

# Scoping Report Cedar City Field Office Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement



**CEDAR CITY  
FIELD OFFICE**



The BLM manages more land – 253 million acres – than any other federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

# **SCOPING REPORT**

**CEDAR CITY FIELD OFFICE**

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**



**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Cedar City Field Office, Utah**

**April 1, 2011**



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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
AUM	Animal unit month
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CCFO	Cedar City Field Office
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DOI	Department of the Interior
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
HMA	Herd Management Area
MFP	Management Framework Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NOA	Notice of Availability
NOI	Notice of Intent
OHV	Off-highway vehicle
RMP	Resource Management Plan
ROD	Record of Decision
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SRP	Special Recreation Permit
SUWA	Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
U.S.	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Overview**

The United States (U.S.) Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM), published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on September 10, 2010 to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) and an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Cedar City Field Office (CCFO). Public lands within the planning area are currently managed under the 1983 Pinyon Management Framework Plan (MFP) and the Cedar and Beaver portions of the 1986 Cedar/Beaver/Garfield/Antimony RMP, as amended. The CCFO will issue a Record of Decision (ROD) and approved RMP at the completion of the project. The CCFO RMP/EIS is anticipated to be completed in December 2014. The RMP/EIS will address the management of BLM-administered lands in the planning area over the next 15 to 20 years. The RMP may be amended in the future to extend beyond the 20 year period.

#### **1.1.1 Purpose and Need for the RMP/EIS**

An RMP is a land use plan designed to ensure that the public lands are managed in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (43 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1701 et seq.), under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The purpose of the new RMP will be to establish goals and objectives for resource management; identify lands that are open or available for certain uses, including any restrictions, and lands that are closed to certain uses; provide comprehensive management direction for all resources and uses; and contain broad scale decisions guiding future site-specific implementation decisions.

Since completion of the 1983 Pinyon MFP and the 1986 Cedar/Beaver/Garfield/Antimony RMP, considerable changes have occurred within the planning area. The CCFO is facing a wide variety of issues affecting local communities such as rapid population growth, increased off-highway vehicle (OHV) activity, demand for renewable energy, and the current condition of natural resources. There are a number of new issues, higher levels of controversy around existing issues, and previously unforeseen public land uses and concerns that have arisen over the years which were not included or were not adequately addressed in the existing land use plans. In addition, laws, regulations, and policies regarding management of BLM-administered lands have changed since the plans were implemented. The BLM is developing a new RMP to ensure compliance with current mandates and to address the current issues in the planning area. During the RMP/EIS process, decisions in the existing RMP that are determined to still be valid may be brought forward in the CCFO RMP/EIS. When completed, the new RMP will replace the 1983 MFP and 1986 RMP.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA, federal agencies are required to analyze and document the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions before implementing these actions. Therefore, pursuant to NEPA, the BLM will prepare an EIS on the CCFO RMP. The CCFO RMP is considered a major federal action.

#### **1.1.2 Planning Area**

The planning area is located in the Great Basin region of southwestern Utah and encompasses approximately 2,103,500 acres of public land, in Beaver and Iron counties, as well as a small portion of Washington County, as shown on Figure 1. The planning area extends to the border of Millard County

on the north, Garfield County on the east, Washington County on the south, and the Nevada state line on west. The area supports a variety of resources and resource uses including habitat for wildlife and wild horses, as well as rangeland for livestock grazing. Public lands in the area provide multiple opportunities for recreation, energy development, and other resource uses.

### **1.1.3 Public Involvement in the RMP/EIS**

Public involvement, which includes the scoping process, is a vital component of FLPMA and NEPA. Through the public involvement process, the public is able to participate in the planning process. NEPA requirements for public involvement are set forth in CEQ regulations 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500–1508. Additional BLM guidance and direction for public involvement is provided in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (BLM Handbook H-1601-1) and the BLM NEPA Handbook (BLM Handbook H-1790-1).

## **1.2 Scoping Process**

### **1.2.1 Description of the Scoping Process**

The purpose of the public scoping process is to identify issues and planning criteria that should be considered in the RMP/EIS and to initiate public participation in the planning process. The BLM follows the public involvement requirements according to the CEQ regulations set forth in 40 CFR 1501.7, which states, “there should be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed during the planning process.” During the scoping process, the BLM solicits comments from the public and relevant agencies, organizes and analyzes all of the comments received, and then distills the comments to identify the issues to be addressed during the planning process. The BLM and cooperating agencies consider comments provided during scoping and refine the issues and planning criteria, formulate alternatives, and conduct impact analyses.

The formal scoping period began on September 10, 2010, with the publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register* (Appendix A). The original scoping period established by the NOI was scheduled to last for 90 days and to end on December 9, 2010. However, the BLM extended the scoping period 15 days beyond the date of the last scoping meeting to December 27, 2010, for a total of 109 days. This time period exceeded the 30 day minimum requirement established under the CEQ regulations. Although the formal comment period has ended, the BLM encourages public involvement and will continue to accept comments received throughout the RMP/EIS process (Appendix B).

### **1.2.2 Federal Register Notice of Intent**

The scoping process for the CCFO RMP/EIS began with the publication of the NOI (Appendix A) in the *Federal Register* on September 10, 2010. The BLM posted the NOI on the project website ([http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar\\_city.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar_city.html)). The NOI notified the public of the BLM’s intent to develop a new RMP for the CCFO planning area. It also identified the preliminary planning issues and criteria to be utilized in the RMP/EIS process.



### 1.2.3 Public Notification of Scoping

#### Announcements and Media Releases

The BLM issued a news release to local media on September 20, 2010 announcing plans to develop a new RMP/EIS and posted the news release on the CCFO website. The news release and other articles regarding the RMP/EIS were published in the newspapers and websites listed in Table 1. The publications described the RMP process, identified preliminary issues, and described the existing land use plans. Most also provided the dates of the scoping period and the dates, times, and locations of the public scoping meetings.

The BLM issued news releases and conducted interviews describing the public scoping period providing the time, date, and location of the public scoping meetings. Distribution included six newspapers, nine websites, and two radio stations, in and around the planning area. Table 1 also details the dates of publication or interview for each media outlet. Newspaper ads were published in the hard copy versions of the newspaper as well as online versions if available. The articles are printed in their entirety in Appendix C.

