

# **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop and periodically revise its Resource Management Plans (RMPs), which guide management of BLM-administered public lands. The BLM Moab, Utah, Field Office (MFO) is revising the Grand Resource Area RMP, which was last revised in 1985 (BLM 1985a). The new plan, which is to be called the Moab RMP, in conjunction with the accompanying Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), will provide future management direction for public lands within the boundaries of the Moab Planning Area (MPA). The Moab RMP covers all of Grand County and the northern third of San Juan County.

## **1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN**

### **1.1.1 PURPOSE**

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

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

### **1.1.2 NEED**

A revision to the 1985 RMP is necessary because there have been significant alterations in the MPA in light of new information and changed resources, circumstances, and policies that may be relevant to the future management of public lands and allocation of resources under the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate. This determination is further corroborated by a Special

Evaluation Report, completed in 2002 by the MFO (BLM 2002a), which concluded that some of the decisions within the 1985 RMP are in need of revision.

There have been changes in the laws, policies, and regulations that direct the management of the resources on MPA public lands. There has also been an increase in the amount of new information and resource data that need to be considered to better manage the public lands. Population in and visitation to the region have grown, and population demographics have changed, as have public awareness and use of lands within the MPA. Specifically, there may be a need to evaluate management prescriptions and resource allocations to address the increases in recreation and visitor use, including scenic quality and open spaces, as well as the increased interest in oil and gas development. Land use plan decisions may be changed only through the amendment or revision process.

## **1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE MOAB PLANNING AREA (MPA)**

### **1.2.1 OVERVIEW**

The MPA is situated in the canyon, plateau, and desert areas of the Colorado Plateau Physiographic Province (Figure 1.1). It is located in southeastern Utah and includes all of Grand County and the northern third of San Juan County. Geographically, the MPA is bounded by the Book Cliffs to the north, the Utah-Colorado state line to the east, Harts Point and Lisbon Valley to the south, and the Green River to the west. Major waterways within the MPA include the Colorado River, the Dolores River, and the Green River. Elevations within the MPA range from approximately 13,000 feet above mean sea level in the La Sal Mountains to approximately 3,900 feet above mean sea level at Mineral Bottom along the Green River.

The MPA encompasses Arches National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, the La Sal Mountains of the Manti-La Sal National Forest, and the Uintah/Ouray Indian Reservation. The MPA shares boundaries with lands administered by the BLM Vernal, Monticello, Grand Junction, Uncompahgre, Dolores, and Price FOs, as well as with Canyonlands National Park (within the Monticello FO).

The MPA comprises approximately 2,756,065 acres of land, of which approximately 1,822,562 acres is public land administered by the BLM (Table 1.1). In addition, the MFO also manages approximately 29,680 acres of subsurface mineral estate within the MPA and manages leasable minerals on 141,240 acres under U.S. Forest Service lands on the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Due to its easier access, the BLM Vernal FO presently manages a small amount of public land (33,331 acres) at the top of the Book Cliffs along the northern portion of the MPA. Decisions for these 33,331 acres are contained in the Vernal RMP. It is important to note that the BLM may only make decisions that affect public lands and resources, but it is responsible for collaborative planning with the public and adjacent jurisdictions so as to consider the impacts of its actions on all the resources in the region. Land ownership and administration of lands within the MPA are described in Table 1.1 and Map 1-1.

**Table 1.1. Land Management within the MPA (acres)**

<b>Land Management</b>	<b>Grand County</b>	<b>San Juan County</b>	<b>Total</b>
BLM	1,529,390*	293,172	1,822,562*
Indian Lands	197,992	0	197,992
Department of Defense	1,631	0	1,631
National Park Service	76,396	0	76,396
Private	101,976	56,294	158,270
State Trust Lands	283,613	56,608	340,221
State Parks, County, City, Wildlife Park, and Outdoor Recreation Areas	16,339	1,068	17,407
USDA Forest Service	57,298	83,942	141,240
Acreage of Water	168	178	346
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,264,803</b>	<b>491,262</b>	<b>2,756,065</b>

\*This total includes the 33,331 acres managed by the BLM Vernal FO.

Source: BLM 2004a.

