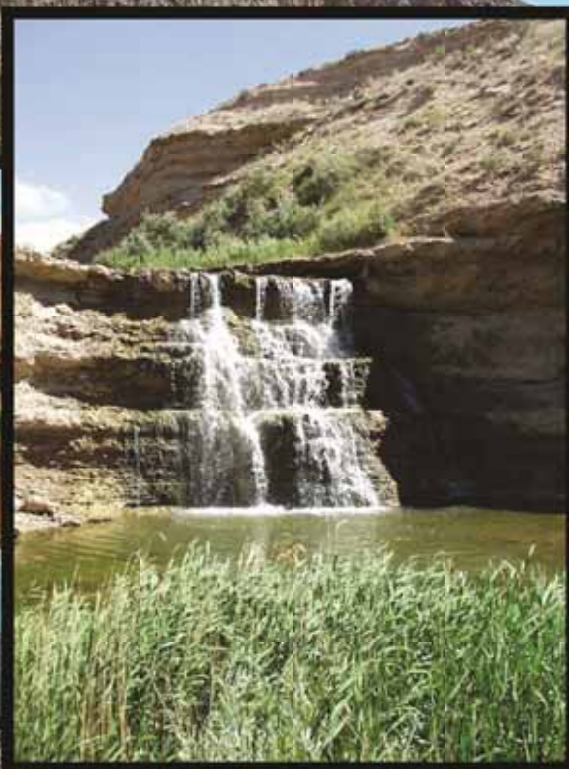


October 2011

# Little Snake

## RECORD OF DECISION and APPROVED Resource Management Plan



Colorado State Office - Little Snake Field Office



Public Lands USA: Use, Share, Appreciate

# **BLM Mission**

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**RECORD OF DECISION**  
and  
**APPROVED**  
**Resource Management Plan**

for  
Public Lands Administered  
by the

**Bureau of Land Management**  
**Little Snake Field Office**  
**Craig, Colorado**

Prepared by

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Northwest Colorado District**  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
**Little Snake Field Office**

**October 2011**

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# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Colorado State Office  
2850 Youngfield Street  
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093  
[www.blm.gov/co](http://www.blm.gov/co)



In Reply Refer To:  
1610 (CON0-1000)

Dear Reader:

The Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (Approved Plan) for The Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado (LSFO), is attached. This Approved Plan is the result of extensive public and agency input. The purpose for developing this land use plan is to ensure that public lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are managed in accordance with all applicable laws, policies, and guidelines; and incorporates the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

The ROD and Approved Plan provide guidance for the management of approximately 1.3 million surface acres and an additional 1.1 million acres of mineral estate of BLM-administered lands, located in the northwest corner of Colorado including Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt Counties.

The *Federal Land Policy Management Act* (FLPMA) requires the development, maintenance, and, as appropriate, the revision of land use plans for public lands. The *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major Federal actions that could significantly affect the environment. In fulfillment of these requirements, a Draft Resource Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DRMP/DEIS) incorporating analysis and input provided by the public; local, State, and other Federal agencies and organizations; Native American tribes; Cooperating Agencies, and BLM personnel was published in January of 2007. After additional public input, analysis, and review, a Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) was published in August, 2010.

Throughout the analysis, the focus was on six key planning issues: Energy and Minerals; Special Management Areas; Transportation and Travel Management; Wildlife; Socioeconomic Values, and Lands and Realty. The Approved Plan provides an optimal balance between the protection of key resources and habitats, recreation opportunities, and balanced multiple uses.

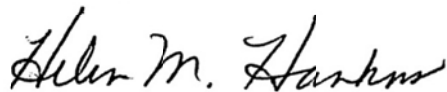
The ROD and Approved Plan can be obtained at <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/lsfo.html>. Printed or CD copies may be obtained at: 455 Emerson Street, Craig, Colorado 81625, or requested by emailing: [lsfoweb@blm.gov](mailto:lsfoweb@blm.gov).

We appreciate the extensive public involvement and the involvement of groups, organizations, cooperating agencies; the Northwest Colorado Stewardship (NWCOS); local, State, and other

Federal agencies; and Native American tribal representatives who contributed to the completion of the Resource Management Plan.

We encourage your continued involvement as we implement and monitor the Approved Plan, and in the management of your public lands in Northwest Colorado.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Helen M. Hankins".

Helen M. Hankins  
State Director

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# Little Snake Field Office Record of Decision

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Little Snake Field Office (LSFO) in Craig, Colorado. These documents are the culmination of a multi-year planning effort to revise the 1989 Little Snake RMP for public lands managed by the LSFO, which includes portions of Moffat, Routt, and Rio Blanco Counties in northwest Colorado (Map 1 and Map 2). This ROD documents the approval of the attached Little Snake RMP, which provides overall direction for management of all resources on BLM-administered land in the LSFO RMP Planning Area.

The management of public lands and federal mineral estate administered by BLM within the LSFO boundaries (from this point forward referred to as the Little Snake RMP Planning Area [RMPPA]) is the subject of this document. Planning decisions in this document do not apply to county- or privately-owned lands or other federal lands not managed by BLM. Further, lands owned by the State of Colorado and managed by the State Board of Land Commissioners or other State agencies are not covered by this plan. To integrate the special expertise and jurisdiction by law of these and other agencies, BLM invited 12 federal, State, county, and municipal government organizations to be cooperating agencies for this process. Moffat County, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Juniper Water Conservancy District, and the City of Steamboat Springs accepted and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BLM. These organizations were incorporated into the planning process as their jurisdiction and expertise warranted, resulting in their direct contribution to and outcome of the planning effort and the Approved RMP.

## 2. DECISION

The decision is hereby made to approve the attached RMP for the Little Snake Field Office. The Approved RMP was prepared under the authority and regulations implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1600), and includes broad land use plan decisions that provide overall direction for management of resources and resource uses within the LSFO RMPPA. Land use plan decisions are expressed as goals and objectives (desired outcomes), allowable uses, and management actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes. Although land use plan decisions identified in the Approved RMP are final and effective upon signing of this ROD, some implementation level decisions to implement the ROD may require additional steps before on the ground activities can begin. The Approved RMP does not include new implementation level decisions.

An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared for this RMP in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The Approved RMP is nearly identical to the Proposed RMP set forth in the Little Snake Proposed RMP/Final EIS, published August 2010. During preparation of the Approved RMP, some changes were made to the Proposed RMP to correct errors, clarify decisions, and address issues raised during the protest period. The major changes made to the Proposed RMP and hereby adopted by this ROD and Approved RMP are detailed in the following list:

- Specific acreage associated with vegetation treatments was removed. The language that remains is similar to that from Alternative C in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, but the conceptual approach for treating vegetation is more similar to that contained in Alternative A, where vegetation treatments would be conducted on a case-by-case basis. This change was made to reflect the fact

that BLM's ability to implement vegetation treatments is constrained by budget and available staff. Requiring specific acreage of treatment per year does not take this into account. However, removing the acreage figures does not mean BLM no longer intends to conduct vegetation treatments, but rather that specific acreage of treatment cannot be guaranteed within the lifespan of the RMP.

- The size of the no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation associated with raptors (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], buteos, and owls, and not including special status species raptors) was increased from a radius of 0.125 miles from nest sites to 0.25 miles from nest sites. The increased size was considered and analyzed in Alternative D in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. BLM determined that the increased size was necessary to protect the raptor species, as well as to be consistent with state-wide stipulations throughout Colorado.
- An NSO stipulation was added to mapped Canada Lynx habitat (approximately 430 acres). BLM determined that the NSO was necessary to protect Lynx habitat, as well as to be consistent with state-wide stipulations throughout Colorado. This action was derived from Alternative A (the No Action Alternative) for Canada Lynx which states: There would be NSO stipulations on habitat areas containing special status species, such as federally listed, proposed, and candidate species.
- The wildland fire management introduction and management actions were updated to more closely reflect the updated language and concepts in the national wildland fire policies, as well as to allow for more flexibility when determining the appropriate management response for wildland fires on a fire-by-fire basis. The revised approach is consistent with the approach identified in Alternative A from the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The change was made to be more consistent with wildland fire policy and to allow greater flexibility in determining management of each wildland fire event while placing emphasis on protecting life and property.
- Transportation planning described in the Final EIS Alternative C (Preferred Alternative) for the Sand Wash Open off-highway vehicle (OHV) area was determined to be an undertaking under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as it has the potential to adversely affect historic properties. Guidance for the mitigation of historic properties within the Sand Wash Open OHV area was developed through the development of a Programmatic Agreement. The Programmatic Agreement was developed concurrently with the planning process for the RMP revision but separate from the NEPA process associated with the development of the Draft EIS, Final EIS, and the ROD. The Programmatic Agreement was developed through consultations involving BLM, the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, Indian Tribes (Ute Indian Tribe [Uintah & Ouray Reservation], Shoshone Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe), Moffat County, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.
- Limestone Ridge, Lookout Mountain, White-Tailed Prairie Dog, and Natural System areas were included in the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) section of Alternative C in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, although they afforded no ACEC designation in Alternative C. These sections and the protections associated with them have been moved to the Special Status Species section of the Approved RMP.
- Little Yampa Canyon/Juniper Mountain was removed from the Lands with Wilderness Character section of the Approved RMP. Both of these areas were not intended to be managed for wilderness character in Alternative C of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, and management decisions for these areas are in the Special Recreation Management Area section of the Approved RMP.
- The Fly Creek backcountry area was changed to a special recreation management area (SRMA) in the Approved RMP. The backcountry area distinction is not a formal designation identified in BLM's planning handbook; therefore it was determined that since Alternative D from the Proposed RMP/Final EIS considered a Fly Creek SRMA, this management direction would be carried into the Approved RMP.
- Language was added to the Transportation and Access and Travel Management section to define parking adjacent to roads and the designation of spur roads. BLM determined that the absence of

this language could result in safety issues if motorized vehicles would not be allowed to pull off of designated or existing routes, thereby obstructing access and creating safety issues for public land users. The addition of the language in the Approved RMP clarifies the intent of BLM management to allow parked vehicles along designated or existing routes, as designated in the Approved RMP.

- The LSFO RMP revision was released to the public as a Proposed RMP/Final EIS prior to the date Washington Office (WO) Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2010-0117 for leasing reform was issued. Since many parts of the Proposed RMP are substantially consistent with master leasing planning and use concepts, the decision was made to address two proposed Master Leasing Plans (MLPs), Adobe Town and Dinosaur Lowlands, in the ROD. The existing information from the Proposed RMP was consolidated in Appendix I of the ROD to facilitate public review and understanding of how Proposed RMP/Final EIS addressed oil and gas development in the two proposed MLPs.
- Acronym, Glossary, and References sections were updated to reflect those associated with this ROD/Approved RMP.

The decisions included in this ROD and Approved RMP supersede the 1989 Little Snake RMP and its subsequent amendments. All public lands within the LSFO RMPPA remain subject to existing valid and existing rights subject to the stipulations associated with the given right at the time it was granted, such as the right of reasonable access to surface and sub-surface parcels leased for the development of the mineral interest. Any other permitted uses, such as lease agreements for grazing, recreation, and other use leases such as tower sites and rights-of-way (ROW), will continue under the terms of the existing permits.

### **3. ALTERNATIVES**

NEPA requires the development and consideration of a reasonable range of management alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, to analyze impacts and guide decision makers in developing and selecting the Approved RMP. All alternatives must be viable and reasonable. They must reflect a mix of resource protections, management use, and energy development; be responsive to issues identified by the public, stakeholders, and BLM specialists and managers during the scoping period; and meet established planning criteria, as well as applicable federal and State laws, regulations, and BLM policies.

#### **3.1 Alternatives Considered, But Not Further Analyzed**

The following alternatives and management options were considered as possible ways of resolving resource management issues and conflicts but were eliminated from detailed analysis because they were either unreasonable or not practical for technical, legal, or policy reasons. Specific alternatives considered but not carried forward for detailed analysis are as follows:

- Elimination of livestock grazing throughout the LSFO RMPPA/Regional closure to grazing.
- Closing the LSFO RMPPA to new federal mineral leasing (for oil and gas).
- Reopening the Douglas Mountain Herd Area to wild horse management.

#### **3.2 Alternatives Considered in Detail**

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS, Section 2.4 summarized the four alternatives (A through D) considered in detail. The four alternatives represented four management directions that could be taken in resolving the issues identified through the scoping process. Each alternative was intended to be consistent with law, regulation, and policy while providing varying levels of compatible resource uses and development opportunities. The alternatives developed and analyzed during the planning process reflected a reasonable range of potential management actions. General overviews of each alternative are provided below.

### 3.2.1 Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Resources on lands administered by BLM within the LSFO RMPPA are currently managed under the existing LSFO RMP and ROD (1989) and by four amendments to that plan that include the Oil and Gas Amendment (1991), the Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Amendment (1996), the Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado Amendment (1997), and the Emerald Mountain Land Exchange Environmental Assessment/Plan Amendment (2006). Management under Alternative A would continue that management plan in balancing the use and development of resources. Mineral and energy development would be allowed throughout most of the planning area. The level of resource functionality to meet the *Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado* and seasonal protections for wildlife would be maintained. Existing special management areas and SRMAs would also be maintained. Minimal limitations on motorized travel would provide an enhanced motorized recreational experience.

### 3.2.2 Alternative B

Alternative B would allow the greatest extent of resource use within the planning area, while maintaining the basic protection needed to sustain resources. Under this alternative, constraints on commodity production for the protection of sensitive resources would be the least restrictive possible within the limits defined by law, regulation, and BLM policy. However, BLM would apply conditions of approval (COA), as needed, through site-specific analysis before authorization. Potential impacts on sensitive resource values would be mitigated on a case-by-case basis. The level of resource functionality to meet the Colorado standards and guidelines would be maintained. Area protections, such as ACECs and wild and scenic rivers (WSRs), would be removed from areas so designated currently, and no new such areas would be recommended. Opportunities for “unmanaged” motorized recreational experiences would increase since few OHV areas would be limited or closed.

### 3.2.3 Alternative C (Proposed RMP)

Alternative C emphasizes multiple resource use by protecting sensitive resources and applying the most current information to allow BLM to set priorities for flexible, proactive and adaptive management of public lands. Commodity production would be balanced with wildlife and vegetation protection; however, exceptions would be granted according to established criteria (Appendix B). Protection of greater sage-grouse and other wildlife habitat would be increased through the application of 1 and 5 percent disturbance ceilings in high and medium priority sagebrush habitats, respectively. Area protections would be limited to those areas where such designations are necessary to protect sensitive resources, with specific management prescriptions applied to areas that do not receive such designations. Vermillion Basin would be managed to protect its wilderness characteristics. Existing SRMAs would remain in place, and additional SRMAs and backcountry areas would be identified to provide diverse recreational experiences. There would be an increase in the areas closed to or with limitations on OHV use, but there would also be some open OHV areas. Alternative C would be implemented by using the concepts of adaptive management where reasonable and practicable, based on available funding and personnel.

### 3.2.4 Alternative D

Alternative D would allow the greatest extent of resource protection within the planning area, while still allowing resource uses where not in conflict with resource protection. Commodity production would be constrained to protect natural resource values or to accelerate improvement in their condition. Protection of greater sage-grouse habitat and other wildlife habitat characteristics would increase. Management would focus on restoring vegetation communities to ecologically desirable levels. Area protections would be maximized, and more restrictions on uses would apply in designated areas to protect sensitive



resources and values. Existing SRMAs would remain in place, and additional SRMAs and backcountry areas would be identified to provide diverse recreational experiences. There would be an increase in the areas closed to or with limitations on OHV use.

### **3.3 Environmentally Preferred Alternative**

Environmental preference is judged using the criteria in NEPA and subsequent guidance by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ – see 40 Frequently Asked Questions on NEPA). The CEQ has defined the environmentally preferable alternative as the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in Section 101 of NEPA. This section lists six broad policy goals for all federal plans, programs, and policies as follows:

- Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
- Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings.
- Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.
- Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our National heritage, and maintain, whenever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.
- Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.
- Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

Based on these criteria, identification of the most environmentally preferable alternative involves a balancing of current and potential resource uses with that of resource protection; Alternative C best fulfills that role. Therefore, BLM finds Alternative C the environmentally preferred alternative.

## **4. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

In developing the Approved RMP, BLM had the discretion to select an alternative in its entirety, or to combine aspects of the various alternatives that were presented in the Draft RMP/EIS or the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, including considering management approaches that were presented during the comment period that do not result in significant changes from what the Draft RMP/EIS considered. The NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1) states, "Various parts of separate alternatives that are analyzed in the draft can also be 'mixed and matched' to develop a complete alternative in the final" (*see also* 43 CFR 1503.4(a)). Based on the input received during the planning process, there was both support and opposition to many components of the Proposed RMP. However, no formal comments were received from federal or state agencies, or from tribal governments indicating the Proposed RMP was inconsistent with other existing plans or policies. Additionally, no inconsistencies with State plans, policies, or programs were identified during the Governor's consistency review of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. BLM considered all comments and protests received on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and input from the Governor's consistency review. This ROD serves as the final decision for the land use plan decisions for the Approved RMP. The Approved RMP will become effective on the date this ROD is signed.

## **5. MITIGATION MEASURES**

In developing the alternatives, BLM used a variety of management methods and tools, including the identification of allowable uses, temporal, spatial, and restrictions on uses, where specific uses will be

prohibited, and specific actions needed to achieve desired outcomes. Restrictions on uses include seasonal closures, limitations on surface disturbance, application of best management practices (BMP), or the use of performance objectives. BMPs can include structural and nonstructural controls, specific operations, and maintenance procedures. BMPs are dynamic and are not one-size-fits-all solutions. BMPs are selected and adapted, as necessary, through interdisciplinary analysis to determine which management practices are necessary to ensure RMP goals and objectives are being met. The best practices and mitigation measures for a particular site are evaluated through a site-specific NEPA process and vary to accommodate unique, site-specific settings and local resource conditions. Additional BMPs may be identified during an interdisciplinary process when evaluating site-specific management actions. Implementation and effectiveness of BMPs will be monitored on a project-by-project basis to determine if they are achieving RMP goals and objectives.

## **6. PLAN MONITORING**

BLM planning regulations (43 CFR Part 1610.4-9) call for the monitoring of RMPs on a continual basis with a formal evaluation done at periodic intervals. Implementation of the Approved RMP will be monitored over time (Appendix F) and plan evaluations conducted periodically. Management actions arising from activity plan decisions will be evaluated to ensure consistency with RMP objectives.

## **7. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**

BLM's decision making process is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the CEQ regulations implementing NEPA, and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and BLM policies and procedures implementing NEPA. NEPA and the associated regulatory and policy framework require federal agencies to involve the interested public in their decision making process. The LSFO has made open, public dialogue integral to this planning process to recognize the interests of a wide range of public, private, tribal, and governmental representatives in providing input for the management of the LSFO RMPPA. The various opportunities for public input are identified below.

An independent group of open membership, the Northwest Colorado Stewardship (NWCOS), which included representatives of many interests, met with the planning team on 29 occasions between September 2004 and April 2006 to discuss possible consensus solutions to many of the resource issues identified in the Draft RMP/EIS. BLM agreed to participate in and provide information for these NWCOS discussions. Additional information on coordination with NWCOS is available in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, Chapter 5, Section 5.4.2 (Community Consultation).

### **7.1 Public Scoping**

The Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* on November 18, 2004 to formally announce that the BLM LSFO was preparing an RMP and associated EIS. The notice invited participation of affected and interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public in determining the scope and significant issues to be addressed in the planning alternatives and analyzed in the EIS. The scoping period ended on January 31, 2005. However, BLM considered additional issues brought forward during the planning process. The official 60-day scoping period began when a public scoping notice was prepared and mailed to federal, State, and local agencies, interest groups, and members of the general public on November 18, 2004. The notice invited the public to participate in the scoping process and to submit input to BLM to assist in identifying resource issues and concerns, management alternatives, and other information valuable in determining future land use decisions for the Little Snake RMPPA. The scoping period ran from November 18, 2004 through January 31, 2005.

