

## **4.6 LANDS AND REALTY**

The majority of specific program management decisions regarding the following resources and resource uses would have no adverse impacts (short-term and/or long-term, as well as direct and/or indirect) on lands and realty regardless of the alternative chosen. These include: fire resource actions; air quality; forage management, livestock grazing, and rangeland improvement; some recreation decisions; travel decisions; vegetation decisions, including woodland and riparian resources; visual resources; and wild horse and wildlife resources. These issues and resources, as they pertain to lands and realty, will not be analyzed further.

In general, adverse impacts to lands and realty would be limited since the types of acquisitions and disposals are identified.

### **4.6.1 Impacts Common to All Alternatives**

#### ***4.6.1.1 Direct Impacts***

No specific land disposals or exchanges have been identified under any alternative; thus, there are no direct impacts associated with these lands and realty issues. Future land tenure adjustments for major water developments, to protect water sources, consolidate management opportunities or to accommodate the needs for the economy and community growth would be processed on a case by case basis with public notices as required by regulation.

Priorities for land tenure adjustments would focus on opportunities to pursue and assemble land exchanges with the State of Utah in order to consolidate land management opportunities for BLM and provide the State of Utah with additional revenue generating potential for the State Institution Trust Lands Administration.

BLM recognizes local government concerns over net gains of public lands within the respective counties and would continue to consider these concerns during land tenure adjustment processes.

Priority would be given for acquisition of lands containing significant paleontological or cultural resources, special status species habitat, riparian/wetland habitat, crucial wildlife habitat, and high value recreation areas. Lands would be acquired through donation, purchase, or land exchange from willing partners to secure key property necessary to protect special status species and to promote biological diversity. ROW designation would be generally avoided in threatened and endangered species habitat.

Recreation resources would affect Lands and Realty where increased public access is desired to provide recreational opportunities on approximately 70,700 acres within the VPA. Land tenure adjustments would be made and/or easements acquired from willing partners to improve public access for hunting, and access to rivers for fishing, boating, or swimming. In addition, ROW designation would be avoided in developed or inventoried recreation sites unless necessary to support recreational uses.

BLM would pursue easements from willing partners to provide access for roads and trails with priority given to certain areas. As well, easements would be pursued for access to woodland resources.

Easements would be acquired to provide public access to ACECs and SRMAs, and new ROWs may be issued to avoid special designation areas unless necessary to support complimentary uses.

Specific cultural resource mitigation requirements may adversely affect some lands by limiting access to significant cultural sites in order to preserve cultural resources. Land tenure adjustments might be made and easements acquired from willing partners to obtain land and provide access to significant cultural sites for protective or interpretive purposes. ROW designation, permits, and leases are unavailable or very limited in areas designated for avoidance due to significant cultural sites

All alternatives would have some direct short and long-term impacts to Lands and Realty due to Mineral Resource decisions. If locatable minerals are found on lands to be sold, the VFO might remove the lands from sale, dispose of the surface estate, or reserve all or part of the mineral estate to the U.S. Consequently, the VFO would dispose of the mineral estate pursuant to Section 209(b) of the FLMPPA or a surface owner could acquire the mineral estate under 43 CFR 2720. Acquisition of access rights could be pursued, providing easements for removal of mineral resources, and ROW designation, permits, and leases would be provided for oil and gas gathering systems or roads.

In 1982, a dam and reservoir ROW grant, serial number UTU-30745, was issued to the State of Utah, Division of Water Resources, which has not been built. Should the dam be constructed, access road(s) and power line locations and their effects would need to be addressed at that time.

Where public access would be sought, VRM Class I areas may be affected.

#### ***4.6.1.2 Indirect Effects***

Cultural and historical sites, special area designations, special status species, fish and wildlife habitat, wetland/riparian habitats, water and fisheries issues and other resource values generally limit lands available for exchange or disposal in any area; reducing the demand for the number and type of realty use authorizations and withdrawals; and restricting the ability to construct or relocate roads for legal access.

#### **4.6.2 Alternative Impacts**

There are no short-term indirect impacts anticipated for any of the alternatives.

##### ***4.6.2.1 Impacts of Recreation Decisions on Lands and Realty***

###### ***4.6.2.1.1 Alternative A***

###### ***4.6.2.1.1.1 Access/Acquisition***

Easements would need to be acquired from state and/or willing private landowners to increase public recreation access to trail systems where they cross non-federal lands. Under Alternative A, a public access easement would be pursued for the White River at the mouth of Cowboy Canyon, Bonanza Bridge, and Wagon Hound Road. This would allow the public to access a portion of the White River, which has been nominated for Wild and Scenic River status. Additionally, an easement for the old Uintah Railroad bed from the UT/CO line to Watson in Evacuation Creek would not be pursued, thus restricting access along this portion of the creek.

