
APPENDIX F—CRITERIA FOR SUBSEQUENT ACTIVITY PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

In response to the input provided by the stakeholders on the resource management plan (RMP) revision, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) created a process for applying the most current information that allows it to set priorities for flexible, proactive management of public lands. This appendix discusses how major issues within the resource management plan planning area (RMPPA) (oil and gas leasing, off-highway vehicle [OHV] designations, transportation planning, and protection of wildlife resources) and their interactions with other RMPPA resources or resource uses will be addressed in subsequent activity planning with the intent to reduce resource impacts and user conflicts. Other issues have also been added to provide additional management flexibility, where possible.

Processes and criteria have been developed for each major issue as described in Appendix E of the RMP/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for oil and gas leasing stipulations, and below for OHV designations and transportation planning. Criteria for protection of wildlife resources are included in Appendix E and below. These criteria are a starting point and could change depending on developing information. Data collected in the RMPPA will be used to support decision changes, evaluate the effectiveness of specific practices or policies, and measure progress toward the goals and objectives adopted for the RMPPA.

OIL AND GAS LEASING

See Appendix E of the RMP/Draft EIS for procedures and criteria for granting exception, modification, and waiver to lease stipulations.

EXISTING ROUTES

Colorado BLM State Office IM No. CO-2007-020 requires a map of all existing routes to be included with revised Resource Management Plans. This IM requires all routes to be inventoried as roads, primitive roads, or trails. The map included in the Little Snake Final RMP was developed by digitizing routes into a GIS database from 2005 satellite imagery and past area specific global positioning system inventories.

ROUTE DESIGNATIONS

Colorado BLM State Office IM No. CO-2007-020 also requires that each RMP Record of Decision includes a system of designated routes for those areas in the limited category, and a map of the roads, primitive roads and trails open and available. A GIS based map of the Designated Route system for the LSFO was developed for the RMP Record of Decision based on the following criteria:

- Numbered BLM roads, primitive roads, and trails that were identified on the LSFO 1989 Transportation Plan.
- Non-numbered roads, primitive roads, and trails identified on the LSFO 1989 Transportation Plan that have received maintenance in the past.
- Roads, primitive roads, and trails that have served administrative access needs in the past. These include routes that serve key recreation areas, facilities, and communication sites.

- Roads, primitive roads, and trails that are needed to provide recreation access in Special Recreation Management Areas that are planned to require motorized access on Designated Routes only.

This designated route inventory provides the basic framework of key road, primitive road, and trails needed for future access throughout the LSFO. Subsequent transportation planning will identify additional routes needed for designation to provide continued access needs.

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Comprehensive Transportation Planning will address all modes of travel/access (recreational, traditional, casual, agricultural, industrial, educational, cultural, administrative, etc.) and conditions of travel on the public lands, including motorized, mechanized, and non-motorized/non-mechanized uses. This will be done through a collaborative transportation planning process.

Colorado State BLM policy requires that all areas in limited Travel Management areas have completed Transportation Plans within 5 years of the completion of the RMP Record of Decision that identify designated routes. Motorized and mechanized travel will be restricted to designated routes upon completion of Transportation Plans. Areas that are identified as limited in the RMP and do not have completed route designations will be managed as limited to existing routes until completion of Transportation Plans. The areas that will undergo Transportation Planning following the completion of the RMP and Record of Decision, in order of the planning effort, are as follows:

- 1) Sand Wash Basin. This area has heavy motorized recreation use and contains key Wild Horse and wildlife habitat.
- 2) South of US 40 from Steamboat to Craig, then south of the Yampa River to Moffat County Road 57 – Rationale: This area includes Axial Basin which is the south end of the ‘fertile crescent’ of sage grouse habitat, much of this area is very heavily used by hunters on motorized vehicles putting the grouse habitat at risk, and completing this area would tie in well with the Duffy Mountain route designations for educational, compliance, and enforcement purposes as it would create a consistent Travel Management area for the people who hunt and recreate in this area.
- 3) From Fly Creek in the north, west along the State line to the Little Snake River, and south to State Highway 318, then east back to and north of US Highway 40 to Steamboat. Rationale: This area is the remainder of most of the ‘fertile crescent’ for sage grouse habitat. It is also heavily used by motorized hunters, and contains much of the winter habitat for elk, deer, and pronghorn.
- 4) The remainder of the area east of the Little Snake River and South of US Highway 40. Rationale: This area contains some sage grouse habitat, contains elk and deer winter range, and is heavily used by motorized hunters.
- 5) The remaining areas west of the Little Snake River to Utah, Wyoming, and Dinosaur National Monument. Rationale: Sand Wash, which has the heaviest recreational OHV use will already have been completed, the area is not heavily used by motorized hunters due to the limited big game hunting licenses, and although this area contains lands with wilderness characteristics, the amount of route proliferation is low due to low hunter numbers, rugged terrain in much of the area, and its remoteness for recreational OHV users.

Criteria for selecting routes for designations and for identifying routes not needed for general transportation needs across the Resource Area are as follows:

- ❑ Provides access where needed for administrative and public purposes
- ❑ Limits miles of routes and points of access to reduce the amount of redundant roads and trails
- ❑ Reduces miles of routes in areas that meet fragile soil criteria
- ❑ Resolves user and resource conflicts
- ❑ Maintains favorable wildlife/wild horse population trends and reduces habitat fragmentation and damage
- ❑ Reduces past user created route proliferation and areas of high route densities. The route inventory from the 2005 satellite imagery will be used as a baseline for existing routes
- ❑ Reduces impacts on cultural resources, erosion and sedimentation, impacts on visual resources, sensitive plants, and degradation of water quality
- ❑ Reroutes, rehabilitates, or eliminates existing routes causing resource damage
- ❑ Reroutes routes where landlocked by private parcels
- ❑ Concentrates stream and riparian crossings
- ❑ Provides a variety of user experiences.

DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING

Monitoring of the RMPPA is necessary for implementation. The constantly changing resource conditions create a challenge to management. Field data and observations will help make decisions better by doing the following:

- ❑ Measuring factors that indicate the condition of the RMPPA
- ❑ Increasing understanding of impacts by direct observation
- ❑ Increasing the effectiveness of project analysis by employing actual data
- ❑ Evaluating the progress toward management goals
- ❑ Helping develop effective and appropriate mitigation measures
- ❑ Providing information on the success of management practices and policies.

Baseline information for this planning process and the initiation of subsequent activity planning is presented in Chapter 3 of the Draft EIS. Continuation of monitoring activities will occur throughout the life of the plan and are detailed in the Table F-1. In addition to yearly funding of monitoring activities by BLM, every effort will be made to obtain funding through cooperative agreements with stakeholders within the RMPPA.

Table F-1. Monitoring Detail

Indicator	Source of Information	Measurement Location	Methodology/Data Source	Information Indicator Provides
Elk distribution	BLM	RMPPA	GIS collar study; field observations	Integrity of key habitats and migratory corridors (amount of continuous land between important habitats and travel pathways between key habitats)
Elk herd health	CDOW	Herd unit area	Post-season counts; flight counts; other CDOW data	Population, health, and security of herd
Mule deer distribution	CDOW	Herd unit area	Flight counts; other CDOW data; field observations	Integrity of key habitats and migratory corridors (amount of continuous land between important habitats)