Public scoping meetings were held in Steamboat Springs, Craig, and Maybell, Colorado, on January 4, 5,

and 6, 2005, respectively. During the three scoping meetings, a total of 98 people registered their attendance. Comments from the public were received during the scoping meetings and throughout the scoping period by mail, fax, and e-mail. A total of 921 comment letters were submitted during the scoping period, identifying 478 specific comments and issues.

BLM prepared a scoping newsletter and sent it to the individuals and entities on the Little Snake project mailing list and posted it on the project website. BLM also maintained the Little Snake RMP/EIS project website ([http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/lisfo/plans/rmp\\_revision.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/lisfo/plans/rmp_revision.html)) which served as a virtual repository for announcements, bulletins, and RMP-related draft and final documents.

## **7.2 Public Review of, and Comment on, the Draft RMP/EIS**

BLM published the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Little Snake Draft RMP/EIS for public review and comment in the *Federal Register* on February 9, 2007. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published their notice on February 16, initiating the 90-day public comment period which concluded on May 16, 2007. Hard copies and compact disks were provided to cooperating agencies and tribal representatives and made available to the public. The Draft RMP/EIS was made available through the project website and at information repositories or reading rooms in the BLM State Office in Denver and the LSFO, and at local public libraries. A newsletter announcing the availability of the Draft RMP/EIS was also sent to those on the project's mailing list.

Three public meetings were held in early March 2007 to provide an opportunity to comment on the Little Snake Draft RMP/EIS. During the three meetings, 87 people registered their attendance. During the public comment period for the Draft RMP/EIS, comment letters were received from approximately 68,910 individuals. Of the total individuals who sent letters, approximately 68,274 of them were associated with one of four form letters, and approximately 636 were considered to be associated with unique letters. A complete listing of all substantive comments on the Draft RMP/EIS and BLM's responses can be found in Appendix Q of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

BLM published the NOA for the *Additional Air Quality Impact Assessment to Support the Little Snake Draft RMP/EIS* on October 10, 2008, starting a 45-day public comment period. This information provided the results of air quality modeling of the alternatives in the Draft RMP/EIS, providing additional detail to the air quality impacts to the Draft RMP/EIS. On November 19, 2008, BLM published a Notice of Correction to the October 10<sup>th</sup> NOA, clarifying a procedural issue and extending the public comment period on the additional air quality analysis document for 45 days after the correction. With this correction, the public comment period on the *Additional Air Quality Impact Assessment to Support the Little Snake Draft RMP/EIS* concluded on January 5, 2009, for a total of 88 days of public review. During the public comment period for the additional air quality impacts document, comment letters were received from approximately 18,040 individuals. Approximately 18,000 of the comment letters were associated with one of three form letters, and approximately 40 were considered to be unique letters. A complete listing of all substantive comments on the Additional Air Quality Impact Assessment and BLM's responses can be found in Appendix R of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

## **7.3 Public Review of, and Protest on, the Proposed RMP/Final EIS**

A 30-day protest period was provided on the land use plan decisions contained in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in accordance with 43 CFR Part 1610.5-2. BLM received 8 protest letters that were subsequently resolved by the BLM Director, whose decision constitutes final agency action for the DOI. The issue topics raised in the protest letters covered a broad range of topics with differing opinions, sometimes completely opposite opinions, on how the protesting party felt BLM erred in the planning process. All protests were either denied in part, or were dismissed in part.

## **8. COORDINATION AND CONSULTATIONS**

### **8.1 Native American Tribal Consultation**

Protective measures for culturally sensitive Native American resources are established through consultation and coordination with the appropriate Native American tribes. Pursuant to the NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), FLPMA, American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), and Executive Order 13007, BLM has engaged in consultation with Native American representatives for the RMP planning process. The decision on which tribes to consult with was based on a map of cultural affiliation provided the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs. Four Native American tribes who have cultural and historical ties to lands administered by the LSFO were identified as follows—

- Shoshone Tribal Council,
- Ute Mountain Tribal Council,
- Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, and the
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

As part of the scoping process, BLM sent letters to tribal governments on October 14, 2004, requesting information for the RMP/EIS and inviting their coordination and participation in the RMP revision process. BLM received one response from the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. The internal review version of the Draft RMP/EIS was sent to the four tribes in April 2006. LSFO followed up with a phone call on November 13, 2006. The Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS were sent to the tribes concurrently with their release to the public.

After the Draft RMP/EIS was published, BLM offered in-person visits to the Tribal Business Council of the Southern Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, Eastern Shoshone, and the Uintah-Ouray Ute Tribe. The only response was from the Uintah-Ouray Ute Tribe, and the LSFO Manager presented the Draft RMP/EIS to them in a February 2007 Tribal Business Council meeting. In addition, the LSFO archaeologist met face-to-face with Eastern Shoshone, Northern Ute, and Ute Mountain Ute representatives to discuss the Draft RMP/EIS. It is important to note that Native American consultation is an ongoing process that began before the current RMP revision and will continue after the new RMP is completed. Consultation occurs throughout all of the levels of BLM's planning process.

### **8.2 Cooperating Agencies and Agency Coordination**

Cooperating agency status provides a formal framework for governmental units—local, State, tribal, or federal—to engage in active collaboration with a lead federal agency in the planning process. In principle, a cooperating agency shares the responsibility for organizing the planning process. The LSFO requested cooperating agency status for the Little Snake RMP planning process from 12 agencies or entities. These entities were invited to participate because they had jurisdiction by law or could offer special expertise. Moffat County, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, the USFWS, Juniper Water Conservancy District, and the City of Steamboat Springs accepted and signed an MOU with BLM. Coordination and consistency for this planning effort were accomplished primarily through the assistance of the cooperating agencies formally involved in the project.

### **8.3 Consultation Efforts with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer**

BLM's cultural resource management program operates in accordance with the alternative procedures for 36 CFR 800 outlined under the National Programmatic Agreement, as implemented by the State Protocol. Section IV of the Protocol requires BLM to provide the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) the opportunity to participate at the development stage and all subsequent phases of land use planning in

accordance with 43 CFR 1610.3. The SHPO has been involved in informal coordination efforts during preparation of the Draft RMP/EIS. A copy of the Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS was sent to the SHPO for review and comment. Formal consultation with the SHPO was initiated when the Proposed RMP was finalized. In addition to the review of and comments on the Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the SHPO raised specific concerns about the proposed Sand Wash open OHV area. BLM and the SHPO visited the South Sand Wash area in September 2007 to review the on-the-ground issues and to discuss potential resolution. As a result of that meeting, the SHPO and BLM agreed to develop a Programmatic Agreement between BLM, the SHPO, Indian Tribes (Ute Indian Tribe [Uintah & Ouray Reservation], Shoshone Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe), Moffat County, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. This agreement was finalized in June, 2011 and includes strategies for the survey, mitigation, and monitoring of cultural resources within the South Sand Wash area. SHPO consultation is an ongoing process that began before the current RMP revision and occurs throughout all of the levels of BLM's planning process.

#### **8.4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation**

To comply with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, BLM consulted the USFWS early in the planning process. The USFWS provided input on planning issues, data collection and review, and alternatives development.

BLM worked with the USFWS to develop a Draft Biological Assessment (BA) following release of the Draft RMP/EIS; the USFWS provided preliminary comments used to prepare the BA. As part of formal consultation with the USFWS on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the BA was provided to the USFWS for review and comment in early 2010. The USFWS submitted a programmatic Biological Opinion concurring with BLM's effects determinations, which was received by BLM on August 23, 2011.

#### **8.5 Environmental Protection Agency Coordination**

NEPA regulations require EISs be filed with the EPA for review and comment (40 CFR 1506.9). BLM submitted the Little Snake Draft RMP/EIS to the EPA for review as required by CEQ regulations. BLM received the EPA's comments on the Draft RMP/EIS, except for on air quality, on August 16, 2007. BLM worked directly with the EPA to develop analyses processes and modeling in the development of the Additional Air Quality Impact Assessment to Support the Draft EIS (September 2008). BLM received EPA's comments on that document on November 26, 2008, along with EPA's formal rating of EC2 (environmental concerns due to insufficient information) and complete comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. EPA expressed environmental concerns about the potential for visibility impacts to the Mt. Zirkel Wilderness and Black Canyon Class I areas and potential adverse impacts to water quality and the sagebrush ecosystem. The agency requested that the Final EIS include measures to address potential ozone impacts, avoid visibility impairment, and include the use of phased development to mitigate impacts to areas with high wildlife and scenic value.

#### **8.6 Governor's Consistency Review**

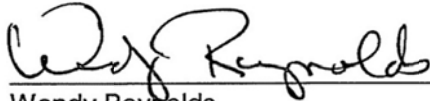
The Governor's Office did not identify any inconsistencies concerning state or local plans, policies, and programs following the 60-day Governor's Consistency Review of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, in accordance with planning regulations at 43 CFR Part 1610.3- 2(e), and concluded in October, 2010.

## 9. APPROVAL

### Field Office Manager Recommendation

Having considered a full range of alternatives, associated impacts, and public and agency input, I recommend the adoption and implementation of the attached Approved Plan as the Little Snake Resource Management Plan.

Recommended:



Wendy Reynolds  
Field Office Manager  
Little Snake Field Office

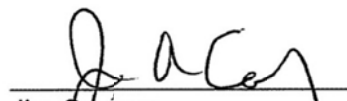
October, 2011

Date

### District Manager Concurrence

I concur with the adoption and implementation of the Little Snake Resource Management Plan.

Concurrence:



Jim Cagney  
District Manager  
Northwest District Office

October, 2011

Date

### State Director Approval

In consideration of the foregoing, I approve the Little Snake Resource Management Plan.

Approved:



Helen Hankins  
Colorado State Director

October, 2011

Date



# Approved Little Snake Field Office Resource Management Plan

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Little Snake Field Office (LSFO) includes portions of Moffat, Routt, and Rio Blanco Counties in northwest Colorado (Map 1, Map 2). This Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Little Snake RMP Planning Area (RMPPA) are intended to provide land use planning and management direction on a broad scale and to guide future actions. The regulations for making and modifying land use plan decisions, which comprise an RMP, are found in 43 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 1600. Land use plan decisions consist of (1) desired outcomes (goals and objectives), and (2) allowable uses and management actions.

### 1.1 Overview of the Resource Management Plan

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires the development and maintenance, and, as appropriate, the revision of RMPs, or land use plans, for public lands. The FLPMA provides the authority for BLM to formulate land use plans and requires that an RMP be developed in order to guide management decisions. The FLPMA states that BLM land management will be guided by the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. In fulfillment of this requirement, BLM developed this RMP. The following are the section titles and brief descriptions of the section contents of this document:

**Section 1 – Introduction** — This section presents a brief introduction for this Approved RMP, including an overview of the Approved RMP (Section 1.1); the purpose and need for the RMP (Section 1.2); a description of the planning area (Section 1.3); a description of the issues analyzed (Section 1.4); a description of the issues considered, but not further analyzed (Section 1.5); the planning criteria (Section 1.6); policies and legislative constraints relevant to the land management and planning process (Section 1.7); an overview of the planning process (Section 1.8); and an overview of the relationship of the RMP to adjacent plans, as well as other applicable BLM policies, plans, and programs (Section 1.9).

**Section 2 – Management Decisions** — This section describes the decisions to be implemented within the LSFO. This section comprises the decisions within the Approved RMP, including goals, objectives, and management actions and allowable uses.

**Section 3 – Public Involvement in Implementation** — This section describes the public involvement in implementation.

**Section 4 – Resource Management Plan Implementation** — This section describes the implementation process for the Approved Plan.

**Section 5 – Plan Evaluation/Adaptive Management** — This section describes the process for plan evaluation (Section 5.1), plan maintenance (Section 5.2), and the process to change and/or amend the Approved RMP (Section 5.3).

**Section 6 – Monitoring and Adaptive Management** — This section describes monitoring (Section 6.1), and adaptive management process (Section 6.2).

**Acronyms, Glossary, References, Maps, and Appendices** — These sections include the acronyms, glossary terms, and published and unpublished reference sources used in this Approved RMP and ROD. This section also includes the maps and appendices that are referenced in the ROD and Approved RMP.

## 1.2 Purpose and Need for the RMP

### 1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Little Snake RMP revision is to ensure that public lands are managed according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. This revised RMP will meet the mandate of FLPMA that public lands be managed according to land use plans and will follow the planning principles outlined in Section 202(c) of FLPMA (43 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1712). This was accomplished through the establishment of desired resource conditions identified through goals and objectives, special management needs, allowable public land uses, and actions needed to achieve objectives. Comprehensive in nature, the Approved RMP addresses resource management issues identified through public, agency, and interagency scoping efforts as well as resource management according to BLM policies. Decisions in the Approved RMP, including management actions that address the major issues identified, will guide land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation-level decisions. These land use plan decisions establish goals and objectives for resource management (desired outcomes) and the measures needed to achieve these goals and objectives (management actions and allowable uses).

### 1.2.2 Need

The Little Snake RMP that was approved in April 1989 has been amended four times to address oil and gas leasing and development (1991), the black-footed ferret reintroduction (1996), the Colorado Land Health Standards (1997), and the Emerald Mountain land exchange (2007). In 2004, an additional RMP amendment to address Vermillion Basin was needed. However, after consultation with Moffat County and several environmental organizations, BLM determined that an RMP revision for the entire resource area was needed to address other issues outside of Vermillion Basin.

An RMP is a set of comprehensive long-range decisions concerning the use and management of resources administered by BLM. In general, an RMP accomplishes two objectives—

- Provides an overview of goals, objectives, and needs associated with public lands management
- Resolves multiple use conflicts or issues associated with those requirements that drive the preparation of the RMP.

FLPMA requires that BLM “*develop, maintain, and, when appropriate, revise land use plans*” (43 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1712 (a)). BLM determined it was necessary to revise the 1989 RMP, as amended, based on a number of new issues that have arisen since preparation of the earlier RMP. A comprehensive list of issues is detailed in Section 1.4. Major issues contributing to the revision of the current RMP include the following:

- Management of lands with wilderness characteristics outside of existing wilderness study areas (WSAs)
- Consideration of new data
- Management of energy and mineral resources, particularly in sensitive or unique areas
- Management of increased off-highway vehicle (OHV) use and non-motorized visitation
- Involvement of local levels of government and citizens in determining traditional and emerging uses of public land.

Other changes have occurred since the last plan was developed that could result in impacts not previously analyzed. The RMP revision allowed for updating management decisions to align with changes in federal law and BLM policies. The RMP revision was also needed to address discrepancies that have occurred because of changes in BLM policy (e.g., OHV route designation policy, consideration of areas of critical

environmental concern [ACECs], Energy Policy and Conservation Act Reauthorization of 2000 [EPCA], change in listed species, etc.). The planning criteria and issues described in Section 1.6 provide constraints and ground rules that further define the need for this plan revision.

### 1.3 Planning Area

The Little Snake RMPPA includes within its administrative boundary approximately 4.2 million acres of federal, State, county, and private lands (Map 2). The area is bordered on the north by the State of Wyoming, on the west by the State of Utah, on the south by the BLM White River Field Office and Routt and White River National Forests, and on the east by Routt National Forest. Of the 4.2 million surface acres within the LSFO RMPPA, approximately 1.3 million acres (32 percent) are administered by BLM, 41 percent is privately owned, 6 percent is owned by the State of Colorado, and 21 percent is administered by other federal agencies (Table 1). Additionally, approximately 1.1 million acres of the private and State lands are underlain by federally-owned minerals.

**Table 1. LSFO-Managed Surface Ownership by County**

County	Acres of County within RMPPA Boundary	Acres of Surface Ownership			
		BLM LSFO	Other Federal Agencies	State of Colorado	Private
Moffat	2,620,700	1,284,200	135,500	183,900	1,017,100
Routt	1,399,300	48,400	566,600	65,700	718,600
Rio Blanco	133,800	4,300	107,900	0	21,600
Garfield	36,300	0	36,100	0	200
Grand	30,000	0	29,800	100	100
Jackson	1,600	0	1,600	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,221,700</b>	<b>1,336,900</b>	<b>877,500</b>	<b>249,700</b>	<b>1,757,600</b>

Source: BLM Geographic Information System (GIS) Data

According to the FLPMA, BLM is responsible for planning for and managing “public lands.” As defined by the act, “public lands” are those federally-owned lands and any federal interest in lands (e.g., federally-owned mineral estate) that are administered by the Secretary of the Interior through BLM. Within the LSFO RMPPA, there are intermingled land surface and subsurface ownerships, and the accompanying administrative jurisdictions for land use planning for these ownerships are also intermingled and overlapping. Because of this situation, it is important to reiterate that the Little Snake RMP will not include planning and management decisions for lands or minerals that are owned by private individuals, the State of Colorado, other federal agencies, or local governments. Because of the long history of public land management, there are numerous rights and privileges that have been established on public lands under law, regulation, or planning decisions. A few examples of these rights and privileges include land grants to the states, road rights of way (ROWs), oil and gas leases, communication sites, and grazing permits. It is important to note that planning decisions in this new RMP are subject to valid existing rights established on public lands. The decisions made in this RMP will be applied to future BLM decisions.

### 1.4 Scoping Issues Analyzed

Issues identified by the public, cooperating agencies, stakeholders, and BLM specialists and managers during scoping provided the main inputs to alternatives development. Public scoping was conducted from November 18, 2004 to January 31, 2005, during which time three public open houses were held in Steamboat Springs, Craig, and Maybell, Colorado, to solicit public comment on the planning process. A total of 478 specific comments were identified in the comment letters received during this period.

The planning issues identified demands, concerns, or conflicts regarding the use or management of public lands and resources within the LSFO RMPPA. Issues aligned into one of the following categories:

- Access and Transportation Management,
- Cultural Resources and Paleontology,
- Fire Management,
- General Comments,
- Lands and Realty Management,
- Livestock Grazing,
- Minerals and Energy Resources,
- Recreation,
- Social and Economic Values,
- Soil, Water and Air Resources, including Water and Air Quality,
- Special Management Designations, including Wilderness,
- Vegetation, including Upland and Riparian Management and Forestry,
- Wild Horses, and
- Wildlife Habitats and Fisheries Management, including Special Status Species.

Issues identified during scoping spanned a broad array of resources, uses, and/or areas. However, several issues were repeated in a number of public comments, often with conflicting opinions from other commenters. The following sections identify the key planning issues identified through public and internal scoping and incorporate information from the analysis of the existing management situation.

#### **1.4.1 Energy and Minerals**

The LSFO RMPPA contains known deposits of coal, oil and gas, bituminous sandstone, gold, rare-earth elements, uranium, copper, lead, zinc, silver, sand, and gravel. Based on known occurrences and/or known favorable geologic relationships, the area has the potential for other considerable deposits of these commodities, as well as other mineral resources, including base and precious metals, oil shale and associated commodities, geothermal energy, zeolites, construction stone, and clays. Management of these resources, including identifying areas and conditions in which mineral development can occur, was a crucial component of the planning process. Issues regarding where and how mineral resources could be developed were a principle focus of this plan.

#### **1.4.2 Special Management Areas**

Colorado conservationists presented BLM with a Statewide Citizens' Wilderness Proposal (CWP) that includes the compilation of citizen wilderness inventories and area-by-area justification for areas to be considered eligible for wilderness protection, including some within the LSFO RMPPA. BLM also conducted an inventory of Vermillion Basin in 2001 and determined that approximately 77,000 acres contained wilderness characteristics. Further, some public scoping comments included nominations for ACECs. Additionally, BLM resource specialists conducted a wild and scenic river (WSR) technical analysis to determine potential eligibility of river segments. Many of the proposed areas with wilderness characteristics, ACECs, or WSRs also have oil and gas potential and support other competing uses. Consideration of these areas, their designation/protection, and the presence of potentially conflicting uses was a key component to alternatives development.

#### **1.4.3 Transportation and Travel Management**

BLM often connects travel management with recreation, as recreation is the primary activity associated with travel management. Recreational activities occur throughout the area and include motorized and non-

motorized vehicle touring, big and small game hunting, backpacking, horseback riding, hiking, mountain bike use, sightseeing, pleasure driving, and OHV use (which includes motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and full-size, four-wheel drive vehicles such as jeeps and sport utility vehicles). Increased OHV use and non-motorized visitation over the years in areas such as Sand Wash Basin have led to increased concerns regarding resource protection and conflicting uses. Other land management activities, such as oil and gas exploration and range management, are also associated with travel management. Use and proliferation of roads may also contribute to impacts to environmental values, wildlife, cultural and paleontological resources, and other values, and contribute to user conflicts over those values. These competing issues were considered during development of the alternatives.