Acquisition of Indian trust lands in Bitter Creek and near the confluence of South and Sweetwater Canyons would be sought from willing partners, which would allow the public to access this area, as well as permit the BLM to better manage the area by consolidating landscape level issues without having to consider administrative boundaries.

4.6.2.1.2 Alternative B

4.6.2.1.2.1 Access/Acquisition

Alternative B, while providing some administrative access for BLM, would leave several large tracts of public land isolated and unavailable for public visitation due to lack of legal access through non-federal lands. Public access to the White River at the mouth of Cowboy Canyon, Bonanza Bridge, and Wagon Hound Road would not be pursued. This would preclude the public from accessing the area. Additionally, an easement for the old Uintah Railroad bed from the UT/CO line to Watson in Evacuation Creek would not be pursued under Alternative B, thus restricting access along this portion of the creek.

Administrative access, not outright acquisition, of Indian trust lands in Bitter Creek and near the confluence of South and Sweetwater Canyons would be sought, which would permit the BLM, though not the public, to gain access through this area as needed. This would make managing this area and adjacent BLM-administered lands more difficult since these areas would not necessarily have a cohesive, compatible management strategy.

4.6.2.1.3 Alternative C

4.6.2.1.3.1 Access/Acquisition

Actions discussed under Alternative A would also be pursued for Alternative C, except for easement for the old Uintah Railroad bed from the UT/CO line to Watson in Evacuation Creek, which would be sought (similar to Alternative B). Thus, impacts would be similar to those described under Alternatives A and B, for the respective actions.

Acquisition of Indian trust lands in Bitter Creek and near the confluence of South and Sweetwater Canyons would be sought, which would allow the public to access this area, as well as permit the BLM to better managed the area by consolidating landscape level issues without having to consider administrative boundaries.

4.6.2.1.4 Alternative D

4.6.2.1.4.1 Access/Acquisition

Similar to Alternative A, easements would need to be acquired from state and/or private landowners to increase public recreation access to trail systems where they cross non-federal lands under Alternatives D, where indicated, as described in the Diamond Mountain RMP. Specific easement acquisitions in the Diamond Mountain RMP, from which Alternative D has been derived, are described in the existing RMP. Easement acquisitions are not discussed in the Book Cliffs Diamond Mountain RMP.

**4.6.2.2 Impacts of Mineral Decisions on Lands and Realty**

4.6.2.2.1 Alternative A

Under Alternative A, a locatable mineral withdrawal and other protective measures would be pursued that would preclude mineral entry in the Green River Scenic Corridor in Browns Park (8,208 acres), White River (9,218 acres) Lears Canyon relict vegetation areas (1,375 acres), the Book Cliffs Natural Area (401 acres), and the lower Green River ACEC (17,063 acres). This would have long-term, beneficial impacts on those values and resources that have been identified in these special designations since these areas would not be subject to surface and subsurface disturbances that result from mineral extraction.

4.6.2.2.2 Alternative B

The impacts would be the same as described under Alternative A.

4.6.2.2.3 Alternative C

The impacts would be the same as described under Alternative A.

4.6.2.2.4 Alternative D

Under Alternative D, locatable mineral withdrawals and impacts would be similar to those described under Alternative A, except that 1) there would not be withdrawals along the White River and Book Cliffs Natural Area, and 2) 5,000 acres of potential and developed recreation sites would be precluded from mineral entry. This would have long-term, beneficial impacts on those values and resources that have been identified in these special designation areas since these areas would not be subject to surface and subsurface disturbances that result from mineral extraction and agricultural operations (see Mineral Resources for details on types of impacts), but the natural resources in the designated Book Cliffs and White River areas would potentially be adversely impacted because they would be subject to mineral entry.

**4.6.3 Mitigation Measures**

There are no mitigation measures necessary for Lands and Realty.

**4.6.4 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

There are no unavoidable adverse impacts.

**4.6.5 Short-term Uses Versus Long-term Productivity**

At this point in time there is no known loss in land productivity as a result of the decisions of any alternatives.

**4.6.6 Irreversible and Irretrievable Impacts**

All alternatives accommodate land tenure adjustments that may result in the permanent loss of lands from public ownership if they enter private or State ownership.

There are no irreversible or irretrievable impacts to Lands and Realty for any alternative chosen.