Also contained within the MPA are several communities, diverse terrain, and scenic landscapes that figure prominently in the settlement, history, culture, and recreational enjoyment of southern Utah. Many occupational pursuits historically associated with this region of the Intermountain West—including farming, ranching, mining, tourism, retail trade, transportation, and construction—are practiced by residents within the MPA. Major communities in the MPA are Moab, La Sal, Castle Valley, Thompson, Crescent Junction, and Elgin. Major transportation routes include Interstate 70 (I-70), U.S. Highway 191, and State Routes 279 (Potash State Scenic Byway), 128 (Colorado River State Scenic Byway), and 313 (Dead Horse Mesa State Scenic Byway).

## **1.2.2 LAND USES**

The MPA is internationally renowned for both its scenic quality and its recreational opportunities, which are the primary land uses in the MPA. Approximately 2 million visitors per year enjoy the diverse and varied recreational opportunities of the MPA and form the basis for Grand County's tourism-based economy. Recreational opportunities include scenic driving, mountain biking, hiking, rafting and boating, rock climbing, riding off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and horseback riding. The many trail-based recreational activities in the MPA are highly dependent upon route systems. Many of these route systems have been based on the network of roads and trails created originally for mineral exploration.

Mineral exploration and development are the next most prominent use of public lands in the MPA. Oil and gas exploration and production has occurred within the MPA continually for the past 100 years. Production of oil and gas is currently taking place in Greater Cisco and the eastern Book Cliffs, in Lisbon Valley, and on Big Flat. Another current mineral activity in the MPA is copper development; a large commercial copper deposit has been delineated in Lisbon Valley, and production is currently underway. Uranium deposits can be found throughout the southern half of the MPA. These deposits have been mined continually for over 90 years, first for

their radium content and later for their vanadium co-product. Other mineral deposits within the MPA include potash, coal, placer gold, limestone, building stone, travertine, humate, sand and gravel, and clay.

Another aspect of the MPA is the protection of certain natural and cultural resources from the impacts of human use. A number of federally listed endangered or threatened wildlife species inhabit the MPA, including the Mexican spotted owl, southwestern willow flycatcher, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail chub, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon. The MPA also contains habitat for deer, elk, bighorn sheep (both desert and Rocky Mountain), and pronghorn. Prehistoric archaeological sites of Anasazi and Fremont cultures are also known to be in the MPA, as are later historical sites of cultural significance.

Other land uses within the MPA include rights-of-way (ROWs) for roads, pipelines, powerlines, and communication sites, as well as commercial filming and livestock grazing.

### **1.3 BLM'S PLANNING PROCESS**

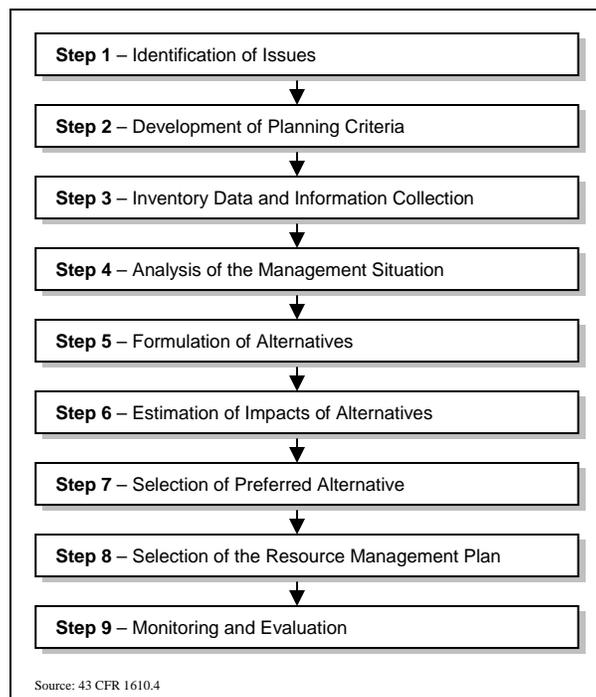
FLPMA requires BLM to use LUPs as tools by which "present and future use is projected" (43 U.S.C. 1701 (a)(2)). FLPMA's implementing regulations for planning, 43 CFR Part 1600, state that land use plans are a preliminary step in the overall process of managing public lands, "designed to guide and control future management actions and the development of subsequent, more detailed and limited scope plans for resources and uses" (43 CFR Part 1601.0-2). Public participation and input are important components of land use planning.

Revision of an existing plan is a major federal action for the BLM. NEPA requires federal agencies to prepare an EIS for major federal actions; thus, this EIS accompanies the revision of the existing RMP. This EIS analyzes the impacts of four alternatives for the MPA, including the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative reflects current management (the existing plan). NEPA requires analysis of a No Action Alternative.