#### **1.4.4 Wildlife**

Public lands within the LSFO RMPPA provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Several commenters suggested that special management attention might be needed to restore, maintain, or enhance priority species and their habitats. These commenters usually noted that public land uses such as recreation, grazing, motorized vehicle use, commercial forestry, oil and gas development, and mining, if not properly managed, has the potential to adversely affect wildlife populations and habitat. Resolution of this issue involved integrating habitat management with other resource programs to minimize impacts on wildlife species and their habitats while still providing for other uses on the public lands. Special attention was requested for many species, including but not limited to big game, white-tailed prairie dog, black-footed ferret, greater sage-grouse, raptors, and migratory birds.

#### **1.4.5 Socioeconomic Values**

Commenters identified a variety of reasons they value northwest Colorado, such as its source of livelihood, scenic qualities and open spaces, and the various places to recreate. Various local levels of government and citizens provided input on an array of issues regarding both traditional and emerging uses of public land and their potential social and economic effects on local communities and values.

#### **1.4.6 Lands and Realty**

BLM regularly receives ROW applications for pipelines, roads, legal access, and communication sites. The alternatives included some direction for these uses. Issues also noted an interest in consolidating BLM lands to benefit public access, use, and resource management. The alternatives considered a range of actions related to guidance for how and when BLM may consider sale or exchange of public land. Additionally, issues were raised regarding an increasing need to consider the sale or exchange of mineral rights, particularly for split-estate lands, and to simplify land management, mineral leasing, and the sale or exchange of mineral rights throughout the LSFO RMPPA.

### **1.5 Scoping Issues Considered, But Not Further Analyzed**

Several issues raised during scoping were outside the purpose and need of the RMP revision and were not considered in the environmental impact statement (EIS). There were three major reasons for not considering these issues during the planning effort:

- 1) BLM does not have authority to resolve the issue raised (e.g., Resolution of RS-2477 assertions is a legal issue beyond the scope of this RMP effort; courts have generally held that BLM's authority to designate new WSAs expired in 1993).
- 2) The issue would be better addressed through implementation/site-specific planning actions (e.g., the route designation process; setting seasons of use for livestock grazing).

- 3) The issue raised is resolved through law, regulation, BLM policy or administrative action (e.g., issues raised encouraging BLM to analyze impacts in a certain manner are beyond the scope of the decisions to be made in the RMP because the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) regulations [40 CFR 1500] and BLM NEPA handbook [BLM-H-1790] contain clear directions on how to conduct impact analysis, and at what level of detail).

## 1.6 Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are the constraints, conditions, and guidelines for conducting the BLM planning process. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by laws and regulations, guidance provided by the BLM Colorado State Director, input from the public, government and tribal agency consultation and coordination, analysis of information relevant to the LSFO RMPPA, and professional judgment. The following general planning criteria were developed to guide planning, development of management alternatives, impacts analysis, and the eventual selection of the Little Snake RMP:

- The Little Snake RMP will be completed in compliance with FLPMA (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).
- The planning process will include an EIS that will comply with NEPA standards.
- Planning work will be completed on time and on budget.
- The collaborative effort will be focused to allow the collaborators to understand how they make a difference and within a timeframe that is reasonable and achievable.
- A strategy will be provided for reaching desired conditions and outcomes and meeting objectives.
- The Little Snake RMP will recognize valid existing rights.
- The Little Snake RMP will recognize the specific niche that federal lands provide both to the nation and to the surrounding community. A successful plan will be one that is responsive to both national and local needs.
- Public participation will be encouraged throughout the process as per the Public Participation Plan. BLM will collaborate and build relationships with tribes, State and local governments, federal agencies, local stakeholders, and others in the community who might be affected by the plan. Collaborators will be regularly informed and offered timely and meaningful opportunities to participate in the planning process. The Northwest Colorado Stewardship group (NWCOS) will participate in the collaborative process to contribute to finding a common vision and strategy for the Little Snake RMP.
- Decisions in the Little Snake RMP will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, and federal agencies, provided the decisions comply with federal laws and regulations that direct resource management on the public lands.
- Road and trail access guidance (and OHV management) will be incorporated into the Little Snake RMP to ensure public and resource needs are met. At a minimum, the Little Snake RMP will divide the LSFO RMPPA into OHV area designations that are open, limited, or closed. The Little Snake RMP will include a map of area designations and address travel over snow. Specific criteria and definitions for open, limited, and closed designations can be found in 43 CFR 8340.0-5 (f), (g) and (h). Additional criteria are provided by existing law, proclamation, Executive Order, regulation, or policy.
- EPCA inventory results will be integrated into land use planning and energy use authorizations.
- 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.
- For all stipulations developed in new land use plans, and to further improve consistency and understanding of lease stipulations, BLM will use the Uniform Format for Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations prepared by the Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinating Committee in March 1989. Lease stipulations will be reviewed for consistency with neighboring BLM Field Offices and States, and where there are discrepancies efforts will be undertaken to achieve consistency or to



explain any differences.

- The Little Snake RMP will take into consideration the lifestyles and concerns of area residents.
- A qualified organization or individual will prepare a socioeconomic assessment of the LSFO RMPPA that will identify, analyze, and review the social and economic considerations of the Little Snake RMP. BLM will also facilitate community discussions on resolving community issues generated by agency land use plans.
- The Little Snake RMP will incorporate the Colorado Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines. It will include a strategy for ensuring that proper grazing practices are followed. Grazing will be managed to maintain or improve the health of the public lands by incorporating conditions to enhance resource conditions into permitted operations.
- The Little Snake RMP will contain an adaptive framework that incorporates regular monitoring and evaluation to adjust management within the direction of the existing plan, or when that is not possible, with a focused plan amendment process.
- The Little Snake RMP will have realistic desired conditions and achievable objectives consistent with likely budgets and the design criteria.
- Lands with wilderness characteristics would be managed to protect and/or preserve some or all of those characteristics. This could include protecting certain lands in their natural condition and/or providing opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
- The Little Snake RMP will determine when management of a special recreation management area (SRMA) is justified, considering the following: (a) public desires for specific recreation products (e.g., essential service delivery systems; essential setting characteristics; experience/benefit and activity outcome opportunities; and negative outcomes to be avoided), (b) identified visitor and/or resident customer segments that are significant enough to justify investments in facilities and/or visitor assistance required to produce them, and (c) the Field Office manager positively determines that BLM and its cooperating business/local government partners can sustainably deliver the services required to produce those products. Other areas of the LSFO RMPPA where public demands are only for visitor and/or recreation resource stewardship of recreation/tourism activities or to address identified care-taking issues would be managed as an extensive recreation management area (ERMA).
- The Little Snake RMP will take into consideration the prehistoric and historic heritage of the region, while recognizing these resources are of value to local and national interests.
- The Little Snake RMP will identify existing and potential corridors (potential corridors include existing ROWs that can be considered for additional facilities, and thus be considered a corridor if not already so designated).
- The Little Snake RMP will identify existing and potential ROW development sites such as energy development areas (e.g., wind energy sites) and communication sites.
- The Little Snake RMP will describe likely development of potential corridors and other ROW sites as a basis for impact assessment.

## 1.7 Policies and Legislative Constraints

BLM's planning process is governed by the FLPMA and BLM's planning regulations listed in 43 CFR Part 1600. RMPs are the primary mechanism for guiding BLM activities so that the mission and goals outlined in the BLM Strategic Plan are achieved. See BLM's *Land Use Planning Handbook* (H-1601-1) for program-specific guidance. RMPs ensure that public land is managed in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in the FLPMA, under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

As required by the FLPMA, as well as by BLM policies and guidelines, the public lands must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; and that, where appropriate, will:

- preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition;
- provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals;
- provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use; and
- recognize the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands [Sec. 102 43 USC 1701 (a)(3)].

In addition to FLPMA, NEPA, and their associated regulations, BLM must comply with the mandate and intent of all applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and policies that apply to BLM-administered lands and resources within the Planning Area. The planning process is intended to develop RMP decisions that resolve conflicts between program priorities, policies and guidelines and that meet the multiple use and sustained yield mandate of the FLPMA.

## **1.8 Planning Process**

The revision of the Little Snake RMP was initiated under the authority of Section 202(f) of FLPMA and is subject to Section 202(c) of NEPA. The process is guided by BLM planning regulations in 43 CFR 1600 and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations in 40 CFR 1500.

BLM uses a nine-step planning process when developing and revising RMPs as required by 43 CFR Part 1600 and planning program guidance in BLM's Handbook H-1601-1, *Land Use Planning Handbook* (Figure 1). The planning process is designed to help 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. The planning process is issue-driven. BLM used 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.

Title II, Section 202, of FLPMA directs BLM to coordinate planning efforts with Native American tribes, other federal departments, and agencies of the state and local governments as part of its land use planning process. BLM is also directed to integrate NEPA requirements with other environmental review and consultation requirements to reduce paperwork and delays (40 CFR Part 1500.4-5). BLM accomplished coordination with Native American tribes, other agencies, and consistency with other plans through ongoing communications, meetings, and collaborative efforts with the Interdisciplinary Team, which includes BLM specialists and federal, state, and local agencies.

**Figure 1. Steps in the BLM Land Use Planning Process**

<b>Step 1*</b>	<b>Identification of Issues</b> This planning step is designed to identify major problems, concerns, or opportunities associated with the management of public land in the planning area. Issues are identified by the public, BLM, and other governmental entities. The planning process is then focused on resolving the planning issues.
<b>Step 2*</b>	<b>Development of Planning Criteria</b> Planning criteria are identified to guide development of the RMP and prevent the collection of unnecessary information and data.
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Collect And Compile Inventory Data</b> This planning step involves the collation and collection of various kinds of environmental, social, economic, resource, and institutional data. In most cases, this process is limited to information needed to address the issues. The data required for land use planning decisions is usually at a broader scale than data required in implementation level planning and analyses.
<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Analysis of the Management Situation</b> This step calls for the deliberate assessment of the current situation. It identifies the way lands and activities are currently managed in the planning area, describes conditions and trends across the planning area, identifies problems and concerns resulting from the current management, and identifies opportunities to manage these lands differently. It also forms the basis for the "No Action" alternative.
<b>Step 5</b>	<b>Formulate Alternatives</b> During this step, BLM formulates a reasonable range of alternatives for managing resources in the planning area. Alternatives include a continuation of current management (no action alternative) and other alternatives that strive to resolve the major planning issues while emphasizing different management scenarios. Alternatives usually vary by the amounts of resource production or protection that would be allowed, or in the emphasis of one program area over another.
<b>Step 6</b>	<b>Estimation of Effects</b> This step involves estimating the physical, biological, economic, and social effects of implementing each alternative in order to provide a comparative evaluation of impacts in compliance with CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500).
<b>Step 7</b>	<b>Selection of Preferred Alternative</b> Based on the information resulting from the estimation of effects, BLM identifies a Preferred Alternative. The Draft RMP/EIS is then prepared for printing and distributed for a 90 day public review.
<b>Step 8*</b>	<b>Selection of RMP</b> Following review and analysis of public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS, BLM makes adjustments as warranted and selects a proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP and a Final EIS is then published. A final decision is made after a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review and a 30-day public protest period are completed. BLM then publishes the ROD and prepares the Approved Resource Management Plan.
<b>Step 9**</b>	<b>Monitoring And Evaluation</b> This step involves the collection and analysis of resource condition and trend data to determine the effectiveness of the plan in resolving the identified issues and achieving desired results. Implementation of decisions requiring subsequent action is also monitored. Monitoring continues from the time the RMP is adopted until changing conditions require revision of the whole plan or any portion of it.

\* Public participation is invited throughout the planning process but is formally requested at these steps.

\*\* The RMP shall be revised as necessary based on monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, and changes in circumstances affecting the entire plan or major portions of the plan.

## 1.9 Related Plans, and Relationship to BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs

BLM planning policies require that BLM review approved or adopted resources plans of other federal, state, local, and tribal governments and, where practicable, be consistent with those plans. Plans that are related to the management of land and resources that apply to this RMP revision include—

- Kremmling RMP (1984)
- White River RMP (1997)
- Uncompahgre Basin RMP (1989)
- Green River RMP (1996)
- Kemmerer RMP (2010)
- Rawlins RMP (2008)
- Vernal RMP (2008)
- Oil and Tar Sands Leasing Programmatic EIS (2008)
- West-wide Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS (2009)
- Wind Energy Development Program Programmatic EIS (2005)
- The Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic EIS (2007)
- Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (2007)
- Routt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1998)
- White River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2002)
- Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (1999)
- Moffat County/City of Craig Master Plan (2003)
- Routt County Master Plan (2003)

BLM has 3 principal levels of land use planning decisions: 1) the RMP level, 2) the activity level, and 3) the site-specific level. This RMP focuses on establishing broad resource objectives and direction while, at the same time, providing some activity-level guidance and site-specific decisions. Additionally, BLM RMPs are directed by federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies. The following list highlights the major policies and laws leading up to how the LSFO is presently managed.

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976), as amended (43 USC 1701 et seq.)
- National Environmental Policy Act (1969) (42 USC 4321 et seq.)
- BLM Manual 1790 and Handbook H-1790-1 (NEPA Handbook)
- BLM Manual 1601 and Handbook H-1601-1 (Land Use Planning)
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978) (Public Law [PL] 95-341)
- Energy Policy and Conservation Act (2000), as amended (42 USC 6217 et seq.)
- Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act (1988) (PL 100- 409, 102 Stat. 1086. 43 USC 1716)
- Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (2000) (PL 106-248)
- Federal Noxious Weed Act (1974), as amended by Sec. 15, Management of Undesirable Plants on Federal Lands (1990) (7 USC 2814)
- Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing and Reform Act (1987) (30 USC 181 et seq.)
- General Mining Law (1872), as amended (30 USC 22, et seq.), as amended by PL 108-447, Division E, Section 120 (30 USC 23 et seq.)
- Healthy Forests Restoration Act (2003) (PL 108-148)
- Mineral Leasing Act (1920), as amended (30 USC 181, et seq.)
- Noxious Weed Control Act of 2004 [PL 108-412]
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act (1978) (43 USC 1901-1908)
- Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 (43 USC 315), as amended by the Act of August 28, 1937 (43 USC 1181d)
- The Wilderness Act (1974) (PL 88-577)
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968), as amended (16 USC 1271 et seq.)
- Executive Order (EO) 12898, Environmental Justice
- EO 13084, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments

- EO 13112, Invasive Species
- National OHV Strategy (January 19, 2001)
- National Mountain Bike Strategy (November 12, 2002)
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979), as amended (16 USC 470a, 470cc and 470ee)
- Historic Sites Act (1935) (16 USC 461)
- National Historic Preservation Act (1966), as amended (16 USC 470)
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) (25 USC 3001)
- BLM State Protocol Agreement between the BLM Colorado State Director and the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) (BLM 1998a)
- BLM Programmatic Agreement among the Bureau of Land Management, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (1999)
- EO 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment
- EO 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review
- EO 13084, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments
- EO 13287, Preserve America
- Clean Air Act (1990) (42 USC 7401, 7642)
- State of Colorado Air Quality Standards and Regulations
- Clean Water Act (1987) (33 USC 1251), as amended
- Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act (1977) (16 USC 2001 - 2009)
- State of Colorado Water Quality Regulations
- EO 11988, Floodplain Management
- EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands
- Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 (42 USC 13101-13109)
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (1976), as amended by the Federal Facility Compliance Act (1992) (42 USC 6901-6992)
- Bald Eagle Protection Act (1940) (16 USC 668-668d, 54 Stat. 250)
- Endangered Species Act (1973), as amended (16 USC 1531 et seq.)
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (1958) (16 USC 661-666)
- Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act (1978) (16 USC 742l; 92 Stat. 3110)
- Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (1980), as amended (16 USC 2901-2911)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918) (16 USC 715)
- EO 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds

## **2. MANAGEMENT DECISIONS**

The planning process included broad goals to guide alternative development for the RMP. Management goals were also defined for each resource and resource use to guide management actions considered for those programs. Specific goals pertaining to resource and to resource use are presented under the respective headings in following sections of this document. The RMP's goals are presented below:

- Maintain the rural, open landscape, recognizing the resources—including but not limited to agriculture, hunting, ranching, diverse recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, scenic landscapes, and air and water quality—that are integral to the value of such landscapes.
- Improve understanding of ecosystem functioning and how to maintain long-term ecosystem health.
- Maintain, improve, and restore (where needed) healthy ecosystems and habitat to support viable populations of native fish, plants, and wildlife species, while reducing habitat loss and fragmentation.

- Protect cultural and natural resources, using the diversity of tools available to BLM, including the use of special designations as appropriate.
- Reduce conflicts between uses and user groups, as feasible.
- Provide management flexibility, where possible and appropriate, to improve management outcomes while protecting natural and cultural resources.
- Recognize the value of commodity and noncommodity resources, providing a diversity of uses and settings that support a variety of economic opportunities.
- Provide a clear analysis of the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of land use decisions.
- Work collaboratively with stakeholders and the public in achieving the RMP's goals and solicit public participation throughout ongoing planning.
- Provide visitor education and interpretation that could include local history and prehistoric cultures.
- Use adaptive management where appropriate, including best available science, and identify and monitor indicators of acceptable landscape or resource health.

Additional items that were included as acknowledgements for overall vision include the following:

- The requirements of the *Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* (Appendix A) apply to all resource uses on public lands.
- Administrative access is made available on a case-by-case basis for emergency purposes, BLM access to managing resources, and for persons engaged in valid uses such as mining claims, mineral leases, livestock grazing, recreation, and other uses.

The following tables are organized by resource, resource use, or special designation. Each table includes a brief introduction and presents the goals, objectives, and management actions.

## 2.1 Air Quality

Air Quality
<p>Management of air quality is through compliance with federal, State, and local regulations. The Federal Government has established ambient air quality standards for criteria pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment, and the State of Colorado has developed an implementation plan to comply with those standards. Regional haze regulations have been developed to maintain visibility on the least-impaired days and to improve visibility on the most-impaired days in mandatory federal Class I areas across the United States, which are defined as national parks larger than 6,000 acres, wilderness areas larger than 5,000 acres, national memorial parks larger than 5,000 acres, and international parks that existed as of August 1977. Actions authorized on BLM-administered lands and federal mineral estates would need to be conducted so as to comply with Clean Air Act requirements, including the applicable National Ambient Air Quality Standards (Section 109); the State Air Quality Implementation Plan (SIP) (Section 110); control of pollution from federal facilities (Section 118); prevention of significant deterioration, including visibility impacts on mandatory federal Class I areas (Section 160 et seq.); and conformity analyses and determinations (Section 176(c)). Section 118 of the Clean Air Act requires federal agencies to comply with all federal, State, and local air pollution requirements. Section 176(c) prohibits federal agencies from taking any actions within a nonattainment or maintenance area that contribute to a new violation of ambient air quality standards, that increase the frequency or severity of an existing violation, or that delay the attainment of a standard. It also requires federal agencies to conform to SIPs. BLM policy states that BLM recognizes air as a valuable natural and public resource that needs to be protected through prudent management and appropriate mitigation. For example, prescribed burns must comply with BLM Manual 7723 for air quality maintenance requirements to minimize air quality impacts from particulates such as smoke. Management actions for air quality included in this RMP include strategies to achieve desired air quality conditions.</p>
Goals and Objectives
<p><b>Goal/Objective:</b> Comply with all applicable local, State, tribal, and federal laws, regulations, standards, and implementation plans. All applicable State, tribal and federal air quality standards will be met or exceeded. BLM will collaborate, as necessary,</p>

Air Quality
with federal and State partners to achieve standards and address air quality.
Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions
The use of best management practices (BMPs) to mitigate air quality impacts from oil and gas operations will be encouraged.

