APPENDIX 1—PLANNING CRITERIA

PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria are the constraints, or ground rules, that will guide the planning effort for the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan (JMH CAP) and that will guide the scope of the various management prescriptions and alternatives to be considered and analyzed. Planning criteria serve the following purposes:

1. To ensure that the planning effort is focused on the issues, follows and incorporates legal requirements, and addresses management of all public land resources and land uses in the planning area.
2. To ensure that plan preparation is accomplished efficiently.
3. To identify the scope and parameters of the planning effort for the decision maker, the interdisciplinary team, and the public.

The JMH CAP will focus on the potential environmental consequences of reasonably foreseeable development and other land use activities in the planning review area, such as staking of mining claims and mineral exploration and development, construction of rights-of-way, and transfer or patenting of public lands through mineral patent, recreation uses, and livestock grazing. Other criteria in relation to reasonably foreseeable development include vehicular use and transportation, and construction of range and watershed improvement projects and recreation site developments.

Criteria Concerning Public Query on the Use of Draft Guidance in the Interim of Finalization of this Document

Draft guidance is not used in land use plans. The planning process provides for inclusion of new guidance through updates, modifications, and changes to the land use plan at such time that new guidance is finalized. In this way land use plans are kept current and up to date. Not all new guidance necessitates an update, modification, or change to the land use plan. In addition draft guidance does not always become finalized or it is not always finalized identical to the draft material. Once draft guidance is finalized, the land use plan is reviewed for conformance with the guidance. If in conformance, a maintenance action should be completed to recognize the new guidance. If the land use plan is determined not to be in conformance with the new guidance, an environmental analysis is completed and an amendment (modification or change) to the land use plan is completed if appropriate (BLM Handbook H-1601-1).

Criteria for Hydrocarbon Leasing and Development

As an aid to developing alternatives for the environmental impact statement (EIS), special criteria were developed relative to the leasing and development of carbon-based minerals (oil, gas, and coalbed methane). By inference from available geologic information, reports of past production, and information from the minerals industry, parts of the planning area were determined to have a high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas and to have high and moderate potential for the occurrence of coal and related coalbed methane.

This information, along with analysis of past mineral leasing and development activity and production, was then utilized to project Reasonably Foreseeable Development scenarios for carbon-based mineral development. These scenarios are used as assumptions to aid in the analysis of impacts. Because they are so broad, these classifications for resource occurrence and development potential, projected for planning purposes, are not appropriate for nor are intended to predict future activity or the exact locations of new discoveries.

Criteria for Locatable Minerals

Areas of potential for occurrence of locatable minerals were developed from the Green River Resource Management Plan (RMP) to help analyze effects of other land and resource uses and management actions on locatable mineral development, and vice versa. These areas of potential were refined for the JMHCAP. The evaluation is based on a representative analysis by inference and does not imply that there may or may not be undiscovered locatable minerals of economic value in the planning area.

Areas identified as having potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals include areas with current or past mining activity, areas where mining claims are located, areas where mineral occurrence has been proven from some type of activity (such as stratigraphic test holes), and areas where geologic formations are known to include locatable mineral occurrences (like zeolite, gold, jade, etc.).

Criteria for Use of Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines

A consistent aspect of the activity planning process will be considering the application of mitigation or protective measures for surface disturbing or disruptive activities. These would be based on the "Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing and Disruptive Activities." Mitigation or protective measures would be applied as conditions of land and resource use for the following purposes:

1. To minimize soil movement.
2. To minimize disturbance of vegetation in sensitive areas, such as riparian areas.
3. To protect important cultural and paleontological resources, recreational values, wildlife and wildlife habitat resources, and threatened or endangered plant and animal species.
4. To protect visual quality.

Criteria for Healthy Rangelands

Another consistent aspect of the activity planning process will be to consider the application of measures to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health. These would be based on the "Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands." Appropriate management prescriptions and protection measures would be applied. The four fundamentals are as follows:

1. Watersheds are functioning properly
2. Water, nutrients, and energy are cycling properly
3. Water quality meets state standards
4. Habitat for special status species is protected.

Criteria for Livestock Grazing Management

Another consistent aspect of the activity planning process will be to consider the application of measures to meet the "Wyoming Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management" and the implementation plan for the "Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands" and "Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management." Appropriate management prescriptions and protection measures would be applied. However, such prescriptions may not be allotment-specific. Site-specific measures would be applied on an allotment basis after a site-specific standards and guidelines review, and in developing allotment management plans.

Some issues that directly or indirectly apply to the planning area were raised and addressed in the Green River RMP planning effort. These same issues will not be raised again nor addressed in the EIS for the JMH CAP. These issues include:

Criteria for the Coal Screening/Planning Process

The coal screening/planning process for management of federal coal resources in the planning area was conducted in the Green River RMP planning process. A complete application of the coal screening process, including application of the Coal Unsuitability Criteria (43 CFR 3461) (documented in Appendix 3-2 of the RMP), was completed in the course of the Green River RMP planning effort. The coal screening/planning process will not be revisited in the JMH CAP planning effort. However, potential coalbed methane development in the area will be considered.