#### **1.3.1 NINE-STEP PLANNING PROCESS**

The BLM uses a nine-step planning process (Figure 1.1) when developing and revising RMPs as required by 43 CFR Part 1600 and planning program guidance in the BLM Handbook H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook (BLM 2005a). The planning process is designed to help the BLM identify the uses of BLM-administered lands desired by the public and to consider these uses to the extent they are consistent with the laws established by Congress and the policies of the executive branch of the federal government.

As depicted in Figure 1.1, the planning process is issue-driven (**Step 1**). The plan revision process is undertaken to resolve management issues and problems as well as to take advantage of management opportunities. The BLM utilized the public scoping process to identify planning issues to direct (drive) the revision of the existing plan. The scoping process also was used to introduce the public to preliminary planning criteria, which set limits to the scope of the RMP revision (**Step 2**).



**Figure 1.1. Nine-step planning process.**

As appropriate, the BLM used existing data from files and other sources and collected new data necessary to update or supplement existing data in order to address planning issues and to fill data gaps identified during public scoping (**Step 3**). Using these data, information concerning the resource management programs, and the planning criteria, the BLM completed an Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS; **Step 4**) to describe current management and to identify management opportunities for addressing the planning issues. Current management reflects management under the existing plan as well as management that would continue through selection of the No Action Alternative. The existing affected environment is summarized from the AMS into Chapter 3 of the Draft RMP/EIS revision.

Results of the first four steps of the planning process clarified the purpose and need and identified key planning issues that need to be addressed by the RMP revision. Key planning issues reflect the focus of the RMP revision and are described in more detail in Section 1.3.2, below.

Alternatives constitute a range of management actions that set forth different priorities and measures to emphasize certain uses or resource values over other uses or resource values (usually representing a continuum from extraction and development to preservation/conservation) pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandates, so as to achieve certain goals or objectives. During alternative formulation (**Step 5**), the BLM collaborated with cooperating agencies to identify goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for resources and resource uses in the MPA. These desired outcomes addressed the key planning issues, were constrained by the

planning criteria, and incorporated the management opportunities identified by the BLM. The details of alternatives were filled in through the development of management actions and allowable uses anticipated to achieve the goals and objectives. The alternatives represent a reasonable range for managing resources and resource uses within the MPA. Chapter 2 of this document describes and summarizes the four alternatives considered in detail.

This EIS also includes an analysis of the impacts of each alternative in Chapter 4 (**Step 6**). With input from cooperating agencies and BLM specialists, and consideration of planning issues, planning criteria, and the impacts of alternatives, the BLM identified and recommended that, at this time, Alternative C is the Preferred Alternative from among the four alternatives presented (**Step 7**). This is documented in the Draft RMP/EIS, which will be distributed for public review and comment.

**Step 8** of the land use planning process will occur following receipt and consideration of public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. In preparing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, BLM will consider all comments it receives during the public comment period. Also, in developing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the Utah BLM State Director, who is the decision-maker for this new plan revision, has the authority and discretion to select an alternative in its entirety or to combine components of the various alternatives presented to prioritize differing resources and/or uses consistent with the multiple-use and sustained yield mandates. **Step 9** will occur via implementation of the selected RMP and with completion of the Record of Decision.

### **1.3.2 SCOPING AND IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES**

#### **1.3.2.1 THE SCOPING PROCESS**

Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope, or range, of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues to consider in the planning process. Scoping identifies the affected public and agency concerns, defines the relevant issues and alternatives that will be examined in detail in the RMP/EIS, and eliminates those that are not significant. A planning issue is defined as a major controversy or dispute regarding management or uses on public lands that can be addressed through a range of alternatives. The environmental impacts of these alternative management scenarios are analyzed and addressed in the Draft RMP/EIS, which will be made available for public review.

Public scoping was initiated prior to the revision of the revised RMP and was designed to meet the public involvement requirements of FLPMA and NEPA. This cooperative process included soliciting input from interested state and local governments, tribal governments, other federal agencies and organizations, and individuals, to identify the scope of issues to be addressed in the plan and to assist in the formulation of reasonable alternatives. The scoping process was an excellent method for opening dialogue between the BLM and the general public about management of the public lands and for identifying the concerns of those who have an interest in the area.