**Table 1. Media Distribution List**

<b>Media Outlet &amp; Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Newspapers</b>	
The Beaver County Journal, Beaver, Utah	12/7/2010
Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah	Online and hard copy 11/29/2010, 12/17/2010
Iron County Today, Cedar City, Utah	12/1/2010
The Richfield Reaper, Richfield, Utah	12/2010
The Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake City, Utah	Online and hard copy 11/18/2010, 11/23/2010, 12/7/2010
The Spectrum Daily News, St. George, Utah	Online and hard copy 11/24/2010, 12/4/2010
<b>Websites</b>	
BLM.gov	9/20/2010
Motoutah.com	9/20/2010
Midutahradio.com	9/21/2010, 11/16/2010
STVOffroad.com	9/27/2010
Sharetrails.org	9/27/2010
Snoreracing.net	11/19/2010
Atvutah.com	11/22/2010
BCORMA.geovisionenvironmental.com	12/15/2010
Worldvisionportal.org	12/9/2010
<b>Radio Stations</b>	
National Public Radio (NPR), Salt Lake City, Utah	12/2010
KSUB Radio, Cedar City, Utah	12/6/2010

## **Flyer**

The BLM posted flyers at multiple businesses and public places in several communities in and around Cedar City. The flyer invited the public to participate in the land use planning process by attending the public scoping meetings. The meeting dates, times, and locations were provided on the flyer along with CCFO contact information. Appendix C includes a copy of the flyer and list of the places the flyer was posted.

## **Project Newsletter**

The BLM compiled a mailing list of approximately 610 individuals, agencies, and organizations that participated in past BLM projects or requested to be on the general mailing list. Prior to the scoping meetings, the BLM prepared a project newsletter and sent it to each contact on the mailing list. The newsletter included general information about the planning process and planning area for the RMP/EIS; preliminary planning issues, contact information and comment submission instructions; and a list of the dates, times, and locations of the public scoping meetings. The BLM posted the newsletter on the project website and provided copies at the public scoping meetings. Appendix C includes a copy of the newsletter.

## **Website**

The CCFO website is one of the methods used to communicate project news and updates to the public. Accessed at [http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar\\_city.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar_city.html), the website provided notice that the BLM was preparing to develop a new RMP/EIS, asked for public input on the issues to be addressed in the RMP/EIS, and listed the scoping meeting dates, times, and locations. Public information posted on the website included copies of the September 20, 2010 news release, the NOI, project newsletter, the 1983 Pinyon MFP, and the 1986 Cedar/Beaver/Garfield/Antimony RMP. The BLM will use the website throughout the RMP/EIS process to communicate project news and updates to the public and to provide publicly available documents.

### **1.2.4 Scoping Meetings**

The BLM hosted three scoping meetings to provide the public with an opportunity to learn and ask questions about the RMP/EIS, the planning process, and to submit their concerns to the BLM. As described above, the BLM advertised the dates, times and locations of the public scoping meetings using a variety of outreach methods.

The BLM hosted the scoping meetings on December 7, 8, and 9, 2010 at Cedar City, Beaver, and Salt Lake City, Utah, respectively. All the meetings were conducted from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Table 2 lists the dates, times, and locations of the scoping meetings, as well as the number of people in attendance at each meeting.

**Table 2. Schedule of Public Scoping Meetings for the Cedar City Field Office RMP/EIS**

Date and Time	Location	Number of Attendees
Tuesday December 7, 2010 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Festival Hall Convention Center Room 7 96 North Main Cedar City, UT 84720	57
Wednesday December 8, 2010 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Beaver Public Library 55 West Center Street Beaver, UT 84713	60
Thursday December 9, 2010 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Salt Lake City Library Room 4 210 East 400 South Salt Lake City, UT 84111	22

The scoping meetings were held in an open house format designed to allow attendees to learn about the project and to provide an opportunity to ask BLM representatives questions in an informal one-on-one setting. In addition to members of the BLM interdisciplinary team and members of the BLM Utah State Office, a total of 139 people attended the scoping meetings.

The BLM displayed four 3-panel table top boards at each scoping meeting that displayed information on the RMP/EIS process, natural resources within the CCFO, and resource issues. Six large maps were also displayed including a map of the planning area. The BLM also provided three handouts on Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs), and Travel and Transportation Management. Copies of the newsletter were also available. Detailed information on the displays, maps, and handouts is provided below.

When requested by attendees, the BLM geographic information system (GIS) specialists projected specific information on existing routes, trails or areas in the CCFO on a large screen. In addition, the attendees could draw or mark existing or missing routes on a large route network map of the CCFO planning area. Meeting participants also had the option of completing a Travel Management Comment Card (see Appendix B) to provide specific information on desired route designations. This information will be used by the BLM to develop a Travel Management Plan, which will be finalized after completion of the RMP/EIS process.

The BLM provided written comment forms at each meeting and attendees were encouraged to submit comments by filling out the form at the meeting, mailing the comment form, or dropping the comment form off at the BLM CCFO. Comments could also be submitted via the project email address at: [utccrmp@blm.gov](mailto:utccrmp@blm.gov). Appendix B includes a copy of the written comment form.

**Handouts**

The BLM provided three handouts at each scoping meeting. The handouts provided the following information:

- ACECs, including information on what an ACEC is, how an ACEC is created, restrictions that may be associated with an ACEC, relevance and importance criteria of ACECs, and how the public can participate in nomination of an ACEC.

- WSRs, including information on how rivers and streams in the planning area will be evaluated for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and how the public can provide input on designation of a river or stream.
- Travel and transportation management, including the steps in travel and transportation management planning, how travel management will be addressed in the RMP/EIS, and how the public can provide input on the travel management planning process.

## Displays

The BLM provided four, 3-panel display boards to guide meeting participants visually through the RMP/EIS process, as well as the resources and issues in the planning area. The four display boards presented the following information:

- A description of the purpose of the new RMP/EIS, primary issues, a summary of the RMP/EIS process, and a flowchart of the RMP/EIS timeline.
- The potential issues in the planning area related to lands and realty, renewable energy, ACECs, cultural resources, and Native American concerns.
- Recreation areas in the planning area, information on Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), WSRs, areas with wilderness characteristics, and how travel management will change in the new RMP.
- How the new RMP will address management of wild horses, information on wildlife concerns in the planning area, where livestock grazing is authorized in the planning area, and how the RMP may change livestock management.

## Maps

The BLM displayed six large maps at each scoping meeting: the CCFO planning area; the locations of existing, proposed, and potential renewable energy areas; wildlife areas and habitats; locations of special designation areas including wilderness and recreation areas; locations of the wild horse HMAs and grazing allotments; and existing route network.

## Mailing List

The BLM compiled a list of 610 individuals, agencies, and organizations that participated in past BLM projects or requested to be on the general mailing list. The BLM distributed the project newsletter to each individual on the mailing list via email or the U.S. Postal Service. Attendees at the scoping meetings were added to the mailing list as requested on the sign in sheets or comment cards. Other additions to the mailing list included individuals, organizations, or agencies who submitted requests to be added to the list. The BLM continuously updated the mailing list as changes occurred including entering changes of address, deleting addresses of undeliverable emails and those requesting to be removed from the list. The BLM will continue to accept requests to be added to or removed from the mailing list throughout the RMP/EIS process.