Criteria for Wilderness Study Areas

Interim management of Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) will not be addressed in the JMH CAP. Management of WSAs within the planning area is addressed in the Rock Springs District Final Wilderness EIS (August 1990). Within the planning area, there are approximately 117,100 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered public land in WSAs, of which approximately 70,000 acres have been recommended for designation as wilderness and are pending congressional decision (Map 2). When Congress makes decisions regarding the WSAs in the planning area, they will be incorporated into the Green River RMP. Until Congress acts, these WSAs will be managed under the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (USDI 1987). No other potential wilderness areas in the planning area have been identified for wilderness review.

Should Congress designate any of the WSAs, either partially or wholly, as wilderness, management of the designated areas will be in conformance with the Wilderness Act of 1964 and as described in the above-mentioned Wilderness EISs and/or in the designation legislation. Wilderness activity plans will be prepared for any wilderness areas designated by Congress.

Should Congress not designate as wilderness part or all of any of the WSAs, the nondesignated areas will lose their identity as WSAs and will be managed along with the adjoining land area as prescribed in the approved Green River RMP.

This CAP will not address management prescriptions specifically for the WSAs. If WSAs are included in an area with management prescriptions that are more stringent than wilderness management prescriptions, the WSA would be managed under those more stringent

prescriptions. Where this occurs, it is to be assumed that the more stringent management prescriptions would apply, whether or not the areas involved were designated as wilderness.

Criteria for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The relevance and importance criteria for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation, found in BLM Manual 1613, were applied and documented in the Green River RMP EIS. These criteria and their application, and the determinations made in the RMP concerning the designation or nondesignation of ACECs, will not be revisited in developing the JMH CAP. However if new areas are identified that meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria, this information will be included in the EIS for the JMH CAP.

Criteria for Wild Horses

The Green River RMP EIS considered appropriate management levels for wild horses. These will not be revisited in developing the JMH CAP.

Criteria for Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Green River RMP EIS identified BLM-administered public lands along waterways that meet the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act suitability factors, to be given further consideration for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Wild and scenic river reviews will not be revisited in developing the JMH CAP.

Criteria for Livestock Grazing

The Green River RMP EIS addressed and provided for livestock grazing management. As a result the JMH CAP will consider some level of grazing use in all alternatives, and a no grazing alternative will not be revisited in developing the JMH CAP.

GENERAL CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMULATION

The following factors will be considered in one or more of the alternatives of the JMH CAP EIS:

- Fire management and fire suppression options
- Intensive management of cultural and historic resources, including rock art occurrences, historic trails, and Native American respected places
- Various types and levels of vegetation uses, including wildlife habitat, watershed protection, livestock grazing
- Minerals exploration and development, authorizations related to rights-of-way and other lands and realty actions, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, and other activities that may result in surface disturbance
- Opportunities for land disposal or acquisition that could be useful in meeting goals for resource manageability and condition

- Acquisition of access for providing reasonable levels of resource uses for the public and for resource development and manageability
- Recommendation of protective withdrawals needed to improve resource manageability
- Identification of right-of-way concentration areas, exclusion areas, and avoidance areas to provide for development needs and protection of resource values
- Various levels of livestock grazing
- Management of recreational use
- Protecting unique and nonrenewable geological, cultural, paleontological, and recreational values
- Management options for protecting or enhancing wetlands and riparian areas
- Big game population goals of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD)
- Protection and enhancement of habitat for sensitive or important wildlife and plant species, including protection of key elk and deer habitat
- Protection of recovery and essential habitat for threatened or endangered wildlife and plant species.

Criteria for Effects to be Considered

Effects in all alternatives generally use existing data for analysis. The following types of effects will be addressed in identifying and analyzing the environmental consequences of the planning alternatives:

- Effects of wild horse use and management
- Effects of surface disturbing land uses and other disruptive human activities on air quality, cultural resources, recreational opportunities, watershed, and wildlife resources.
- Effects caused by livestock grazing, disposal or acquisition of land, and OHV use or restrictions on OHV use
- Effects of fencing on wildlife movement and migration
- Effects of all types of land and resource uses on the vegetation resource
- Economic impacts of land use restrictions on economic sectors that are heavily dependent on the use of public lands and resources (for example, minerals exploration and development, livestock grazing, recreation activities).

Criteria for Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Answers to the following questions will be used to guide selection of the preferred alternative:

- Does the alternative(s) meet guidelines for reduction of sedimentation and salinity, as stated in water quality plans of the State of Wyoming and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)?
- What levels of land use restrictions are needed to provide adequate protection of resource values?
- Does/Do the alternative(s) retain reasonable accessibility of public lands for purposes of public access, public land use, and resource development?
- In proposing resource allocations that would affect the availability of lands for mineral development, has the BLM considered the potential of those lands for occurrence and development of energy and mineral resources?
- Is/Are the alternative(s) consistent with plans, programs, and policies of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes?
- Is/Are the alternative(s) consistent with the objectives established in the Green River RMP?

