferson Counties on the eastern slope. Other populations are known to occur in the Uinta Basin and Dinosaur area of Utah, and also in Nevada.

ANIMALS

A list of endangered, threatened, candidate, and proposed species with potential to occur in the amendment area is included in Appendix B. The list was developed in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Also included on the list are species listed as endangered or threatened under Colorado law. Of the

species listed, only those mentioned below are known to occur within the amendment area.

Bald eagles are present only during the winter months. The river corridor upstream of Norwood Hill is used only for incidental hunting, no concentration areas have been documented there. The area between Norwood Hill and Piñon is part of a bald eagle concentration area that stretches from Norwood Hill to the Nucla Powerplant, near Naturita. Up to 44 bald eagles have been documented in this area by BLM biologists, with average annual counts of 9 birds. There are 4 known communal roosts in the San Miguel Canyon, two of which are within the amendment area. One roost is located on public land just upstream of the confluence with Horsefly Creek, and a second roost within the amendment area is located on private land just downstream of the confluence of Horsefly Creek. These two roosts are the most heavily used of the 4 roosts on the river, perhaps because there is no convenient vehicle access to either of them, and human disturbance is limited. Large ponderosa pines with open branch structures are the preferred communal roost tree in the Canyon. Most of the birds that roost in the canyon are believed to feed primarily on winter killed big game concentrated on Wrights Mesa in the Redvale area. BLM's current RMP, and oil and gas EIS have imposed a seasonal closure from 12/1 to 4/15 (BLM 1991) on a total of 8,596 acres (6,952 of which are public land) to protect wintering eagles from disturbance caused by BLM authorized actions.
CDOW biologists have one recorded instance of a river otter, from the Dolores River reintroduction effort, occurring in the San Miguel River in the vicinity of Horsefly Creek (Olterman 1991). There is no evidence that a self sustaining population of otters is present within the amendment area. No analysis of habitat suitability is available. The Nature Conservancy has proposed a study to determine if the habitat on the San Miguel is suitable for otter reintroduction.

Limited inventories for the Mexican spotted owl have been completed in the Horsefly Creek area of the San Miguel River Canyon(ENSR, 1992) but no spotted owls were located. CDOW plans to complete some further inventories in the Specie Creek and Beaver Creek Canyon areas in 1992 (Rogers, Boyle, 1992).

WILDLIFE

TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE

There have been no intensive inventories of the amendment area to determine the species that may be present. Stacy and Richard (1975) completed a literature review of the animals within the project area for the San Miguel Project, which includes most of the amendment area. BLM wildlife observation records contain information for many species common to the area, including: mountain lion, mule deer, elk, river otter, spotted sandpiper, belted kingfisher, coyote, raccoon, black bear, redtail hawks, golden eagle, and numerous others. The riparian plant communities

in the amendment area provide excellent nongame bird habitat, and excellent wildlife viewing opportunities for the public.

Under the existing RMP, 11,433 acres have seasonal restrictions from December 1 to April 30 (BLM 1991) to protect wintering deer and elk on crucial winter ranges. Of this acreage, 3,177 acres are public land. Most wintering big game animals concentrate on the tops of mesas and do not make heavy use of the stream and river bottom areas. Both mule deer and elk are present in limited numbers within the amendment area year-round.

FISHERIES

A complete list of the streams that occur on public land in the amendment area, their flow regime, and their length on public land, is located in Appendix B. A total of 63.8 miles of perennial and intermittent stream is present on public land within the amendment area. Of the total stream mileage within the amendment area, 57.3 miles are perennial streams. There are a number of unnamed streams with perennial flow, for which no data are available. In addition, there are 11.1 miles of stream on U.S. Forest Service lands and 69.2 miles of privately owned streams within the amendment boundary.

Based on DOW fish sampling data, rainbow, brown, brook, and cutthroat trout are found within the stream systems of the amendment area. Of the perennial streams listed, only Willow, Summit, Cottonwood, North Fork Cottonwood, McKenzie, Muddy, and Turner Creeks have no data indicating that they are trout fisheries. Non game fish include suckers, shiners, sculpins, and minnows, and are found in all perennial streams in the amendment area. These non game species may also be found in intermittent streams occasionally.

Fishery habitat quality has been degraded in Fall, Big Bear, and Specie Creeks as a result of road placement and construction activities, and extreme flood events. These streams, like most of the streams in the amendment area, are high gradient, and require healthy riparian systems to maintain stable stream channels and retain quality fishery habitat. Under the current situation in these three systems, little can be done to make a significant improvement in fishery habitat.

Fishery habitat quality in the San Miguel River is rated as poor by the CDOW. Large sediment yields from the watershed during summer storms are probably a limiting factor for this fishery. Much of the sediment is related to geologic factors, and cannot be altered. Annual stocking of catchable trout maintains the recreational fishery potential for the river.

Beaver Creek was electroshocked in 1991 by BLM to determine the kind of fish present and relative productivity. In spite of being in low flow conditions for 3 consecutive years as a result of drought, this stream appears to be extremely productive, . This

may be a reflection of the excellent condition of the riparian system of this stream.

The existing RMP has designated 2,878 acres of public land (3,400 acres total) as riparian/aquatic emphasis areas. This designation is present on the San Miguel River, Beaver Creek, Saltado Creek, Specie Creek, Leopard Creek, and Big Bear Creek.

VEGETATION:

RIPARIAN VEGETATION:

Riparian vegetation acreage on public land is summarized on the stream mileage table presented in Appendix B. There are an additional 80 miles of Forest Service, and privately owned stream within the amendment area, which contribute to the riparian acreage of the area.

San Miguel River: The riparian vegetation of the San Miguel was first described by Baker in 1986. This study of the riparian vegetation of west-central and southwest Colorado was an effort to rate the importance of these systems for preservation. This study, completed for the Nature Conservancy and Colorado Natural Areas Program, identified the San Miguel and Yampa Rivers as the most important systems in Colorado for protection. Baker identified remnant (pre-settlement condition) areas that were relatively unaffected by grazing, mining or other human activities. The riparian community on the San Miguel upstream of Horsefly Creek consists of Colorado blue spruce, narrowleaf cottonwood, Douglas fir, thin leaf alder, water birch, and red osier dogwood. This is the only Western Colorado riparian woodland with water birch as a major component of the plant community. Remnant, or relic, sites (defined as plant communities that are essentially untouched by human activity and retain all their original vegetation components and characteristics) are located on The Nature Conservancy's Middle San Miguel Preserve, downstream of Specie Creek, and on public land upstream of the Preserve. The general location of the known relic sites is shown on the proposed action map in Appendix E. This riparian community also occurs on the Yampa and Animas Rivers, but the San Miguel's vegetation is the least disturbed and it's flows the least regulated of the three. The water birch and thinleaf alder have declined or disappeared from other systems where stream flows have been altered by dams or irrigation diversions. Reductions in the reproduction of cottonwood have also been noted.

Four different areas of human impact and activity in this particular plant community are evident. The areas upstream of Placerville are used heavily by recreationists. Spillover camping from festivals in Telluride tends to concentrate in this area. The riparian community on the north side of the river has been impacted and narrowed somewhat by an old railroad grade, now used as a road. The section from Placerville to the Sanborn Park Road is increasingly being impacted by recreation use. This section is also lightly impacted by old gravel mining and placer mining operations. The section from the Sanborn Park Road to Horsefly

Creek is roadless, with limited access due to private lands at the upstream and downstream ends. Livestock grazing of this area has historically been light. This section exhibits the least evidence of overt human disturbance. From Horsefly Creek to Piñon, the river is characterized by a more open floodplain which historically has been used for livestock grazing, and placer mining. This lower section continues to be the one that is most frequently disturbed by mining activity, as well as, increased recreational use, primarily hunters and campers.

In spite of past and present disturbance, the riparian system is still in very good overall condition. The riparian system and the aquatic systems to which it is tied are functioning very well. Most sites that had been seriously disturbed in the past have recovered well and have few exotic plant species present. In recent years the most significant damage to the riparian community has occurred due to unregulated recreation use, especially off road vehicles and camping. Campers have continued to extend trails and vehicle tracks into the riparian system and campsites have continued to expand. Remnant sites on public lands and Nature Conservancy lands have been noticeably altered since Baker completed his field work in 1985.

Within the past ten years placer mining activity has had little effect on the section of the river from Deep Creek, downstream to Horsefly Creek. Most miners are using small suction dredges which do not damage riparian vegetation. One mine, at the mouth of Specie Creek, has damaged about two acres of riparian vegetation by the construction of a settling pond, and some unexplained blading of a riparian woodland, located just downstream of Specie Creek.

One section of riparian vegetation just east of Placerville, was removed over 20 years ago by gravel mining, and has not yet recovered. The failure to recover is due to the complete loss of channel stability, which results in the loss of newly established vegetation each time high water conditions occur. The channel in this location is braided, and provides no valuable habitat for aquatic organisms. Although some indication of recovery has been evident in the last 3 years, full recovery of this section may require mechanical reconstruction and replanting.

Downstream of Horsefly Creek, the riparian system is dominated by cottonwoods with a few scattered ponderosa pines. This area has been much more disturbed by irrigation diversions, grazing, and mining. Within the last decade most of the mining disturbance on the river has occurred in this area. The percentage of understory shrubs in this area has been reduced, and the percentage of Kentucky bluegrass has been increased. The appearance of the area on public land, as opposed to some adjacent private lands, is still predominantly that of a natural community.

Tributary Streams: Saltado and Beaver Creeks have riparian vegetation which is predominantly in excellent condition. The vegetation on both streams is similar in composition to that of the San Miguel. Portions of Beaver Creek that were formerly private

land, have been heavily grazed in the past, but appear to have recovered well as a result of several years of rest. The upper portions of Saltado Creek on public land have been heavily grazed in the recent past, resulting in a small area where riparian vegetation is no longer in good condition. When other tributary streams in the upper San Miguel River system have been heavily damaged by severe runoff events, these two streams have suffered only light damage, from which they have largely recovered.

Fall, Big Bear, Leopard, and Specie Creeks have the potential for riparian vegetation similar to the San Miguel. All have been damaged by human activities, and road placement and construction has caused the worst damage. Leopard Creek has suffered the least damage, but is frequently used by the highway department as a disposal area for waste soil and rock that falls on the uphill side of the highway. The other streams have had a percentage of their riparian vegetation removed by road construction. The road construction also straightened and confined the streams somewhat resulting in higher gradients. When these systems were subjected to extreme runoff events from summer storms in 1983, much of the remaining riparian vegetation was damaged or removed, as were portions of the roads. Reconstruction of the roads has generally constricted these systems even more, and recovery has not been evident. Livestock grazing does not appear to have been a significant influence on these systems in recent times.

Horsefly and Cottonwood Creeks appear to be in good condition. They contain a narrowleaf cottonwood community with an understory of coyote willow, squawbush, and other species typical of low elevation riparian systems in the lower San Miguel and Dolores River drainages. Cattle grazing is occurring in these systems, and the influence of livestock on the system is currently unknown, but is assumed to be of minor importance.

The remaining streams, such as McKenzie Creek, Willow Creek, Huff Gulch, and Deep Creek have very limited public acreage, or lack of access, and generally have received little inventory attention from BLM. Huff Gulch, an intermittent stream with extremely high gradient, has had some previous damage to its limited riparian system due to road construction. A new road is being constructed in this drainage, and the final impacts to the riparian system are not yet evident.

UPLAND VEGETATION:

An inventory of the vegetation and soils of the RMP area was conducted in the years 1980 through 1982. Within the amendment area all the soils were mapped and sight write-up areas (SWA's) were developed for vegetation communities in the areas west of Beaver Creek. The intent of the original inventory was to determine the amount of livestock forage available. Because topography limits the amount of grazeable land within the amendment area, vegetation data from this inventory is sketchy.