## 1.3 Collaborative Involvement Process

### 1.3.1 Cooperating Agencies

A cooperating agency is any federal, state, or local government agency or Native American tribe that enters into a formal agreement with the lead federal agency to help develop an environmental analysis. More specifically, cooperating agencies “work with the BLM, sharing knowledge and resources, to

achieve desired outcomes for public lands and communities within statutory and regulatory frameworks” (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1).

The benefits of collaboration among agencies in preparing NEPA analyses include disclosing relevant information early in the analytical process; applying available technical expertise and staff support; avoiding duplication with other federal, state, tribal, and local procedures; and establishing a mechanism for addressing intergovernmental issues.

The BLM invited state and local agencies and two Indian tribes to participate as cooperating agencies on the CCFO RMP/EIS. An invitation for all state agencies to be cooperators was sent through the Utah Public Land Policy and Coordination Office. The State of Utah accepted and has become a cooperating agency via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Governor and Utah State Director in January 2011. Beaver and Iron counties also accepted the invitation to be cooperators and their signed MOUs are pending. The Paiute and Hopi Tribes declined the invitation but indicated that they will participate in the project.

### 1.3.2 Consultation with Tribes

In addition to inviting the Paiute and Hopi Tribes to be cooperators in the RMP/EIS process, the BLM anticipates consulting with the several tribal governments including:

- Goshute Indian Tribe
- Kaibab-Paiute Indian Tribe
- Kanosh Band of Paiutes
- Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah
- Southern Paiute Consortium
- Hopi Tribe
- Ute Indian Tribe

## 2.0 COMMENT SUMMARY

### 2.1 Method of Comment Collection and Analysis

The official scoping period ended on December 27, 2010, and all comments received or post-marked by that date are included in this report. All comments received throughout the RMP/EIS process will continue to be reviewed to ensure that no key issues or concerns have been overlooked. The issues identified in this report will be considered in the formulation of alternatives and in the analysis of effects.

The BLM received a total of 68 unique comment documents. One of these documents was a form letter regarding wild horses, of which the BLM received 40,060 submittals. Comment documents were submitted at the scoping meetings, delivered in person, submitted via email, or mailed to the field office. Appendix D includes a list of commenters, although commenters submitting wild horse form letters are not listed individually, except for one representative author. Appendix E contains copies of all comment letters including one example of a wild horse form letter and form letters containing additional unique material. E-mail was the most commonly used submission method. Table 3 identifies the comment submission method for all comments.

**Table 3. Number of Comment Documents Received by Submission Type**

Submission Type	Number of Comment Documents
Standard Mail	30
E-mail <sup>1</sup>	40,084
Comment Mailers Submitted at Scoping Meetings	14
<b>Total Comment Documents Received During Scoping<sup>1</sup>:</b>	<b>40,128</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes 40,060 form letters received during the scoping period.

Appendix D provides the complete list of the comment documents arranged by commenter, organization, and document number. This information can be used to locate specific comment documents in Appendix E. The 68 unique comment documents resulted in approximately 468 separate comments addressing issues within the scope of the RMP/EIS.

Comment documents were tracked upon receipt to assure all relevant comments were captured. First, comment documents were logged, given a unique identifier (referred to as a document number), and scanned into an electronic file. Comment documents were then entered into a comment tracking and analysis program known as CommentWorks® and individual comments in each comment document were identified. Using this software, individual comments were placed in issue categories based on the topic of the comment.

## 2.2 Summary of Public Comments Received

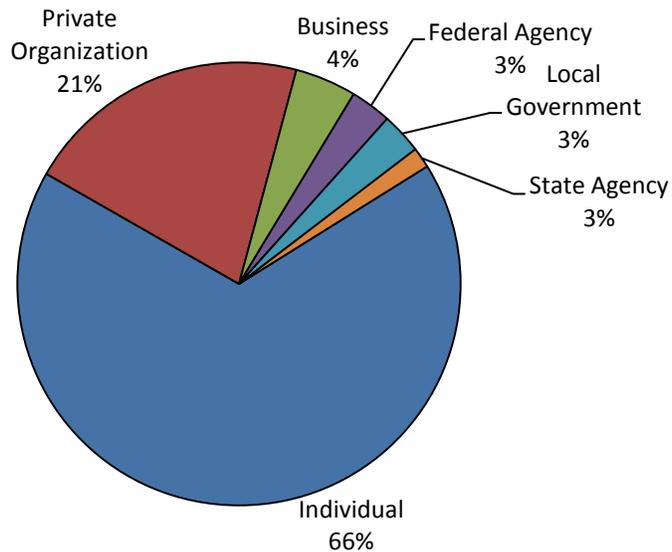
### Comments by Affiliation

Table 4 shows the affiliation of each commenter. Individuals who did not identify an affiliation provided the largest number of comment documents during the scoping period. No comments were received from tribal governments. Appendix D provides a list of individual commenters and their affiliations. Figure 2 shows the proportion of comment documents by affiliation, which is a graphic representation of Table 4.

**Table 4. Number of Comment Documents by Affiliation**

Commenter Affiliation	Number of Comment Documents
Individual (no affiliation)	45
Private Organization	14
Business	3
Federal Agency	2
State Agency	2
Local Government	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

**Figure 2. Proportion of Comment Documents by Affiliation**



### Comments by Geographic Location

Of the 68 comment documents received by the BLM, 37 were from commenters in Utah, 18 were from other states, and 13 were from unknown locations, i.e., they did not contain an address. Comments from residents within the planning area were submitted primarily by individuals who did not identify an affiliation. The BLM considers all comments equally, regardless of geographic origin or affiliation.

### Comments by Planning Issue Category

The BLM received a total of 468 comments related to the RMP/EIS planning issues. The form letter, or altered versions of it, contained 11 unique comments that are included in the total of 468 comments. The BLM also identified an additional 134 comments on topics that will not be addressed in the RMP/EIS including: requests for changes to regulations and policies; issues outside the scope of the planning process; comments that were too vague to be categorized; and comments on how the planning or public involvement process should work. Section 3.6 discusses comments that will not be addressed in the RMP/EIS in greater detail.

The BLM categorized the 468 comments into 16 planning issue categories. Table 5 shows the number of comments received for each category. Section 3.3 provides a basic summary of the comments received for each category. Appendix E includes copies of the comment documents.