As part of the scoping process, the BLM also requested that the public submit nominations for potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and nominations of rivers for potential inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The scoping period for the Moab RMP began on June 4, 2003 with publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register, and ended on January 31, 2004. Scoping included scheduled open-house meetings in 6 communities (Green River, Moab, Monticello, Blanding, and Salt Lake City, Utah, and Grand Junction, Colorado), and visitations to 12 locations throughout the MPA by BLM personnel. In addition, news releases and radio announcements were used to notify the public regarding the scoping period and the planning process and to invite the public to provide written comments. MFO received written comments from many sources via email, fax, and regular mail. Comments obtained from the public during the scoping period were used to define the relevant issues that would be addressed by a reasonable range of alternatives.

For the Moab planning process, scoping comments received from the public were placed in one of three categories:

1. Issues identified for consideration in the Moab RMP;
2. Issues to be addressed through policy or administrative action (and therefore not addressed in the RMP);
3. Issues eliminated from detailed analysis because they are beyond the scope of the RMP (and therefore not addressed in the RMP).

Some important issues to be addressed in the RMP were identified by the public and the agencies during the scoping process for the Moab RMP. The Final Scoping Summary (available for review on the Moab planning web page at [www.blm.gov/rmp/ut/moab](http://www.blm.gov/rmp/ut/moab)), prepared in conjunction with this RMP, summarizes the scoping process, which is discussed in Section 1.3.2.2, below. The issues identified in the Scoping Report fall into one of 10 broad categories (see Section 1.3.2.2). Other resource and use issues are identified in the BLM Planning Handbook and Manual (H1610-1). All of these issues were considered in developing the alternatives brought forward in this RMP.

### **1.3.2.2 ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE MOAB RMP**

***Issue 1. How can increased recreation use, especially motorized vehicle access, be managed while protecting natural resource values?*** Recreation in southeastern Utah has grown in popularity in recent years. With this popularity has come a demand for a greater variety and availability of recreation opportunities, including OHV use, climbing, mountain biking, hiking, camping, BASE jumping, and equestrian use, while protecting the natural and cultural values of the public lands. With the number of visitors growing, recreation is expanding further into the backcountry, while resource and user conflicts are becoming more common. Although all recreational uses need to be managed, OHV use needs particular attention, including identifying areas to be open, restricted or closed for the protection of other resource values.

### Related Recreational Issues:

- Which areas should be designated as open, limited or closed to OHV use, and which OHV routes should be designated within the limited category?
- What types of recreation travel should be available on which designated routes and under what limitations?
- Where should adaptive management practices be applied in response to unacceptable resource impacts?
- How should recreational uses be managed to limit conflicts among recreational users?
- How should camping, human waste, fires, and wood collection be managed?
- Where should Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) be designated?
- How should conflicts with other, non-recreational uses be reduced?
- What management actions should be implemented to mitigate damage caused by recreational uses, including vehicles, on other resources and sensitive areas, especially riparian areas?
- How should recreation in the MPA be managed to ensure public health and safety?
- Where and under what circumstances should permitted recreation uses be available?
- What types of recreational facilities and uses should be available, and what limitations should be required?
- How will visual resources be managed?

***Issue 2. What areas will be available for mineral development, and what restrictions should be imposed?*** Historically, the mineral industry has been an important aspect of the local economy in the MPA. Mineral development is considered a major issue for this planning area not only for economic reasons but also for the degree to which it can potentially affect other resources.

### Related Mineral Issues:

- How can conflicts be reduced between mineral development and increasing recreation?
- Where can mineral leasing and development occur, while protecting other resources?
- What are the economic benefits of mineral development?

***Issue 3. What areas should have special designations such as ACECs and Wild and Scenic Rivers?*** FLPMA and BLM policy require the BLM to give priority to designation and protection of ACECs during the land use planning process. The Wild and Scenic River Act directs federal agencies to consider the potential for including watercourses into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System during the land use planning process.

### Related Special Designation Issues:

- What management prescriptions should be applied to areas with special designations?
- What resources need the protection provided by a special designation?

***Issue 4. How can resources such as watersheds, wildlife, and vegetation be protected, maintained, or restored?*** Some resource uses (i.e., grazing, mineral development, OHV use, and recreation) can affect the natural function and condition of watersheds. A healthy cover of perennial vegetation stabilizes the soil, increases infiltration of precipitation, reduces runoff, provides clean water to adjacent streams, and minimizes noxious weed invasion. Plant communities provide habitat for wildlife as well as forage for domestic animals.