The upstream end of the amendment area is characterized by spruce-fir forest communities on steep slopes. Intermixed within these communities are islands of aspen. Because of the steep slopes, none of these forest types have been classified by BLM as having commercial value. Between Placerville and Norwood Hill, spruce/fir vegetation is maintained on the north facing slopes and the south facing slopes begin to be dominated by piñon pine and rocky mountain juniper, with small sagebrush parks. The mesa top areas have small stands of ponderosa pine, some of which have commercial value, although it may not be cost effective to log these small tracts.

Downstream of Norwood Hill, the predominant vegetation on the south and west facing slopes is piñon/juniper with mountain shrubs mixed into the stand on the more moist locations. North and east facing slopes in this area are dominated by mountain shrub communities. The tops of the mesas in the Sanborn Park and Dry Park areas, were piñon/juniper communities, and have been chained by BLM and the Forest Service to increase livestock forage production. These sites, which are livestock emphasis areas in the original RMP, are now dominated by introduced grasses.

Although all the communities described above contain grasses and forbs, grasses and forbs are not a major component in any of them, except for the treated areas.

NOXIOUS WEEDS:

Extensive surveys for noxious weeds have not been conducted in the amendment area. A brief survey along Highway 145 in 1992, did not locate any state or county listed noxious weeds. Further weed surveys will be conducted in the amendment area as funding allows.

FIRE:

Annually there are between 5 and 10 fires, from all causes, in the San Miguel River Canyon. Most fires are no more than a few acres. Because of the high visibility of the area, it has been standard practice to fully suppress all fires.

IMPACTS FROM THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION:

This section discusses the physical, biological and economic consequences of implementing the alternatives described earlier. Only those resources that would be affected are discussed; it is assumed that no important impacts to climate, air quality, geology, topography, transportation, noise, or prime and unique farmlands would result from these BLM actions. Where resource management would remain essentially unchanged, such as, the disposal tracts from the original RMP, the unique fossil areas, the commercial forest management areas, bald eagle winter concentration areas, a

formalized 14 day camping limit, and crucial big game winter ranges, no assessment of impacts is described.

Noxious weed control would occur within the area under either alternative, based on an Integrated Pest Management Plan developed by the San Miguel Basin Weed Board. Control work on public land would be coordinated and approved by BLM. The proposed ACEC may have a higher priority for inventory and control of noxious weeds.

The general, and specific, assumptions and guidelines found on pages 3-1 to 3-4 of the Draft San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan were also used for this amendment.

Because the decisions pertaining to oil and gas leasing would not be altered by this amendment, no discussion of the impacts of oil and gas leasing is presented.

All acreage references in the impact analysis section refer to Public Land only.

PROPOSED ACTION:

Introduction:

This alternative generally protects riparian and recreation values within the San Miguel River Canyon, and the canyons of its major tributaries, between the old townsite of Piñon and Deep Creek. Impact discussions are provided by resource.

Energy and Minerals Resources: The ACEC designation would require mining claimants to file a mine plan prior to surface disturbance, on 20,964 acres of public land. This would result in some increased costs for the claimants and a minimum delay of 15 additional days in approval of their proposed activities. The requirement to use native species for reclamation and the potential to require additional mitigation, not required under a 3809 Notice, would also be expected to increase costs slightly.

Mineral material disposal would be prohibited on 20,964 acres of the ACEC and an estimated 730 acres of riparian systems within the planning area. Since no mineral material sales have occurred in these systems within the past 10 years, the actual economic impact is believed to be negligible. In the event that demand for these materials increases, alternate sources, outside of the closed areas, would have to be located. Costs for the alternate sources would be somewhat higher due to increased trucking expenses.

No impacts are expected to coal, geothermal, or oil and gas activity.

Vegetation: Riparian vegetation conditions would be maintained or improved on about 1,450 acres of publicly owned land. Continued degradation of the riparian systems in the ACEC, due to unmanaged recreation activity would be curtailed. Much of the damage done to the San Miguel River riparian system over the past few years would

be repaired, and recreation activity would be directed to sites that would cause no additional damage to riparian vegetation values. The cohesive management philosophy established by this amendment should result in real progress in riparian vegetation management. The relic riparian vegetation sites, near Specie Creek, would be protected from further damage. The end result would be the preservation of the existing biodiversity of the San Miguel River ecosystem.

The requirement for submission and approval of a mining plan prior to conducting surface disturbing activities on mining claims, and the inclusion of specific reclamation and mitigation in those plans would reduce long term impacts to upland and riparian vegetation on 20,964 acres.

Management of livestock grazing on riparian vegetation would be improved, and the risk of damage to the systems reduced, as a result of establishing specific management objectives for the riparian areas. An estimated 500 acres of suitable livestock range on acquired land, much of which is riparian, would be protected from any livestock impacts.

Off highway vehicle closures on 10,668 acres of currently unroaded areas would prevent degradation of the vegetation in those areas from off highway vehicle use. The restriction of vehicles to designated roads and trails on 22,011 acres would reduce the acreage of vegetation currently impacted by OHV's and prevent an increase in unplanned vehicle trails.

Soils and Water: Off highway vehicle closures on 10,668 acres and restriction to designated roads and trails on 22,011 acres should reduce soil erosion and improve soil stability. The reclamation of closed, unnecessary roads would also reduce soil loss.

Stream system stability should improve slightly due to riparian vegetation management and restoration of damaged stream banks and channels, that are found on a small fraction of the stream systems in the amendment area.

The exclusion of livestock grazing from 500 acres of suitable range, out of the 2,800 acres of acquired land, would reduce non-point source pollution in surface water. Much of the suitable acreage is in or adjacent to streams and riparian zones.

Stream flows would be protected by recommending instream flows to the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

Terrestrial Wildlife: Riparian habitat conditions would be improved or maintained on about 1,456 acres of riparian system. Management of recreation impacts within the ACEC and SRMA would reduce some disturbance of wildlife by closing some unnecessary roads and camping areas on the river between Placerville and Norwood Hill. Nongame bird species would be the primary beneficiary of the habitat maintenance and improvement.

The closure of 10,668 acres of habitat to OHVs and road development would prevent increased disturbance of wildlife and degradation of habitat.

Acquisition of key private parcels would enhance riparian system management and help to maintain riparian habitat values for the long term.

The closure of approximately 2,800 acres of acquired lands, 500 acres of which is suitable range, to livestock grazing would enhance riparian habitat values and reduce livestock-wildlife conflicts for forage and space.

Wintering big game would be protected from disturbance on crucial winter ranges on 8,240 acres of land, 1,340 acres of which are Public Land. This is 1,400 fewer acres than the existing RMP, but is consistent with the Oil and Gas EIS, completed in 1991. The acreage removed from winter closure is primarily private land in the Wilson Mesa area. The decisions in the Oil and Gas EIS pertain only to oil and gas activities. The amendment proposal would pertain to all BLM permitted actions on 1,340 acres of Public Land crucial winter range.

In cooperation with CDOW, river otters would be reintroduced into suitable habitat on the San Miguel River, and probably establish a population on up to 50 miles of River and stream habitat. This would enhance biodiversity within the river corridor and within the region.

The inclusion of specific wildlife management objectives in the SRMA plan would provide improved direction for management of all types of wildlife habitat within the SRMA.

Aquatic Wildlife: The planned increased emphasis on protection and improvement of habitat values on about 65 miles of stream and 1,450 acres of riparian habitat would improve aquatic habitat on an estimated 12 miles of stream that have been damaged by off highway vehicles, mining, recreation, road construction, and floods.

T&E Species: The closure of 10,668 acres of upland habitat to OHVs, and the maintenance of those acres in a roadless state would prevent degradation of the best potential Mexican spotted owl habitat within the amendment area.

The closure of the river canyon, from the Sanborn Park Road to Horsefly Creek, to OHV's would protect wintering bald eagles from disturbance. The closed area contains the only communal winter roosts on public land within the amendment area, and provides habitat for the largest number of eagles that winter on the San Miguel.

Improved management of the riparian systems, downstream of Norwood Hill, could enhance habitat values for the Ute ladies tresses orchid, if it is present in the area.

No other impacts to any T&E species, proposed species, or candidate species are anticipated.

Livestock Grazing: No reductions in livestock grazing preferences are planned. Grazing reductions, or changes in grazing schemes, may result if grazing operations cause degradation of riparian systems. At present there is no indication the minor livestock problems present within the area would result in a situation requiring a reduction in grazing preference.

An estimated 500 acres of unallocated, suitable range on acquired lands would be lost to livestock grazing for the long term.

Inclusion of specific livestock management objectives in the SRMA plan would provide improved direction for livestock management, especially in riparian areas.

Forestry: Approximately 20,166 acres of the ACEC, and 298 acres of the remainder of the SRMA would be closed to forest product disposal. The closed acreage in the ACEC is located on steep slopes, in riparian areas, or on lightly stocked sites that have no commercial value. Some potential loss of personal use forest products, such as firewood and juniper posts, would result, however, no permits for such sales have occurred within the ACEC area within the past 10 years. Although closure of the riparian areas to forest product sales in the remainder of the SRMA would appear to forgo some economic benefits, in reality, harvests within riparian areas would probably not be authorized in order to protect the integrity of stream systems. As a result the loss of wood fiber production would be insignificant.

Recreation: The establishment of recreation management objectives for the land use plan, and completion of a management plan for the SRMA, would result in improved management of recreation resources, and improved visitor contacts and service, on 32,641 acres of public land. BLM should also be better equipped to manage the continued increase in recreation pressure and demand that the area has been experiencing.

The requirement for mine plans, that include mitigation and reclamation for claims within the ACEC would result in the preservation of the quality recreation environment within the area.

Restricting car camping within the ACEC to a maximum of 3 sites would reduce the attractiveness of the area for some users, who prefer to vehicle camp in isolation from other campers. The construction of campsites, bike trails, and interpretive sites, and improved management, of the authorized sites would enhance the useability of the area for other users. The potential to further limit camping stays to periods shorter than 14 days would make the area less attractive to those users who wish to stay for the longer period. If imposed, the shorter camping limit would help preserve the quality of the camping experience and insure that it is available to a larger number of users.

OHV restrictions and closures would also reduce the useability of the area for some users, but should retain a balance of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. Closure of the ACEC to major utility corridors would maintain the physical setting attractive to recreation users, and reduce the potential for degradation of the scenic qualities of the area.

Establishment of VRM classes for the amendment area would also help to preserve the values of the area by maintaining the physical setting desired by the public. The proposed powerline to be constructed across Beaver and Saltado Creek canyons would cause a minor intrusion into the primitive setting of these canyons, but the thick vegetation of the canyon should limit the visual impact.

Planned restoration of damaged riparian/aquatic habitat would enhance the setting for recreational users, and ultimately result in better fishing opportunities and more frequent wildlife sightings.

The construction of trails into the area between the Sanborn Park Road and Horsefly Creek would provide public access to an area that has been inaccessible to the general public.

Exchanging and acquiring lands within the SRMA would allow the BLM to obtain key parcels of land needed to enhance recreation and riparian management.

Cultural Resources: Inventory and management of cultural resources would improve due to development of specific management objectives being developed in the SRMA plan.

Visual Resources: The proposal has established Visual Resource Management goals for 35,884 acres of public land. These VRM guidelines should preserve the visual quality of the San Miguel River Canyon and its tributaries, and the visual qualities of the San Juan Scenic Byway and Unaweep/Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway.

Lands: The restrictions imposed by the management of the ACEC, VRM classes, and the closure of the ACEC to major utilities would decrease the opportunities for rights-of-ways and other authorizations on public land. One result of this may be an increase in construction costs for applicants who are required to select longer alternate routes or include more costly mitigation in their proposed project. No estimate of the increased costs are available, since they would have to be calculated for each project independently. The cost increases that could be incurred by major utilities bypassing the ACEC could be substantial.

Acquisition of key private parcels, and exchanges to facilitate the acquisitions, would initiate an increased short term workload for the BLM lands program. The elimination of some inholdings would improve the efficiency of land use authorizations by BLM.