The comment count by planning issue category in Table 5 provides an estimate for the number of comments based on comment topic. However, because of the unstructured nature of the comment process (i.e., commenters were not answering specific questions but rather identifying their concerns), the BLM often received comments that touched on multiple issue categories. In these cases, the comment was placed into one category where it seemed most appropriate. For example, a comment requesting protection for the Southern Wah Wah Mountains through designation as an ACEC to protect geologic, scenic, wildlife, cultural, and historical values was coded in the Special Designations issue category, even though the comment also applies to the Geologic Resources, Cultural Resources, Visual

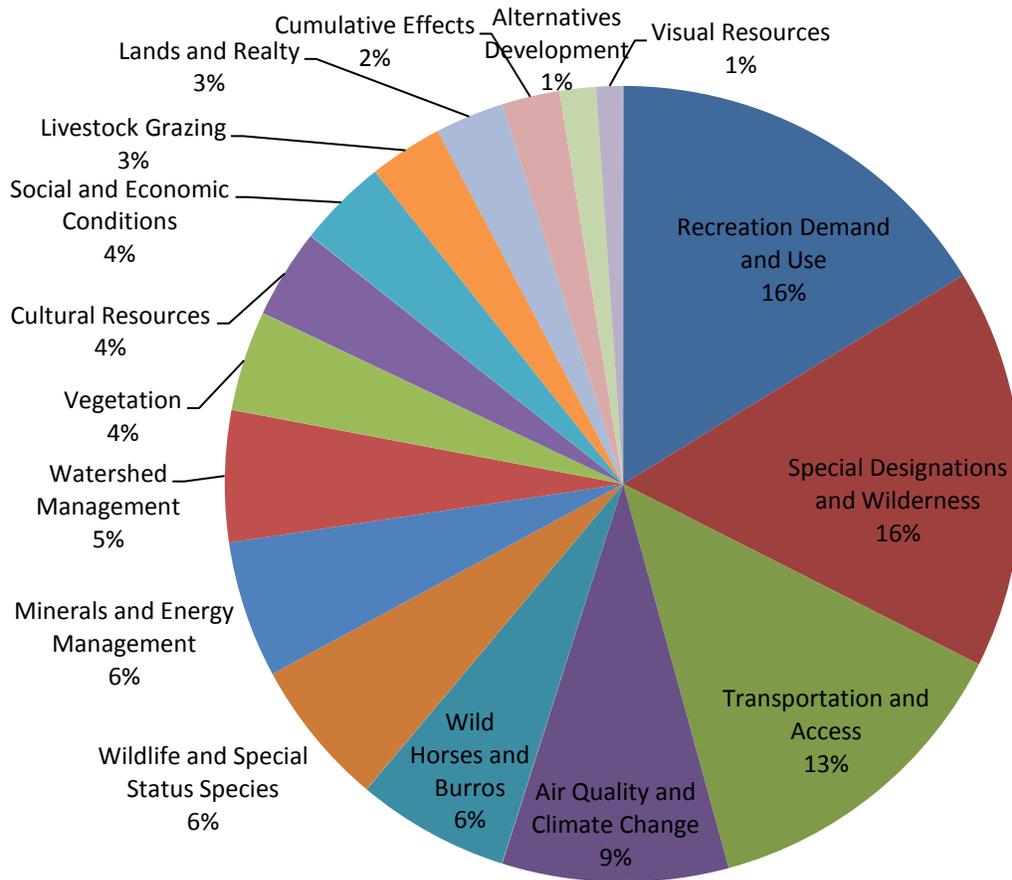
Resources, and Fish and Wildlife issue categories. It is important to note that while comments of this type were not coded into multiple categories, the issue statements in Section 3.2 do represent all of the comments relevant to that planning topic, regardless of the issue category where the comment was grouped.

**Table 5. Number of Comments by Planning Issue Category**

Planning Issue Category	Number of Individual Comments
Air Quality and Climate Change	43
Cultural Resources	17
Wildlife and Special Status Species	28
Visual Resources	5
Vegetation (including forests and woodlands, rangelands, riparian/wetland resources)	19
Watershed Management	25
Wild Horses and Burros	29
Lands and Realty	13
Livestock Grazing	14
Minerals and Energy Management	26
Recreation Demand and Uses	76
Transportation and Access	62
Special Designations and Wilderness	76
Social and Economic Conditions (including Public Safety)	17
Cumulative Effects	11
Alternatives Development	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>468</b>

Figure 3 shows the proportion of comments in each planning issue category. Section 3, Issue Summary, provides a detailed analysis of the comments received for each planning issue category.

**Figure 3. Proportion of Comments by Planning Issue Category**



### 3.0 ISSUE SUMMARY

Issue identification is the first step in the RMP/EIS process. Planning issues are controversies or concerns about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices. Issues may include public concerns or needs to be considered in the planning process. Planning issues may result from changed circumstances from the previous planning process or new data that was previously unavailable.

#### 3.1 Planning Issue Development

Substantial change has taken place since completion of the current land use plans. Communities have grown, and resource development has expanded substantially while at the same time regard for environmental conservation and protection is becoming a major concern. The BLM is facing a wide variety of issues affecting local communities, regional, and state interests, and the health of natural resources. In order to better understand the planning issues facing the CCFO, the BLM conducted a Planning Evaluation in August 2001. This process generated preliminary planning issues that were

sorted into the following 20 issue categories, listed in the order in which resources will be addressed in the RMP/EIS:

1. Air Quality
2. Cultural Resources
3. Paleontological Resources
4. Fire Management
5. Woodland Harvest and Management
6. Hazardous Sites, Materials, and Waste
7. Lands and Realty
8. Rangeland Management and Health/Rehabilitation
9. Minerals Management
10. Off-Highway Vehicle Use
11. Recreation
12. Riparian Resources
13. Vegetation and Special Status Plants
14. Visual Resources
15. Watersheds and Water Resources
16. Wilderness
17. Wild and Scenic Rivers
18. Special Management Areas
19. Wildlife and Fish Habitat, and Special Status Species Management
20. Wild Horses

Issue categories are broad resource topics used to consolidate comments expressing similar areas of concern. These preliminary issue categories were expected to encompass most public issues and concerns and to serve as a starting point to spark public consideration; however, they were not meant to be all inclusive.

The scoping period provided the BLM additional information on the public's concerns and suggestions regarding the planning area. The BLM used a multi-step process to categorize and distill the issues presented in the scoping comments. Scoping comments were compiled and evaluated to identify issue categories. These issue categories were then used to group individual comments, and these grouped comments were used to develop discreet planning issue statements. The process of issue category and issue statement development was iterative; as comment summaries were written based on the preliminary issue categories, these categories and issue statements were sometimes divided or condensed to more appropriately reflect the range of topics discussed in the comments. Consequently, 16 planning issue statements resulted from the 20 preliminary issue categories. The issue statements are presented in the section below. Their purpose is to highlight the key issues as described in comments received during the scoping process.

## **3.2 Planning Issue Statements**

The BLM developed planning issue statements for 16 planning issue categories, written in the form of questions. These planning issue statements summarize the issues and concerns raised by the public during the scoping process. Revisions to the planning issues will be made as needed during the planning process as the BLM receives additional input from the public and cooperators. The 16 planning issue statements are identified below for each of the planning issue categories. Section 3.3 provides a summary of the public comments received during the public scoping process for each planning issue category.