Related Natural Resource Issues:

- Which watersheds may require special protection?
- What restrictions could be placed on resource uses in identified areas to maintain the existence or promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, or to prevent the listing of additional species?
- How should wildlife corridors and unfragmented, critical wildlife habitat be protected or improved?
- How should relict plant communities and hanging gardens be managed?
- What areas should be available for fuelwood harvesting?
- Where and with what methods can noxious weeds be controlled?
- How should activities and uses be managed during drought?

***Issue 5. Are there areas where grazing should not be allowed due to resource conflicts?*** The Secretary of the Interior, through the BLM, manages approximately 264 million acres of public rangelands throughout the western U.S. The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, the FLPMA, and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 together guide the BLM's management of livestock grazing on public lands. The objectives for grazing administration regulations are to "promote healthy sustainable rangeland ecosystems; to accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning condition; to efficiently and effectively administer domestic livestock grazing; and to provide for the sustainability of the western livestock industry and communities that are dependent upon productive, healthy public rangelands" (43 CFR Part 4100.0-2).

Related Grazing Issues:

- How should grazing be managed during times of drought?
- How should grazing be managed in riparian areas?

***Issue 6. How can riparian/wetland areas be managed to protect, maintain, and restore their proper functioning condition?*** Riparian areas typically support a unique mixture of vegetation, providing vital habitat for wildlife, aquatic species, and plants. The density and diversity of plant and wildlife species are normally higher in riparian areas than on adjacent uplands. Healthy riparian areas also reduce the impacts of flooding, filter sediment, stabilize banks, store water, and recharge groundwater during floods and rainstorms. These areas also filter sediment and nutrients from surface runoff from adjacent lands. However, resource uses such as grazing, mineral development, and recreation, particularly OHV use, can affect the natural function and condition of riparian and wetland areas.

Related Riparian Issues:

- How should riparian systems be managed to maintain or improve the quality of habitat for fish, wildlife (especially migratory birds), plants, and invertebrates?
- How should human activities and uses be managed to protect riparian areas?

***Issue 7. How can cultural and paleontological resources be protected from the predicted influx in visitation as well as from impacts from other resource uses (e.g., motorized recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development)?*** The MPA is known for its high density of cultural and paleontological resources, many of which have yet to be recorded. For Native Americans, aboriginal cultural resources provide a direct link to their past, and they request that these resources be protected.

Related Cultural Issues:

- What management practices (i.e., method of development, and location) can be applied to human activities and uses in order to protect cultural resources?
- Where can cultural resources be used for scientific, educational, recreational, and traditional purposes?

***Issue 8. What lands within the MPA should be identified as targets for acquisition, disposal or withdrawal?*** As mandated by Sec. 102 (a)(1) of FLPMA (43 U.S.C. § 1701), public lands are retained in federal ownership, the exception being those public lands that have future potential for disposal (i.e., sale or exchange), as described under Sec. 203(a) and Sec. 206 of FLPMA (43 U.S.C. §§ 1713 and 1716).

Public lands cannot be effectively administered without legal and physical access. Therefore, public lands have potential for disposal when they are isolated and/or difficult to manage. Lands identified for disposal must meet public objectives, such as community expansion and economic development. The preferred method of disposal is land exchange. Other lands can be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis. Disposal actions are usually in response to a public request or an application and result in a title transfer, wherein the lands leave the public domain.

Methods used to acquire legal rights to lands that meet resource management needs include negotiated purchase, donation, and exchange. In a withdrawal of lands, an area of public land is withheld from settlement, sale, location, or entry, for the purpose of limiting activities in order to maintain other public values.

***Issue 9. Where is fire desired and not desired, and in what areas could fire be utilized as a management tool for vegetative treatments?*** Drought and beetle infestation in southern Utah have contributed to hazardous fuel loading, increasing the threat of wildfires. Areas of pinyon die-off and dry grasslands have also created areas of higher risk for fire hazard and could require treatment.

A fire management plan would be developed to address high risk areas, fire prevention, prescribed burns, rehabilitation and restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, and the protection of life and property.

***Issue 10. How should non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics be managed?*** Identify what decisions need to be made to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation) in appropriate areas on lands with those values outside of existing WSAs.