Fire: Fire management would experience a slight increase in suppression costs due to the decision to place the area within the canyon rims, except the area between Clay Creek and Horsefly Creek, and the forest management areas, in the full suppression category. Since full suppression has been the informal management philosophy for this area, the change in costs should be minimal. The use of fire to meet vegetation and fuel management objectives would be possible.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE:

Introduction:

Land use decision from the original RMP would continue in effect. Effective management of recreation resources and riparian ecosystems would be difficult. Impact discussions are provided by resource.

Energy and Minerals Resources: The entire 43,011 acres of Public Land in the amendment area would be open to locatable mineral development without the requirement for filing a mine plan, and open to mineral material disposal.

Vegetation: Riparian vegetation conditions along the San Miguel River between the Sanborn Park Road and Deep Creek would continue to deteriorate due to unmanaged recreation impacts, resulting in the creation of additional campsites and vehicle trails to the River. Reclamation of the damaged riparian sites within the amendment area may be completed, but progress would be slowed by a lack of coordinated management for the area. The relic riparian sites on the River would continue to be damaged and deteriorated, by unmanaged recreation.

Livestock grazing in riparian systems would continue to lack specific objectives, and could cause riparian vegetation damage. An estimated 500 acres of suitable livestock range, on acquired lands, may be grazed by domestic livestock, resulting in some potential for degradation of the riparian systems involved.

Allowing OHV use on 43,011 acres of public land would result in some minor degradation of vegetation conditions through damage and removal.

Soils and Water: Off highway vehicle use on 43,011 acres of public land would increase erosion and reduce soil stability. The continued proliferation of vehicle trails in the riparian zones would cause accelerated degradation of hydrologic function, and an increase in stream channel instability.

The potential introduction of livestock grazing on 500 suitable acres, of the 2,800 acres of acquired land, would slightly increase nonpoint source pollution of surface water.

Instream flow filings may not be obtained to protect the function of stream systems.

Terrestrial Wildlife: Riparian habitat conditions would continue to deteriorate on the River and some tributaries as a result of unmanaged recreation. Additional vegetation would be removed to create campsites and vehicle trails to the River. Some riparian habitat improvement would be accomplished, but is not likely to keep pace with the increasing recreation pressure in the area.

Wintering big game would be protected from disturbance on 9,640 acres of land. This is about 1,400 acres more than is currently covered by seasonal restrictions under the Oil and Gas EIS plan amendment. Most of the 1,400 acres is private land in the Wilson Mesa area, and is not currently considered to be crucial winter range.

River otters would not be reintroduced into the River, even if the San Miguel River is suitable habitat for otters.

Aquatic Wildlife: Unmanaged recreation activity would continue to damage aquatic habitat along the River between Sanborn Park and Deep Creek. Vegetation would continue to be damaged and removed to create campsites and vehicle access to the river. Some minor habitat improvement would be accomplished on those streams that are riparian/aquatic emphasis areas.

T&E Species: Potential Mexican spotted owl habitat could be degraded by road construction and OHV use.

Livestock Grazing: Livestock grazing could be authorized on 2,800 acres of acquired land, about 500 of which is suitable for livestock grazing. Management would continue to be low priority for the BLM range program.

Forestry: The entire 43,011 acres of public land would be open to forest product disposal. Little of the acreage would be harvested due to steep slopes, poor stocking, and lack of demand.

Recreation: Management of the increased recreation activity in the area would continue to be hampered by a lack of land use plan direction on 43,011 acres of public land. Sanitation and trash problems, and campsite deterioration would continue. In time, the attributes that make the San Miguel River Canyon a desirable place for recreation would deteriorate as a result of continued, and escalating recreation impacts.

Camping and OHV use on 43,011 acres of public land would continue to be open and unregulated. Ultimately vehicular type activities could begin to dominate the recreation spectrum within the corridor.

The lack of VRM management guidelines would result in a gradual deterioration of the physical setting desired by the public. The scenic values of the scenic byways would also be deteriorated, especially by major utility construction that could occur anywhere in the canyon. Exchanges or land acquisitions to facilitate recreation management would be unlikely.

The area between Sanborn Park Road and Horsefly Creek would continue to be inaccessible to the recreating public.

Cultural Resources: Cultural resource management, and inventory would not be emphasized on 43,011 acres of public land. Some minimal inventory and interpretation would occur.

Visual Resources: Without visual resource management guidelines, the visual qualities of the corridor would continue to be deteriorated by disturbances that do not blend with the environment. The visual qualities of the scenic byways would not be preserved.

Lands: The entire area, except 300 acres of commercial forest would be open to major utilities. Rights of ways and other authorizations would be authorized with few restrictions from the land use plan.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

No cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed action. The proposals of this amendment are primarily protective in nature, and would result in a reduction of surface impacts. If any cumulative impacts were to accrue, they would be primarily beneficial, especially in the preservation of the biodiversity of the San Miguel River Canyon, and in the protection of the assets which make the canyon a desirable destination point and travel route.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Notice of the intent to modify the land use plan was placed in the Federal Register on February 28,1991. The local public was also notified of the plan modification, and open house concerning the amendment, through news releases to local newspapers and radio stations. Individuals and organizations who participated in the original RMP were contacted in 1989 to see if they would be interested in receiving further information about the land use plan amendment for the San Miguel River. Those individuals who responded in the affirmative were notified directly of the amendment and given a brief description of the proposal.

An open house was held in Placerville, on April 3, 1991, to obtain public comment on the preliminary proposal. The thirty day public comment period ended on April 29, 1991, but comments were accepted until June 3, 1991. A total of 42 comments were received. One of these was a petition, with 103 signatures, in favor of the proposed amendment. The majority of commenters were in favor of the amendment. All commenters were added to the mailing list for this action.

Of the comments received, the major adverse concerns were that the proposal would overemphasize recreation, may prevent construction

_____. Various Years. Stream and Riparian System Inventory Data. BLM, Montrose, CO.

Baker, William. 1986. Riparian Vegetation of the Montane and Subalpine Zones in West-Central and Southwestern Colorado: Final Report. The Nature Conservancy and Colorado Natural Areas Program.

Nan Lederer. 1991. Personal Communication, regarding the riparian vegetation of the San Miguel downstream of Norwood Hill. The Nature Conservancy, Boulder, Co

_____.1992. Recreation Use Records for the San Miguel River, 1986-1992. Bureau of Land Management, Montrose, CO.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 1

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

(CURRENT MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE)

MANAGEMENT AREA NAME	ACRES[1]
Aquatic/Riparian (BAR)♥ Management	2,878 (BLM) 522 (PVT)
Livestock Management (A)♥	8,970 (BLM) 2,036 (PVT)
Bald Eagle Winter (BE)♥ Concentration Area	13,134 (BLM) 2 (USFS) 1,642 (PVT)
Sand and Gravel (ES)♥ Management	9 (BLM)
Deer and Elk (BDEW)♥ Winter Range	3,178 (BLM) 29 (USFS) 8,204 (PVT) 22 (STATE)
Placerville Fossil (EF)♥ Area	2,833 (BLM) 1,172 (PVT)
General Management (G)♥	17,270 (BLM) 8,541 (USFS) 82,198 (PVT) 2,505 (STATE)
Disposal Tracts (H)♥	724 (BLM) 556 (PVT)♠
Forest Management (J)♥	798 (BLM) 123 (PVT)♠

[1]The acreage presented in the table does not equal the acreage of the amendment area because some management areas overlap, and are counted twice. Total acreage for the amendment area is presented on the table for the proposed action. All acreages are from BLM's electronic mapping system, and slight variations in acreage values may exist within the document due to electronic adjustments of the various maps that make up the amendment database.

♥ Denotes the map symbols from the original RMP.
♠ Acreage no longer in public ownership.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 2

PROPOSED ACTION

MANAGEMENT AREA NAME	ACREAGE[1]
ACEC (L_1)♣	20,964 (BLM) 2 (USFS) 3,101 (PVT)
Recreation Management (C_1)♣	11,677 (BLM) 34 (USFS) 4,028 (PVT)
Livestock Management (A)♥	5,383 (BLM) 2 (USFS) 147 (PVT)
General Management (G)♥	3,022 (BLM) 8,572 (USFS) 90,271 (PVT) 2,527 (STATE)
Bald Eagle Winter (BE)♥ Concentration Area	12 (BLM)
Disposal Tracts (H)♥	632 (BLM)
Deer and Elk Winter (BDEW)♥ Range	1,321 (BLM) 433 (PVT)

♥ Denotes the map symbols for the management units, from the original RMP.

♣ Denotes the map symbols for the new management units developed for the amendment.

TOTAL ACREAGES:

BLM Lands.....43,011 ac.
USFS lands.....8,612 ac.
Private lands.....98,157 ac.
State Lands.....2,527 ac.
Total...152,307 ac.

[1]All acreages are from BLM's electronic mapping system, and slight variations in acreage values may exist within the document due to electronic adjustments of the various maps that make up the amendment database.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 3

OIL AND GAS LEASING STIPULATIONS

STIPULATIONS	ACRES*
Crucial Winter Range(CWR)♥ (Big Game Crucial Winter Range)	30,186
No Surface Occupancy(NSO)♥ (Raptor Nests and Roosts)	747
Bald Eagle Winter(SME)♥ Concentration Area	10,163
Standard (SSP)♥ Stipulations	113,706

* Due to overlapping management areas, the total acreage exceeds that of the amendment area. Total acreages are presented on the preceding table for the proposed action.

♥ Denotes the map symbols for the management units, from Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement and Plan Amendment.

Management Guidance for Area L1:
Area of Critical Environmental Concern

This management area is located in the San Miguel River Canyon between Placerville and Horsefly Creeks. It also includes the canyons of the tributary streams of Saltado and Beaver Creek. The management area contains 20,964 acres of public land, and 3,101 acres of private land.

Within this management area the primary emphasis is on the protection of unique, high quality, riparian vegetation resources, the scenic values of the corridor, and preservation of relic riparian communities. The provision of quality recreation experiences while maintaining these riparian systems is the second major goal of this management area. The ACEC is closed to major utility corridors (except as detailed below) in order to protect riparian and visual values.

Within the ACEC the recreation management objectives vary somewhat depending upon location. Along the highway corridor, management is directed toward the motorized segment of the recreation public, and management will be for a roaded natural setting (corresponds to the designated roads and trails areas on the OHV map). In the areas that are now basically roadless, the emphasis will be on primitive nonmotorized recreation (corresponds to the areas closed to OHVs on the OHV map).

Restoration of disturbed sites will be accomplished with species native to the sites. The use of trees and shrubs will be required, if appropriate to the site.

All applicable land disposal authorities would remain available for use to resolve unforeseen trespass situations.

Management Direction for Other Resource Values

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Cultural	Develop, inventory and protect suitable cultural resource properties.	Develop specific cultural resource management objectives for the SRMA plan. Provide protective management of the unique fossils in the Placerville area through the use of stipulations on a case-by-case basis.
Visual	Preserve scenic values, enhance viewing opportunities and increase variety, where appropriate. Establish site specific visual quality objectives and design guidelines for landscape development projects during activity planning.	Manage the area under VRM Class II guidelines, except for the forest management areas from the original RMP which will be managed under Class IV guidelines.