Indicator	Source of Information	Measurement Location	Methodology/Data Source	Information Indicator Provides
Mule deer herd health ¹	CDOW	Herd unit area	Post-season counts; flight counts; other CDOW data	Population, health, and security of herd
Pronghorn distribution	CDOW	RMPPA	Radio collar studies; field observations	Integrity of key habitats and migratory corridors (amount of continuous land between important habitats)
Pronghorn herd health ¹	CDOW	RMPPA	Preseason counts; flight counts; other CDOW data	Population, health, and security of herd
Sage-grouse lek use ¹	BLM, CDOW	RMPPA	Field observation; lek counts	Health and security of population; reproduction opportunities
Sage-grouse population health	BLM, CDOW	RMPPA	Preseason counts; field observation	Population changes
Livestock AUMs	BLM	RMPPA	Counts; actual use reports; grazing authorizations	Amount of livestock use (+/-)
Wild horse population	BLM	Sand Wash Basin HMA	Counts	Number of wild horses (+/- AML)
Rangeland Health Standard #1	BLM	Watersheds grazing allotments	Remote sensing; field visits	Change in rangeland and watershed health (+/-)
Rangeland Health Standard #2	BLM	Watersheds grazing allotments	Remote sensing; field visits; trend data collection	Change in rangeland and watershed health (+/-)
Rangeland Health Standard #3	BLM	Watersheds grazing allotments	Remote sensing; field visits; trend data collection	Change in rangeland and watershed health (+/-)
Rangeland Health Standard #4	BLM	Watersheds grazing allotments	Field visits	Change in rangeland and watershed health (+/-)
Rangeland Health Standard #5	BLM and State of Colorado	Watersheds grazing allotments	Monitoring station and visual monitoring data	Change in rangeland and watershed health (+/-)
Roads and trails creation	BLM, county	RMPPA and associated hydrologic unit code (HUC) 12 watersheds	Remote sensing; permits	Change in watershed health (+/-), habitat fragmentation, migratory corridor integrity (amount of continuous land between important habitats)
Road density	BLM, county	RMPPA and associated HUC12	Remote sensing	Change in watershed health (+/-), habitat fragmentation, migratory corridor integrity (amount of continuous land between important habitats)
O/G leased	BLM	RMPPA	BLM records	Leasing activity; opportunity taken for development
O/G available for leasing	BLM	RMPPA	Management decisions; industry interest	Interest in leasing; opportunity for development
O/G production	BLM	RMPPA	Production reports; verification activities	Lease activity (+/-); resource potential
Locatable mineral activity	BLM	RMPPA	BLM records	Opportunity for locatable mineral activity; interest in locatable minerals

Indicator	Source of Information	Measurement Location	Methodology/Data Source	Information Indicator Provides
Salable mineral activity	BLM	RMPPA	Permits	Opportunity for salable mineral activity; interest in salable minerals

OTHER RESOURCE ISSUES

Wild Horse AML Adjustment

The following criteria would be considered for adjusting the Sand Wash Basin Herd Management Area (HMA) appropriate management level (AML):

- Current monitoring data
- Rate of herd increase
- Competing uses
- Frequency of gather cycle
- Other population management options
- Herd genetics.

Yampa River Corridor

Within the Yampa River corridor, monitor the quality of the following indicators of recreation experience and regulate the use of sites and access points:

- Site disturbance
- User conflict
- Public health and safety
- Other resource impacts.

Reserve Conservation Allotments

The purpose of a Reserve Conservation Allotment (RCA) is to provide alternative forage for BLM permittees or lessees during the rest requirement while their customary allotment is undergoing an approved rangeland restoration or recovery project. Emergency conditions such as wildfire will also be considered for a condition of use of an RCA. Because of the widespread nature of drought, it will not be considered as a need for use. Overuse of the customary allotment will not be considered as a need for use of an RCA.

These allotments will remain in long-term agricultural production, while helping to maintain the stability of the livestock industry by easing the economic stress to and providing incentive for permittees to undergo range restoration projects.

These allotments may be returned to individual allotment if there is no longer a continued demand for their use. At that time, BLM will follow standard procedures for filling vacant allotments.

Criteria for Selection and Use of an Allotment as an RCA

- Does the area meet Rangeland Health Standards?
- Are there weed concerns?

- ❑ Are there adequate animal unit months (AUM) available?
- ❑ Are range improvements adequate for livestock management and maintained to BLM standards?
- ❑ Is the area suitable to meet demands as far as season of use, reasonable access, and vegetative type?
- ❑ Are there other land use concerns such as demands on forage from wild horses, wildlife, threatened and endangered (T&E) species concerns?

Criteria for Permittee/Lessee Use

- ❑ Priority will be given to those permittees or lessees whose customary allotments are under an approved rangeland restoration or recovery project
- ❑ Emergency conditions (e.g., wildfire)
- ❑ NOT to be used for drought or for overuse of customary allotment.