There are also other issues related to resources and resource uses that are required to be considered during land use planning efforts that were not identified during public scoping in accordance with BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1610-1) and NEPA regulations and policy. These include decisions for soil and water, wood-cutting, ROWs, environmental justice, and air quality, as well as impacts to socioeconomics, among others.

### **1.3.2.3 ISSUES ADDRESSED THROUGH POLICY OR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

Policy or administrative actions include those actions that are implemented by the BLM because they are standard operating procedure, because federal law requires them, or because they are BLM policy. They are, therefore, issues that are eliminated from detailed analysis in this planning effort. Administrative actions do not require a planning decision to implement. The following issues raised during scoping are already addressed by administrative actions:

- Compliance with existing laws and policies (e.g., FLPMA, NEPA, Endangered Species Act, American Antiquities Act, Clean Air Act, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act).
- Application of the BLM's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management addresses, among other issues, the allocation of forage for grazing animals and wildlife, the numbers of livestock, and changes in grazing management practices.
- Education, enforcement/prosecution, vandalism, and volunteer coordination.
- Consistency with existing federal, state, and local plans.
- Management of cultural resources, which includes up-to-date inventories, non-disclosure of sensitive sites, proposal of cultural sites for the National Register of Historic Places, and Native American consultation.
- Management of the MPA's 11 existing Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs; approximately 348,800 acres) under the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP; H-8550-1; BLM 1995). These WSAs are statutorily required (pursuant to FLPMA Section 603(c)) to be managed to protect their suitability for Congressional designation into the National Wilderness Preservation System. There are, however, a few decisions that will be made for WSAs in this planning effort. They include applying a visual resources management (VRM) Class I objective to the WSAs and determining if the WSAs will be limited or closed to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. Because this planning effort will also consider designating ways in the limited areas as an implementation action, specific ways available for use will be disclosed and analyzed.
- Management of the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness Area. This wilderness area was Congressionally designated in 2000 under Public Law 106-353 and is managed by the Grand Junction Field Office through an RMP for the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area and Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness.

- Completion of inventory of riparian and wetland areas and the use of monitoring and mitigation to help protect these resources.
- Continuing work on a comprehensive sign system and maps for recreational and other users.
- Administration of existing mineral leases, permits, and other authorized uses.
- Use of valid existing rights.
- Monitoring wildlife and biodiversity.
- Monitoring air quality.
- Mitigation measures for site-specific projects.
- Eligibility standards for specially designated areas.
- Protection of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.
- Coordination with local, state, and federal agencies.
- Cooperation with user groups.
- The allocation of forage between livestock and wildlife and the application of specific management practices on allotments within the planning area. (This issue is provided for through the application of Utah's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management and supporting monitoring data. When monitoring and inventory data indicate, changes are made to livestock and wildlife numbers and their management to assure that resource objectives will be met. These allocation and management adjustments are implementation decisions according to BLM's planning handbook and are done on an allotment or other site specific basis.)

#### **1.3.2.4 ISSUES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS BECAUSE THEY ARE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE PLAN**

Issues beyond the scope of the RMP planning process include all issues not related to decisions that would occur as a result of the planning process. They include decisions that are not under the jurisdiction of the MFO or are beyond the capability of the BLM to resolve as part of the planning process. Issues identified in this category include:

- Settlement of RS 2477 claims. The State of Utah, Grand and San Juan Counties may hold valid existing ROWs in the MPA pursuant to Revised Statute (RS) 2477, Act of July 28 1866, chapter 262, 8, 14 Stat. 252, 253, codified at 43 U.S.C. 932. On October 21, 1976, Congress repealed RS 2477 through passage of FLPMA. This RMP does not adjudicate, analyze, or otherwise determine the validity of claimed ROWs. However, nothing in the RMP extinguishes any valid ROW or alters in any way the legal rights the state and counties have to assert and protect RS 2477 rights or to challenge in federal court or other appropriate venue any use restrictions imposed by the RMP that they believe are inconsistent with their rights.
- New wilderness or WSA proposals.
- Eliminating grazing, mineral development, and OHV use on all public lands.
- Activities and uses beyond the jurisdiction of the BLM.
- Changing existing laws, policies, and regulations.

- Availability of funding and personnel for managing programs.
- Considering alternative energy sources as substitutes for activities related to mineral development.