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Recreation	Manage for a variety of recreation opportunities consistent with maintenance of the riparian system and visual resource values. Provide necessary visitor management services and facilities required to reduce the impacts of unregulated recreation, and educate the public about the values of riparian systems. All facility construction will protect riparian and scenic values. Manage this area and the C1 areas as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), and develop an integrated management plan for the area. The integrated plan will serve as the Recreation Area Management Plan.	Camping along the river, between Placerville and the Sanborn Park Road, will be limited to two designated locations (tentatively the motor home campsite near Specie Creek, and the acquired land at the base of Norwood Hill). The latter would be developed for tent camping only. Minimal camping facilities would be constructed in Beaver Creek Canyon at the Beef Trail Road crossing. A fourteen day camping limit will be enforced in the ACEC. This limit is further defined as: Fourteen days maximum in one location anywhere in the SRMA. A thirty day period must pass before camping anywhere else within the SRMA. The site must be completely vacated, personal property may not remain on the site beyond the fourteen day period, or moved to another location within the SRMA and left unattended. In the event that resource damage becomes evident as a result of the fourteen day limit, or demand for camp sites becomes extremely high, the camping limit may be shortened accordingly, with no land use plan amendment. Develop a maximum of two interpretive sites, to include an environmental education center (developed jointly with The Nature Conservancy) at the base of Norwood Hill. Trails in Saltado and Beaver Creek Canyons may be constructed as well as a boat ramp on the San Miguel at Beaver Creek. If feasible, a bicycle and foot trail would be constructed between Placerville and Norwood Hill. Beaver Creek, Saltado Creek, Horsefly Creek and the San Miguel River between the Sanborn Park Road and Horsefly Creek will be managed for primitive non-motorized recreation. Construct a foot trail into the San Miguel River Canyon between horsefly Creek and the Sanborn Park Road. The remainder of the ACEC will be managed as a roaded natural area. Construct vehicle parking areas, located outside of the flood plain, and riparian area with safe highway access to accommodate day use visitors. Construct a foot trail from the Sanborn Park Road to Horsefly Creek, pending access through or around private land. If disturbance of wintering eagles becomes evident, close the area to public use from November 16 to April 30.

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
OHV Use	Designations of OHV areas is primarily directed at maintenance or restoration or riparian areas and scenic values. Roads will be designated at the time the activity plan for the SRMA is developed.	Beaver Creek Canyon, Saltado Creek, and the San Miguel River Canyon from the Sanborn Park road to Horsefly Creek, would be closed to off-highway vehicles. The access road in lower Beaver Canyon must remain usable for utility line maintenance, but would be closed to public vehicle use. Within the remainder of the ACEC, vehicle use would be limited to designated roads or trails. Designation of the roads to remain open will occur in the Recreation Area Management Plan (Integrated Resource Management Plan).
Wildlife	Provide the highest priority management to aquatic and riparian habitat to provide frequent wildlife sightings, fishing opportunities, recreational hunting, interpretive opportunities, and healthy plant communities. Continue to provide necessary management for T&E species. Riparian and aquatic habitats will receive priority for habitat management.	The area between the Sanborn Park Road and Horsefly Creek will be seasonally closed between November 16 and April 30 (Colorado Oil and Gas Leasing and Development EIS, Record of Decision, 1991) to protect wintering bald eagles. Bald eagle roost trees will be protected, and monitoring of wintering eagle use will be resumed. Crucial big game winter ranges will be closed to all discretionary actions from December 1 to April 30 (Colorado Oil and Gas Leasing and Development EIS, Record of Decision, 1991). Damaged riparian areas in the ACEC will receive f priority for restoration and management compared other areas within the SRMA. Cooperate with the Nature Conservancy, and Colorado Division of Wildlife, to study the suitability of the San Miguel River for river otter reintroduction. Allow reintroduction into suitable habitat. Wildlife habitat management objectives and planned projects will be incorporated into the SRMA plan. To protect the riparian and aquatic systems within the SRMA, instream flow needs will be determined and filed with the State Water Conservation Board.

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Livestock Management	Manage livestock to protect riparian system values. Do not attempt to improve forage production through vegetation projects. Range management improvements must not negatively effect riparian system values, or scenic values.	Those riparian areas not currently allotted, including acquired lands, would be closed to livestock use. Allotment boundaries would be adjusted to exclude areas unsuitable for livestock grazing due to physical characteristics. Grazing preferences would not be effected. Allotment management plans, or grazing systems, shall contain specific measurable objectives for riparian pastures. Good or excellent condition riparian systems must be maintained in good to excellent condition. Where livestock management is a factor in systems being in less than good condition, livestock management practices would be changed to improve those systems to at least good condition.
Forestry	Forestry practices will be used to enhance riparian management, or control insect outbreaks.	With the exception of the three forest management areas designated in the original RMP, the ACEC is closed to forest product disposal, unless the criteria of improving riparian values and maintaining forest health are met.
Minerals	Manage mineral development to minimize impacts on riparian and recreation values. When possible, schedule activities so conflicts are minimized between recreational and mineral activities. Ensure site rehabilitation activities follow operating plans and address riparian management objectives.	The management area is closed to the disposal of mineral materials unless such disposal is needed to meet management goals for the river or riparian area, and is of a temporary, one-time nature. The area will be open to oil and gas leasing subject to standard stipulations and timing limitations (Colorado Oil and Gas Leasing and Development EIS, Record of Decision, 1991).

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Lands	All land use authorizations will be designed to mitigate riparian system values and recreation values. Acquisition of lands will be considered when opportunities for riparian and recreation management will be enhanced. Land would be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis. Although the intent of this management area is to retain lands in public ownership, disposal that enhances the management goals of the management area, and serves the public interest may be considered. Disposal may occur through exchange, boundary adjustment, and Recreation and Public Purposes Act conveyances.	The area is closed to the development of major utilities (defined in the original RMP), with the exception of the areas described below. Utility corridors, to be used only for major overhead electric transmission lines, will be established across Beaver Creek and Saltado Creek. As requested by San Miguel Power Association, only one of these corridors will ultimately be selected for use. The remaining one will be closed to major utility development. The corridor selected for use would be available for only one overhead transmission line. The corridors are located 1/4 mile on each side of San Miguel Power's existing 69 kV line, and 1/2 mile either side of the Beef Trail Road crossing Beaver Creek. The lines must span the riparian area to prevent disturbance to the riparian and aquatic resources of the streams. Visual impacts of line construction must be minimized to comply with VRM guidelines. Stipulations will be developed on a specific project basis to protect natural and scenic values. Within the San Miguel Canyon upgrades of the existing major electric transmission lines would be authorized. Bureau permitted actions, such as rights-of-way, bik trails, camping areas, etc., would not be permitted in the relic riparian communities within the ACEC. Elsewhere in the ACEC, such actions would be restricted to only those with an overriding public need which will not create long-term visual impacts, or damage to the riparian system.
Soils and Water	Maintain soil productivity, minimize man-caused erosion and strive to achieve adequate vegetation for watershed protection and plant vigor. Maintain or improve water quality and quantity for multiple-use resource needs. Secure sufficient water rights to provide for recreation and riparian management needs.	Where possible facility development will be located outside the 100 year floodplain.

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Fire	Utilize fire management techniques that maintain long-term recreation quality objectives. Suppression of wildfires will generally occur,but prescribed fire will be allowed if it will meet or exceed riparian, visual, and recreation objectives.	To allow the use of fire as a management tool, the mesa top areas, such as the forest management areas and the area between Clay Creek and Horsefly Creek would be managed in a conditional fire suppression category, and as fire use and fuel management areas. All areas within the upper canyon rims would be managed under the full fire suppression category. Within the Canyon, the Area Manager must approve the use of heavy equipment for fire suppression activities. These areas would also be placed in a fire use and fuels management category.
Access	Provide access to public land to enhance recreation values. Provide levels of maintenance on primary roads that promotes user safety. Minimal levels of maintenance would be provided on secondary roads.	Build and maintain a non-motorized trail, on existing easements, across private land in upper Saltado Creek to provide access to public land. Construct trails around private land, or purchase easements, to provide access to the San Miguel River Canyon between the Sanborn Park Road and Horsefly Creek.

Management Guidance for Area C1: Emphasis on Recreation

This management area consists of two separate sections located in the San Miguel River Canyon. The first section is located between Deep Creek and Placerville, including the tributary streams, and the second section is located between the canyon rims from Horsefly Creek to Piñon. The management area contains 11,674 acres of public land, 34 acres of Forest Service land, and 4,030 acres of private land.

Within this management area, recreation is identified as the principal management objective. The primary goals of management in these areas are those of continuing to provide a quality recreation experience, with diverse recreation opportunities, while protecting the riparian, and scenic values of the San Miguel River Canyon and its tributaries.

Recreation management objectives are to focus recreation uses, such as camping to managed sites, control off highway vehicle use, manage public and commercial boating activity and walk in fishing, and protect the visual qualities of the management area. This unit will be managed as a roaded natural area (this corresponds to the designated roads and trails OHV areas on the OHV map).

These management areas will, combined with the L1 management areas, be designated as the San Miguel River Special Recreation Management Area.

Revegetation of all disturbed riparian sites will be accomplished with native plant species only. Trees and shrubs will be required when they are appropriate to the site.

Management Direction for Other Resource Values

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Cultural	Develop, inventory and protect suitable cultural resource properties.	Develop specific cultural resource management objectives for the SRMA plan. Provide protective management of the unique fossils in the Placerville area through the use of stipulations on a case-by-case basis.
Visual	Preserve scenic values, enhance viewing opportunities and increase variety, where appropriate. Establish site specific visual quality objectives and design guidelines for landscape development projects during activity planning.	Manage the area under VRM Class III guidelines, and protect the scenic values of the San Juan Scenic Byway.

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Recreation	Manage for a variety of recreation opportunities consistent with physical and social recreation carrying capacities of the rriver corridor. Provide necessary visitor management services and facilities required to meet recreation program goals. Cooperate with the U.S. Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy to develop recreation facilities and long-term management objectives for the river corridor. Manage this area, and the L1 area as a Special Recreation Management Area, and develop an integrated resource management plan for the area. The integrated plan will serve as the Recreation Area Management Plan for the area.	Improved camping opportunities will be provided upstream of Placerville. A fee campground, upstream of Placerville, will be considered if an adequate site is acquired. If a suitable site is available, boating takeout facilities would be developed near Piñon. A fourteen day camping limit will be enforced in the management units comprising the SRMA. This limit is further defined as: fourteen days maximum in one location anywhere in the SRMA. A thirty day period must pass before camping anywhere else within the SRMA. The site must be completely vacated, no personally owned items may be left on site for more than the fourteen day period, and may not be moved to another location within the SRMA and left unattended. In the event that resource damage becomes evident as a result of the fourteen day limit, or demand for camp sites becomes extremely high, the camping limit may be shortened accordingly. Bicycle trails may be constructed along Leopard Creek and along the San Miguel, upstream of Placerville. Off highway vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails.

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Wildlife	Manage aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat to provide frequent wildlife sightings, good fishing opportunities, recreational hunting opportunities, and healthy plant communities. Continue to provide necessary management for T&E species. Other wildlife values will be managed to enhance the recreation experience.	Public lands, between the canyon rims, downstream of Horsefly Creek are closed from December 1 to April 15 to protect wintering bald eagles (Colorado Oil and Gas Leasing and Development EIS, Record of Decision, Plan Amendment, 1991). Crucial big game winter range would be closed to all discretionary actions from December 1 to April 30 (Colorado Oil and Gas Leasing and Development EIS, Record of Decision, Plan Amendment, 1991). The riparian systems of the San Miguel River, Leopard Creek, and Fall Creek will be maintained in good condition. Restoration efforts would also be undertaken on Fall Creek, if feasible. Work with the highway department to prevent further damage to these systems from road maintenance and construction. Cooperate with the Nature Conservancy, and Colorado Division of Wildlife, to study the suitability of the San Miguel River for river otter reintroduction. Allow the reintroduction to occur into suitable habitat. Wildlife habitat management objectives and plann projects will be incorporated into the SRMA plan. To protect the riparian and aquatic systems within the SRMA, instream flow needs will be determined and filed with the State Water Conservation Board.
Livestock Management	Livestock grazing must not degrade recreation or riparian values. With the exception of prescribed fire, vegetation treatments will not be used to improve forage production. Where range improvements are located near visitor concentration areas, the improvements should be designed to enhance the recreation experience.	For vehicular safety reasons, the area along the State Highway will remain unallocated to livestock grazing. In locations where livestock grazing is a factor in riparian systems being in less than good condition, livestock management must be changed to improve those systems to at least good condition. Good or excellent condition riparian systems would be maintained in good to excellent condition. Desired plant communities, and measurable objectives will be developed for all allotted riparian areas within the SRMA. Allotment boundaries will be redrawn to exclude unsuitable range, which will remain unallotted. Grazing preferences will not be reduced as a result of the boundary changes.
Forestry	Manage forested lands to enhance recreational opportunities and to maintain healthy stand conditions.	Riparian zones are closed to forest product disposal. Outside the riparian zone, disposal may occur if completed in a manner that preserves the scenic value of the area.