### **3.2.1 Planning Issue Statements**

**Air Quality and Climate Change** – How can the BLM analyze air quality impacts and incorporate climate change into its land management practices?

**Cultural Resources** – How can the BLM protect and conserve cultural resources?

**Wildlife and Special Status Species** – How can the BLM manage public land for multiple uses while maintaining and improving wildlife habitat?

**Visual Resources** – How can the BLM manage public lands for visual qualities?

**Vegetation** – How can the BLM manage vegetation to allow for public uses, to maintain or improve habitat, and to contain the spread of invasive species?

**Watershed Management** – How can the BLM manage watersheds to allow for multiple uses while protecting water quality and riparian and wetland resources?

**Wild Horses** – How can the BLM manage wild horses on public lands while also protecting natural and cultural resources?

**Lands and Realty** – What opportunities exist to make adjustments to public land ownership that would result in greater management efficiency, acceptable levels of public access, and in increased public and natural resource benefits?

**Livestock Grazing** – How can the BLM manage livestock use on public lands while also protecting natural and cultural resources?

**Minerals and Energy Management** – Which areas should be open to mineral and energy development, and how should BLM manage such development while protecting other resource values?

**Recreation Demand and Use** – How will the BLM manage recreation to provide motorized and nonmotorized recreation opportunities, protect natural and cultural resources, reduce user conflicts, and provide a variety of recreational opportunities?

**Transportation and Access** – How can the BLM manage transportation to protect natural and cultural resources, provide motorized and nonmotorized travel routes to meet demand, reduce user conflicts, enforce route designations and closures, and improve public access?

**Special Designations and Wilderness** – Where are special designations and management to preserve wilderness characteristics appropriate to protect unique resources, and how can the BLM manage areas that contain unique or sensitive resources?

**Social and Economic Conditions** – How can the BLM manage public land use to preserve local tradition and economies that rely upon BLM-administered land?

**Cumulative Effects** – How will the BLM address the cumulative effects of its land management decisions?

**Alternatives Development** – How will the BLM use an appropriate range of alternatives to facilitate the RMP planning process and to develop proposed management actions and mitigation measures where appropriate?

### **3.3 Public Comment Summary by Issue Category**

As discussed previously, the BLM received and reviewed approximately 468 comments related to planning issues (from 68 unique comment documents) during the scoping period. In the issue category summaries presented below, the BLM has attempted to capture the primary needs, uses, and concerns presented in these comments. With the exception of form letters, all written submissions have been reproduced in their entirety in Appendix E.

#### **3.3.1 Air Quality and Climate Change**

The BLM received 43 comments concerning air quality and climate change related issues, including 28 comments regarding air quality and 15 comments addressing climate change. This issue category represents nine percent of the total comments received.

##### **Air Quality**

Most comments addressed air quality monitoring including suggestions that the BLM should take a comprehensive, quantitative approach to modeling air quality by gathering baseline air quality data to create comprehensive emissions inventories, using cumulative air quality analyses such as dispersion modeling, and analyzing air quality in the context of federal and state standards. Other comments requested the use of a fully vetted air quality modeling protocol and the evaluation of potential impacts on Class I and Class II federal areas. Several comments addressed the type of BLM-authorized activities for which emissions should be analyzed, including energy development; mining; motorized vehicle use, including OHVs; prescribed fire; and livestock grazing. Another prominent issue raised by comments was to include in the RMP an analysis of fugitive dust emissions from BLM-authorized activities, including OHV use. Several comments requested that the analysis include the effect of wind-transported dust on the snowpack in nearby mountains. One comment called for reducing surface disturbance to reduce fugitive dust, while another suggested that it is impossible to reduce dust with the strong winds that frequent the planning area.

##### **Climate Change**

The majority of comments related to climate change requested that the RMP address the effects of climate change in the planning area and provide management that is responsive and adaptive to these effects. Two comments specifically suggested minimizing vegetation and soil disturbance to preserve carbon sinks and mitigate the effects of climate change. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended quantifying greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by type and source, discussing the link between GHGs and climate change, and analyzing alternatives to mitigate project-level GHG emissions. Another commenter recommended the incorporation of the approach and recommendations contained in the Mojave Desert Ecoregional Assessment 6. One comment noted that under the pressures of climate change, natural resource management must change from a paradigm of maximum sustained yield to a paradigm of risk management, while another comment questioned the existence of climate change and the ability to predict its effects.

### **3.3.2 Cultural Resources**

The BLM received 17 comments related to cultural resources, representing four percent of the total number of comments received. Many comments expressed concerns over the impact from motorized vehicle use on cultural resources due to increased access that can lead to vandalism and other degradation from human presence. Several comments suggested conducting a Class III cultural resources inventory for all travel routes designated including camping and parking or staging areas. Regarding cultural resources inventories, other comments addressed the need for the area of potential effect to expand beyond the disturbance footprint. Two comments asked that the BLM consider designating special management areas to protect cultural resources. Two others specifically requested that the BLM carefully consider the effects of management alternatives on rock art sites. The Utah Professional Archaeological Council shared similar concerns, suggested a quality control process for cultural site data, and stated its desire to be a consulting party in the development of the RMP. The Council also suggested identifying monitoring of cultural sites in the vicinity of new development to determine the severity, and to limit, indirect impacts.

### **3.3.3 Wildlife and Special Status Species**

Of the total of 28 comments related to wildlife and special status species (six percent of comments on planning issues), 20 addressed general wildlife issues and eight addressed the Utah prairie dog or greater sage-grouse. The vast majority of comments related to wildlife supported the preservation of wildlife habitat. These comments called for minimizing disturbance on crucial winter range or during crucial winter time periods, preserving specific areas as habitat for mule deer, identifying and protecting wildlife corridors, and addressing the impacts to wildlife from OHV use. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) identified habitat fragmentation as a specific threat to wildlife, calling for an analysis of each alternative's affect on fragmentation with quantifiable metrics, and urging the BLM to pursue various land management strategies to minimize habitat fragmentation. Two comments addressed resource competition between big game and livestock. Other comments requested that the RMP include a list of bird species and maps of ranges for important mammal species in the planning area.

Comments regarding special status species voiced general support for their protection, suggested reseeded to restore greater sage-grouse habitat, and requested that the RMP include a map with greater sage-grouse range and known leks. One commenter addressed management of the Utah prairie dog, discouraging translocation and recommending the provision of migration corridors and plague control efforts, restricting OHV use and livestock grazing on prairie dog habitat, and the consideration of prairie dog habitat for ACEC designation.

### **3.3.4 Visual Resources**

Visual resources issues received the least number of comments of all planning issue categories, consisting of five comments that represent one percent of all comments. Comments addressed the need to preserve scenic values in the planning area and to perform a visual resources inventory. Two comments suggested assigning protective Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications to designations such as WSAs, WSR segments, ACECs, and undeveloped Special Recreation Management Area (SRMAs). One comment suggested management stipulations for undeveloped SRMAs and ACECs to mitigate impacts to scenic values from OHVs and other human disturbance.