### **1.3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNING CRITERIA**

Planning criteria are based on appropriate laws, regulations, BLM Manual sections, and policy directives, as well as on public participation and coordination with cooperating agencies, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes. Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and factors used to resolve issues and develop alternatives. Planning criteria are prepared to ensure decision making is tailored to the issues and to ensure that the BLM avoids unnecessary data collection and analysis.

Planning criteria have been developed to guide the development of alternatives. The planning criteria to be considered in the development of the RMP are as follows:

- The planning process would recognize the existence of valid existing rights.
- All decisions made in the planning process would apply only to public lands and, where appropriate, split-estate lands where the subsurface mineral estate is managed by the BLM.
- As described by law and policy, the BLM would strive to ensure that its management actions are as consistent as possible with other adjoining planning jurisdictions, both federal and non-federal.
- Management of existing WSAs would be guided by the IMP (BLM 1995). Should Congress release all or part of a WSA from wilderness study, resource management would be determined by preparing an amendment to the RMP. Actions inconsistent with RMP goals and objectives would be deferred until completion of requisite plan amendments. Because the management direction of the released land would continue in accordance with the goals and objectives established in the RMP, there is no separate analysis required in this land use plan to address resource impacts if any WSAs are released. If Congress acts to designate any lands within the MPA as wilderness, they would be managed pursuant to Congress's designation and the Wilderness Act.
- The Standards for Public Land Health (BLM 1997a, 2002b) would apply to all activities and uses. The Standards, as well as the BLM guidelines for grazing and recreation management implemented to achieve the Standards, would be applicable to all alternatives to the RMP analyzed in this Draft EIS.
- Baseline Reasonably Foreseeable Management/Development scenarios would be developed and portrayed for oil and gas, and other uses as appropriate, based on historical, existing, and projected levels for all mineral resource programs.
- Based on consultation with Native Americans, the BLM would consider sites, areas, issues, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage.
- The BLM would adhere to all applicable laws (including state and local laws where appropriate), regulations, BLM Manual sections, and current policy directives pertaining to management of public lands. For example, all management actions would comply with the Endangered Species Act and all laws concerning cultural resources.

- The socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives would be addressed.
- Areas potentially suitable for designation as ACECs and other special designations would be identified and, where appropriate, brought forward for analysis in the EIS.
- River segments would be considered for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and determinations of eligibility, suitability, tentative classification, and protective management would be made in accordance with Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and BLM Manual 8351.

## **1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS**

This RMP is a preliminary step in the overall process of managing public lands. Subsequent more detailed or limited decisions and plans may implement BLM's projections. As a result, this planning process must recognize the many ongoing programs, plans, and policies that are being implemented in the MPA by other land managers and government agencies. The BLM will seek to be consistent with or complementary to other management actions whenever possible. Plans that need to be considered during the MFO's planning effort include:

### **1.4.1 STATE OF UTAH**

- Dead Horse Point State Park Resource Management Plan
- Plans of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA)
- Regional plans of the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT)
- State of Utah plans relating to water management, water quality, nonpoint source pollution, watershed management, and air quality
- Utah's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

### **1.4.2 COUNTY LAND USE PLANS**

- San Juan County, Utah: San Juan County Master Plan (1996)
- Grand County, Utah: Grand County General Plan Update (2004)

### **1.4.3 OTHER FEDERAL PLANS**

- Canyonlands National Park Natural Resource Management Plan
- Canyonlands National Park General Management Plans (1974, 2003, 2006)
- Canyonlands National Park Backcountry Management Plan (1984, 1995)
- Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986)
- Arches National Park, General Management Plan and Development Concept Plan (1989)
- RMPs for the BLM Vernal, Grand Junction, Uncompahgre, Dolores, and Price FOs (BLM 1985b, 1985c, 1985d, 1987, 1989a, 1993a)
- Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area Management Plan (2003a)

#### **1.4.4 ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY PLANS**

Endangered species recovery plans are prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

- Colorado Pikeminnow Recovery Plan (USFWS 1978, 1990, 1991, 2002a)
- Humpback Chub Recovery Plan (USFWS 1979, 1990a, 2002b)
- Northern States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan (USFWS 1983)
- Bonytail Chub Recovery Plan (USFWS 1984, 1990b, 2002c)
- Recovery Implementation Program EA for the Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin (USFWS 1987)
- Black-footed Ferret Recovery Plan (USFWS 1988)
- Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan (USFWS 1995)
- Razorback Sucker Recovery Plan (USFWS 1999, 2002d)
- Final Recovery Plan for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (USFWS 2002e)

#### **1.4.5 ENERGY POLICY AND CONSERVATION ACT (EPCA)**

In May 2001, the Bush administration's Comprehensive National Energy Policy was issued, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to:

... examine land status and lease stipulation impediments to federal oil and gas leasing, and review and modify those where opportunities exist (consistent with the law, good environmental practice and balanced use of other resources).