Resource/Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management
Minerals	Manage mineral development to limit conflict with management of high recreational values. When possible, schedule activities so conflicts are minimized between recreational and mineral activities. Ensure site rehabilitation activities follow operating plans and address recreation management objectives.	The river, creeks and their riparian corridors will be closed to mineral material disposal to protect scenic, recreational and biological values. The area will be open to oil and gas leasing, subject to standard stipulations and timing limitations (BLM Oil and Gas Leasing and Development EIS, Record of Decision, 1991).
Lands	All land use authorizations will be designed to mitigate impacts to recreation and riparian system values. Acquisition of lands will be considered when opportunities for recreation and riparian management would be enhanced. Land would be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis. Although the intent of this management area is to retain lands in public ownership, disposal that enhances the management goals of the management area, and serves the public interest may be considered. Disposal may occur through exchange, boundary adjustment, and Recreation and Public Purposes Act conveyances.	Acquire private lands and easements needed to facilitate management. Any acquired lands would be managed according to the guidelines of this emphasis area. The area would be open to major utility corridors, subject to VRM guidelines. The area downstream of Horsefly Creek would be open to major utilities until construction and maintenance impacts to the riparian zone reach 5% of the total riparian acreage.
Soils and Water	Maintain soil productivity, minimize man-caused soil erosion, and strive to achieve adequate vegetation for watershed protection and plant vigor. Maintain or improve water quality and quantity for multiple use resource needs. Secure sufficient water rights to provide for recreation management needs.	When possible, locate all facilities outside the 100 year floodplain.
Fire	Utilize fire management techniques that maintain long-term recreation quality objectives. Suppression of wildfires will generally occur, but prescribed fire will be allowed if it will meet or exceed recreation objectives.	All areas within the upper canyon rims would be managed under the full fire suppression category. Within the Canyon, the Area Manager must approve the use of heavy equipment for fire suppression activities. These areas would also be managed as fire use areas and fire fuels management areas. Those areas above the canyon rims may be managed in a conditional suppression category, and as fire use and fire fuels management areas.
Access	Provide access to public land to enhance recreation values. Provide levels of maintenance on primary roads that promotes user safety. Minimal levels of maintenance would be provided on secondary roads.	Provide public access to the area from the Sanborn Park Rod to Horsefly Creek.

Table 1-1. Management Guidance for Emphasis Areas

Management Guidance for Area A: Emphasis on Livestock Management

Management direction will emphasize increasing forage and livestock production on a sustained yield basis. Emphasis is upon increasing forage, red meat and animal fiber production, and improving forage composition and watershed conditions. Significant investments may be made in livestock improvements which will be multiple use oriented (i.e., wildlife, watershed, etc.). Investments for other resources will be minimal, although resource management activities compatible with livestock production will continue. Dispersed recreation opportunities will continue. Woodland products and timber will be made available. Wildlife habitat development generally will not be emphasized. Fire will be utilized to enhance forage production.

Management Direction for Other Resource Values

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
Cultural	Protect & manage important cultural resource properties.	
Recreation	Manage for dispersed recreation as the primary recreation activity. Permit yearlong, nonmotorized recreation activities throughout the area. Allow motorized, off-road vehicle (ORV) use. Establish site-specific visual quality objectives & design guidelines for landscape development projects during activity planning.	
Wildlife	Maintain or improve wildlife habitat through interdisciplinary design of range improvement projects & diversity of native vegetation types. Allow compatible wildlife introductions or reintroductions or habitat improvements. Limit investments of wildlife program funds unless opportunity for substantial benefits to wildlife resources can be realized. Aquatic/riparian resources will receive special consideration at the activity planning stage to ensure maintenance or improvement of these resources.	All perennial streams within the planning area that have the potential of providing quality fisheries &(or) riparian habitat (approx. 400 mi have been identified) should receive special management consideration through the activity planning process & monitoring systems to maintain, improve, or enhance resource conditions associated with aquatic/riparian habitat.
		Allow CDOW to introduce chukar & expand the pronghorn antelope herds. Other game species would be allowed if site-specific analysis indicates that significant conflicts with livestock will not occur. In all vegetation types, 5% to 15% of the existing vegetation should be maintained as leave

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
		strips or islands interspersed throughout the project areas to maintain dispersed, ecologic communities for wildlife.
Livestock Management	Manage suitable vegetation types for increased, sustained livestock production. One goal is to improve range condition & productivity on native rangeland. Use improved management systems such as rest-rotation & deferred-rotation, if appropriate. Invest in range improvements necessary to implement management systems.	Develop 71 AMPs (810,000 acres).
Forestry	Manage woodland products & timber to enhance range resources & for insect & disease control.	Provide reasonable opportunity to salvage forest products prior to & following range habitat improvement treatments.
	Timber species should be managed at a stocking level that maintains moderate to high herbage production. Utilize woodland products to the maximum extent practicable through commercial sales under the principle of sustained yield. Manage aspen forest types to perpetuate aspen, using even-aged silviculture. Limit clearcuts in aspen to a maximum of 40 acres or the size of an aspen clone, whichever is smaller.	Provide legal & physical access to vegetation treatments to facilitate salvage of forest products when feasible.
Minerals	Allow mineral development in all areas not withdrawn from entry. Provide protective stipulations to limit impacts to livestock improvements or management practices.	
Lands	Allow for disposal of parcels of public land that do not significantly affect livestock management. Major utility corridors would be allowed with protective stipulations to prevent or limit impacts to range management. Allow	

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
	other land actions, when there is a clear & significant public need, when they will result in minimal adverse impacts, or when they will be beneficial to grazing management.	
	Acquire or exchange lands when livestock management opportunities will be enhanced.	
Soils and Water	Maintain soil productivity, minimize man-caused soil erosion & strive to achieve adequate vegetation cover for watershed protection & plant vigor. Maintain water quality & quantity for multiple resource management. Secure sufficient water rights to provide for livestock management needs.	
Fire	Provide level of protection from wildfire that will result in least total cost & will generally enhance range management values. Use prescribed fire when possible to enhance forage production.	Continue & expand (where appropriate) the limited fire suppression plan to enhance vegetation conditions for livestock grazing.
Access	Provide administrative access to public land to enhance management of the range resource. Provide maintenance of roads in the BLM transportation plan to minimum standards for user safety.	Acquire access to the following grazing allotments: 7016, 8011, 8013, 8018, & 8019.

Management Guidance for Area B: Emphasis on Wildlife

Management direction will emphasize achieving and maintaining the best possible habitat conditions for fisheries and wildlife. Emphasis will be upon increasing aquatic and terrestrial wildlife numbers within habitat capability, improving stream and watershed conditions and providing a high degree of vegetation diversity. Investments for wildlife habitat improvements could be high in certain areas. Woodland products and timber will be available. Dispersed recreation opportunities will continue. Livestock management will be of an intensity that will utilize available forage and maintain forage vigor while not degrading wildlife habitat. The season-of-use may be changed or the numbers of livestock may be reduced in some areas.

Management Direction for Other Resource Values

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
Cultural	Protect & manage important cultural resource properties.	
Recreation	Manage for dispersed recreation as the primary recreation activity. Permit yearlong, non-motorized recreation activities throughout the area, except restrict recreation use to resolve people & wildlife conflicts, favoring wildlife in such cases. Establish site-specific visual quality objectives & design guidelines for landscape development projects during activity planning.	Continue vehicle closure on Perins Peak & Animas Mountain area. Continue seasonal (April 1-July 15) closure to public access at Perins Peak peregrine falcon eyrie.
Wildlife	Intensively manage for optimal terrestrial & aquatic/riparian wildlife habitat. Maintain or improve historically occupied or potentially suitable threatened & endangered (T&E) species habitat. Maintain or improve habitat for sensitive plant & wildlife species & "migratory bird species of high Federal interest." Provide for necessary investments to enhance wildlife habitat. Cooperate with CDOW for funding of habitat improvement projects & also cooperate with CDOW on the reintroduction program.	Terrestrial Manage big game for the following numbers of animals, subject to monitoring results & availability of funds & personnel to implement needed improvements: 20,000 mule deer 1,600 elk 300 antelope 300 bighorn sheep Continue management of Perins Peak & Paradox peregrine falcon eyries. Continue management of bald eagle nests & winter eagle concentration areas. Animas Mountain should be managed for its wildlife values (winter range) & maintained in a primitive state. Complete habitat improvements. Invest wildlife funds for

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
		structural improvements & vegetation restoration projects to improve high priority riparian habitat at the following drainages: Roc, North & South Mesa, La Sal, & Dry creeks (East & West Fork, Dry Creek Canyon) & Cross, Cow, Cahone, Hovenweep, & Bridge canyons.
		Continue to monitor & provide protection for endangered candidate & sensitive plant species in Paradox Valley & Spring Creek.
		Aquatic/Riparian
		Reestablish river otters in the Dolores River.
		Improve or enhance aquatic/ riparian habitat on the following priority areas:
		-Upper San Miguel River & its tributaries (44 miles) -Upper Dolores River (30 miles) -Lower San Miguel & its tributaries (20 miles)
		Develop aquatic/riparian HMPs for these three priority areas (including intensive monitoring plans).
Livestock Management	Manage suitable vegetation types under low to moderate intensity for livestock production, with intent to utilize available forage & maintain forage vigor, while not degrading wildlife habitat. Constrain range treatment projects in size, layout & type with intent to enhance wildlife & livestock forage, vegetation & habitat diversity. Reduce number of livestock and change season-of-use where needed to provide sufficient forage for wildlife & to protect	Limit total utilization of forage species current year's growth. Livestock use should be limited where necessary to protect highly preferred species of plants. Maintain an overall cover/forage ratio of 40:60. Limit width of vegetation openings to approx. 150 to 200 yards in big game winter ranges. In pinyon-juniper & shrub vegetation types, retain 35% to 40% of original cover when completing vegetation .

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
	aquatic/riparian resources, especially on big game winter & spring ranges.	
Forestry	Manage forest lands to enhance wildlife resource. Plan wood product sales in wildlife areas to improve big game forage & other wildlife needs.	Provide reasonable opportunity to salvage forest products prior to & following habitat improvement treatments. Provide legal & physical access to vegetation treatments to facilitate salvage of forest products when feasible.
Minerals	Allow mineral development in all areas not withdrawn from entry. Provide protective stipulations to limit impacts to wildlife habitat or species. Limit &(or) provide protective stipulations for mineral development on habitat for T&E species.	Continue present leasing stipulations with changes for wildlife winter ranges & eagle concentration areas as shown in the Resource Conservation Alternative.
Lands	Allow for disposal of parcels of public land not determined to be significant & manageable for wildlife habitat. Major utility corridors would generally be excluded except on a case-by-case basis depending on site-specific impacts of the proposal. Acquire or exchange land when management opportunities for wildlife are enhanced. Acquire fishing easements on acreages associated with priority streams. Allow other land actions, when there is a clear & significant public need, when they will result in minimal adverse impacts, or when they are beneficial to wildlife.	Pursue exchange of public lands to enhance wildlife values in Dry Creek Basin. Primary consideration for exchange should be given to CDOW; however, other opportunities which may enhance wildlife values will not be dismissed.
Soils and Water	Maintain soil productivity, minimize man-caused soil erosion & strive to achieve adequate vegetation cover for watershed protection & plant vigor. Maintain or improve water quality & quantity for multiple use resource needs. Maintain minimum instream	

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
	flows for wildlife & fishery needs.	
Fire	Provide the level of protection from wildfire that will result in least total cost & will generally enhance wildlife management values. Use prescribed fire when possible to enhance wildlife habitat.	
Access	Provide administrative access to public land for managing wildlife habitat. Provide very little or no maintenance to roads. Close & reclaim any abandoned or poorly designed roads. Acquire public access where needed to allow wildlife-related recreation (including hunting & fishing in underutilized areas).	Acquire access to Chromo Mesa to enhance all management & public hunting opportunities. Acquire administrative access to Roc Creek.

