

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

Green River District

Price Field Office
125 South 600 West
Price, UT 84501

DECISION RECORD

for San Rafael Swell Desert Bighorn Sheep Capture

DOI-BLM-UT-G020-2026-0010-EA

January 6, 2026

I. DECISION

It is my decision to authorize the request submitted by Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) to use helicopters and GPS tracking collars in designated Wilderness Areas (see Attachment 1). Due to significant overlap of desert bighorn sheep habitat with designated wilderness in the San Rafael North and South management units, the monitoring enabled by the helicopters and GPS trackers cannot feasibly be conducted by other means without compromising sheep health or the utility of data collected. These activities support wildlife conservation efforts and habitat and herd management decisions. The Proposed Action and design features ensure that impacts to sheep, public health and safety, wilderness, and other resources are of low magnitude, temporary in nature, and geographically confined to the capture areas. The capture will be executed as described in the UDWR's capture plan which is summarized in the EA's Proposed Action (Section 2.1 of DOI-BLM-UT-G020-2026-0010-EA), which follows industry best practices for human and sheep safety.

The following design features will apply (as listed in 2.1.1):

- UDWR will only use previously disturbed sites for staging, parking, fuel storage, and processing.
- Other than helicopter landings as previously described, UDWR will not use off-road motorized travel
- UDWR's contractor will land aircraft on designated routes, rock outcroppings, and old roads when feasible to minimize ground disturbance
- UDWR will limit helicopter pursuit to **≤5 minutes** per animal.
- UDWR will discontinue or modify operations if repeated elevated animal body temperatures are observed in the same capture area.
- UDWR will release sheep at the capture site to keep them in familiar and safe habitat
- UDWR will limit all activities to daylight hours.
- UDWR's contractor will implement safety briefings, flight-following, and emergency procedures.
- UDWR will prohibit public access to active staging zones for safety.
- UDWR will refrain from net gunning if recreationists are in the vicinity.

A. Monitoring

1. During the capture, UDWR public affairs, law enforcement, and veterinary staff will be present to facilitate public and sheep safety

2. During the capture, UDWR will monitor sheep's temperatures and adjust plans accordingly if they are showing signs of stress (elevated body temperature). Sick sheep may be flown to the staging area for assessment by the veterinarian.
3. After the capture, UDWR will continue monitoring sheep through overflights and other means.
4. BLM staff may visit staging areas during the capture to ensure continued interagency communication
5. BLM staff may monitor popular public recreation sites when captures are occurring in that area to answer questions from visitors who observe capture activities from a distance

II. COMPLIANCE AND CONFORMANCE

The activities authorized conform to the Price Field Office's Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (BLM 2008). They are consistent with WL-2, WL-5, and WL-13, which direct the BLM to cooperate with UDWR and other parties on wildlife research and support long-term conservation actions (Section 1.5 of the EA).

Activities are also consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 1131) Section 4(c) because the use of aircraft and scientific installations for desert bighorn sheep conservation research are necessary to meet the minimum requirements of the affected wilderness areas as described in Appendix A of the EA.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This project was posted to ePlanning on December 16, 2025. No comments were received prior to signature.

IV. RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The selected alternative will meet the need to facilitate the health of the San Rafael Swell's sizable bighorn sheep herds, which are important to both the desert ecosystem and to wilderness character and have both historically and recently been compromised by disease and other anthropogenic population stressors.

Through the Minimum Requirements Analysis Framework (Appendix A), the BLM has determined that the purpose and need cannot be met through other approaches as the herds predominantly live in wilderness and alternate methodologies are either not successful or detrimental to sheep health. The proposal submitted by UDWR follows research-backed methodologies and best practices for sheep and human safety, ensuring that scientific benefits will be optimized and herd health will not be compromised.

I carefully considered and evaluated these factors, UDWR's capture plan, the analysis contained in DOI-UT-G020-2026-0010-EA, and the conclusions in the attached Finding of No Significant Impact. Because this action will not have any significant impacts, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

V. RIGHT OF PROTEST AND/OR APPEAL:

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), Office of Hearings and Appeals, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. The notice of appeal

must be filed no later than 30 days after the date of receiving notice of this decision. Any notice of appeal must be filed with the IBLA and must include a copy of the decision being appealed, a statement of standing, and a statement of timeliness.

If you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must show sufficient justification based on the following criteria at 43 CFR 4.405(b).