### **3.3.5 Vegetation**

The BLM received 19 comments concerning vegetation related issues, representing four percent of the comments on planning issues. The majority of comments addressed vegetation and rangeland

management including thinning pinyon/juniper woodlands and sagebrush and reseeding thinned or poor producing areas to improve habitat for wildlife and forage for livestock. Several commenters specifically requested reseeding with the most palatable and nutritious grasses and forbes for livestock, regardless of whether they are native or introduced. Many comments related to concerns over the spread of noxious weeds including suggestions for listing all noxious weeds and exotic plants in the planning area and detailing a strategy for control, with one comment suggesting the use of non-chemical treatments. Two comments regarding forests and woodlands requested the allowance of post- and Christmas tree-cutting and stressed the effect of tree overgrowth on water resources, respectively.

### **3.3.6 Watershed Management**

Representing five percent of the comments on planning issues, the BLM received 25 comments concerning watershed management. Roughly half of these comments related to reducing impacts to riparian/wetland areas and water quality, most calling for strict protection for riparian/wetland resources. The EPA provided several comments that included requests for the BLM to design and implement a quantitative system to monitor and prevent surface disturbance in riparian areas, apply a 100-foot protective buffer around riparian/wetland areas, and require two to one ratio of mitigation to disturbance of wetlands during the project operating time. Two comments asked the BLM to conduct an inventory of all riparian/wetland resources in the planning area. Regarding water quality, comments addressed the need for establishing baselines and modeling pollutants, especially those that may affect human consumption sources, and other water quality parameters such as E. coli, nutrient concentrations, and turbidity. The remaining comments on watershed management voiced support for preserving groundwater and asked for increasing the improvement of water resources and springs to better serve wildlife and livestock. One comment asked the BLM to reseed areas that have potential for erosion, and the EPA requested that the RMP include an accurate description of surface water and groundwater resources, with maps to identify watersheds affected by the various alternatives.

### **3.3.7 Wild Horses**

The BLM received 40,060 form letters concerning wild horse management within the planning area. Each of these letters contained 11 comments including support for private-public partnerships for managing wild horses and the creation of wild horse preserves; minimizing disruptions, such as vehicular travel, and other activities that may be detrimental to wild horses within Herd Management Areas (HMAs); increasing Appropriate Management Levels to provide for genetic viability and reinstating zeroed-out HMAs; designating all HMAs to be managed principally for wild horses; replacing mass roundups with a more cost-effective approach to management such as fertility control, if needed; allocating resources equitably to wild horses without a preference for livestock; and restoring and improving habitat in HMAs to benefit wild horses.

The BLM received 16 other written submissions regarding wild horses that were not form letters. These submissions contained 18 total comments, for a total of 29 comments for the wild horses category (combined with the comments in the form letter). Comments suggested revising HMA boundaries to increase their connectivity and acreage and reducing the number of wild horses in HMAs to a level appropriate to the available forage. Several comments suggested significantly reducing the number of wild horses—specifically removing them from certain permitted grazing areas—to reduce their impact on range management objectives.

### 3.3.8 Lands and Realty

Of the 13 comments received regarding lands and realty, accounting for three percent of the total comments received, seven comments related to land tenure and six comments related to utility corridors. The majority of comments regarding land tenure called for increased protection, new acquisitions, and retention of ACECs. A few comments also wanted lands with special species habitats, wilderness, and high conservation value to be purchased or exchanged for other lands with less conservation value. Two comments raised the issue of making more BLM-administered lands available to facilitate the acquisition of state trust lands and ensuring that disposed lands were of equivalent value to the lands being acquired. One comment opposed the disposal of lands valued by local communities for their open space, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Conversely, another comment proposed that some parcels of land could be more valuable if sold to private citizens. The majority of comments regarding utility corridors called for the ability to perform maintenance, upgrades and expansion without needing to amend the RMP. Other comments urged the BLM to consider the adverse effects of consolidating utilities into a common corridor and suggested analyzing other congested corridors to help aid in the development of new utility corridors.

### 3.3.9 Livestock Grazing

The BLM received 14 comments related to livestock grazing, representing three percent of the comments on planning issues. Most comments supported continued grazing on BLM-administered lands, including support of keeping permittees involved with the grazing permit renewal process and designating suitable acreage to maintain the present level of animal unit months (AUMs). Other comments sought to expand permitted grazing and to allow more grazing of cheatgrass to control its spread and reduce fire risk, more temporal flexibility for grazing to improve ecosystem health, and more range improvement projects to improve livestock distribution. Three comments called for a considered, scientific evaluation of the impacts of livestock grazing on the local ecosystem including the need for site-specific environmental analyses prior to livestock authorization. One comment suggested eliminating grazing from certain ACECs with sensitive resources.

### 3.3.10 Minerals and Energy Management

The BLM received 26 comments related to minerals and energy management, representing six percent of the total number of comments received. Over half of these comments related to renewable energy, with fewer addressing mining and oil and gas leasing. Most comments voiced support for reducing the impacts from mining and minerals development activities to other resources, including the use of stipulations and best management practices and removing mineral leasing from certain areas including lands of high ecological, cultural, or wilderness value, as well as areas with low oil and gas potential. Some comments voiced support for oil and gas development, with one suggesting that the BLM consider no surface occupancy leasing to make more lands available and another requesting that the RMP include a comprehensive analysis of the benefits of oil and gas leasing. Another comment voiced support for oil and gas leasing, but only if it does not compromise other resource values and another recognized the immediate economic benefits of mining but cautioned against its long-term effects to tourism and recreation.

Most comments related to renewable energy suggested identifying zones where renewable energy development would be most suitable and would have the least impact on other resource values such as livestock, wilderness, ACECs, and wildlife. Concern over the effects on greater sage-grouse composed many of the wildlife comments, with one comment suggesting that wind-energy development be excluded within 5 miles of leks. Two comments requested that the BLM confine renewable energy

development to previously disturbed areas or near existing transmission lines and another suggested requiring on- and off-site mitigation. One organization specifically voiced its support of the Escalante Valley and Milford Flats South Solar Energy Study Areas and its opposition to solar development in the Wah Wah Valley. Another commenter asked that the RMP address biomass and the future of biomass on BLM land in Utah.