Management Guidance for Area E: Emphasis on Mineral Development

Management direction will emphasize mineral development on the public lands. Mineral values indicate significant reserves of valuable minerals are present and development is either currently ongoing or will occur within the near future. Other resource uses will occur to the extent they are compatible with mineral development. Limited expenditures of public resources will be used on developing the present land resources. Livestock grazing will continue, wildlife habitat will be maintained where feasible, and cultural resources will receive the protection currently afforded by law.

Management Direction for Other Resource Values

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
Cultural	Protect & manage important cultural resource properties.	
Recreation	Provide recreation opportunities that do not conflict with mineral development. Allow motorized ORV use.	
	Establish site-specific visual quality objectives & design guidelines for landscape development projects during activity planning.	
Wildlife	Protect T&E species & maintain or improve their habitat. Provide for minimal investments to enhance key wildlife species.	Continue present leasing stipulations with changes to wildlife winter ranges & eagle concentration areas.
Livestock Management	Manage suitable vegetation types under moderate intensity for livestock production, with the intent to use available forage & maintain forage vigor.	
	Reduce the number and/or season-of-use for livestock where needed to minimize impacts to mineral operations & revegetation efforts or to minimize erosion from site. Limit range improvements on areas designated for mineral development to protect investments. Adjust livestock use as land is removed from production for mineral purposes.	
Forestry	Allow for the sale or disposal of forest products or timber that may be lost in mineral development or that is needed	

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
	for managing the resource. Meet demand without degradation or conflict.	
Minerals	Allow mineral development on all areas not specifically excluded from development. Provide protective stipulations to limit impacts to other resource values.	Continue oil, gas, & CO_2 operations throughout planning area (183,000 acres in areas designated as KGSs). Continue cooperative management to protect surface resources on 19,800 acres of DOE lease tracts. Continue approved operations of 4,500 acres of hard rock mining under 43 CFR 3809 regulations. Continue sodium lease (120 acres). Continue sand & gravel operations (880 acres). In addition, 400 acres on Ewing Mesa would be available for development for sand & gravel. Provide protective management of the unique fossils in the Placerville area through the use of stipulations on a case-by-case basis in environmental documents. Allow coal leasing on 1,480 acres in the Nucla KRCRA & 46,000 acres in the Durango KRCRA.*
Lands	Allow for disposal of parcels of public land not needed for mineral development. Major utility corridors will be	

* The priority of these areas was determined based on 1983 coal data & indications of interest by industry. The remaining coal lands determined to be suitable or identified as priorities for future leasing will be managed for other multiple use considerations. These lands would be made available for future leasing only when the coal priority areas had been depleted or a significant demand was expressed that could not be met by the existing coal priority area.

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
	allowed as long as they don't conflict with mineral development. Allow other land actions as long as they don't limit mineral development, or when there is a clear & significant public need. Acquire or exchange land & subsurface mineral estate when mineral development will be enhanced.	
Soils and Water	Maintain soil productivity & minimize soil erosion through rehabilitation efforts when mineral activities cease. Maintain water quality & quantity when possible for resource needs.	
Fire	Provide a level of protection from wildfire resulting in the least total cost & protection of mineral developments on the public lands.	
Access	Provide or maintain public access minimizing impacts to mineral development. Work with mineral developers to assure roads are maintained for public safety.	

Management Guidance for Area G:
Emphasis on General Natural Resource Management

Management direction for these areas will consist of general multiple use as prescribed in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. The resource values contained in these areas are not significant to the degree that a dominant use exists. Management guidance will consist of existing laws, policy, and manuals concerning each resource program.

Management Direction for Other Resource Values

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
Cultural	Manage cultural resource properties in accordance with applicable laws, regulations & public interest.	
	Provide for dispersed types of recreation opportunities. Utilize sign, maps, etc., to help manage the dispersed use. Allow ORV use.	
	Establish site-specific visual quality objectives & design guidelines for landscape development projects during activity planning.	
Wildlife	Protect T&E species & maintain or improve their habitat. Manage all other habitat to provide satisfactory conditions.	
Livestock Management	Manage vegetation so it maintains itself satisfactorily with a generally upward trend.	
Forestry	Provide a sustained yield of forest products consistent with land capability, suitability, protection needs, & other resource values.	
Minerals	Provide for mineral development in all areas not withdrawn from mineral entry. Provide protective stipulations to limit impacts to other resource values.	
Lands	Allow for disposal of parcels of public land not needed for resource management. Acquire or exchange land when resource management opportunities will be enhanced. Major utility corridors would be allowed with protective stipulations to prevent or limit adverse impacts to	

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
	other resource values. Allow other land actions to occur with appropriate stipulations, or when there is a clear & significant public need.	
Soils and Water	Maintain soil productivity, minimize man-caused soil erosion & strive to achieve adequate vegetation cover for watershed protection & plant vigor. Maintain water quality & quantity for resource needs. Secure sufficient water rights to provide for resource management.	
Fire	Provide a level of protection from wildfire that will result in the least total cost & will generally enhance resource conditions of the vegetation. Use prescribed fire when possible to enhance resource conditions.	
Access	Provide administrative & public access, where possible. Maintain roads to a level of minimum standards for public safety.	

Management Guidance for Area H: Emphasis on Public Land Disposal

Management of these areas will be for the disposal of the public lands; these areas will be subject to additional screening and clearances before any tracts identified for disposal in this plan may be transferred from BLM control. These activities include mineral assessment, cultural resource clearances, environmental analysis, appraisal and similar site-specific actions. Little or no public funds will be spent on these tracts for resource management; funds would only be spent to correct public health and safety problems or to correct severe resource deterioration we cannot allow to continue.

Management Direction for Other Resource Values

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
Cultural	Provide cultural resource inventories & clearances so disposal of the tracts can occur. Pending disposal, manage the cultural resources under present laws & regulations.	
Recreation	Provide for very limited dispersed recreation activity. Allow motorized ORV use. Establish site-specific visual quality objectives & design guidelines for landscape development projects during activity planning.	Consider disposal of the Indian Springs site to CDOW as part of their Mike Young property management. Also consider CDOW cooperatively managing those heavily used hunter camp sites along the road between Miramonte Reservoir & Indian Springs (near Hamilton Mesa).
Wildlife	Provide for T&E species inventories & clearance prior to disposal.	
Livestock Management	Allow limited management of the rangeland to occur. Spend no public funds on rangeland improvements. Complete procedural notifications to grazing permittees.	
Forestry	Allow timber to be harvested & forest products to be used.	
Minerals	Continue to manage the mineral program for development. Retain all mineral rights unless an exception can be documented for transferring the mineral rights.	Transfer all mineral rights with the surface unless: (1) mineral values can be documented to justify retaining the mineral rights, or (2) transferring the mineral rights is prevented by law or regulation.
Lands	Provide for disposal of the public lands. Major utility corridors would be allowed. Allow other land actions to proceed, especially when there is a clear & significant public need.	Allow approx. 21,700 acres for land disposal (through sales, exchanges, or any other title transfer means).

Disposal
Area H (continued)

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
Soils and Water	Maintain soil productivity, minimize man-caused soil erosion & maintain a minimum amount of vegetation cover for watershed protection.	
	Maintain present water quality & quantity. Do not acquire water rights for resource needs unless an exception can be documented. Land disposals must be in conformance with Executive Order (E.O.) 11988 - Floodplain Management.	
Fire	Provide for a limited level of fire management. Suppress wildfires which may be threatening adjacent private, state or Federal property.	
Access	Acquire no access to these tracts unless an exception can be documented. Provide very little or no maintenance of roads. Reserve access rights across parcels when needed for public or resource management.	

Management Guidance for Area J:
Emphasis on Forestry and Wood Products

This guidance is designed to increase the production and utilization of wood fiber, firewood, post and poles. Emphasis is on improved wood production and utilization resulting in extensive modification of tree and other vegetation cover. Investments may be made for forest management activities. Investments (in other emphasis areas) that are commensurate with level wood fiber production will be made. Opportunities will generally be moderate for wildlife management and for dispersed recreation. Livestock grazing will occur; however, disruptions may occur due to timber management actions or objectives.

Management Direction for Other Resource Values

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
Cultural	Protect important cultural resource properties.	
Recreation	Manage for dispersed recreation as the primary recreation activity. Allow motorized ORV use.	
	Establish site-specific visual quality objectives & design guidelines for landscape development projects during activity planning.	
Wildlife	Protect T&E species & maintain or improve their habitat. Provide investments to enhance wildlife species which will benefit from uneven-aged timber management.	Coordinate efforts on a case-by-case basis to ensure aquatic/ riparian resources are protected &, in some cases, improved.
Livestock Management	Allow livestock grazing on those areas & at times of the year when it will have no negative effects on timber management operations & objectives for the area.	
	Range vegetation treatments will generally not be allowed in timber areas. Range improvements will be designed to minimize conflicts with forest emphasis.	
Forestry	Manage lands suitable for timber production. Invest necessary funds to provide for intensive management of the forest resource. Provide firewood, Christmas trees, & other wood products.	Manage timber and woodland species on all available & capable lands with a combination of even & uneven-age systems. Manage aspen under an even-age system. Limit open patchcuts to 20 acres or less in commercial forest types &

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
		40 acres in woodland types. Regenerate all patchcuts, shelterwood, & selection harvest cuts, naturally or artificially, within 15 years. Continue management of all operable woodland & commercial sawtimber in other emphasis areas.
		Manage approx. 10,960 acres for intensive forest management. Estimated allowable harvest would be 6.5 MMBF per decade.
		Manage approx. 42,130 acres to provide woodland products (firewood, posts, poles, etc.). Estimated allowable harvest would be 6.4 MMBF (12,800 cords) per decade.
Minerals	Allow mineral development in all areas not withdrawn from mineral entry. Provide protective stipulations to limit impacts to the forest resource.	
Lands	Allow for disposal of public land parcels not needed for forest management. Acquire or exchange lands when forest management will be enhanced. Major utility corridors would generally not be allowed in commercial forests but would be allowed in woodland; exceptions could occur with specific analysis. Allow other land actions when they will result in minimal adverse impacts, when they will be beneficial to forest management, or when there is a clear & significant public need.	
Soils and Water	Maintain soil productivity, minimize man-caused soil erosion & ensure utilization of forestry practices which will provide for minimal soil losses.	
	Maintain water quality & quantity	

Resource/ Activity	General Guidance	Specific Management Direction
	for resource needs. Timber harvesting & associated activities will be conducted in a manner that will not degrade the water quality (from both point & non-point sources) below the Colorado Department of Health & Water Quality Standards & Classifications.	
Fire	Provide a level of protection from wildfire that will result in a least total cost & will enhance forest resources. Use prescribed fire when possible to enhance forest management objectives.	
Access	Provide administrative &, where needed, public access to public land to enhance forest management. Provide necessary maintenance of roads to ensure timber management practices can occur as planned.	