The appellant must serve a copy of the notice of appeal and any accompanying documents on the office of the officer who made the decision, each person or entity named in the decision, and the appropriate Office of the Solicitor at the time of filing with IBLA (see 43 CFR 4.403(b); 4.407(b)). Parties must serve the Office of the Solicitor at the address shown on Form 1842-1. Service on a party known to be represented by an attorney or other designated representative must be made on the representative. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice of appeal, it must be filed within 30 days after the record on appeal is filed with the IBLA. Failure to file a statement of reasons within the time required will subject the challenged decision to summary affirmance (see 43 CFR 4.412(a)).

VI. APPROVAL

Elijah Waters, District Manager

Date

ATTACHMENTS:

1 Map of Project Area

2 Appeals Form 1842-1



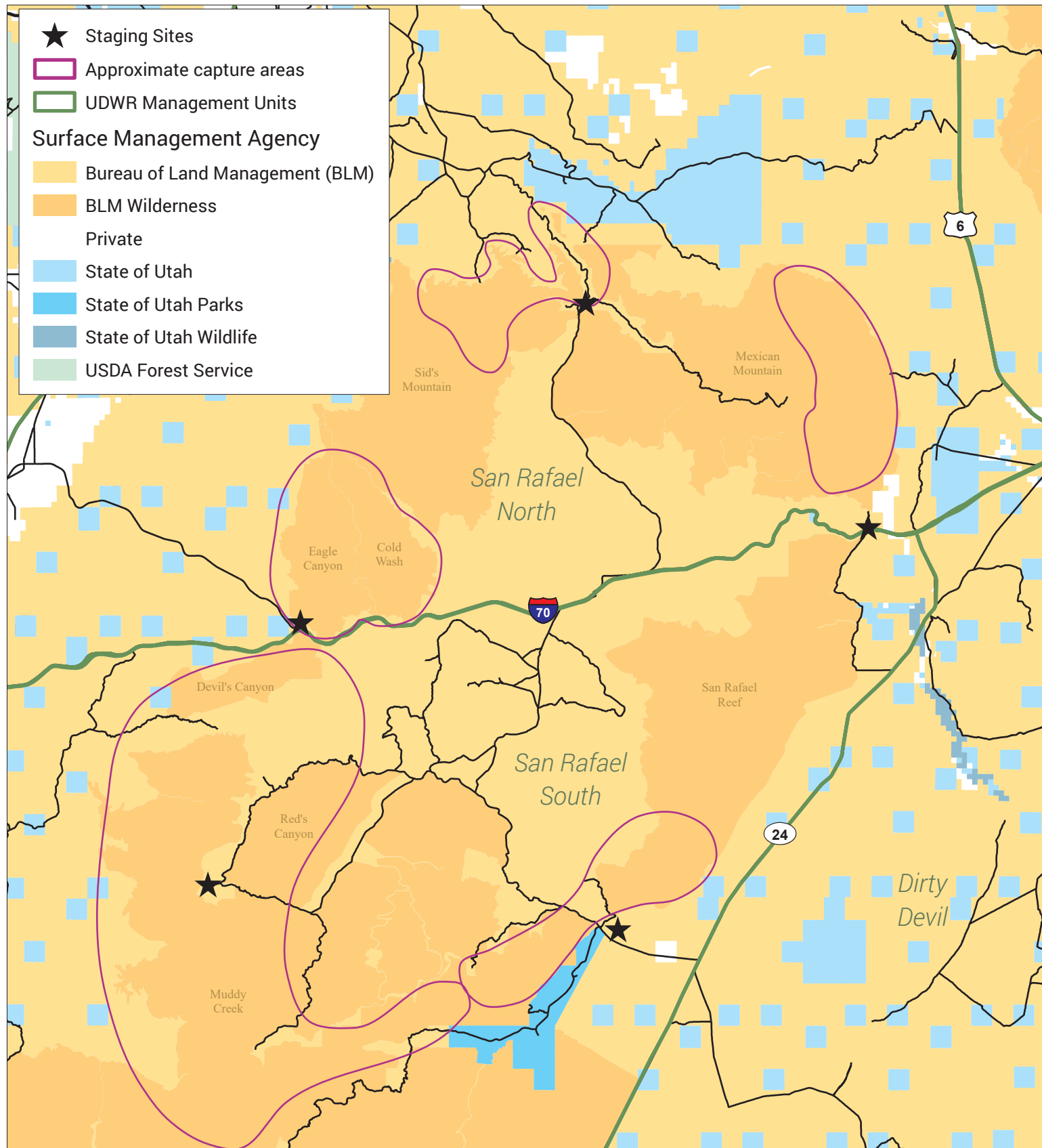
Bighorn Sheep Capture Overview

Bureau of Land Management, Utah
Price Field Office
125 South 600 West
Price, UT 84501



Locations of live capture staging areas and general zones provided by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

12/3/2025



0 10 20 Miles

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

INFORMATION ON APPEALING TO THE INTERIOR BOARD OF LAND APPEALS

IF YOU APPEAL, THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THEM MAY SUBJECT THE APPEAL TO DISMISSAL OR SUMMARY AFFIRMANCE (see 43 CFR 4.412(a)).