## 2.2 Soil Resources

Soil Resources
Standards and goals under the Clean Water Act and the Colorado standards and guidelines require measures to minimize soil erosion. BLM complies through evaluation of management actions and implementation of BMPs on a site-specific basis. Fragile soils areas and steep slopes are more susceptible to accelerated erosion, and these require specific management consideration. Management actions for soil resources included in this RMP include strategies to achieve desired conditions.
Goals and Objectives
<p><b>Goal:</b> Maintain or restore soil conditions. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigate negative impacts on soil productivity from accelerated erosion or physical or chemical degradation.</li> <li>• Stabilize and rehabilitate areas where accelerated erosion, runoff, and physical or chemical degradation have resulted in unacceptable resource conditions.</li> <li>• Prevent disturbance to fragile soil areas where resulting erosion could not be controlled.</li> <li>• Collaborate with National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), watershed groups, or local conservation district on soil-related issues, such as soil surveys, impacts, mapping, and other projects.</li> </ul>
Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions
<p><b>Fragile Soils</b> Surface disturbing activities will be allowed on isolated sites that meet fragile soil criteria, but only when performance standards and objectives can be met. Fragile soil criteria areas are rated as highly or severely erodible by wind or water as described by the NRCS in the <i>Area Soil Survey Report</i> or as described by onsite inspection. Fragile soil criteria are also slopes greater than or equal to 35 percent if they have one of the other following soil characteristics: surface texture that is sand, loamy sand, very fine sandy loam, silty clay, or clay; a depth to bedrock of less than 20 inches; an erosion condition rated as "poor"; or a K-factor greater than 0.32.</p> <p>Surface occupancy on public land will be permitted only where adherence to performance objectives for surface disturbing activities within fragile-soil areas is assured. Performance objectives for fragile soils include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain soil productivity both by reducing soil loss from erosion and through proper handling of the soil material.</li> <li>• Reduce the impact to offsite areas by controlling erosion and/or overland flow from these areas.</li> <li>• Protect water quality and quantity of adjacent surface and ground water sources.</li> <li>• Reduce accelerated erosion caused by surface disturbing activities.</li> <li>• Select the best possible site for development to reduce impacts on soil and water resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Surface Use</b> BLM will apply Conditions of Approval (COAs) and BMPs as appropriate on a case-by-case basis at the implementation-level to protect soil resources.</p>

## 2.3 Water Resources

Water Resources
The Clean Water Act (§ 101[a]) was passed in 1948, with amendments in 1977, 1981, and 1987. It is intended to maintain and restore the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The Colorado Department of Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division is responsible for regulating the Clean Water Act by developing water quality standards, determining the stream or river segments not meeting these standards, meet Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reporting requirements, implement permit program for discharges into waters of the United States, and implement provisions of the Act. Section 1342 of the Clean Water Act directs the

### Water Resources

States (through EPA) to regulate any discharge of pollutants to waters. BLM management is to be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Act, by implementing best management practices, best available technology, and other project design features to maintain and protect water quality. The 1976 FLPMA directs and requires BLM to comply with State water quality standards and manage public land so as to preserve and protect certain lands in their natural condition. BLM is required to maintain water quality where it presently meets EPA-approved State of Colorado water quality standards and to improve water quality on public lands where it does not meet standards as defined by Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Any water discharged on the surface by industry is controlled through National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits. Actions authorized on BLM lands must also comply with the mitigation requirements defined by the Office of Surface Mining regulations for coal leasing and by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit requirements.

Management actions will be conducted in conformance with the various regulations in the Clean Water Act, the Colorado Water Quality Control Act, FLPMA, and the Colorado standards and guidelines to achieve the water quality classifications and standards for surface and ground waters developed by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission. Management actions for water quality included in this RMP include strategies to achieve desired water quality conditions.

### Goals and Objectives

**Goal A:**

Protect and maintain present ground water quality. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Ensure that actions that could potentially affect ground water quality are conducted by using BMPs.

**Goal B:**

Maintain or improve the surface water quality and quantity and the integrity of streams and their associated riparian values on public lands. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Use BMPs to limit disturbances in and near streams or riparian/wetland systems.
- Maintain watershed integrity, stream stability, and functioning hydrology.
- Achieve proper functioning condition (PFC) in existing riparian/wetland systems that do not meet land health and water quality standards.
- Identify and, where possible, remove existing sources of degradation.
- Prevent, where possible, accelerated erosion and physical or chemical degradation in upland areas.
- Ensure that land use employs BMPs to protect surface water resources.
- Strive for sufficient quantity, quality, and timing of water to support water-dependent resource values, including fisheries, riparian communities, wetland communities, aquatic insects, terrestrial wildlife, and migratory/nonmigratory birds.
- Strive for sufficient quantity, quality, and timing of water to support human and economic uses of water on public lands, including livestock grazing, recreation, forestry, and mineral development.
- Minimize, through BMPs, sedimentation and erosion of water bodies.

### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

In addition to the management action listed below, the management actions for soil resources (Section 2.2) would also achieve water quality goals and objectives.

Establish no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations for up to 0.25 mile from perennial water sources, if necessary, depending on type and use of the water source, soil type, and slope steepness. Exceptions would be granted according to Appendix B.

## 2.4 Vegetation

### Vegetation

The FLPMA and the Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA) of 1978 clearly define the objectives and priorities for management of public land vegetation resources. Guidance contained in the Department of Interior regulations for *Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* (43 CFR 4180) directs public land management toward the maintenance or restoration of the physical function and biological health of rangeland ecosystems. Regional standards of rangeland health and guidelines for livestock grazing management were developed for public land administered by BLM. The Colorado Standards and Guidelines (Appendix A) are the minimal acceptable conditions for addressing the health, productivity, and sustainability of rangelands. These standards describe healthy rangelands rather than rangeland byproducts. Achievement of a standard is accomplished through observing, measuring, and monitoring appropriate indicators, followed by the evaluation of that



## Vegetation

data. An indicator is a component of a system whose characteristics (e.g., presence, absence, quantity, and distribution) can be observed, measured, or monitored by sound scientific principles. The standards will direct the management of public lands and focus the implementation of this plan on the maintenance or attainment of healthy rangelands.

The Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990s (BLM 1991a) establishes goals and objectives for managing riparian/wetland resources. Riparian areas are managed to attain or maintain PFC. The PFC for different types of riparian/wetland systems is fully defined in BLM Technical Reference 1737-15, *A User Guide to Assessing Proper Functioning Condition and the Supporting Science for Lotic Areas*, and in BLM Technical Reference 1737-16, *A User Guide to Assessing Proper Functioning Condition and the Supporting Science for Lentic Areas*. PFC can be summarized as the minimum acceptable level of ecological status in which vegetation, landform, and/or large woody debris create a level of inherent resiliency that allows the stream or wetland system to be protected from erosive forces, capture sediment, provide for infiltration, and create appropriate habitat. Riparian areas will be maintained, improved, or restored to enhance forage conditions, provide wildlife habitat, and improve stream and water quality. To achieve PFC, riparian areas will be managed to maintain dominance by those native species capable of stabilizing soils and stream banks. All riparian areas will be assessed, as needed, to determine their existing condition and whether specific management actions are needed for improvement.

### Goals and Objectives

#### **Goal A (Vegetation):**

Collaborate with stakeholders and resource users in providing an array of habitats, suitably distributed across the landscape, in order to support biodiversity and viable populations of native plant and animal species. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Manage for a diversity of seral stages within plant communities.
- Manage for connections between varieties of plant communities on a landscape scale.
- Manage for juniper and other large woody species within their historic range of natural variability.
- Restore natural disturbance regimes, such as fire, and use vegetation treatments to accomplish biodiversity objectives.
- Establish desired plant communities (DPC), in coordination with stakeholders across the LSFO, in a way that focuses on native communities and intact ecosystems while allowing non-native species, where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Goal B (Sagebrush):**

Sustain the integrity of the sagebrush biome in order to support viable populations of greater sage-grouse and other sagebrush obligate species. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Maintain large patches of high-quality sagebrush habitats, consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado.
- Maintain connections between sagebrush habitats on a landscape scale, as allowed by the range site condition.

#### **Goal C (Sagebrush):**

Identify and initiate restoration and rehabilitation of sagebrush habitat while maintaining a mosaic of canopy cover and seral stages. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Reconnect large patches of sagebrush habitat, consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado.
- Reduce the encroachment of juniper and other large woody species into the sagebrush habitat.
- Restore a diversity of seral stages within sagebrush communities.
- Restore the quantity, species composition, and species diversity of sagebrush understories.

#### **Goal D (Forestry):**

Manage for healthy forest and woodland communities. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Manage forests and woodlands to improve forest resiliency to disturbances from insects, disease, and wildfires; restore habitats for special status species; and produce a sustainable supply of forest products.
- Maintain the appropriate species diversity and age-class distribution for forest and woodland communities that are resilient to disturbances.
- Recognize and manage aspen as a unique and limited high-value forest type for a wide variety of resources.

#### **Goal E (Riparian and Wetlands):**

Maintain or improve the integrity of streams and their associated riparian values on public lands that meet land health and water quality standards. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

Vegetation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage human-caused disturbances in and near riparian/wetland systems.</li> <li>• Maintain or improve watershed integrity and functioning hydrology.</li> <li>• Recognize and manage riparian/wetland communities as a limited and high-value vegetation type.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal F (Riparian and Wetlands):</b> Achieve PFC in existing riparian/wetland systems that do not meet land health and water quality standards. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and, if possible, remove existing sources of degradation.</li> <li>• Protect riparian/wetland systems from new sources of degradation.</li> <li>• Work with users to identify ways to improve riparian areas and to minimize degradation from existing uses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal G (Weeds):</b> Reduce the occurrence of noxious and undesirable plant species. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all land use actions that could potentially increase the occurrence of noxious weeds are conducted by using BMPs.</li> <li>• Apply principles of integrated pest management.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal H (Weeds):</b> Integrate weed management across landscape and ownership boundaries. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue, wherever possible, the use of cooperative agreements to coordinate weed management actions.</li> <li>• Identify ways of partnering with resource users and other stakeholders to reduce the occurrence of noxious weeds.</li> </ul>
Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions
<p><b>Desired Plant Communities</b> Upland and riparian vegetation will be managed to achieve DPC objectives that have been established for a localized area to meet the Colorado Public Land Health Standards and the objectives for the Little Snake Planning Area. The DPC objectives will be determined through consulting various references including the NRCS's <i>Range Site Guides</i> and ecological site inventory data, which are targeted to the specific objectives for the area. The DPC objectives will emphasize wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, watershed, and biodiversity values while maintaining or enhancing habitat for special status species.</p>
<p><b>Vegetation Treatments</b> Vegetation treatments will be used to improve diversity of seral stages and species, as appropriate. Work with the Northwest Colorado Sage-Grouse Working Group to identify, maintain, and treat vegetation where necessary. Creation of functional blocks of sagebrush as sage-grouse habitat will be emphasized. In addition, vegetation treatments will be applied to reduce expansion of juniper and other large woody species to mimic natural conditions. Vegetation treatments may be one of the tools used where land health assessments (LHA) indicate a standard is not being met for reasons other than existing livestock management (such as areas where reclamation efforts have not been successful or areas with heavy OHV use) to improve conditions and may also be implemented to achieve large scale habitat and diversity objectives.</p>
<p><b>Forestry</b> Treat Ponderosa pine and lodge pole pine stands as necessary to achieve a diversity of age class and functionality. Treatments will likely be a mix of commercial forest product sales and fuels-related treatments aimed at maintaining an overall viable stand and reducing the threat of large fires in the area. There will be improvement or maintenance of aspen communities, especially in the Cold Spring landscape and in Routt County. Aspen improvement will likely entail using nonharvest methods such as prescribed fire, chainsaw thinning, and other mechanical means aimed at promoting aspen regeneration. Treat pinyon and juniper as necessary to maintain a mosaic of age classes and to balance the amount of treatment against natural pinyon-juniper expansion. Pinyon-juniper restoration could be treated through a combination of prescribed burning, biomass removal, mechanical mastication, and designated firewood gathering areas.</p>
<p><b>Noxious Weeds</b> Monitor, prioritize, and treat noxious weeds. Invasive species will be eliminated by focusing on areas of new infestations and, where possible, on extirpating existing populations wherever they exist within the planning area. The occurrence of noxious weeds could be reduced through partnering with resource users and other stakeholders. Maximize utilization of cooperative agreements for control of invasive species will be encouraged. Continue implementation of noxious weed and invasive species control actions as per national guidance and local weed management plans in cooperation with State, federal, affected counties, adjoining private land owners, and other partners or interests directly affected.</p>

## 2.5 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Fish and Wildlife Habitat
<p>Section 102.8 of FLPMA requires that public land be managed to protect the quality of multiple resources and to provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals. PRIA also directs BLM to improve rangeland conditions with due consideration of the needs of wildlife and their habitats. Rangeland health regulations identify the need to foster productive and diverse populations and communities of plants and animals. The Sikes Act of 1974 is a congressional mandate for BLM to “plan, develop, maintain, and coordinate programs for the conservation and rehabilitation of wildlife, fish, and game.” In addition, executive orders for floodplain management and protection of wetlands provide further direction for protection and management of fisheries habitat.</p> <p>BLM’s role is to provide habitat that supports desired aquatic plants and animals. Species manipulations, such as introductions and population management, are under the authority of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPAW).</p> <p>Wildlife depends on riparian/wetland areas for vital habitat components. In managing riparian/wetland areas, BLM should consider the consequences and relationships of its management to the life cycle needs of wildlife. The character of upland vegetation (arrangements, densities, age classes, etc.) greatly influences wildlife habitat quality and productivity. Because characteristics of upland vegetation can have varied responses to different land uses, BLM considers the consequences of land uses and treatments to the health of wildlife habitat. Proper range or forest management may not necessarily result in satisfactory wildlife habitat due to habitat disturbance or displacement by humans. In such instances, wildlife habitat must also have a reasonable amount of protection from such human-caused impacts. This is especially true during breeding periods and during use of winter ranges, where most human activity may result in displacement impacts.</p>
Goals and Objectives
<p><b>Goal A:</b> Sustain the integrity of the sagebrush biome to support viable populations of greater sage-grouse and other sagebrush obligate species, consistent with local conservation plans. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain large patches of high-quality sagebrush habitats consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado.</li> <li>• Maintain connections between sagebrush habitats on a landscape scale.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal B:</b> Identify and initiate restoration and rehabilitation of sagebrush habitat while maintaining a mosaic of canopy cover and seral stages. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconnect large patches of sagebrush habitat consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado.</li> <li>• Reduce encroachment of juniper and other large woody species into sagebrush habitat.</li> <li>• Restore a diversity of seral stages within sagebrush communities.</li> <li>• Restore the quantity, species composition, and species diversity of sagebrush understories.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal C:</b> Manage habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species endemic to key vegetation types by maintaining adequate habitat quantity, quality, and continuity. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve and/or maintain those areas that are key wildlife habitats and their desired plant communities.</li> <li>• Maintain or restore connectivity between habitat use areas.</li> <li>• Maintain, restore, or enhance the habitat of migratory bird species (i.e., neotropicals, waterfowl, and raptors).</li> <li>• Promote conservation and minimize the take of migratory birds.</li> <li>• Maintain and promote high-quality habitat for big game populations.</li> <li>• Provide habitat to support sufficient raptor prey populations.</li> <li>• Provide sufficient nesting and fledging habitat to ensure sustainable raptor populations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal D:</b> Manage disturbances to wildlife populations. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage access to seasonal use areas during crucial time frames.</li> <li>• Manage access in crucial habitats.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal E:</b> Provide an array of aquatic habitats that support biodiversity and viable populations of species. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p>

<b>Fish and Wildlife Habitat</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote improvement and recovery of current, historic, and potential habitats of aquatic species.</li> <li>• Maintain or improve riparian conditions to provide for forage, habitat, and biodiversity.</li> <li>• Encourage sport fisheries where these would not be detrimental to native fish populations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal F:</b> Cooperate with CPAW. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In collaboration with key agencies, provide input to CPAW on establishing fish and wildlife populations that can be sustained by the available habitat.</li> <li>• Seek input from CPAW on managing fish and wildlife habitat on public lands.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions</b>
<p><b>Improving and Maintaining Sagebrush Habitat Functionality by Limiting Fragmentation</b></p> <p>Within the planning area, BLM and CPAW evaluated sagebrush habitats and placed them within high, medium and low priority categories (Map 4). The lowest priority category is composed of parts of the landscape that are least important to wildlife. The medium category includes areas wildlife species are highly dependent upon, and the high category includes those areas which are critical to wildlife due to high range fidelity or areas that are irreplaceable. It is important to note that the ranked levels of these categories are relative. Nearly all portions of the LSFO are highly valuable to wildlife, but some habitat types and locations are clearly more valuable than others.</p> <p>The lowest priority habitats in the LSFO RMPPA consist of overall big game winter range and summer range. The medium priority habitats consist of big game winter concentration areas, severe winter range, migration corridors, sage-grouse winter range, sage-grouse breeding habitat, and areas within the 4 mile radius of leks located outside of the sage-grouse core areas. The highest priority habitats consist of sage-grouse core areas (Map 4), which include 4 mile lek radii around the largest leks, portions of sage-grouse winter range, and portions of big game winter range.</p> <p>These areas were defined based on known sage-grouse lek sites and other information, but are intended to be flexible in the RMP so that new sites discovered during the life of the RMP will also be included. Like other oil and gas stipulations, these apply to both federal surface and federal mineral estates.</p> <p>The appropriate wildlife habitat stipulations will be determined by the priority of sagebrush habitat the lease is located in and whether a lease is new or existing. If a lease straddles two or more levels of habitat priority, the higher priority stipulation will apply.</p> <p><b>Low Priority Habitats</b></p> <p>In these identified areas, oil and gas development will proceed as described in this RMP, with all appropriate stipulations applying, subject to the exception, modification, and waiver criteria described in Appendix B. No additional mitigation beyond the stipulations described in the other sections of the Approved RMP will be required.</p> <p><b>Medium Priority Habitats, Existing Leases</b></p> <p>For existing oil and gas leases at the time of the ROD, participation in this approach will be voluntary. A valid existing lease conveys certain rights of development to the leaseholder. A stipulation cannot be added to an existing lease after the lease is issued. Oil and gas operators could opt into an agreement to limit surface disturbance to 5 percent of the project area and submit a Plan of Development (POD) which illustrates a strategy to keep large blocks of habitat undeveloped. In return, BLM will grant exceptions to big game and sage-grouse timing limitation stipulations, allowing larger windows for development (drilling, completions and construction). If a proposal and/or operator meets both criteria, BLM will grant an exception to big game winter range and sage-grouse nesting and critical winter range timing stipulations for all applications for permits to drill (APDs) in the project area (as described below), allowing a larger window for development. Until these criteria are met, timing limitation stipulations will apply as stated on leases. This agreement does not pertain to the NSO stipulation around sage-grouse leks or timing stipulations for raptors and other species, which will remain in effect. For these stipulations, as well as stipulations on leases which are not subject to this voluntary agreement, BLM could grant exceptions, modifications, or waivers through normal procedures as described in Appendix B. The agreement must be adhered to for the life of the leases in the project area.</p> <p>Approval of exceptions to big game and sage-grouse timing limitation stipulations for year-round drilling will require active monitoring for compliance with the conditions of approval outlined in the voluntary agreement. Operators must continually meet these criteria throughout development of the project area, or the authorization for the exception of timing stipulations will terminate. Compliance history will be a factor in approving this tradeoff for future development. If an operator were to breach the agreement, BLM will not allow the same operator to enter into this agreement again.</p> <p>For operators who choose not to opt into this voluntary approach in medium potential habitats, BLM will require habitat protection BMPs. Appropriate BMPs will be required as COAs on drilling applications on existing leases within medium priority habitats not enrolled in a voluntary surface disturbance limiting agreement. BMPs could include, but will not be limited to, the practices listed in Section 2.6 (special status species management).</p>

## Fish and Wildlife Habitat

### ***Medium Priority Habitats, New Leases***

For any new leases which overlie a medium priority habitat, a stipulation will be attached to the lease to comply with the two criteria described in more detail below: a 5 percent disturbance limitation and a POD illustrating a strategy to leave large blocks of undisturbed habitat. These criteria will be mandatory and BLM will not be obligated to grant an operator an exception to timing limitation stipulations. Operators will have to apply for an exception to this stipulation, which BLM will consider on a case-by-case basis.