APPENDIX B

STREAMS ON PUBLIC LAND WITHIN THE AMENDMENT AREA

Stream Name	Stream Type	BLM Miles	BLM Acres
San Miguel River*	Perennial	22.5	923.9
Cottonwood Creek	Perennial	2.0	7.0
N. Fk. Cottonwood	Perennial	0.7	0.3
Telephone Draw	Intermittent	0.3	0.0
Dry Park Draw	Intermittent	0.6	0.0
Horsefly Creek	Perennial	1.2	7.5
Loggin Camp Dr.	Intermittent	1.3	0.0
Craig Draw	Intermittent	0.8	1.8
McKenzie Creek	Perennial	1.2	2.8
Beaver Creek *	Perennial	14.0	340.4
Comanche Draw	Intermittent	0.6	0.0
Turner Creek	Perennial	1.0	6.1
Goat Creek	Perennial	0.5	2.9
Goodenough Gulch	Intermittent	0.1	0.0
Huff Gulch*	Intermittent	0.6	0.7
Saltado Creek*	Perennial	4.5	58.2
Specie Creek	Perennial	2.1	12.7
Slaughterhouse Gl.	Intermittent	1.3	4.5
Leopard Creek*	Perennial	2.5	30.8
Alder Creek	Perennial	0.3	0.9
Fall Creek*	Perennial	1.4	36.2
Hyatt Draw	Intermittent	0.9	0.0
Big Bear Creek*	Perennial	1.5	14.8
Muddy Creek	Perennial	0.5	1.5
Summit Creek	Perennial	1.0	2.7
Willow Creek	Perennial	0.4	1.2
	Totals	63.8	1,456.9

* Denotes streams with BLM inventory information used to determine riparian width and acres. For the remaining perennial streams acreage has been determined using an estimated average riparian width. Riparian acreage on uninventoried intermittent streams is assumed to be zero.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF ENDANGERED, THREATENED, CANDIDATE, AND PROPOSED ANIMAL SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING IN THE AMENDMENT AREA

Endangered Species Act Listed Species

Bald Eagle [1]E	Winter Visitor
Peregrine Falcon [1]E	No active or historic aeries
Black-footed Ferret [1]E	No suitable habitat
Whooping Cranes [1]E	Not on normal migration route
Grizzly Bear [1]T	Not present
Grey Wolf [1]E	Not present
Bonytail Chub [1]E	Not present
Humpback Chub [1]E	Not present
Colorado Squawfish [1]E	Not present
Razorback Sucker [1]E	Not present

Endangered Species Act Candidate and Proposed Species

North American Lynx [1]	Not present
North American Wolverine [1]	Not present
Spotted Bat	Not present
Southwestern River Otter	Not present
Mexican Spotted Owl [2]	Possible, not documented
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	Possible, riparian shrubs
Long-billed Curlew	No favored habitat
Ferruginous Hawk	Possible, poor habitat
Loggerhead Shrike	Possible, riparian areas
Black Tern	Possible, no breeding habitat
Boreal Western Toad	Not present, no breeding habitat
Roundtail Chub	Not present
Flannelmouth Sucker	Not present
Colorado Cutthroat Trout	Not present
Fringe-tailed myotis	Possible, not documented

Colorado State Listed Species

(Listed here are only those species not covered as federally listed or candidate species)

Greater Sandhill Crane	Not on normal migration route
River Otter	Present, population unknown
Arctic Peregrine Falcon	Not known to be present

[1] Denotes those species listed as endangered under Colorado law.
[2] This species is proposed for Threatened Status as of November 1991.
E Denotes federally Endangered species
T Denotes federally Threatened species

(Final concurrence with this list was received from USFWS on September 9, 1992.)

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PREPARERS

NAME	OFFICE	RESOURCE RESPONSIBILITY
Ron Huntley	Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area	Range Management
Teresa Pfifer	Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area	Lands
James R. Ferguson	Montrose District	Wildlife Habitat, T&E Species, Vegetation, Riparian Resources, EA and Plan Preparation
Dennis Murphy	Montrose District	Soil and Water Resources
Karen Tucker	Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area	Recreation
Lynn Lewis	Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area	Minerals and Geology
Dave Kauffman	Montrose District	Forestry
Dave Smith	Montrose District	Fisheries
Allan Belt	Uncompahgre Basin Resource Area	Area Manager
Roger Alexander	Montrose District	Environmental Coordination and Planning

APPENDIX D

Criteria for ACEC Designation, (BLM Manual 1613), and Documentation of Qualification of the San Miguel River Canyon as an ACEC

.1 Characteristics of ACEC's.

.11 Identification Criteria. To be considered as a potential ACEC and analyzed in resource management plan alternatives, an area must meet the criteria of relevance and importance, as established and defined in 43 CFR 1610.7-2.

A. Relevance.

An area meets the "relevance" criterion if it contains one or more of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).

2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive or threatened species, or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).

3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).

4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process that it has become part of a natural process.

B. Importance.

The value, resource, system, process, or hazard described above must have substantial significance and values in order to satisfy the "importance" criteria. This generally means that the value, resource, system, process, or hazard is characterized by one or more of the following:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.

2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.

3. Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.

4. Has qualities which warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.

5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

ACEC NOMINATION EVALUATION

NAME: San Miguel River LOCATION: San Miguel River Canyon between Placerville and Horsefly Creek

SIZE: 20,964 acres NOMINATED BY: The Nature Conservancy

RATIONALE: The middle section of the San Miguel River contains one of the three longest stretches of good condition riparian vegetation in the Montane region of western Colorado. It contains examples of a blue spruce-narrowleaf cottonwood-thinleaf alder-water birch riparian plant community that is known to occur in only 7 locations in Colorado. Included in the area are relic sites which are believed to be in presettlement condition. This is one of the few remaining rivers in the state which is unregulated, and exhibits natural runoff patterns. Certain components of the riparian plant community are dependent on natural flow regimes. Even within the San Miguel River watershed, most stream and riparian systems have been mildly to severely altered and degraded.

RELEVANCE (must contain one or more of the following):

1. Significant historic, cultural, or scenic value? The area contains significant scenic values and is traversed by the Unaweep-Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway. The scenic and natural qualities of the area are one of the major reasons for its popularity with recreation users.

2. Fish and wildlife resource? The lower end of the proposed ACEC is a bald eagle winter concentration area, and contains a communal roost site.

3. Natural process or system? The high quality riparian ecosystems on the San Miguel River and several tributaries are in exceptionally good condition. These systems can serve as benchmarks for other systems in the area and within the state.

4. Natural hazard? None.

IMPORTANCE (characterized by one or more of the following):

1. Has more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource?
   The riparian system values of the area have at least statewide importance, as examples of good condition sites that can be used as benchmarks for similar systems. The scenic values of the area have been recognized by including it in the newly designated Unaweep-Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway. The increased growth of the tourist industry has had major impacts on the Telluride area that have spilled over onto public lands in the San Miguel River Canyon.

2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change?
   The riparian systems of the area are rare and highly susceptible to degradation, especially without active management of recreation activity, and other surface disturbances.

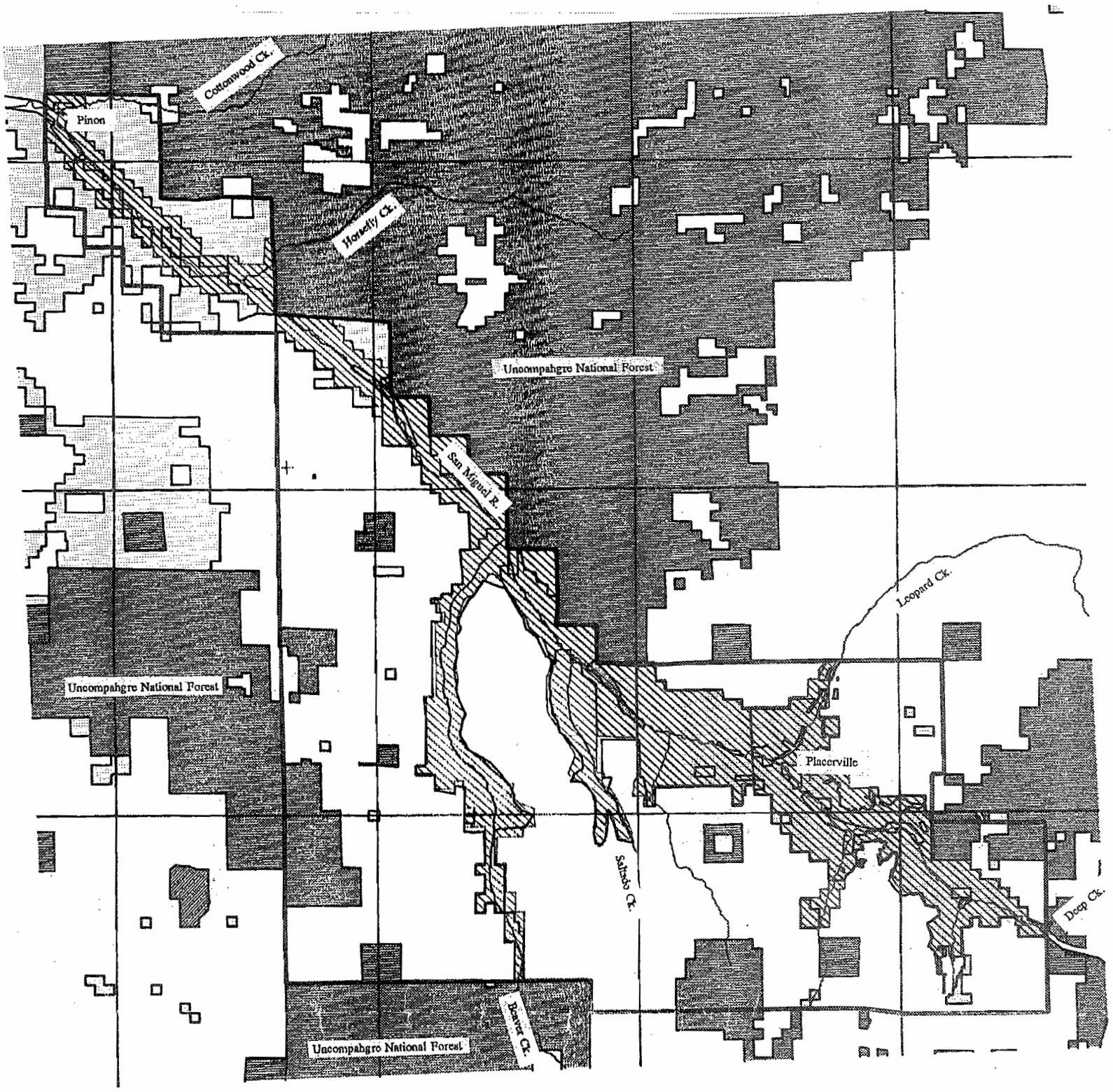
3. Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA?
   The proposal fits well with BLM's emphasis on riparian system management and protection.

4. Has qualities which warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare?
   None.

5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property?
   None.