1. WHAT TO FILE	<p><i>Notice of Appeal:</i> You must file a notice of appeal if you wish to appeal a decision.</p> <p><i>Decision Being Appealed:</i> You must include a copy of the decision from which you are appealing.</p> <p><i>Statement of Standing:</i> You must show that you are a party to the case who is adversely affected by the decision.</p> <p><i>Statement of Timeliness:</i> You must include a statement and any corroborating documentation that provides the date when you received notice of the decision.</p> <p><i>Petition for a Stay:</i> Except where program-specific regulations place this decision in full force and effect or provide for an automatic stay, the decision becomes effective upon the expiration of the time allowed for filing an appeal unless a petition for a stay is timely filed together with the Notice of Appeal. You must show that you meet the criteria for a stay. (43 CFR 4.405(b))</p> <p>IMPORTANT: After July 21, 2025, appellants who are represented by an attorney must use IBLA's electronic filing system, Bison File and Serve. Appellants who are not represented by an attorney may file an appeal by Bison File and Serve, hand delivery, mail, or commercial carrier. To file your appeal you must include the Notice of Appeal, Statement of Standing, Statement of Timeliness, and a Petition for a stay, if applicable. Each document must be separately filed.</p>
2. WHEN TO FILE	<p>You must file a Notice of Appeal no later than 30 days after the date of receiving notice of the decision.</p> <p>IMPORTANT: This appeal timeframe cannot be extended.</p>
3. WHERE TO FILE	<p>The documents listed in section 1 above must be filed with Interior Board of Land Appeals (the Board). (43 CFR 4.403(b)(1))</p> <p><i>Electronic Filing:</i> Attorneys representing a person or entity and any Federal, State, or local agency, must file electronically; non-attorneys may file electronically and are strongly encouraged to do so. A link to the electronic filing system known as Bison File and Serve is located on the Board's website. Refer to the OHA Standing Orders on Electronic Transmission found</p>

7. THE BOARD'S WEBSITE

The Board's website is located at <https://www.doi.gov/oha/about-interior-board-land-appeals>.

43 CFR SUBPART 1821-GENERAL INFORMATION

Sec. 1821.10 Where are BLM offices located? (a) In addition to the Headquarters Office in Washington, D.C. and seven national level support and service centers, BLM operates 12 State Offices each having several subsidiary offices called Field Offices. The addresses of the State Offices can be found in the most recent edition of 43 CFR 1821.10. The State Office geographical areas of jurisdiction are as follows. BLM is allowing electronic service to each of the following states at the included email address:

STATE OFFICES AND AREAS OF JURISDICTION:

Alaska State Office ----- Alaska; BLM_AK_APPEALS@BLM.GOV
Arizona State Office ----- Arizona; BLM_AZ-APPEALS_OHA@BLM.GOV
California State Office ----- California; BLM_CA_Web_SO@BLM.GOV
Colorado State Office ----- Colorado; BLM_CO_APPEALS@BLM.GOV
Eastern States Office ----- Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, and all States east of the Mississippi River; BLM_ES_APPEALS@BLM.GOV
Idaho State Office ----- Idaho; BLM_ID_LITSPEC@BLM.GOV
Montana State Office ----- Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota; BLM_MT_OHA@BLM.GOV
Nevada State Office ----- Nevada; BLM_NV_APPEALS@BLM.GOV
New Mexico State Office ----- New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas; BLM_NM_LITIGATION@BLM.GOV
Oregon State Office ----- Oregon and Washington; BLM_OR_APPEALS@BLM.GOV
Utah State Office ----- Utah; BLM_UT_APPEALS@BLM.GOV
Wyoming State Office ----- Wyoming and Nebraska; BLM_WY_WY910_LITIGATION@BLM.GOV

(b) A list of the names, addresses, and geographical areas of jurisdiction of all Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management can be obtained at the above addresses or any office of the Bureau of Land Management