Non-oil and gas related projects may also be held to a higher standard in medium priority habitats. BLM may require additional mitigation for ROWs, recreation facilities, range improvements, commercial forest harvest and other projects within these areas.

#### ***Defining the project area boundary***

Where the surface disturbance stipulation is voluntary, the operator will define the project boundary. An operator is allowed a lot of flexibility in defining the project area. The only requirement is that they control the oil and gas development within the area so that they are able to meet the necessary criteria without interference from other operators. A project boundary could be composed of as little as one lease, or as much as several leases under different operators, or even a federal oil and gas unit. The leases within the project area could either be connected or not contiguous. The project area could be composed of a mixture of federal and private surface.

The total allowable surface disturbance will be calculated for the entire project area. For example, a project boundary of 1,000 acres will allow 50 acres of disturbance regardless of the size of the leases in the project area. A project area could be composed of medium and high priority habitats. In this case, allowable disturbance in the two different types will be calculated separately. For example, a 1,000 acre project area with 500 acres medium priority habitat and 500 acres high priority habitat, no more than 25 acres of medium priority habitat and 5 acres of high priority habitat could be disturbed at one time. When calculating total acres in a project area, all leased lands will be included, including areas with NSO stipulations. For example, if there are 200 acres covered by an NSO stipulation for sage-grouse in a 1,000 acre project area, the total project area will be 1,000 acres, not 800.

It is not necessary for one leaseholder to hold all leases in a project area. In the case of the project area being defined by a federal oil and gas unit, the lead operator will be responsible for coordinating the oil and gas development so the criteria are met. Outside of established units, but within landscapes with multiple leaseholders, multiple operators could enter into this approach together, coordinating development together to ensure meeting the criteria within the project area. Development will have to be organized so that one operator cannot utilize all allowable disturbance acreage for the project area.

Larger project areas will benefit both the operator and the wildlife resource. Large project areas will allow operators more flexibility in remaining below the disturbance threshold, as there will be more acres available to disturb. Likewise, larger project areas will facilitate larger sage-grouse sanctuaries and better create habitat protection on a landscape scale.

For new leases where this approach is mandatory, the operator could suggest a project area boundary to BLM for approval, which could include existing leases. If the operator does not have a specific project area in mind, compliance with established criteria will be required for the boundary of the new lease.

Below are the two criteria that an operator must meet when entering into a voluntary agreement or complying with a mandatory stipulation in medium priority habitats.

#### ***Criterion #1 for Medium Priority Habitats***

No more than 5 percent of the surface area of the project area will be disturbed at any time. In this context, surface disturbance pertains to only oil and gas actions. Other BLM permitted activities, nonpermitted activities, and non-oil and gas related ROWs do not count toward the 5 percent maximum. Oil and gas related ROWs that are owned by a third party also do not count toward the 5 percent limit; only actions that the leaseholder is responsible for are included in the total. All disturbances associated with oil and gas operations performed by the leaseholder, however, do count toward this limitation, including well pads, roads, pipelines, exploration and production facilities, and all other infrastructure. In addition, existing oil and gas disturbance also counts toward the 5 percent threshold. In this context, "existing disturbance" means areas where vegetation has been stripped or otherwise removed or destroyed, and for which revegetation has not been initiated, or has not achieved reclamation success standards. For project areas already exceeding 5 percent oil and gas-related disturbance, a no-net-gain principle would go into effect, which is described below.

Although the 5 percent surface disturbance threshold is the guiding factor, spacing of oil and gas facilities on the surface is also an important concept in limiting habitat fragmentation. If it is assumed that each facility occupies 8 acres, this is equivalent to disturbing 5 percent of a 160-acre block. The intent is not to require 160-acre spacing but to average no more than one facility for each 160 acres within a project area while leaving large blocks of habitat undisturbed. Therefore, operators are encouraged to develop proposals that leave larger blocks of sagebrush habitat undisturbed within project areas, by clustering facilities, carefully designing road and pipeline systems to minimize disturbance, or other means.

### Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Disturbed areas can be recovered on a rolling-reclamation basis. Upon successful reclamation, reclaimed areas will no longer be counted toward the 5 percent limit, and the total area disturbed in the project area will be decreased by that amount. Successful reclamation is defined in the Reclamation Performance Standard described in Appendix C. The criteria used to evaluate whether the reclamation performance standard is met will depend on whether the reclamation is interim or final.

In areas where existing oil and gas infrastructure already exceeds the 5 percent disturbance threshold, a no-net-gain principle will be employed. A leaseholder could satisfy this criterion if it can show in a POD that it will reclaim areas equal to the area proposed for new development and meet the performance standard for successful reclamation in those areas. In-kind offsite or compensatory mitigation could also count toward recuperating disturbed areas, if approved by BLM, although it may not necessarily be on a one-acre per one-acre basis. Reclamation and offsite mitigation will be required to meet the same reclamation performance standard as described above. If mitigation is not performed as agreed upon, or any aspect of the POD is not followed, BLM will no longer grant exceptions to timing stipulations and will issue noncompliance to the leaseholder.

#### ***Criterion #2 for Medium Priority Habitats***

Development and approval of a POD, which contains a strategy for reducing habitat fragmentation and maintaining large blocks of sagebrush habitat, is an important requirement in this approach. The operator needs to have some level of confidence and certainty in their POD. PODs may be developed in stages and updated annually (see the discussion on *Maintaining the Project Record* below). The area of the project described in the POD could include multiple leases or units, either connected or not contiguous. However, BLM or the operator may determine that separate PODs are needed for areas that are not connected.

A complete POD consists of the following components, if applicable:

- Cover letter containing operator name, project name, list of wells (name and number by lease, with legal description including quarter-quarter)
- Master drilling plan
- Master surface use plan, including plans for surface reclamation, a baseline calculation of total surface area currently disturbed by oil and gas activity in the project area, and the total area to be disturbed through the proposed development
- A strategy for limiting and/or mitigating sagebrush habitat fragmentation with the goal of maintaining large, unfragmented blocks of sagebrush habitat. The plan will demonstrate significant control of fragmentation in a number of ways, including:
  - Reducing surface density of facilities, roads, pipelines, and other ROWs
  - Focusing development near existing ROWs
  - Clustering facilities, including the use of directional drilling where feasible and utilizing closed drilling systems (no reserve pits)
  - Minimizing oil- and gas-related activity in sagebrush habitats, including reducing traffic through field road management, closing roads to public use, remote telemetry of wells, piping of produced fluids rather than trucking, etc.
  - Using new technologies, including surface mats, self-contained rigs, limited impact drilling (e.g., small roads and small pads)
  - Being sensitive to different habitat types within the project area and developing a strategy that protects important habitat types. Operators should consider seasonal habitats and guide development away from important breeding, summer, fall and winter habitats. Mitigation plans, compensatory mitigation proposals
  - Acceptance of applicable BMPs
- Water management plan
- Cultural resource inventory plan
- Wildlife monitoring plan
- Project maps, including:
  - Surface ownership with project boundary
  - Mineral ownership with project boundary
  - Existing and proposed well sites
  - Compressor sites
  - Flow line routes
  - Utility line routes
  - Transportation routes
- List of all permitting agencies involved
- Surface owner agreements
- Water mitigation agreements
- Any additional information

## Fish and Wildlife Habitat

### ***High Priority Habitats, Existing Leases***

The approach will be the same as medium priority habitats. For existing oil and gas leases at the time of the ROD, participation in this approach will be voluntary. If an operator chose to opt into an agreement, they will have to develop a plan which keeps surface disturbance below 5 percent and creates large refuges of undeveloped habitat. As an incentive to enter into this approach, BLM will grant an exception to big game and sage-grouse timing stipulations if the operator complies with the two criteria described below.

For operators who choose not to opt into this voluntary approach in high potential habitats, BLM will require habitat protection BMPs. Appropriate BMPs will be required as COAs on drilling applications on existing leases within high priority habitats not enrolled in a voluntary surface disturbance limiting agreement. BMPs could include, but will not be limited to, the practices listed in Section 2.6 (special status species management).

### ***High Priority Habitats, New Leases***

For new leases within high priority habitat, a lease stipulation will be attached to comply with the two criteria: a 1 percent disturbance limitation and a POD illustrating a strategy to leave large blocks of undisturbed habitat. These criteria will be mandatory and BLM will not be obligated to grant an exception to timing limitation stipulations. Operators will have to apply for an exception to this stipulation, which BLM will consider on a case-by-case basis. To grant an exception to the 1 percent disturbance threshold, the operator will have to prove that it went to extraordinary means to mitigate or improve high priority habitats. This could include enlisting surrounding leaseholders into a plan to protect even larger blocks of habitat, or performing BLM-approved compensatory mitigation.

Non-oil and gas related projects will be held to a higher standard in high priority habitats. BLM may require additional mitigation for ROWs, recreation facilities, range improvements, and other projects within these areas. BLM will make an attempt to site projects outside of high potential habitats, if possible. Depending on other possible locations and alternatives, as well as conditions on the ground, BLM may not approve such projects in high potential habitats. BLM will consider these projects on a case-by-case basis to ensure management intent with respect to sagebrush obligate species within these habitats can be achieved.

The two criteria that an operator must meet when entering into a voluntary agreement or complying with a mandatory stipulation in high priority habitats are similar to those for medium potential habitats.

#### ***Criterion #1 for High Priority Habitats***

No more than 1 percent of the surface area of the project area will be disturbed at any time. This requirement will be exactly the same as for medium priority habitats, except the surface disturbance threshold will be 1 percent of the project area or lease. Existing oil and gas related disturbance will still count towards the total. Areas over 1 percent existing disturbance will be subject to the no-net-gain rule. The principles of rolling reclamation and compensatory mitigation will also apply to high priority habitats.

#### ***Criterion #2 for High Priority Habitats***

A POD which puts forward a strategy for limiting and/or mitigating sagebrush habitat fragmentation with the goal of maintaining large, unfragmented blocks of sagebrush habitat will also be a requirement for high priority habitats. This requirement will be exactly the same as described for medium potential habitats, except that BLM will look for more measures to protect these critical communities.

### ***Maintaining the Project Record: Baseline Measurements, Monitoring, and Updating PODs***

This approach requires a baseline measurement of existing disturbance as well as monitoring to determine when the 5 percent or 1 percent threshold is reached. Before a leaseholder enters into the agreement, a GIS analysis of existing disturbance in the project area will be performed by the operator as part of the POD. Operators will provide BLM with Federal Geographic Data Committee-compliant metadata and GIS data for all existing oil and gas related disturbance. Using global positioning system (GPS) on the ground or digitizing disturbance from satellite imagery are two possible methods to compile a baseline disturbance map. The total number of acres of existing disturbance in the project area will be calculated by the operator. Portions of the project area will be ground-truthed by BLM to ensure accuracy.

A running total of surface disturbance in the project area will be performed by the operator and updated in the POD at least annually. Annual meetings between BLM and the operator will be required to maintain a project record. A draft POD will be required for BLM review prior to annual planning meetings. A final POD, based on comments and discussion during the annual planning meeting, will be submitted within a reasonable timeframe thereafter.

During an annual meeting or in another forum, the proposed POD will be reviewed and recommendations will be made to ensure that the measures laid out will effectively protect sagebrush and big game habitat. Additionally, a running total of surface disturbance in the project area, including anticipated development for that year, will be performed by the operator and included in the POD. The operator will be required to supply an annual reclamation status report and plan for all disturbances in the project area so that BLM could assess reclamation success. BLM and the operator could take the following day, or another time, to ground-truth the scope of the proposed development and review reclaimed areas to see if they have met the reclamation requirements described in Appendix C. Proposals for compensatory mitigation could also be discussed.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat
<p><b>Raptors (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], hawks, and owls)</b></p> <p>NSO will be allowed within a 0.25 mile radius of raptor nest sites. The NSO area could be altered depending upon the active status of the nest site or upon the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening to the nest site. Raptor nesting and fledgling habitat will be closed to surface disturbing activities from February 1 to August 15 within a 0.25 mile buffer zone around the nest site. However, during years when a nest site is unoccupied, or unoccupied by or after May 15, these seasonal limitations may be excepted; they may also be excepted once the young have fledged and dispersed from the nest.</p> <p>Exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.</p>
<p><b>Peregrine Falcon</b></p> <p>NSO will be allowed within a 0.25 mile radius of cliff nesting complexes. NSO areas may be altered depending upon the active status of the nesting complex or upon the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening. In addition, exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.</p> <p>Peregrine falcon cliff nesting complexes will be closed to surface disturbing activities from March 16 to July 31 within a 0.5 mile buffer area around the nesting complex to prevent abandonment and desertion of established territories. However, during years when a nest is unoccupied, or unoccupied by or after May 15, the seasonal stipulation may be excepted. The stipulations may also be excepted once the young have fledged and dispersed from the nest.</p>
<p><b>Waterfowl and Shorebird</b></p> <p>NSO will be allowed on significant production areas, such as waterfowl habitat management areas and rookeries. NSO areas may be altered depending upon the active status of the production areas or upon the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening. Exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.</p>
<p><b>Big Game Species (mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, and bighorn sheep)</b></p> <p>Crucial winter habitat will be closed to surface disturbing activities from December 1 to April 30, with the intent that this stipulation will be applied after the big game hunting season. In the case that hunting season extends later, exceptions will be applied according to Appendix B. Big game birthing areas will be closed to surface disturbing activities for the following species and during the following periods: elk calving (April 16 to June 30), pronghorn antelope fawning (May 1 to July 15), and bighorn sheep lambing (May 1 to July 15). In addition, exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.</p>
<p><b>Greater Sandhill Crane</b></p> <p>Nesting and staging habitat areas will be closed to surface disturbing activities from March 1 to October 16. Exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.</p>
<p><b>Osprey</b></p> <p>Osprey nesting and fledgling habitat will be closed to surface disturbing activities from April 1 to August 31. This closure will apply to a 0.5 mile buffer zone around the habitat to avoid nest abandonment. Exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.</p>
<p><b>Wildlife Use Adjustments</b></p> <p>Wildlife use adjustments will be recommended to CPAW if monitoring data indicates such adjustments are necessary. No similar actions for controlled surface use (CSU), site-specific relocation (SSR), and timing stipulations.</p>
<p><b>White-Tailed Prairie Dogs</b></p> <p>CSU and timing stipulations will be as follows: Surface disturbing activities occurring over more than 1 acre will not be permitted in active prairie dog towns less than 10 acres in size. These activities will be relocated to the edge of the active prairie dog town. To protect prairie dog pups, surface disturbing activities will not be permitted in prairie dog towns between April 1 and June 15. Exceptions may also be considered on a case by case basis following Appendix B guidelines.</p>

## 2.6 Special Status Species

Special Status Species
<p>Special status species include those species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 as amended, as well as those designated by BLM as "Bureau sensitive". Bureau sensitive species are designated by BLM State Directors in accordance with the criteria provided in the revised 6840 <i>Manual for Management of Special Status Species</i>. Section 102.8 of FLPMA requires that public land</p>



### Special Status Species

be managed to protect the quality of ecological and environmental values and, where appropriate, to protect their natural condition. The ESA mandates that management take the lead in the conservation or recovery of federally listed threatened or endangered species. The ESA, as well as BLM Special Status Species/6840 Manual, also encourages management to protect special status species that are not currently listed as threatened or endangered. Federal agencies are required to ensure that the actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of species listed as threatened or endangered or that adversely modify or destroy their critical habitat under the ESA. BLM will avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of any federally listed, State listed, or proposed for listing species; will actively promote species recovery; and will work to improve the status of candidate and sensitive species. If a federally listed species may be affected by a proposed land use allocation or management action, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) pursuant to Section 7 of ESA will occur.

Most special status species are limited in their distributions, populations, or habitats and may be at risk over various geographic areas. Where evidence suggests that land uses are adversely affecting special status species that are not currently listed as threatened or endangered, it is in the public interest to prevent having to federally list those species under ESA. Listing a species as threatened or endangered may lead to restrictions on land uses, and under some circumstances, commodity users may experience adverse socioeconomic impacts because of such listings. In most cases, therefore, there are both socioeconomic and biological benefits associated with conserving species so that these can avoid being federally listed species in the future.

Maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of populations or habitat may each represent an appropriate BLM management decision, depending on the habitat needs or specific circumstances of a species. Restoration or enhancement may not always be the only clear choices for BLM actions regarding special status species. One potential limitation that could delay restoration or enhancement actions is that biological mechanisms adversely affecting a species may not be understood well enough to identify needed management changes.

### Goals and Objectives

#### Goal A:

Preserve and protect special status species. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Maintain the populations of BLM sensitive species at levels that will avoid having to list these species in the future as threatened or endangered.
- Maintain, restore, or enhance the habitat of special status species, including designated critical habitats for listed species.
- Maintain or restore the populations of special status species to the extent possible.
- Prioritize inventories, monitoring, and other scientific studies to better understand the ecology of special status species to improve their management.

#### Goal B:

Sustain the integrity of the sagebrush biome to maintain viable populations of greater sage-grouse and other sagebrush obligate species, consistent with local conservation plans. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Maintain large patches of high-quality sagebrush habitats consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado.
- Maintain connections between sagebrush habitats on a landscape scale.

#### Goal C:

Identify and initiate restoration and rehabilitation of sagebrush habitat while maintaining a mosaic of canopy cover and seral stages. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Reconnect large patches of sagebrush habitat consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado.
- Reduce the encroachment of juniper and other large woody species onto sagebrush habitat.
- Restore a diversity of seral stages within sagebrush communities.
- Restore the quantity, species composition, and species diversity of sagebrush understories.

### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

#### Colorado BLM Sensitive Species

Before any surface disturbance activity, surveys will be conducted of potential habitat for Colorado BLM Sensitive Species, including plants and wildlife. Should any such species be found, all disruptive activities will be halted until species-specific protective measures are developed and implemented. There will be CSU stipulations on habitat areas containing special status species, such as federally listed, proposed, and candidate species. Exception criteria detailed in Appendix B will apply.

### Special Status Species

BLM will also survey for rare plant species, and if any such communities were found, all disruptive activities will be delayed until specific protective measures are developed and implemented, if appropriate.

Management for specific areas with sensitive species is identified below:

#### **Limestone Ridge**

The area objective will be to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic quality. Sensitive plants and remnant plant communities will be avoided through a CSU stipulation. The area will be closed to OHV use. Scenic values will be protected through a visual resources management (VRM) Class II designation. The area will be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables, and will be an exclusion area for ROWs unless they were associated with valid existing rights.

#### **Lookout Mountain**

The area objective will be to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic quality. Sensitive plants and remnant plant communities will be avoided through a CSU stipulation. With the exception of the area immediately surrounding the existing communication site on Lookout Mountain, which will have a VRM Class III designation, the Lookout Mountain area will have a VRM Class II designation to protect the scenic values. The area will be available for mineral location, and closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables. OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails. The area will also have Class II and III VRM designations. Renewal of existing and authorization of future ROWs will be allowed upon approval of a site-specific development plan consistent with area resource objectives.

#### **Natural Systems**

Rare plant and rare plant community occurrences within these areas will be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities.

#### **Ferruginous Hawk**

From February 1 to August 15, a 1 mile buffer around nesting and fledgling habitat will be closed to surface disturbing activities to avoid nest abandonment. Exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.

#### **Columbian Sharp-Tailed Grouse**

NSO will be allowed within a 0.25 mile radius of a lek site. The NSO area may be altered depending upon the active status of the lek or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening to the lek site. Nesting habitat will be closed to surface disturbing activities from March 1 to June 30. Crucial winter habitat will be closed from December 16 to March 15. Exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.

#### **Colorado River Fishes**

Require NSO stipulations within critical or occupied habitat of Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), humpback chub (*Gila cypha*), and bonytail (*Gila elegans*). Exceptions that could adversely affect listed fish (such as bridge abutments) will require site-specific consultation with the USFWS.

