

APPENDIX 22—ACEC DESIGNATION PROCESS

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) are areas of BLM-administered lands where special management attention is needed to protect their important and relevant values. “Special management attention” refers to management prescriptions developed during preparation of a Resource Management Plan (RMP) or amendment expressly to protect the important and relevant values on an area from the potential effects of actions permitted by the RMP, including proposed actions deemed to be in conformance with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the RMP (BLM Manual 1613). These are management measures that would not be necessary or prescribed if the critical and important features were not present.

To be designated as an ACEC, the area must meet the criteria of relevance and importance (as defined in BLM Manual 1613). Areas meeting the relevance criterion possess significant historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish or wildlife resources, including threatened and endangered species; or natural hazards. To meet the importance criterion, the resource must have substantial significance and value. This generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for

There were four existing ACECS within the Resource Management Plan Planning Area (RMPPA): Como Bluff ACEC, Sand Hills ACEC, Jep Canyon ACEC, and Shamrock Hills ACEC. Public comment received during scoping suggested that a number of areas be considered for designation as ACECs, and some areas were proposed as potential ACECs by BLM staff. Thus, other areas within the RMPPA that were identified as potential ACECs include the Red Rim-Daley Area, Upper Muddy Creek Watershed/Grizzly Area, High Savery Dam, Stratton Sagebrush Steppe Research Area, Chain Lakes Areas, Laramie Peak Area, Pennock Mountain wildlife habitat management area (WHMA), Wick-Beumee WHMA, Laramie Plains Lakes Area, blowout penstemon area, white-tailed prairie dog areas, historic trails, mountain plover concentration areas, the Bates Hole/Chalk Mountain cushion plant community, and the Powder Rim juniper woodland.

BLM was required to determine if existing ACECs and areas proposed for ACEC designation meet the relevance and importance criteria prior to inclusion in the RMP process. BLM used the proposal evaluation form presented in Table A22-1 to make this evaluation; the evaluation forms for all existing and proposed ACECs are presented in BLM (2004a). Areas that did not meet the relevance and importance criteria were dropped from further consideration for ACEC designation. Areas that met the relevance and importance criteria are discussed in Chapter 3 and management of these areas is presented in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.11 and Table 2-1.

Table A22-1. ACEC Proposal Evaluation Form—Rawlins Field Office
RMP Process

ACEC Proposal Evaluation Form		
Area Considered		
General Location		
General Description		
Acreage		
Values Considered		
Identification Criteria		
To be considered as a potential ACEC and analyzed in RMP alternatives, an area must meet the criteria of relevance and importance, as established and defined in 43 CFR 1610.7-2.		
Relevance:		
An area meets the “relevance” criterion if it contains one or more of the following:		
Relevance Value	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
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).		
A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species; or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).		
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).		
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.		
Importance		
The value, resource, system, process, or hazard described above must have substantial significance and values 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:		

ACEC Proposal Evaluation Form		
Importance Value	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
Has more than locally significant qualities, which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.		
Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.		
Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.		
Has qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.		
Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.		