### **3.3.11 Recreation Demand and Uses**

The BLM received 76 comments related to recreation demand and uses, representing 16 percent of the total number of comments received on planning issues. The primary issue raised was the user conflict between motorized and non-motorized recreation. The majority of comments stressed the need to increase motorized recreational opportunities to meet demand, including the creation of more SRMAs for off-road motorized travel, providing for OHV competitive recreation events, providing more opportunities for point-to-point motorized travel, and developing youth loops. Conversely, many comments requested limiting OHV use in favor of preserving more primitive recreational experiences. Several comments raised the issue of resource damage caused by off-road motorized use, with three comments requesting greater enforcement to ensure compliance with motorized use restrictions and other comments in favor of limiting OHV group sizes and adopting protective criteria for issuing Special Recreation Permits (SRPs). Some voiced support for minimizing user conflicts, with one commenter suggesting a soundscape analysis to help guide the formulation of intended user experiences. Other comments requested more mountain bike trails. Some commenters requested more recreational opportunities for local residents and fewer restrictions on outdoor recreation, in general.

### **3.3.12 Transportation and Access**

The BLM received 62 comments related to transportation and access, representing the third largest planning issue category (13 percent of comments). Of these 62 comments, approximately two-thirds were related to OHV travel routes, with the remainder addressing other transportation and access issues including trails. One of the primary issues expressed by respondents was related to use designations on routes and trails, specifically which routes should be motorized versus nonmotorized, and which should be closed. Most of these comments called for limiting, restricting, or prohibiting OHV use to protect other resource values, particularly in desert mountain ranges and the Swett Hills area. A few comments voiced concerns over the creation of new travel routes and their potential to harm other resources, with one comment requesting that the BLM determine if allowing cross-country motorized travel violates FLPMA's unnecessary and undue degradation standard. Conversely, many comments supported creating more travel routes for OHVs and designating more routes for OHV use. Several comments requested an accurate inventory of all existing routes to aid in transportation planning for the RMP, with one comment suggesting coordination with local OHV associations. Another comment requested that the BLM demonstrate a nexus between resource damage and motorized travel prior to closing any route.

The Old Spanish Trail Association requested that a continuous hiking trail easement be established in the Old Spanish National Historic Trail corridor and that it be designated as a "high potential route segment under the National Trails System Act. The association also requested that a management plan be established for the trail and that the historic qualities of the view shed be protected. Most of the other comments related to transportation and access voiced general support of providing access to the public, with several comments supportive of public access but cautionary of potential resource damage. Two comments urged the BLM to set travel management designations for special management areas (e.g., ACECs and SRMAs) in the RMP. Two comments urged the BLM to use travel designations to minimize

user-conflict and two others requested that highways and other major or county roads be included when analyzing the current transportation network.

### **3.3.13 Special Designations and Wilderness**

Seventy-six comments were received in this issue category, which is 16 percent of the total number of planning issues, with about half related to wilderness and half addressing other special management areas such as ACECs and WSRs. Of the comments related to wilderness, approximately half voiced opposition to managing areas to preserve their wilderness characteristics, while half voiced support. Issues raised by comments in opposition included concerns that managing lands for wilderness characteristics precludes multiple uses and access rights to inholdings, including state trust and private lands. Comments also voiced opposition to managing the Granite Peak and Wah Wah Mountains areas for wilderness values. Two comments requested strict criteria for managing areas as wilderness, with one requesting that only roadless areas meet the standards. Comments that voiced support for wilderness requested that the BLM preserve wilderness characteristics in all the lands included in the Red Rock Wilderness Act; all inventoried lands found to have wilderness characteristics; and, specifically, the Steamboat Mountain, San Francisco Mountains, Wah Wah Mountains, and Mountain Home Range areas. One comment requested that the RMP/EIS include a map with all lands with wilderness characteristics, while the SUWA submitted a map identifying areas with wilderness characteristics to aid in the inventory process.

Comments regarding other Special Designations paralleled the issues raised regarding wilderness areas. Roughly half the comments supported designating ACECs and WSRs to protect important natural resources, critical habitats, and provide for primitive recreation opportunities, while half voiced concerns over precluding other resource uses in these areas. The SUWA recommended the Parowan Gap, Mineral Mountains, and Wah Wah Mountains for ACEC designation along with suggesting management prescriptions for certain areas. Another comment suggested that areas with high concentrations of archeological sites should have ACEC designation. Several comments supported nominating riparian areas, including Kanarra and Spring Creeks, as eligible segments under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Other comments voiced general opposition to nominating segments, with one specifically requesting that ephemeral streams not be considered.

### **3.3.14 Social and Economic Conditions**

Social and economic issues, including four comments regarding public safety, encompassed 17 comments received by the BLM, representing four percent of the comment on planning issues. Most comments noted the natural beauty of the planning area and voiced support for destination tourism to support the local economy, with some comments specifically voicing concern over the effects of coal mining and coal-fired power to the tourism industry. Conversely, a few comments supported development of renewable energy and mineral resources with a comprehensive analysis to determine the economical value of these industries. On a related issue, the EPA questioned the ability of local communities to provide public services and amenities if the planning area is opened for energy development while three comments supported the incorporation of local government policies and priorities into the planning process. Three comments requested quantifiable data on the economic effects of land management decisions, such as wilderness designations, on state trust lands. Two comments requested a non-market valuation of wildlands and open space as well as the costs associated with motorized recreation. Comments on public safety included support for greater enforcement of BLM management designations and preventing illegal dumping on BLM-administered lands. One comment refuted the notion that there are hazardous areas in Beaver or Iron counties.

### 3.3.15 Cumulative Effects

The BLM received a total of 11 comments regarding the cumulative effects of BLM management, representing two percent of the comments on planning issues. The majority of these comments addressed the cumulative effect of closing or limiting OHV recreation and access on public lands. Many comments urged the BLM to not create any net loss in OHV recreational opportunities. Two comments requested that the RMP analyze the cumulative effects, in a regional context, of oil and gas development. One comment asked that the cumulative effects of the RMP be considered in the scope of climate change. The EPA provided general recommendations to analyze cumulative effects on cultural, recreational, and resource characteristics; specifically air, water, and endangered or sensitive species.

### 3.3.16 Alternatives Development

The BLM received seven comments related to alternatives development, representing one percent of the comments on planning issues. The majority of comments addressed the need for an appropriate range of alternatives. One comment expressed the desire for an alternative that precludes OHV routes in lands with wilderness characteristics or proposed for wilderness designations, sensitive riparian areas, and critical wildlife habitat. The EPA emphasized the incorporation of specific mitigation measures, including the entity responsible, into the alternatives; the importance of developing an environmental baseline as opposed to the No Action alternative; and in the case of air quality, modeled demonstration of effective mitigation measures.

## 3.4 Travel Management Plan

The BLM will be developing a Travel Management Plan during the RMP/EIS process; however, it will not be completed until several years after the RMP is finalized. All route information obtained from the public during the scoping meetings will be used for the formulation of this plan. Information obtained included routes missing on the BLM's current travel and transportation map present at the scoping meetings, as well as suggested route designations. The public submitted this information via completion of Travel Management Comment Cards ( Appendix B) and by marking existing or missing routes on a large route network map of the CCFO planning area.