#### **Greater Sage-Grouse**

To reduce potential impacts on greater sage-grouse lek integrity, NSO will be applied within a 0.6 mile radius of a lek site. The NSO area may be altered depending upon the active status of the lek, habitat characteristics, or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening to the lek site. Exceptions will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.

To prevent disturbing up to 75 percent of nesting birds, between March 1 and June 30, greater sage-grouse nesting and early brood-rearing habitat (Map 5) will be stipulated as CSU for oil and gas operations and avoidance areas for other surface disturbing activities within a 4 mile radius of the perimeter of a lek. All surface disturbing activities will avoid only nesting and early brood-rearing habitat within the 4 mile radius of the lek during this time period. Exceptions, modification, or waivers will be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B. The actual area to be avoided will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on applicable scientific research and site-specific analysis and in coordination with commodity users and other appropriate entities.

The use of the following list of BMPs will be encouraged for all surface disturbing activities, and BLM may require implementation of some of these BMPs. Use of these BMPs becomes even more important once a disturbance affects 10 percent of the nesting habitat within a 4 mile radius of an active lek. As new BMPs are developed, they may be added to this list of BMPs or may replace some of those now listed.

Habitat Reclamation:

- Use early and effective reclamation techniques, including interim reclamation, to allow sage-grouse habitat to be reestablished as soon as possible. This may require multiple reclamation efforts.
- Use reclamation seed mixes, consisting of native bunchgrasses, forbs, and subspecies of big sagebrush, that are appropriate for the disturbed site and its potential.

### Special Status Species

- Practice reclamation techniques that speed recovery of preexisting vegetation.
- Avoid the use of aggressive, non-native grasses (e.g., intermediate wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass, crested wheatgrass, and smooth brome) in reclamation seed mixes.
- Cooperate with county weed programs to control noxious weed infestations associated with oil and gas development disturbances.

#### Footprint Reduction:

- Reduce the long-term footprint of facilities to the smallest practical space.
- Design and construct roads to minimize duplication of them.
- Cluster development of roads, pipelines, electric lines, and other facilities, and use existing, combined corridors where possible.
- Use directional drilling where biologically significant habitats are involved so as to minimize impact to grouse habitat, if such techniques are technically feasible.
- Minimize pad size and other facilities to the extent possible consistent with safety. Where directional drilling is occurring, larger pads are needed for multiple wells.
- Minimize width of field surface roads. Avoid engineered and graveled roads when possible to reduce the footprint.

#### Reduce Disturbance to Birds:

- Limit non-surface disturbing activities during the breeding season, March 1–May 1, near active sage-grouse leks to portions of the day after 9:00 a.m. and before 4:00 p.m.
- Reduce noise impacts from compressor stations by locating stations at least 2,500 feet away from leks and by using decibel reduction equipment.
- Require field development plans if exploration or wildcat wells indicate that substantial drilling may occur.
- Reduce daily visits to well pads and road travel to the extent possible in sage-grouse habitat.
- Use remote telemetry to monitor wells, when practical, to reduce daily visits to wells.
- Erect gates on, or otherwise limit regular public access to, field service roads. This should be consistent with landowner wishes and direction for split-estate wells or ROW access across private lands.

Crucial winter habitat (Map 5) will be closed from December 16 to March 15. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix B.

BLM will work with other agencies and interested parties to achieve the goals and objectives, including CPAW's population targets, included in the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan. BLM will support monitoring and evaluation efforts as outlined in the Northwest Colorado and Colorado statewide conservation plans to detect changes in sage-grouse trends due to land use activities. If it is determined that any Management Zone or the whole population is in a downward trend, BLM will assist in development and implementation of strategies to reverse this trend through the management of seasonal sagebrush habitats. If populations were to drop into the "evaluation zone," as defined in the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan, action will be taken within one year to reverse declining sage-grouse trends, return populations to the levels above the "evaluation zone" and prevent declines of sage-grouse populations below the target range.

#### Black Footed Ferret

Surface disturbing activities will be minimized to the extent reasonable to reduce landscape disturbance to prairie dog habitat for the black-footed ferret. Rangeland improvement projects (such as fences and water developments) will not be allowed within 0.25 miles of black-footed ferret release sites, to prevent disturbance or damage during the 3- to 4-month release period.

New mineral material sales (sand and gravel) proposed in prairie dog towns within 0.25 miles of black-footed ferret release sites may be required to have their operations delayed or excepted for 3 to 4 months during the release period. There will be no restrictions on mineral material sales operations that were ongoing at the time of selection of release sites. Sales within the common use areas within 0.25 miles of release sites will also be excepted during the 3- to 4-month release period.

OHV use will not be allowed within 0.25 miles of black-footed ferret release sites for 3 to 4 months during the release period. Target shooting, plinking, or any type of sport hunting will be prohibited within 0.25 miles of black-footed ferret release sites for 3 to 4 months during the release period.

ROWs on public land with the potential to disturb occupied black-footed ferret habitat will be rerouted to avoid those prairie dog towns.

Active white-tailed prairie dog colonies will continue to be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities within the black-footed ferret reintroduction area.

Special Status Species
<p><b>Canada Lynx</b></p> <p>NSO will be applied to all mapped lynx habitat. Other surface disturbing activities within protected or restricted habitats, such as prescribed fires and fuels reduction, may occur in specific cases, but these will require separate Section 7 consultation.</p>
<p><b>Mexican Spotted Owl</b></p> <p>NSO will be applied to all protected activity centers (PAC). Other surface disturbing activities within protected or restricted habitats, such as prescribed fires and fuels reduction, may occur in specific cases, but these will require separate Section 7 consultation. Activities in PACs that are not surface disturbing will avoid the Mexican spotted owl breeding season, which runs from March 1 through August 31.</p>
<p><b>Bald Eagle</b></p> <p>Year-round NSO will be applied within a 0.25 mile radius of roost sites and both occupied and unoccupied nests. The definition of an "occupied nest" (from the Northern States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan 1983, page D4) includes (a) young were observed, (b) eggs were laid (eggs or eggshell fragments observed), (c) one adult was observed in incubating ("sitting low") posture on the nest during the incubation period, (d) two adults were observed at an empty nest or within the breeding area, or (e) one adult eagle and one eagle in immature plumage were observed at or near a nest, especially if mating or reproductive behavior (display flights, copulation, nest repair, etc.) was observed.</p> <p>No human activity or surface disturbance will be allowed within a 0.5 mile radius of occupied nests from November 15 through July 31. Human activity within 0.25 miles of known winter hunting perches and within 0.5 miles of critical night roosts on BLM land should be restricted from November 15 to March 15. Buffers can be reduced to 0.25 miles for night roosts and 0.125 miles for haunting perches if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography. Development may be permitted at other periods. If periodic visits, such as those that occur with oil well maintenance work, are required within the buffer zone after development, such activity should be restricted to between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. during the period November 15 to March 15.</p>
<p><b>Yellow-Billed Cuckoo</b></p> <p>Prohibit permanent surface disturbing activities (NSO) within 0.25 mile of any suitable yellow-billed cuckoo habitat. Exceptions should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to avoid adverse impact.</p>
<p><b>Mountain Plover</b></p> <p>Establish 0.125 mile NSO stipulations around all plover nest sites. The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorized officer determines that surface occupancy will not harm the integrity of the nest or nest location. Prohibit surface use from April 1 to July 15 within 0.25 mile of all plover nest sites. This stipulation does not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities (refer to Appendix B for exception, modification, or waiver criteria). Additionally, the boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorized officer determines that portions of the area are not critical to the mountain plover.</p>
<p><b>Special Status Species Conservation Measures and Recommendations</b></p> <p>BLM will apply special status species conservation measures at the implementation level to streamline Section 7 consultation, as outlined in Appendix D. The goal of these measures is to provide common expectations regarding how to reduce or minimize adverse effects to endangered, threatened, proposed, candidate and other sensitive species resulting from BLM actions. In addition to the conservation measures, BLM will also implement the conservation recommendations contained in Appendix D.</p>

## 2.7 Wild Horses

Wild Horses
<p>The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 requires BLM to manage wild horses according to multiple use management principles so as to achieve and maintain a thriving, natural ecological balance on public lands. The color, type, conformation, size, and weight of members of various horse herds are historic characteristics that are desirable to maintain.</p>
Goals and Objectives
<p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p>Manage the Sand Wash wild horse herd and its habitat to encourage herd health while maintaining a thriving, natural ecological balance of rangeland resources. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p>

Wild Horses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the Sand Wash wild horse herd as an integral part of the public lands ecosystem at an appropriate management level (AML). Periodically reevaluate the existing AML to ensure herd size remains compatible with other resources.</li> <li>• Recognize and proactively respond to potential conflicts, as they occur, between the wild horse herd and other resources.</li> <li>• Maintain herd management area (HMA) boundary fences to encourage wild horses to remain within an HMA. If horses relocate outside an HMA, attempt to herd horses back inside the HMA as expeditiously as possible</li> </ul>
Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions
<p>Maintain the current HMA status and manage at an AML, which is currently identified as a range of between 163 and 362 wild horses. The AML is a dynamic number that is adjusted as range conditions warrant. The guidelines and criteria for adjusting AML include current monitoring data, rate of herd increase, competing uses, frequency of gathering cycle, other population management options, and herd genetics. Continue to manage wild horses in the Sand Wash Basin HMA (Map 6), with gathers occurring as necessary to maintain the established herd population range.</p> <p>No drilling or development operations will be permitted within a 1 mile radius from wild horse water sources from March 1 to December 1. Exceptions will be granted according to established criteria (Appendix B). No oil- and gas-related helicopter or motor vehicle use will be allowed in the wild horse HMA during foaling season, which runs from March 1 to June 30. Exceptions will be granted according to established criteria (Appendix B) and wild horse outcomes as described in wild horse goals and objectives section and the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act.</p>

## 2.8 Wildland Fire Management

Wildland Fire Management
<p>According to Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities on a landscape scale and across agency boundaries and such integration will be based upon the best available science. Management actions on wildland fire will be consistent with approved fire management plans. Wildland fire may be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and will be, to the extent possible, allowed to function in its natural ecological role. Management actions in this RMP for fire include landscape-level strategies to achieve the resource objectives and goals. Management actions for the forestry resource as well as fuels treatment actions are in Vegetation (Section 2.4).</p>
Goals and Objectives
<p><b>Goal A:</b> Give first priority to protection of life or property. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and reduce hazardous fuels, with an emphasis on urban interface areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal B:</b> Create an integrated approach to fire and resource management to meet land health standards. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce fire hazards in ecosystems and restore ecological community functions.</li> <li>• Use fire and allow it to protect, maintain, and enhance resources.</li> <li>• Use fire and allow it to function in its ecological role when appropriate for the site and situation.</li> <li>• Use mechanical or other vegetation treatments to reduce fire hazards, when appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal C:</b> Integrate fire and fuels management across landscape, agency, and government boundaries. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use cooperative agreements to coordinate fire and fuels management action.</li> </ul>
Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions
<p>A suppression oriented response will be used in areas where fire is not desired at all or specifically wildfire is not desired, such as in ecosystems where fire does not play a significant positive role in that ecosystem's function; in areas where fire suppression is required to prevent direct threats to life or property; in private lands and at urban interfaces; around important cultural resources; in areas with unnatural fuel buildups; and in areas where a seed bank does not exist for natural reseeding.</p>

### Wildland Fire Management

All remaining areas where fire could have a beneficial effect to the ecosystem will receive a management response ranging from full suppression to partial perimeter control to monitoring fire activity with no suppression activity. The selected strategy will be based on an evaluation of risks to firefighter and public safety, weather and fuel conditions, natural and cultural resource management objectives, protection priorities, and values to be protected. The evaluation will also take into consideration the context of the specific fire within the overall local, geographic area, or national wildland fire situation. The LSFO is divided into fire management units where wildland fire is not desired and areas where fire may play a beneficial role in meeting land management objectives. These fire management units are based on similar responses to wildland fire, common fuel types, major fire regime groups, and topography. It is also possible that they may cross political boundaries.

The fire management units are evaluated each year and may be altered. Major evaluation criteria include:

- Acres burned in 1 year
- Acres burned in 10 years
- New residential and commercial development
- Changes in special status wildlife and plant species
- Other vegetation treatments that may alter the fire regime and condition class

Prescribed fire and mechanical vegetation treatments will also be used to meet identified resource management or hazard fuel reduction objectives.

## 2.9 Cultural and Heritage Resources

### Cultural and Heritage Resources

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] 470), mandates that federal agencies protect and preserve both prehistoric and historic cultural properties that are eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). FLPMA charges BLM to (1) manage public land so as to protect the quality of scientific and other values and (2) ensure land and resources are periodically and systematically inventoried. Section 106 of the NHPA requires that federal agencies take into account the effect of an undertaking on historic properties in the area of potential effect (APE).

BLM will identify and take into consideration Native American concerns when actions might affect cultural or religious values and areas of traditional use. Consultation with federally recognized tribes will take place on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with Executive Order 13175 *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments* and Section 106 of NHPA. Such consultation will occur prior to planned excavations or undertakings on BLM-administered lands, in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. BLM will protect and preserve Native American religious and cultural rights and practices on federal lands, in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Section 110 of NHPA requires that federal agencies manage and protect the cultural resources located on their lands. BLM will follow the process identified in the National Programmatic Agreement (1998) and agreed to with the National Council of SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Colorado Protocol (1998). The LSFO will implement a proactive cultural resource program required under Section 110 of the NHPA. A reasonable amount of outreach/customer service work, Native American consultation, interpretation and environmental education, cultural resource inventories, data recovery and recordation efforts, restoration and protection of "at-risk" site efforts, and systematic monitoring of cultural sites treatments are to be completed annually. The level of proactive cultural resource program work will be determined annually within constraints of available funds and staff.

### Goals and Objectives

#### **Goal A (Cultural Resources Program):**

Develop an in-depth understanding of archeological and historical resources, in accordance with Section 110 of the NHPA. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Identify areas for development of cultural resource management plans and sites appropriate for interpretation.
- Identify research and partnership opportunities for site excavation, stabilization, rehabilitation, and monitoring.
- Complete site nominations to the NRHP.

#### **Goal B (Cultural Resources Program):**

Determine cultural use allocations and desired outcomes for all cultural properties located in the LSFO RMPPA. Cultural use allocations include scientific use, conservation for future use, traditional use, public use, experimental use, or discharge from management. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

### Cultural and Heritage Resources

- Enhance understanding of past human settlement by studying the physical presence of cultural resources and artifacts in the planning area. Identify cultural study needs by using sound archeological methods and practices.
- Partner with universities, research facilities, and other institutions to encourage research and publish findings or cultural studies.
- Expand regional interpretation activities through recreation programs and contributions from local partners.

#### **Goal C (Cultural Resources Support Services):**

Seek to reduce threats and to resolve potential conflicts from either natural or human-caused deterioration or other program uses, in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Pursue partnerships to facilitate a better understanding of Native American cultural resources, thereby providing a more meaningful tribal consultation process as required by Section 106.
- Pursue programmatic agreements with tribal governments to streamline consultation procedures.

#### **Goal D (Cultural Resources Support Services):**

Preserve and protect significant cultural resources and ensure these remain available for appropriate uses by both present and future generations in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Identify priority areas for new field surveys on the basis of a probability for consumptive use conflicts on significant resources.
- Improve law enforcement.

### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

#### **Cultural Resources Program**

The LSFO will implement a proactive cultural resource program required under Section 110 of the NHPA. A reasonable amount of outreach/customer service work, Native American consultation, interpretation and environmental education, cultural resource inventories, data recovery and recordation efforts, restoration and protection of "at-risk" site efforts, and systematic monitoring of cultural sites treatments are to be completed annually. The level of proactive cultural resource program work will be determined annually within constraints of available funds and staff.

Priority cultural resources program projects are identified below, by project type. This list is not intended to be comprehensive or limiting and may change throughout the life of the plan as more is known about the cultural resources in the planning area. In general, priority will be given to sites eligible for nomination to the NRHP and to sites needing data.

- Priority areas for development of cultural resource management plans: Sand Wash Basin and Irish Canyon
- Priority areas for cultural resource surveys: Irish Canyon, Sand Wash Basin, Diamond Breaks, Cold Spring, and Vermillion Basin
- Priority "at risk" sites: Vermillion Buffalo Trap, Sand Wash wickiup and other known wickiup sites, known tree stands, Irish Canyon shelter, Red Army rock shelter, Lower Vermillion Creek Archaeological District, and Cross Mountain rock shelter
- Priority site monitoring: Vermillion Buffalo Trap, Sand Wash wickiup and other known wickiup sites, known tree stands, Irish Canyon shelter, Red Army rock shelter, and Cross Mountain rock shelter
- Priority nomination sites: Vermillion Buffalo Trap, Sand Wash wickiup and other known wickiup sites, known tree stands, Irish Canyon shelter, Red Army rock shelter, Lower Vermillion Creek Archaeological District, and Cross Mountain rock shelter
- Priority interpretation sites: Sand Wash and Vermillion Rim

#### **Cultural Site Use Allocations**

Manage cultural site types on a site-specific basis, according to the allocations identified in Appendix E.

#### **Mitigation of Potential Adverse Effects to Historic Properties in Open OHV Areas**

Transportation planning will be performed in Sand Wash Basin following the signing of the ROD, as described in Appendix F. Protecting cultural resources in Sand Wash Basin will be an important aspect in the development of the transportation plan and designation of roads and trails in the area.

Outside this planning and NEPA process, a Programmatic Agreement (PA) has been developed to aid in transportation planning for the Sand Wash open OHV area. This agreement was developed between BLM, the SHPO, Indian Tribes (Ute Indian Tribe [Uintah & Ouray Reservation], Shoshone Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe), Moffat County, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. This agreement was finalized in June of 2011 and includes strategies for the survey, mitigation, and monitoring of cultural resources within the South Sand Wash area. The PA will be reviewed annually by all parties. At that time, the parties will

### Cultural and Heritage Resources

determine whether the PA will remain as it is, or whether the parties should amend it or whether the parties should terminate it. The PA shall remain in effect for a period of ten (10) years or until terminated by a signatory or invited signatory. If the signatories agree in writing, the PA may be extended for additional ten year periods. If the PA is terminated BLM will revert to designated use for trails and roads within the open OHV area.

## 2.10 Paleontological Resources

### Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological sites are protected under FLPMA. FLPMA charges BLM to (1) manage public land so as to protect the quality of scientific and other values and (2) ensure that land and resources are periodically and systematically inventoried. Paleontological resources will be managed according to BLM's 8270 *Handbook* and BLM's *Manual for the Management of Paleontological Resources*.

#### Goals and Objectives

**Goal:**

To identify and protect the paleontological resources within the LSFO. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Expand paleontological support activities, such as data gathering, GIS integration, and Class I surveys.
- Provide opportunities for education about and interpretation of paleontological resources.
- Improve law enforcement.

#### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

Proposed surface disturbing actions will be evaluated to determine inventory needs and identify sites that could be potentially impacted by such activities. Surface disturbing activities in Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) Class 4 and 5 paleontological areas (Map 7) that are devoid of thick soils and vegetation and with steep, unsafe cliffs will be inventoried by a qualified paleontologist with a valid Colorado BLM paleontology permit who is approved by the authorized officer. Mitigation measures for specific locations will be identified on a case-by-case basis.

If paleontological resources are discovered during exploration operations, the licensee shall immediately notify the LSFO Manager and shall not disturb such discovered resources until the LSFO Manager issues specific instructions. Within 5 working days after notification, the LSFO Manager shall have a qualified paleontologist evaluate any paleontological resources discovered and shall determine whether any action may be required to protect or to preserve such discoveries. The cost of data recovery for paleontological resources discovered during exploration operations shall be borne by the licensee if the licensee had been ordered to take any protective measures. Ownership of paleontological resources discovered shall be determined in accordance with applicable law.