APPENDIX E; MAPS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION, NO ACTION, OIL AND GAS RESTRICTIONS AND OHV DESIGNATIONS

OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE DESIGNATIONS FOR THE SRMA AND ACEC



SCALE 1: 200000

Closed to Off Highway Vehicles

Off Highway Vehicles Restricted to Designated Roads and Trails

BLM Land

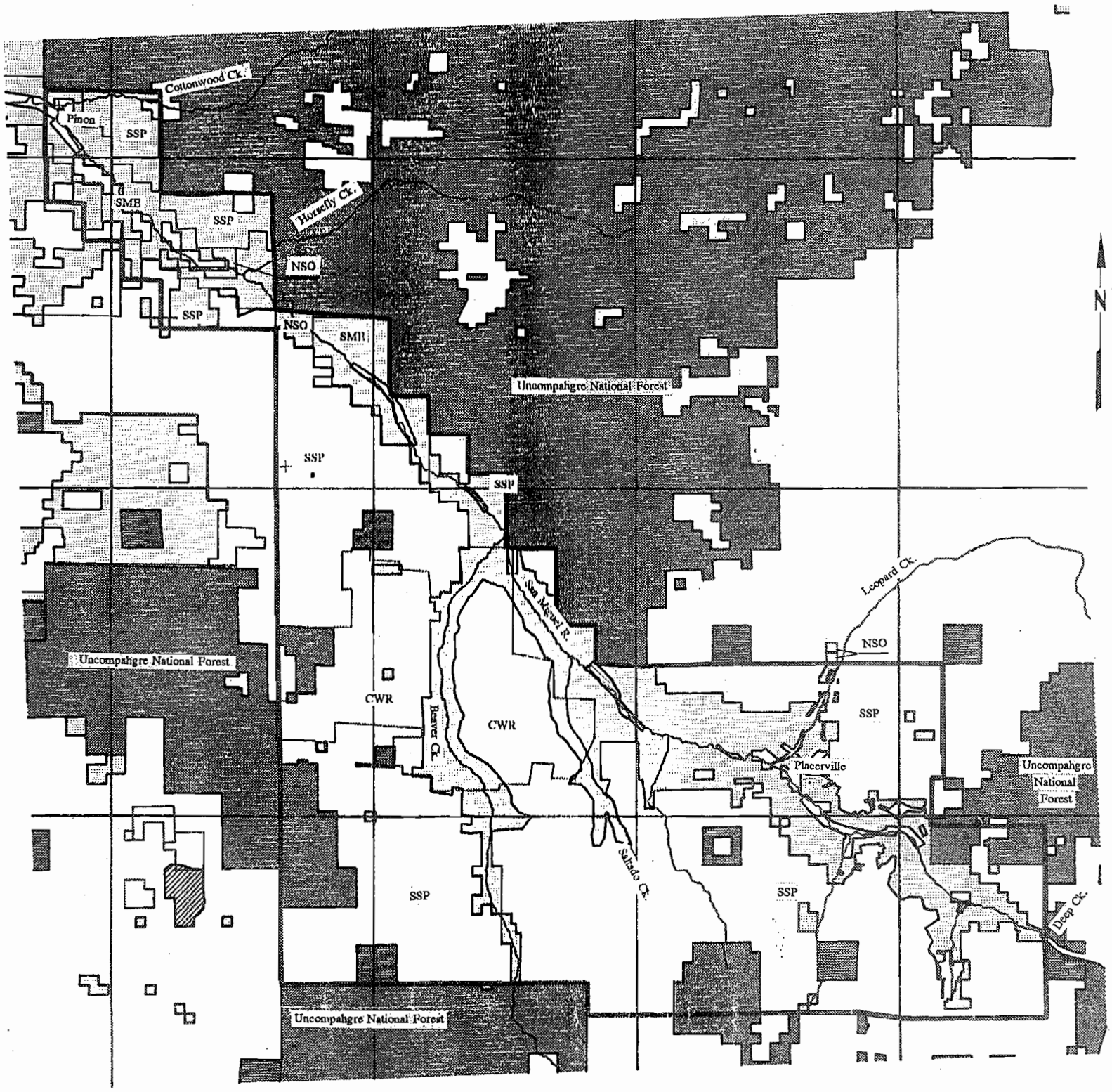
U.S. Forest Service Land

Private Land

State Land

CDOW Land

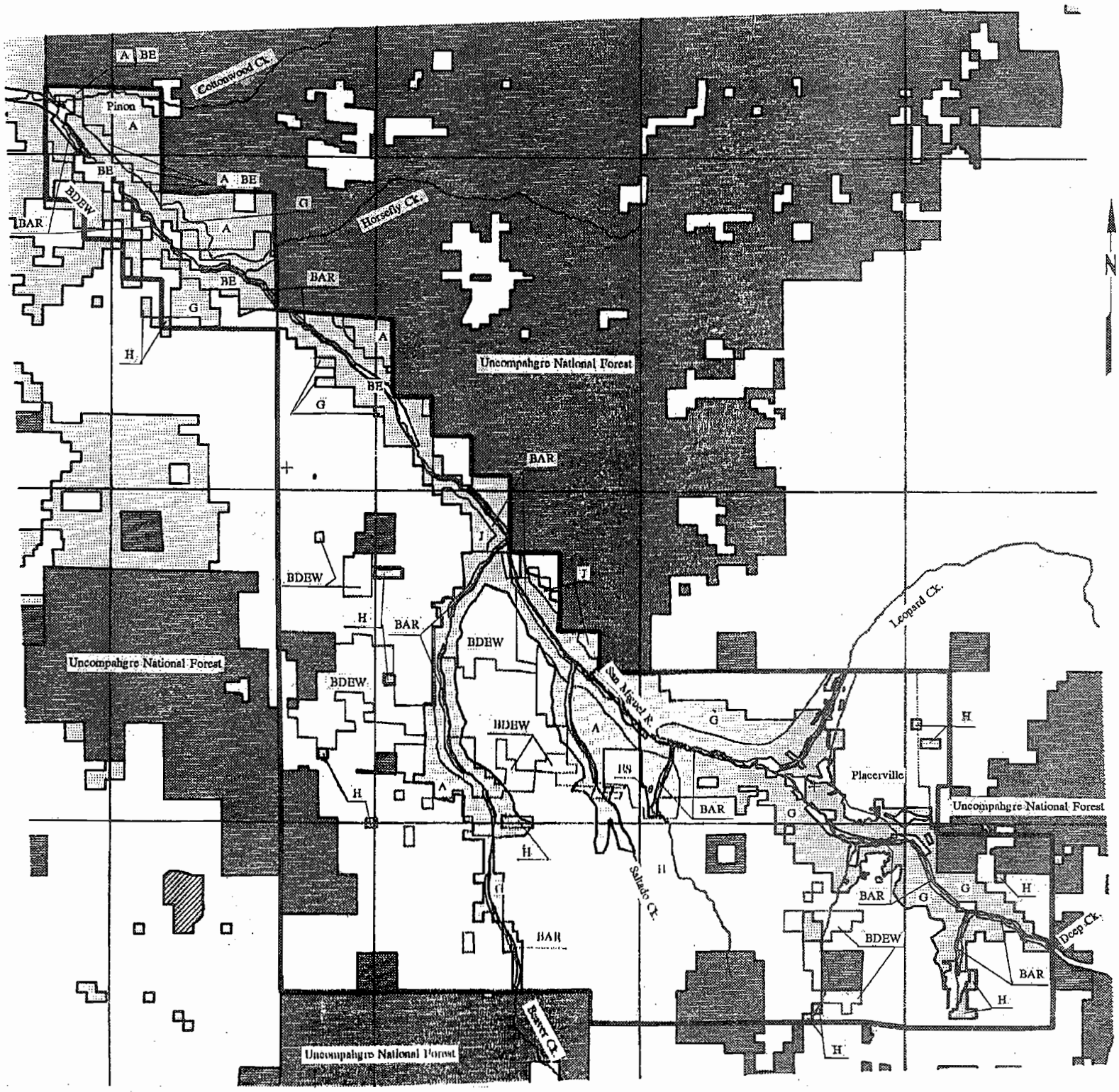
OIL AND GAS LEASE STIPULATIONS



SCALE 1: 200000

SEASONAL CLOSURE; BIG GAME WINTER RANGE	CWR
NO SURFACE OCCUPANCY; RAPTOR NESTS AND ROOSTS	NSO
BLM	
FOREST	
CDOW	
STATE	
TNC	
PRIVATE	
SEASONAL CLOSURE; BALD EAGLE WINTER CONCENTRATION	SME
STANDARD STIPULATIONS	SSP
AMENDMENT AREA BOUNDARY	

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

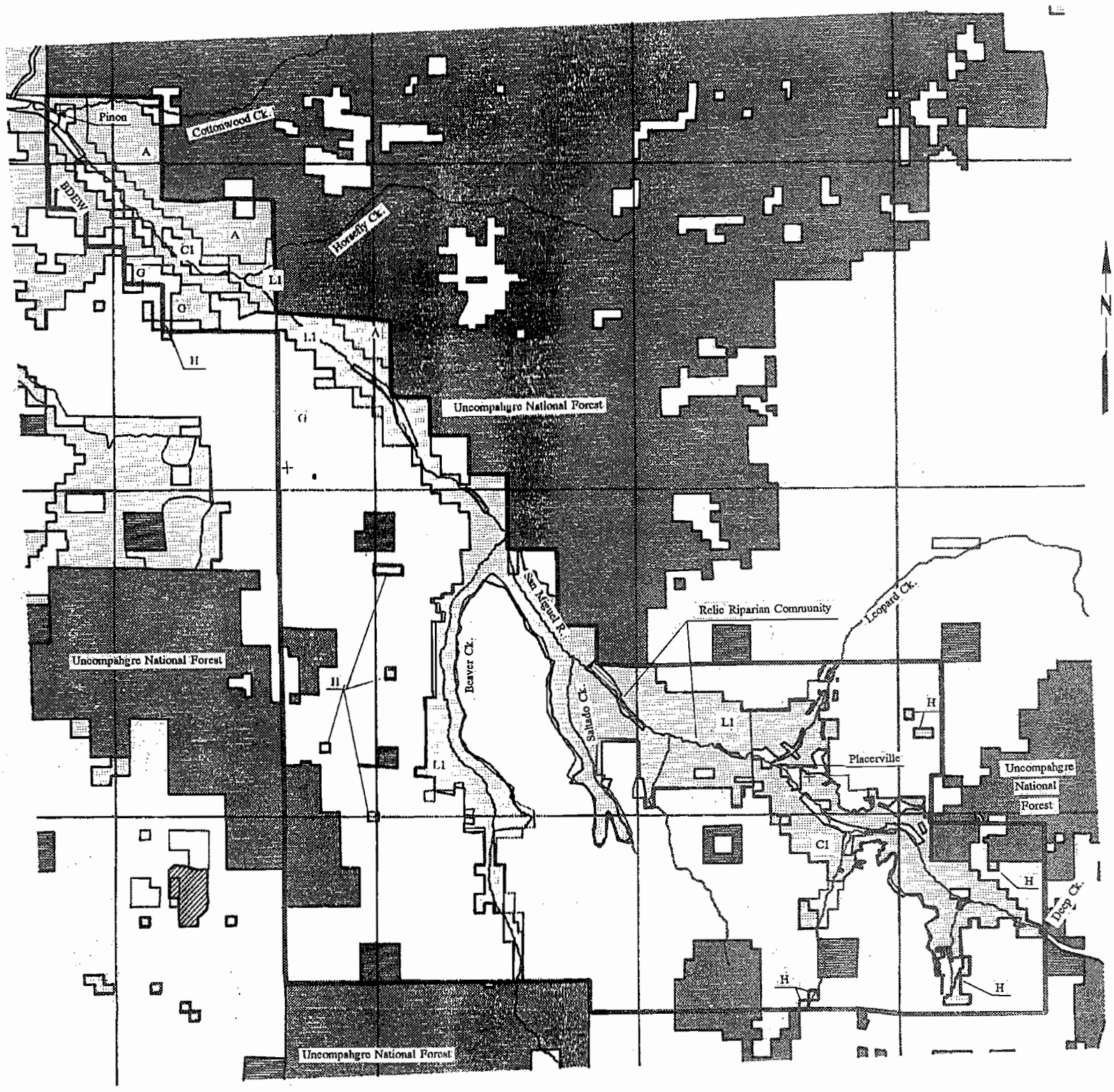


AMENDMENT AREA BOUNDARY	
LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT AREA	A
RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT AREA	BAR
BALD EAGLE MANAGEMENT AREA	BE
BIG GAME WINTER RANGE	BDEW
FOSSIL MANAGEMENT AREA	EF
MINERALS MANAGEMENT AREA	ES
GENERAL MANAGEMENT AREA	G
DISPOSAL TRACTS	H
FOREST MANAGEMENT AREA	J

SCALE 1: 200000

BLM
FOREST
CDOW
STATE
TNC
PRIVATE

PROPOSED ACTION



SCALE 1: 200000

AMENDMENT AREA BOUNDARY		
ACEC	L1	BLM
RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA	C1	FOREST
LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT	A	CDOW
BIG GAME WINTER RANGE	BDEW	STATE
GENERAL MANAGEMENT	G	TNC
DISPOSAL TRACTS	H	PRIVATE