## 3.5 Anticipated Decisions

This scoping report does not make any decisions, nor does it change current management direction set forth in the 1983 MFP or 1986 RMP. It merely summarizes those issues identified during the scoping period for the RMP/EIS. Issues identified in the scoping report, as well as subsequently identified issues, will be used by the BLM to help formulate a reasonable range of alternatives during the next phase (i.e., alternative formulation) of the RMP/EIS process. Each identified alternative (including continuation of existing management) will represent a complete and reasonable plan for managing BLM-administered lands in the planning area. The BLM's evaluation of identified alternatives will be documented in the EIS associated with the new RMP.

FLPMA requires the BLM to plan for and manage public lands administered by the Secretary of the Interior, specifically through the BLM. The planning area is currently being managed in accordance with decisions made in the 1983 MFP and 1986 RMP. Future decisions to be made for the planning area will occur at two levels: (1) the RMP level, and (2) the implementation level. In general, only RMP-level

decisions will be made as part of the RMP/EIS process. Implementation level decisions will be consistent with the broad resource management planning framework established in the new RMP.

### **3.6 Issues Raised that Will Not Be Addressed in the RMP/EIS**

Most of the comments received were related to planning issues that will be addressed in the RMP/EIS (as discussed in preceding sections); however, a number of comments presented issues and concerns that will not be addressed in the RMP/EIS. Comments of this type include administrative or policy issues; implementation issues; issues outside the scope of the RMP; or issues that have already been addressed through other BLM activities.

Administrative and policy issues involved requests for changes to, or continuation of, the administration of the BLM or state or national BLM policies and regulations. Changes to BLM policy occur at the national level. Examples of requests to change policy included comments that the BLM implement management policies used by other agencies or change the planning or public involvement process. Comments on continuation of policy included requests that the BLM comply with laws such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, NEPA or FLPMA. Other comments requested that a reasonable range of alternatives be developed or that an analysis of cumulative effects be conducted in the RMP/EIS. As stated in the planning criteria published in the September 10, 2010 NOI (Appendix A), the BLM will follow all applicable laws, regulations, and policies for the conduct of the RMP/EIS.

Addressing implementation issues requires on-site actions that follow RMP decisions. Most comments on implementation issues were regarding the formulation of a travel management plan. Other comments included requests to prepare a cultural resource management plan. The BLM will prepare implementation plans following the completion of the RMP/EIS.

Issues outside the scope of the planning process included requests for the BLM to take actions outside of the agency's jurisdiction. These types of comments included requests to set standards for air quality. The BLM is not authorized to take these actions.

### **3.7 Valid Existing Management to be Carried Forward**

The BLM is reviewing the condition of the existing environment and the management situation to identify which management decisions should be carried forward or modified and where there are opportunities for change. This information will be summarized in the Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation and posted on the project website in the near future.

## 4.0 DRAFT PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria are based on laws and regulations, guidance provided by the BLM Utah State Director, results of consultation and coordination with the public, input from other agencies and governmental entities, Native American tribes, analysis of information pertinent to the planning area, public input, and professional judgment.

Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that are developed to guide and direct the RMP/EIS process. The planning criteria serve to: ensure the planning effort is consistent with and incorporates legal requirements; provide for management of all resource uses in the planning area; focus on the issues; identify the scope and parameters of the planning effort; inform the public of what to expect from the planning effort; and help ensure the RMP/EIS process is accomplished efficiently.

The BLM's preliminary planning criteria were published in the NOI and are available in Appendix A or on the CCFO website at [http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar\\_city.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar_city.html).

## 5.0 DATA SUMMARY/DATA GAPS

The development of the RMP/EIS will use both updated existing and new data. Multiple commenters suggested that the BLM conduct baseline studies of the resources in the planning process, including: air quality, water quality and riparian resources, cultural and archeological resources, visual resources, wilderness and wilderness characteristics, and travel routes. The BLM is currently collecting new baseline data, or updating existing data, where such information is needed to develop alternatives or complete the analysis of resource impacts. This new resource data is being generated and digitized into GIS themes.

GIS data will be the building blocks used to quantify resources and display information during the planning process. GIS data themes are at various stages of completeness, ranging from no data collected to themes that are completely digitized and have all supporting metadata. Some of this information needs to be compiled and put into appropriate formats for use in the planning process for the RMP/EIS. Both new and existing data will meet Federal Geographic Data Committee standards, as required by Executive Order 12906, as well as other applicable BLM standards and will become part the publicly available administrative record for the planning process.

The BLM conducted socioeconomic workshops, which were open to the public, as part of their information gathering process. The BLM held the workshops on February 7-8, 2011. Additional information regarding the workshops is available on the project website.

## 6.0 SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Following the completion of the scoping process, the BLM will develop its goals, objectives, and alternatives in partnership with cooperating agencies. Alternatives will be responsive to the planning issues identified in this report (as well as any others raised following scoping, but before publication of the Draft RMP/EIS) and will achieve the planning process goals and objectives. Following the development of the alternatives, the BLM will perform an analysis of all the alternatives and will select its preferred alternative. The preferred alternative in an RMP/EIS is often composed of management options from the other alternatives, combined in a way that the BLM believes will provide the most beneficial combination of different land uses and resource values.

The next designated public comment period starts with the publication of the Draft RMP/EIS. The draft document will be distributed to individuals, agencies, and organizations on the general mailing list, as well as all cooperating agencies. The Draft RMP/EIS will also be available on the project website: [http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar\\_city.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar_city.html). The availability of the Draft RMP/EIS will be announced in a Notice of Availability (NOA) published in the *Federal Register*. A 90-day public comment period will begin following publication of the NOA. Publication of the Draft RMP/EIS is anticipated in May 2013.

Following the Draft RMP/EIS public comment period, all public comments the BLM receives will be considered and revisions will be made if warranted. After any changes are made, the publication of a Proposed RMP and Final EIS will be announced in the *Federal Register*. A 30-day public protest period will begin following publication. The Governor of Utah will review the document during the public protest period to determine if the RMP is consistent with state and local level plans and policies. If significant substantive alterations are made as a result of protests, the BLM will publish a *Federal Register* notice requesting additional comments.

The BLM will address any public protests or inconsistencies identified by the Governor and will publish a ROD and Approved RMP. A *Federal Register* notice will be published to announce the ROD and Approved RMP.

The BLM is committed to keeping the public informed concerning the RMP/EIS. All of the materials and documents related to this RMP/EIS will be made available on the project website. Dates for the official public comment and protest periods, along with other relevant project dates, will also appear on this website. For additional information on the planning process, to be added or removed from the mailing list, or to submit a comment on the RMP/EIS, please contact the RMP Project Manager, Gina Ginouves at 176 East DL Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84721. Members of the public can also email a request to the project email address: [utccrmp@blm.gov](mailto:utccrmp@blm.gov).