Under this directive, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management delivered to Congress an inventory of U.S. oil and gas resources in five western basins, as well as the extent and nature of any restrictions or impediments to their development. This report was prepared at the request of Congress under the provisions of the 2000 Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA).

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

1. Environmental protection and energy production are both desirable and necessary objectives of sound land management practices and are not to be considered mutually exclusive priorities.
2. The BLM must ensure appropriate accessibility to energy resources necessary for the nation's security, while recognizing that special and unique non-energy resources can be preserved.
3. Sound planning will weigh the relative resource values, consistent with the multiple use and sustained yield mandates required by FLPMA.
4. All resource impacts, including those associated with energy development and transmission, will be mitigated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

#### **1.4.6 ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005 AND THE WESTERN ENERGY CORRIDOR PROGRAMMATIC EIS (PEIS)**

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

#### **1.4.7 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM) AND U.S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOREST SERVICE**

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish joint BLM and Forest Service policies and procedures for managing oil and gas leasing and operational activities pursuant to oil and gas leases on National Forest System (NFS) lands, consistent with applicable law and policy. The MOU was signed in 1991 for the purpose of efficient, effective compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The MOU establishes the roles of the Forest Service and the BLM in processing Applications for Permits to Drill and review of subsequent operations.

#### **1.4.8 ACTIVITY PLANS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE GRAND RESOURCE AREA RMP (1985)**

The existing Grand Resource Area RMP has undergone numerous land use plan amendments from which decisions will either be carried forward under this new RMP or would be changed via the alternatives. The same is true for the activity level plans that have been completed in conformance with the Grand Resource Area RMP. The activity plans and amendments that will continue to be brought forward under all alternatives are noted below. Those that may be changed under the alternatives are also noted.

- Grazing Amendment to RMP (Livestock conversions) (1988); (changed by alternatives in this planning process)
- Grand Resource Area RMP Oil and Gas Supplemental Environmental Assessment (1988); (changed by alternatives in this planning process)
- Bighorn Sheep Amendment (1990, 1993b); (common to all alternatives)
- Colorado Riverway Recreation Area Management Plan (1992a); (common to all alternatives)
- Sand Flats Recreation Management Plan (1994a); (common to all alternatives)
- Livestock Grazing Use Adjustments (1996); (common to all alternatives)
- Ken's Lake Emergency Plan (1996); (common to all alternatives)
- Utah's Colorado Riverway Special Management Recreation Area Amendment (2001a); (common to all alternatives)
- Mill Creek Canyon Management Plan (2001b); (common to all alternatives)
- Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan (2003b); (common to all alternatives)

- Three Rivers Withdrawal (2004b); (common to all alternatives)
- Cameo Cliffs Special Recreation Management Area Plan (2005b); (common to all alternatives)
- Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation and Stabilization Plan (2006a); (common to all alternatives)
- Moab District Fire Management Plan (2006b); (common to all alternatives)

#### **1.4.9 HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLANS (HMPs)**

A Habitat Management Plan (HMP) provides guidance for the management of a defined habitat for a target wildlife species, protecting and improving habitat for that species and for other species utilizing the habitat. These plans are usually written in coordination with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

- Cisco Desert HMP (1985a); (common to all alternatives)
- Hatch Point HMP (1985b); (common to all alternatives)
- Dolores Triangle HMP (1985c); (common to all alternatives)
- The Potash-Confluence HMP (1986); (common to all alternatives)

#### **1.4.10 EXISTING EISs**

- Wild and Scenic River Study Colorado and Lower Dolores Rivers EIS (NPS 1979); (changed by alternatives in this planning process)
- Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness EIS (1990); (common to all alternatives)
- Lisbon Valley Copper Project EIS (BLM 1997b); (common to all alternatives)
- Questar, Williams, and Kern River Pipeline Project EIS (BLM 2001c); (common to all alternatives)
- Remediation of the Moab Uranium Tailings, Grand and San Juan Counties, Utah EIS (DOE 2005); (common to all alternatives)
- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (1991a); (common to all alternatives)

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