ACEC CRITERIA

As part of the process for developing the JMH CAP, BLM planning team members reviewed all BLM-administered public lands in the planning area to determine whether any areas should be considered for designation as an ACEC. Existing ACECs were not reviewed to determine whether any existing ACEC designations should be modified or terminated, as this task was recently accomplished and documented through preparation of the Green River RMP. Only BLM-administered public lands (i.e., public land "surface") can be considered for ACEC designation.

To be eligible for designation as an ACEC, an area must meet the relevance and importance criteria described in 43 CFR 1610.7-2 and BLM Manual 1613.

Relevance and Importance are defined as follows:

- **Relevance:** There shall be present a significant historic, cultural, or scenic value; a fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process; or natural hazard.
- **Importance:** The above described value, resource, system, process, or hazard shall have substantial significance and values. This generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern. A natural hazard can be important if it is a significant threat to life or property.

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, nonsensitive, 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 to have become part of a natural process.

Importance

An area meets the Importance criterion if it meets 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 to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).
4. Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

Table A1-1 shows the areas that were identified in the review, and the BLM relevance and importance determinations that were made.

The Green River RMP Interdisciplinary Team identified potential expansions for two of the existing ACECs, to be addressed during the JMH CAP planning effort.

Based on the criteria, expansions were reviewed for two areas. The existing ACECs were not reevaluated. One of the proposed expansions would add an additional species to the existing Special Status Plant Species ACEC. The other expansion would add the wildlife habitat and migration corridors of the core area to the Steamboat Mountain ACEC.

Table A1-1. Evaluation of ACEC Relevance and Importance Criteria

Existing or Proposed ACECs	Relevance Criteria (resources)	Importance Criteria	Comments
SPECIAL STATUS (CANDIDATE) PLANT SPECIES (Proposed Expansion) Large-fruited bladderpod *(Lesquerella macrocarpa)* Nelson's milkvetch (*Astragalus nelsonianus*) Meadow pussytoes (*Antennaria arcuata*)	Criterion 3	Criteria 1, 2, 3	Meets the relevance criteria for natural processes or systems. Meets importance criteria for more than locally significant qualities; fragile, sensitive, rare vulnerable to adverse change; and warrants protection to satisfy national priority concerns and carry out the mandates of FLPMA. The plant already receives special emphasis as a candidate species. Populations of this plant are found outside the planning area. The status of this plant has not changed since completion of the Green River RMP. The ACEC designation is unnecessary.
STEAMBOAT MOUNTAIN (Proposed Expansion)	Criteria 1, 2, 3	Criteria 1, 2	Meets the relevance and importance criteria for wildlife, cultural values of national significance, natural systems, unique habitat features found nowhere else in the planning area, and values needing special emphasis to be effectively managed.
BASIN BIG SAGEBRUSH/LEMON SCURFPEA	Criterion 3	CriteriA 1,2	Listed in WYNDD reports as rare and unique and worth special protection; fragile habitat; also used extensively by desert elk herd. Meets the relevance criteria for natural processes or systems. Meets the importance criteria for more than locally significant qualities which give the area special distinctiveness, and for cause for concern because of qualities that make the area fragile, sensitive, rare, and vulnerable to adverse change. The values in this area need special emphasis to be effectively managed.
CUSHION PLANT COMMUNITY	Criteria 2, 3	Criteria 1, 2, 3	Listed in WYNDD reports as fragile, unique, and worth special protection. Is also a special habitat used by the mountain plover, a species. Proposed for listing. Meets the relevance criteria for wildlife resource and natural processes or systems. Meets the importance criteria for more than locally significant qualities that give the area special distinctiveness and cause for concern because of qualities that make it fragile and vulnerable to adverse change, warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns and to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.

Table A1-1. Evaluation of ACEC Relevance and Importance Criteria (Continued)

Existing or Proposed ACECs	Relevance Criteria (resources)	Importance Criteria	Comments
PINNACLES AREA	Criteria 1, 3	Criteria 1, 2	Meets the relevance criteria for natural processes or systems. Meets the importance criteria for more than locally significant qualities and for qualities that make the area fragile, sensitive, rare, and vulnerable to adverse change. The area already receives special emphasis as a part of the Red Desert Watershed Management Area. The ACEC designation is unnecessary. The values in this area do not need special emphasis to be effectively managed.
PALEOSOL DEPOSITION AREA	Criteria 1, 3	Criteria 1, 2	Meets the relevance criteria for significant cultural resources; eligible for inclusion in NRHP under Criteria D (36 CFR 60), for scientific information presence and potential. The archaeological and geological deposits are relevant for the study of environmental change during the transition from the Pleistocene to the Holocene geological age and the study of human adaptation to these natural systemic changes over time. Meets the importance criteria for scientific qualities pursuant to Nationally significant issues in archaeological science. The circumstances (e.g. archaeological and geological strata) of these qualities are fragile, sensitive, rare, exemplary, unique and irreplaceable. The archaeological and geological deposits from the Pleistocene to Holocene transition are unique and in an excellent state of preservation.