## 2.11 Special Management Areas

### Special Management Areas

Special management areas are those requiring special management considerations to ensure that public land and resources are protected from irreparable damage. These areas include ACECs, WSAs, WSRs, and other areas such as lands with wilderness characteristics that are outside existing WSAs. Management of these areas will comply with the applicable regulations (43 CFR 1610, 6300, 8350) for activities that could occur within these areas. All management actions and recreation and resource uses will focus on protecting sensitive resources, scenic values, and the health and safety of the user.

Section 202(c)(3) of FLPMA mandates giving priority to the designation and protection of ACECs. These areas are defined in Section 103(a) as areas where special management attention is required to protect, and to prevent irreparable damage to, important values, resources, systems, or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards. Further guidance and evaluation criteria are found at 43 CFR Part 1610.7-2.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers (NWSR) Act (PL 90-542 and amendments) Section 1(b) states that "certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations." Section 5(d) requires federal agencies to consider potential wild, scenic, and recreational river areas in all planning for the use and development of water and related land resources. Section 10(a) describes the basic management requirement of protecting and enhancing the values that were the reasons for originally including the river in the NWSR System. In accordance with BLM policy, all rivers were evaluated for eligibility.



### Special Management Areas

BLM's findings in this land use planning process should not be considered as "proposed designation" of the studied segments. BLM is simply analyzing the segments to identify outstandingly remarkable values and to identify whether or not a WSR designation by Congress would be a feasible method for enduring protection of those values. BLM is not making a proactive recommendation to the U.S. Congress and the President that these segments be immediately designated.

Instead, BLM acknowledges that information and consensus building about preferred water supply options and identification of streams important for recreation, fisheries, and ecologic values is occurring in State and local planning processes. Specifically, BLM intends to acknowledge the outcomes of the Colorado Statewide Water Supply Initiative, Basin Roundtables, and the Interbasin Compact Process. The outcome of these processes will significantly affect whether or not BLM may choose to actively recommend the suitable segments in the future. It is also conceivable that, as a result of these processes, stakeholders in the basin may make recommendations to the Colorado congressional delegation about how to protect the outstandingly remarkable values identified by BLM while minimizing the impact on water management. If and when Congress chooses to consider these river segments, it can consider a wide range of legislative approaches other than WSR designation or it can decide to take no action at all.

A BLM WSR suitability determination does not remain in effect indefinitely. The land use prescriptions that implement the suitability determination remain in effect only as long as the land use plan that made that determination is in effect. BLM has the authority to change the determination through a land use plan amendment or during its next revision of the plan.

If, in the future, plans and funding are in place for a water project that requires BLM land use authorization, the project proponents can ask BLM to reconsider its suitability determination in a land use plan amendment. Alternatively, the project proponents could ask BLM to change its suitability finding during the next plan revision on the basis of new information and expanded public demand for development of additional water supplies. If stakeholders in the Yampa River Basin and statewide have developed a consensus about which water projects should proceed to best meet the State's water supply and environmental needs, this consensus would greatly facilitate the process of amending the land use plan or changing BLM's suitability determination.

Under FLPMA, wilderness preservation is part of BLM's multiple use mandate and wilderness characteristics are recognized as part of the spectrum of resource values considered during land use planning. Under the wilderness program, existing designated WSAs are managed in accordance with BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP). BLM's management policy is to continue resource uses on lands under wilderness review in a manner that maintains the area's suitability for preservation as wilderness. Wilderness characteristics and values, described in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (PL 88-577), must be protected, ensuring Congress's prerogative to designate the WSA as wilderness is maintained in all WSAs. In addition, the RMP process was open to new information, including public proposals for protecting areas with wilderness character. According to BLM policy, BLM may consider information on wilderness characteristics, along with information on other uses and values, when preparing land use plans. This includes determining if BLM wilderness inventories or public wilderness proposals contain significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns that has bearing on the proposed action or to impacts that have not previously been analyzed. The number of U.S. District and Appeals court opinions clarify that BLM cannot manage inventoried wilderness characteristics areas under a designated nonimpairment standard, or as if they are or may become congressionally designated wilderness areas. However, courts and BLM's planning handbook clarify that through the planning process BLM may manage them using special protections to protect wilderness characteristics.

### Goals and Objectives

#### Goal:

Provide special management attention to those areas where special management is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important natural, cultural, recreational, wilderness characteristics, or scenic resources and values. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Manage WSAs to protect wilderness characteristics until those WSAs are either designated or released from wilderness study by Congress.
- Manage to protect the values of areas where special management prescriptions are identified.
- Complete motorized/mechanized road/trail designations for special management areas that are not closed to motorized/mechanized vehicle use.

### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

#### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Retain designation of the Irish Canyon ACEC (11,910 acres) (Map 8).

The existing ACEC designation will remain because special management attention is needed to protect the multiple relevant and important values in the area, including rare plants, rare plant communities, and scenic, geologic, and

### Special Management Areas

cultural values. The presence of all these overlapping values in one area makes it suitable for special management attention through an ACEC designation. The objective for the ACEC is to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, cultural and geologic values, and scenic quality.

The area will be closed to oil and gas operations, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables, and recommended for withdrawal from mineral location. The area will be an ROW exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights. OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails, and the area will be designated VRM Class II.

#### Wilderness Study Areas

WSAs (Map 8) will be managed to preserve their wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and will continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates them as wilderness or releases them for other uses. While managed as WSAs, these areas will be managed with a VRM Class I designation. The areas will be closed to oil and gas operations, recommended for withdrawal from mineral location, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables, and will not be available for coal leasing. They will be managed as ROW exclusion areas, and will be closed to OHV use. The Cross Mountain, Diamond Breaks, West Cold Spring, Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs will not be leased. These are 78,250 acres of BLM administered mineral estate within the Little Snake RMPPA. Public land designated as wilderness will be managed in compliance with BLM's Wilderness Management Policy and the Wilderness Act of 1964. Site-specific wilderness management plans will be developed for areas designated by Congress as wilderness.

In addition, if WSAs are released by Congress, the released lands will be managed in accordance with multiple use direction and land allocations established in the RMP, including special designations such as SRMAs, suitable WSRs, and ACECs. Resource allocations restricted because of WSA management policies such as oil and gas leasing, coal unsuitability, lands and realty actions, and wood cutting will be reviewed to determine if changes in management are needed. If such changes are needed, a revision of the RMP may be initiated.

If Congress releases Diamond Breaks from wilderness study, it would be managed as follows:

- Closed to oil and gas operations
- Locatable—Recommended for withdrawal
- Nonenergy Leasables—Closed
- Coal—Not available for leasing
- OHV—Closed
- VRM—Class II
- Lands and Realty—ROWs would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If Congress releases Cross Mountain from wilderness study, it would be managed as an ACEC as follows:

Objective—Protect sensitive plants, threatened and endangered species, and scenic values.

- Closed to oil and gas operations
- Locatable—Recommended for withdrawal
- Nonenergy Leasables—Closed
- Coal—Not available for leasing
- OHV—Closed
- VRM—Class II
- Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.

If Congress releases West Cold Spring from wilderness study, it would be managed the same as the adjacent wilderness characteristics area, Cold Spring Mountain:

- Closed to oil and gas operations
- Locatable—Recommended for withdrawal
- Nonenergy Leasables—Closed
- Coal—Not available for leasing
- OHV—Limited to existing roads and trails
- VRM—Class III
- Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance area; accept wind energy applications on case-by-case basis

If Congress releases Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears from wilderness study, they would be managed the same as the adjacent wilderness characteristics area, Dinosaur North:

- Closed to oil and gas operations
- Locatable—Recommended for withdrawal
- Nonenergy Leasables—Closed
- Coal—Not available for leasing

### Special Management Areas

- OHV—Limited to existing roads and trails
- VRM—Class II
- Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance area; no wind energy

#### Lands With Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs

##### *Vermillion Basin*

The objective for Vermillion Basin will be to manage to protect naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude. The Vermillion Basin Protective Management Area will be created and the following prescriptions will be applied: Vermillion Basin will be closed to new oil and gas leasing, recommended for withdrawal from mineral location, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables, and will not be available for coal leasing. The area will have a Class II VRM designation. Vermillion Basin will be a ROW exclusion area.

OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails in some areas and closed in other areas. Three roads are cherry-stemmed out of the closed area in western Vermillion Basin and are not subject to the OHV closure: the Blue Hill road running through T10N R100W Section 30 to T10N R101W Section 36; the Vermillion Basin bench road running from Moffat County Road 169 in T9N R101W Section 3 northeast then east to T10N R101W Section 35; and the road from Irish Lake in T10N R101W Section 10 southwest to Section 14.

##### *Dinosaur North*

The area objective will be to manage to protect naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude. There will be no special area designation, however the following prescriptions will be applied. Dinosaur North will be closed to oil and gas operations, recommended for withdrawal from mineral location, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables, and will not be available for coal leasing. OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails. The area will have a Class II VRM designation. Dinosaur North will also be a ROW avoidance area.

##### *Cold Spring Mountain*

The area objective will be to manage to protect naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude. There will be no special area designation, however the following prescriptions will be applied. Cold Spring Mountain will be closed to oil and gas operations, recommended for withdrawal from mineral location, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables, and will not be available for coal leasing. OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails. The area will have a Class III VRM designation. Cold Spring will also be a ROW avoidance area.

#### Wild and Scenic Rivers

Yampa River segments 1, 2, and 3 will be determined and managed as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System, for a total of 22 miles and 6,260 acres (Map 8).

Stream Segment	Classification	Miles	Acres
Yampa River segment 1	Recreational	2.8	820
Yampa River segment 2	Scenic	15.9	4,350
Yampa River segment 3	Wild	3.3	1,090

Management actions will only apply to those portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. For sites within the segment where spawning habitat loss is a risk, remedial actions would be implemented to ensure that the suitability of the threatened and endangered fish spawning habitat is maintained or enhanced. Water quality and free flow will be protected for all segments.

##### *Yampa Segment 1 (River Mile 126 to Milk Creek, recreational)*

Manage Yampa River segment 1 (2.8 miles from River Mile #126 to Milk Creek area) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System, with the tentative classification of "recreational." Manage to protect the outstandingly remarkable values, including recreation and fish. Specific management prescriptions within 0.25 miles of each side of the river include OHV limited to designated roads and trails, NSO for oil and gas operations, recommended for withdrawal from locatable minerals, and will not be available for coal leasing.

##### *Yampa Segment 2 (Milk Creek to Duffy Tunnel, scenic)*

Manage Yampa River segment 2 (15.9 miles from Milk Creek to Duffy Tunnel) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System, with the tentative classification of "scenic." Manage to protect the outstandingly remarkable values, including recreation and fish. Specific management prescriptions within 0.25 miles of each side of the river include OHV limited to designated roads and trails, NSO for oil and gas operations, recommended for withdrawal from locatable minerals, and will not be available for coal leasing.

##### *Yampa Segment 3 (Cross Mountain Canyon, wild)*

Manage Yampa River segment 3 (3.3 miles through Cross Mountain Canyon) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR

### Special Management Areas

System, with the tentative classification of "wild." Manage to protect the outstandingly remarkable values, including scenic, recreational, geologic, and fish. Specific management prescriptions within 0.25 miles of each side of the river include being closed to OHV use, closed to oil and gas operations, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables, recommended for withdrawal from locatable minerals, and will not be available for coal leasing.

## 2.12 Visual Resource Management

### Visual Resource Management

Section 102 (8) of FLPMA declares that public lands would be managed to protect the quality of scenic values and, where appropriate, to preserve and protect certain public land in its natural condition. Section 101(b) of NEPA requires federal agencies to "assure for all Americans...aesthetically pleasing surroundings." Section 102 of NEPA requires agencies to "utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which would ensure the integrated use of...Environmental Design Acts in the planning and decision making" process. Guidelines for the identification of VRM classes on public land are contained in BLM Manual Handbook 8410-1, *Visual Resource Inventory (VRI)*. The establishment of VRM classes on public land is based on management decisions that consider the values defined within the VRI classes, land uses, and desirable outcomes.

The four VRM classes (I, II, III, and IV) set standards for planning, designing, and evaluating projects by identifying various permissible levels of landscape modification. The VRM class objectives range from very limited management activity (Class I) to activities allowing major landscape modifications (Class IV). Visual resource classes will be established, retained, or modified to enhance objectives regarding other resources such as cultural, recreation uses, wild horse viewing, and special management areas. Projects will be designed to meet the objectives of established visual classifications, and appropriate mitigation would be applied.

#### Goals and Objectives

##### Goal:

Recognize and manage visual resources for overall multiple use and quality of life for local communities and visitors to public lands. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Maintain visual characteristics/values as designated by management classes.
- Ensure land management projects and uses meet VRM objectives within the boundaries of the designated VRM management class.

#### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

##### VRM Summary

Visual resources will be managed as displayed on Map 9 and described below.

VRM Class	Acres
VRM Class I	78,250
VRM Class II	150,790
VRM Class III	929,270
VRM Class IV	178,590

##### VRM Class I

Visual resources will be managed as VRM Class I in the following areas:

- Cross Mountain WSA (in accordance with the IMP)
- Diamond Breaks WSA (in accordance with the IMP)
- West Cold Spring WSA (in accordance with the IMP)
- Ant Hills WSA (in accordance with the IMP)
- Chew Winter Camp WSA (in accordance with the IMP)
- Peterson Draw WSA (in accordance with the IMP)
- Vale of Tears WSA (in accordance with the IMP)

##### VRM Class II

Visual resources will be managed as VRM Class II in the following areas:

- Limestone Ridge area
- Irish Canyon ACEC
- Portion of Lookout Mountain area

### Visual Resource Management

- Emerald Mountain SRMA
- Vermillion Basin
- Dinosaur North Area (outside the WSA)
- Portion of Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (within line of sight from the river within the SRMAs)
- Portion of Juniper Mountain SRMA (within line of sight from the river within the SRMAs)

#### **VRM Class III**

Visual resources will be managed as VRM Class III in the following areas:

- Portion of Lookout Mountain area
- Portion of Little Yampa Canyon SRMA
- Portion of Juniper Mountain SRMA
- Cold Spring Mountain area
- Cedar Mountain SRMA
- South Sand Wash SRMA, Zone 2
- Serviceberry SRMA
- Fly Creek SRMA
- All areas not designated as VRM Class I, II, or IV

#### **VRM Class IV**

Visual resources will be managed as VRM Class IV in the following areas:

- Hiawatha and Powder Wash areas
- Regions of Sand Wash Basin
- South Sand Wash SRMA, Zone 1 (open OHV area in the South Sand Wash SRMA)
- Areas suitable for coal mining

## 2.13 Energy and Minerals

### Energy and Minerals

All minerals and energy resource management actions will recognize all valid existing mineral rights and will ensure compliance with existing legal and regulatory requirements. The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (as amended), the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (as amended), and the Mining and Mineral Policy Act of 1970 declare that it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources. Section 102 of FLPMA directs management of the public land in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals and other resources. Transmitted by Information Bulletin 2008-107, BLM mineral policy states, among other items, that "...land use planning and multiple use management decisions will recognize that energy and mineral development can occur concurrently or sequentially with other resource uses, providing that appropriate stipulations or conditions of approval are incorporated into authorizations to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation, reduce environmental impacts, and prevent a jeopardy opinion."

BLM will apply lease stipulations to new leases as necessary. These stipulations will notify the leaseholder that development activities might be limited, prohibited, or implemented with mitigation measures to protect specific resources. The stipulations will condition the leaseholder's development activities and will provide BLM with the authority to require mitigation or to deny some proposed exploration and development methods. The general types of resource protections in the land use plan include areas closed to oil and gas leasing, areas open to oil and gas leasing with standard terms and conditions, NSO, CSU, and timing limitations. Leasing of solid minerals will comply with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, the Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976, and coal regulations and coal planning requirements.

The General Mining Law of 1872 gives miners the right to locate and develop mining claims on public lands that are open to mineral entry. In areas open to mineral location, mining claims can be filed, which allow the claims to be held and developed in accordance with applicable regulations (39 CFR 3809). Mining activities will also comply with other regulatory requirements, including limitations on air and water discharges, waste management, spill prevention, and endangered species. Mining of mineral materials will comply with applicable regulatory requirements (43 CFR 3600) and air and water quality protection regulations. A site-specific analysis will be performed before any exploration or extraction activity to identify and locate resource elements that require protection or mitigation measures.

## Energy and Minerals

### Goals and Objectives

**Goal A (Oil and Gas):**

Allow for the availability of the federal oil and gas estate (including coalbed natural gas) for exploration and development. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Identify and make available the federal oil and gas estate (including coalbed natural gas) for exploration and development.
- Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of oil and gas resources (including coalbed natural gas).
- Promote the use of BMPs, including implementation of sound reclamation standards.

**Goal B (Locatable Minerals, Mineral Materials, and Nonenergy Leasable Minerals):**

Allow for the availability of federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, and nonenergy leasable minerals, for exploration and development consistent with national policy. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Identify and make available federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, and nonenergy leasable minerals, for exploration and development.
- Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, and nonenergy leasable minerals.
- Provide mineral materials needed for community and economic purposes.
- Minimize and eliminate fraudulent claims.
- Promote the use of BMPs, including implementation of sound reclamation standards.

**Goal C (Coal and Oil Shale):**

Allow for the availability of the federal coal and oil shale estate for exploration and development. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Identify and make available the federal coal and oil shale estate for exploration and development, consistent with appropriate suitability studies, to increase energy supplies.
- Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of the federal coal and oil shale estate.
- Promote the use of BMPs, including implementation of sound reclamation standards.

### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

**Oil and Gas Leasing Decisions**

Lease with standard lease terms and conditions in addition to specified stipulations. Areas have been designated for leasing with standard stipulations, CSU and NSO, closed to leasing, and timing limitations as described below and displayed on Map 10. A list of all oil and gas stipulations from the Approved RMP is compiled in Appendix B.

Leasing Stipulation	Acres
Open to leasing, subject to standard terms and conditions	168,150
Timing limitations	1,189,210
Controlled surface use (CSU)	1,217,560
No surface occupancy (NSO)	222,910
Closed to leasing	242,560

Exceptions, modifications, and waivers could be provided as detailed in Appendix B. BLM has the discretion to modify surface operations to change or add specific mitigation measures when supported by scientific analysis. All mitigation/conservation measures not already required as stipulations would be analyzed in a site-specific NEPA document, and be incorporated, as appropriate, into conditions of approval of the permit, plan of development, and/or other use authorizations.

**Closed to Oil and Gas Leasing**

Making an area closed to oil and gas leasing through an RMP is a land use planning decision and does not effectuate a withdrawal. A determination to make lands unavailable for oil and gas leasing under an RMP is not a permanent mineral withdrawal, but rather, is a discretionary deferral of leasing for the life of the plan. Furthermore, because mineral leasing is discretionary under the Mineral Leasing Act, no withdrawal is required to make public lands unavailable for leasing under the Act. The following areas (242,560 acres) are designated as unavailable to oil and gas leasing for the life of the plan:

- Existing WSAs
- Emerald Mountain SRMA

## Energy and Minerals

- Vermillion Basin
- Irish Canyon ACEC
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 3
- Dinosaur North area (outside the WSA)
- Cold Spring Mountain area (outside the WSA)

### **No Surface Occupancy Stipulations**

NSO areas include leases within the area of federally leased coal lands for surface coal mines where oil and gas development would likely be incompatible with coal extraction; the NSO stipulation may be waived if the lessee agrees to the outlined conditions.

Developed recreation sites with established campgrounds, boat ramps, or other developed recreation facilities will be protected by a 40-acre NSO stipulation. Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis consistent with the criteria identified in Appendix B. The list below shows recreation sites currently identified and is not comprehensive. The sites are shown on Map 11.

- West Cross Mountain campground
- East Cross Mountain campground
- Rocky Reservoir campground
- Duffy Mountain campground
- Irish Canyon campground
- Irish Canyon interpretive site
- Elkhead Reservoir development
- Cedar Mountain recreation site

The following areas (222,910 acres) include a no surface occupancy stipulation for oil and gas development and operation:

- Within 0.25 mile of perennial water sources
- Within 0.25 mile of raptor nest sites (specifically golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], hawks, and owls)
- Within 0.25 mile of peregrine falcon cliff nesting complex
- Waterfowl and shorebird significant production areas (waterfowl habitat management areas and rookeries)
- Within 0.25 mile of Colombian sharp-tailed grouse lek
- Within critical or occupied habitat of Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), humpback chub (*Gila cypha*), and bonytail chub (*Gila elegans*)
- Within 0.6 mile of greater sage-grouse lek
- Mexican spotted owl Protected Activity Centers
- Canada Lynx mapped habitat
- Within 0.25 mile of both occupied and unoccupied bald eagle nests
- Within 0.25 mile of known bald eagle roosts
- Within 0.25 mile of suitable yellow-billed cuckoo habitat
- Within 0.125 mile of occupied mountain plover nesting habitat
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 1
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 2
- Federally leased surface coal mines
- Little Yampa Canyon SRMA Zone 1
- Juniper Mountain SRMA
- Cedar Mountain SRMA
- Developed recreation sites (40-acre blocks)

### **Controlled Surface Use Stipulations**

Controlled surface use stipulations vary based on what type of management control is needed to protect the given value in question. Unlike an NSO stipulation, which has an easily defined meaning, a CSU stipulation can vary by each resource needing protection. The definition of the management control could be as simple as enabling management to move well siting beyond the 200 meters allowed under standard lease terms or could involve a more involved system of management control, such as implementing ceilings on surface disturbance within high and medium value sagebrush habitats. For the actual stipulation, the reader is referred to the resource/use section in which the stipulation originates, unless it is included below.

CSU stipulations will be attached to leases where oil and gas operations are proposed within the area of an approved underground coal mine. Operations will be relocated outside the area to be mined or to accommodate room and pillar mining operations. CSU stipulations may be waived subject to outlined conditions.

## Energy and Minerals

To protect the viewshed of the Thornburgh/Battle of Milk Creek, a CSU stipulation will be attached to leases in the area.

For fragile soil area performance objectives and fragile soil criteria, refer to the Soils Section (2.2). Before surface disturbance on slopes of 35 percent or greater, an engineering or reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. CSU stipulations may be accepted subject to an onsite impact analysis. CSU stipulations will not be applied when the authorized officer determines that relocation up to 200 meters can be applied to protect the riparian system during well siting.

The following areas (1,217,560 acres) include controlled surface use stipulations for oil and gas development and operation:

- Fragile soil areas
- Medium priority sagebrush habitats
- High priority sagebrush habitats
- Active white-tailed prairie dog towns less than 10 acres
- Special status species habitat (plants and wildlife)
- Active white-tailed prairie dog colonies within black-footed ferret reintroduction areas
- Limestone Ridge area
- Lookout Mountain area
- Areas with an approved underground coal mine
- Viewshed of the Thornburgh/ Battle of Milk Creek area
- Slopes equal to or greater than 35 percent

### **Timing Limit Stipulations**

Timing limitations are temporal-based stipulation that limit some or all oil and gas development activities during a certain portion of the year. The specific timing of the stipulation is determined by the resource to be protected, generally coinciding during the most sensitive periods for the given resources. For the actual dates related to the timing limitation, the reader is referred to the resource/use section in which the stipulation originates. It is also important to note that the acreage for timing limit stipulations may overlap acres with NSO or CSU stipulations, or may be the only stipulation in some areas (Map 12). As such, the acres of timing limit stipulations cannot be added to the other oil and gas leasing stipulations for a sum of the entire LSFO.

The following areas (1,189,210 acres) include a timing limit stipulation for oil and gas development and operation:

- Within 0.25 mile of raptor nesting and fledgling habitat (golden eagle and all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], all buteos, and owls)
- Within 0.5 mile of a peregrine falcon cliff nesting complex
- Mule deer crucial winter habitat
- Elk crucial winter habitat
- Elk calving areas
- Pronghorn crucial winter habitat
- Pronghorn fawning areas
- Bighorn sheep crucial winter habitat
- Bighorn sheep lambing areas
- Greater sandhill crane nesting and staging habitat
- Osprey nesting and fledgling habitat (applies to 0.5 mile buffer)
- Active white-tailed prairie dog towns
- Ferruginous hawk nesting and fledgling habitat (applies to 1 mile buffer)
- Columbian sharp-tailed grouse nesting habitat
- Columbian sharp-tailed grouse crucial winter habitat
- Greater sage-grouse nesting and early brood-rearing habitat (within 4 miles of the perimeter of lek)
- Greater sage-grouse crucial winter habitat
- Within 0.5 mile of occupied bald eagle nest sites
- Within 0.25 mile of bald eagle winter hunting perches. Buffers can be reduced to 0.125 mile if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography.
- Within 0.5 mile of bald eagle critical night roosts. Buffers can be reduced to 0.25 mile for night roosts if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography.
- Within 0.25 mile of mountain plover nesting habitat
- Wild horse Sand Wash HMA
- Within 1 mile of wild horse water sources, with includes the following:
  - Within 1 mile of Wild Horse Spring
  - Within 1 mile of Sheepherder Spring



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- Within 1 mile of Coffee Pot Spring
- Within 1 mile of Two Bar Spring
- Within 1 mile of Dugout Draw Spring
- Domestic sheep lambing grounds

### **Open to Oil and Gas Leasing**

Any portion of BLM surface or mineral estate that does not have one of the closures or stipulations identified above will be managed as open to oil and gas leasing, but will continue to be subject to the standard terms and conditions associated with the oil and gas lease form. A total of 168,150 acres of the LSFO will be subject to existing standard terms and conditions, consistent with applicable law.

### **Best Management Practices for Development**

The use of a variety of BMPs will be encouraged, as defined by *Best Management Practices for Oil and Gas Development on Public Lands*, which can be found at <http://www.blm.gov/bmp/>. These BMPs may be changed over time.

### **Exception, Waiver, and/or Modification**

Exceptions will be determined on a case-by-case and temporary basis, waivers will have permanent exemptions, and modification (change stipulation) criteria will be applied on a case-by-case basis consistent with the process identified in Appendix B. COAs will be applied to operational approvals as determined to be necessary by the authorized officer so as to protect other resources and values within the terms, conditions, and stipulations of the lease.

### **Geophysical Exploration**

Lease stipulations for oil and gas development do not necessarily apply to geophysical exploration activities. Using oil and gas stipulations as a reference point, restrictions will be determined at the permitting stage on a case-by-case basis.

### **Surface Reclamation**

A Plan for Surface Reclamation is required with every APD or POD and is subject to approval by the authorized officer. The Surface Reclamation Standard described in Appendix C will be attached as a COA to APDs and associated ROWs. The Surface Reclamation Standard could be modified on the basis of new information or to meet specific needs, but the protection level envisioned in the COAs will be maintained.

## **Locatable Minerals, Mineral Materials, and Nonenergy Leasable Minerals**

### **Mineral Location (Map 13)**

All public lands are open to mineral entry and development under the General Mining Law of 1872 (1,677,930 acres) except the following areas, which will be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location (259,970 acres):

- Existing WSAs
- Emerald Mountain SRMA
- Vermillion Basin
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 1
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 2
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 3
- Dinosaur North area (outside the WSA)
- Cold Spring Mountain area (outside the WSA)
- Cedar Mountain SRMA
- Little Yampa Canyon SRMA Zone 1
- Fly Creek SRMA
- Limestone Ridge area
- Irish Canyon ACEC

### **Mineral Materials (Map 14)**

All public lands are open to mineral material development (1,680,820 acres) except the following areas, which will be closed to mineral material sales (257,080 acres):

- WSAs
- Vermillion Basin
- Cedar Mountain SRMA
- Irish Canyon ACEC
- Dinosaur North area (outside the WSA)
- Lookout Mountain area
- Limestone Ridge area
- Little Yampa Canyon SRMA Zone 1
- Cold Spring Mountain area (outside the WSA)

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New mineral material sales within fragile soil and water areas will be subject to the performance objectives described under Soil Resources (Section 2.2).

### **Non-Energy Leasable Minerals (Map 15)**

All public lands are open to non-energy leasable minerals (1,680,270 acres) except the following areas, which will be closed to leasing non-energy minerals (257,630 acres):

- WSAs
- Vermillion Basin
- Little Yampa Canyon SRMA Zone 1
- Cedar Mountain SRMA
- Dinosaur North area (outside the WSA)
- Cold Spring Mountain area (outside the WSA)
- Limestone Ridge area
- Irish Canyon ACEC
- Lookout Mountain area

Specific areas will be leased consistent with oil and gas leasing categories above. New leases within fragile soil and water areas will be subject to the performance objectives described under Soil Resources (Section 2.2).

### **Coal**

Lands found acceptable in this RMP will be available for further consideration for leasing and/or exchange. However, all lands determined to be suitable, unsuitable, or unacceptable for further consideration for leasing and/or exchange may be reviewed and suitability determinations may be modified on the basis of new data discovered during activity planning efforts. Unsuitability criteria will apply only to surface coal mining but not to underground mining. The lands with coal resource development potential in the Little Snake coal planning area are located in the Yampa and Dansforth Hills coal fields. The coal planning includes federal coal within the following townships: Sixth Principal Meridian; T. 3 N., R. 85 W.; T. 3 N., R. 86 W.; T. 3 N., R. 90 W. - R. 95 W.; T. 4 N., R. 86 W. - R. 95 W.; T. 5 N., R. 85 W. - R. 93 W.; T. 6 N., R. 86 W. - R. 93 W.; T. 7 N., R. 87 W. - R. 94 W.; T. 8 N., R. 86 W. - R. 94 W.; and T. 9 N., R. 86 W.

The coal planning area contains approximately 675,550 acres of federal coal lands or BLM surface estate. Unsuitability criteria have been applied to these lands to determine the areas unsuitable for surface mining. Results are shown in Appendix G. After applying unsuitability criteria and exceptions, approximately 623,860 acres were deemed acceptable for further consideration for leasing for either surface or underground development (Map 16).

NSO stipulations for coal development will be used to protect raptor nest and roost sites and concentration areas, migratory bird habitats, floodplains, alluvial valley floors, and federally designated critical habitats for threatened or endangered plant and animal species. NSO stipulations will apply to Juniper Mountain SRMA and to Zone 1 of the Little Yampa SRMA; these areas will be acceptable for further consideration only for underground coal mining (NSO stipulation). Specific areas that have no surface occupancy stipulations for coal leasing are listed below (47,910 acres – acres are limited to the areas with coal potential, located in the southeastern portion of the LSFO):

- Raptor nest and roost sites and concentration areas (these stipulations are contained in the Coal Suitability Review in Appendix G)
- Migratory bird habitats (these stipulations are contained in the Coal Suitability Review (Appendix G)
- Floodplains (these stipulations are contained in the Coal Suitability Review in Appendix G)
- Alluvial Valley Floors (these stipulations are contained in the Coal Suitability Review in Appendix G)
- Federally designated critical habitats for threatened or endangered plant and animal species (these stipulations are contained in the Coal Suitability Review in Appendix G)
- Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, Zone 1
- Juniper Mountain SRMA

The Cedar Mountain SRMA and WSR Yampa River segments 1, 2 and 3 will not be available for coal leasing (3,780 acres).

CSU stipulations will be used to protect coal mines from oil and gas development where the mining method or location is such that subsequent wells can avoid significant conflicts, including fragile soil areas, steep slopes, and riparian/wetland vegetation. CSU stipulations will be attached to oil and gas leases where operations proposed within the area of an approved underground coal mine. Oil and gas operations will be relocated outside the area to be mined or to accommodate room and pillar mining operations.

There will be NSO stipulations on oil and gas leases in areas of federally leased coal lands for surface coal mines where oil and gas development would likely be incompatible with coal extraction; the NSO stipulation may be waived if the lessee agrees to the outlined conditions.

Site-specific activity planning, including additional environmental analysis, will be needed before a decision to lease

### Energy and Minerals

specific tracts can be made. Exploratory drilling will be allowed to obtain sufficient data for resource management decisions and to make fair market value determinations.

#### Oil Shale

BLM will consider leasing oil shale as each application is received. Future oil shale leasing will require additional NEPA analysis, as well as a Plan Amendment. This additional NEPA analysis could preclude development.

## 2.14 Livestock Grazing

### Livestock Grazing

The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 is the legislative authority that provides for livestock grazing on, and protection of, public land. FLPMA (passed in 1976) and PRIA (passed in 1978) also provide legislative authority for the management of livestock grazing on public land. FLPMA directs the management of public land for multiple use and sustained yield. PRIA directs improvement of rangeland conditions and provides for rangeland improvements including establishing habitat for wildlife. The *Colorado Standards for Public Land Health* apply to all resource uses on public lands and the *Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* apply specifically to livestock grazing (Appendix A). These standards and guidelines address management practices at the grazing allotment management plan and watershed levels and are intended to maintain desirable conditions or to improve undesirable rangeland conditions within reasonable time frames. If it were determined that existing livestock grazing management was a factor in not meeting the standards, appropriate management actions would be implemented, as determined through cooperation among BLM, livestock operators, stakeholders, interested members of the public, and in conformance with 43 CFR 4180.2(c). In areas where livestock grazing would not be compatible with other uses, grazing would not be permitted. Public land found not to be suitable for livestock grazing, or public land found to contain resource values that cannot be adequately protected from livestock impacts through mitigating measures, would not be allocated to livestock grazing.

### Goals and Objectives

#### Goal A:

Manage resources, vegetation, and watersheds to sustain a variety of uses, including livestock grazing, and to maintain the long-term health of the rangelands. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Maintain and improve forage species diversity and abundance by managing to meet plant reproductive and physiological needs.
- Minimize conflicts between livestock and other grazing animals in areas of increased pressure on forage and riparian zones.
- Manage plant utilization by all foraging species at a level that maintains plant health and protects watersheds.

#### Goal B:

Provide for efficient management of livestock grazing allotments. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- To sustain flexible and viable agriculture operations and provide the opportunity to create Reserve Conservation Allotments (RCA) by partnering with State, federal, or private landowners when lands or permits become available, without requiring involuntary animal unit month (AUM) relinquishments or transfers. An RCA is a vacant allotment with no attached grazing preference whose purpose is to provide alternative forage for BLM permittees/lessees during the rest requirement while their customary allotment is undergoing rangeland recovery from natural disturbances (i.e. fire) or restoration projects.

#### Goal C:

Contribute to the stability and sustainability of the livestock industry.

### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

Livestock grazing will be managed by using standards and guidelines processes, while working closely with permittees/lessees to develop sustainable ranching operations. Appropriate actions for improving allotments that do not meet the Colorado standards and guidelines could include, but will not be limited to, adjustment of permitted AUMs, modified turnout dates, livestock water developments, range improvements, modified grazing periods and grazing systems, resting areas during the growing season, closing areas, riparian pastures, enclosures, implementation of forage utilization levels, and livestock conversions. Livestock grazing will be allowed to the extent of existing federal preferences, shown in Appendix H, until monitoring studies and land health evaluations determine otherwise on an allotment specific basis. Appropriate action will be taken where existing livestock grazing management is determined to be a significant causal factor for not meeting land health standards.

### Livestock Grazing

Rangelands will be monitored, focusing on allotments where land health standards have not been met and/or riparian assessments are “functioning at risk”, “non-functional”, or are in a “downward trend.” Land Health Assessments and determinations of whether standards are being met will be one factor that may be considered in setting criteria for where vegetation treatments are needed and if treatments should be implemented (Vegetation, Section 2.4). Vegetation treatments and other range improvements will be considered to improve rangeland diversity, condition, and sustainability by actions that may include, but are not limited to, the control of pinyon-juniper encroachment and decadent sagebrush.

BLM will work closely with CPAW to reduce livestock/big game conflicts so as to improve vegetative and forage conditions.

Criteria in Appendix F will be used to establish RCAs. Management plans will be developed for all allotments to be used as an RCA. Criteria for permittee/lessee use include:

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

Exploration (including seismic exploration, drilling, or other development or production activity) will generally not be allowed on domestic sheep lambing grounds during lambing activity. Lambing activities usually fall between April 10 and June 30 and last for approximately six weeks. Dates for the six week closure will be determined for each operation as local conditions dictate.

## 2.15 Recreation

### Recreation

FLPMA provides for recreational use of public land as an integral part of multiple use management. Dispersed, unstructured activities typify the recreational uses occurring on most public land. Policy guidelines in BLM Manual 8320 direct BLM to identify administrative units known as SRMAs when there is a distinct, primary recreation-tourism market as well as a corresponding and distinguishing recreation management strategy. The remaining public land is identified as an ERMA, where there is only a limited commitment of resources required to provide extensive, unstructured recreation activities.

A national recreation and visitor service work plan entitled “The BLM’s Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services” was adopted in 2004 (Washington Office [WO] Information Bulletin [IB] 2004-072). A Unified Strategy was subsequently developed and adopted as policy in 2007 (WO IM 2007-043) affirming BLM’s commitment to a collaborative recreation and visitor services planning and management framework, providing “a logical, structured framework for analyzing recreation-tourism market demand for recreational activities, experiences, and benefit opportunities. It also provides long-term sustainability of the character of recreation settings and services and the infrastructure that support them.” The Unified Strategy unified the work plan’s seven program objectives. The three primary unifiers are to (1) manage public lands for enhanced recreation experiences and quality of life, (2) encourage sustainable travel and tourism development with gateway communities and provide community-based conservation support for visitor services, and (3) provide fair value and return for recreation through fee collection and commercial services.

### Goals and Objectives

#### **Goal A:**

Provide a diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities, activities, and experiences for various user groups, unorganized visitors and affected communities, their residences, economies, and the environment. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Increase managed motorized and non-motorized use trails.
- Focus the development of non-motorized and non-mechanized trails in backcountry areas or where public demand warrants.
- Provide legal public access opportunities for recreational uses.
- Manage for special recreation permit services.
- Identify strategies and decisions that may be applied to protect or preserve primitive and semi-primitive areas so as to provide solitude and backcountry opportunities.
- Manage motorized recreation to reduce impacts on big game hunt quality and harvest success on BLM lands.

## Recreation

### Goal B:

Provide visitor services including interpretive and educational information. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Provide developed facilities in heavy-use areas where such use is impacting resources and experiences.
- Use education as a means to further resource protection.
- Enhance recreational experiences by such actions as providing boundary signing and information and managing campsites and access.
- Continue coordination with organized interpretive associations.

### Goal C:

Support tourism efforts for local economic diversification associated with public land resources. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Maintain cooperative agreements with Colorado State Parks, Moffat County, and the Moffat County Sheriff for management of the Yampa River.
- Continue coordination with local and regional recreation economic development organizations, such as BLM community partners and community organizations.
- Pursue cooperative agreements with other agencies and governments.

## Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

### Special Recreation Management Areas

SRMAs are identified where demands for specific structured recreation opportunities (activities, experiences, and benefits) have been determined from identifiable recreation-tourism markets. Each SRMA has a distinct, primary recreation-tourism market as well as a corresponding and distinguishing recreation management strategy. Identified SRMAs are listed below (Map 17); management of each SRMA is described in the following subsections:

SRMA Name	Acres
Emerald Mountain SRMA	4,140
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA	27,310
Juniper Mountain SRMA	1,780
Cedar Mountain SRMA	900
South Sand Wash SRMA	35,510
Serviceberry SRMA	12,380
Fly Creek SRMA	12,340
<b>Total</b>	<b>94,360</b>

### Emerald Mountain

Emerald Mountain (4,140 acres) will be managed as a SRMA to provide opportunities close to the City of Steamboat Springs for strenuous activities and nature experiences on primitive trails. Management of the SRMA is summarized in the table below, with additional management direction following (Map 17).

Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Destination	Community
Activities	Mountain biking Nordic skiing	Wildlife viewing Hiking Horseback Riding Hunting
OHV designation	Closed	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class II	VRM Class II

### Management Applicable to Both Zones

Emerald Mountain will be a day-use only area. A seasonal closure will be in effect in all or parts of both zones from December 1 to June 30 to protect wintering and calving elk. Hunting will be permitted in both zones. Continued management of grazing leases and permits in accordance with current BLM policy will be allowed and collaboration between BLM and grazing permittees to manage grazing for sustainability and conservation will be promoted. Biological diversity and ecosystem health will be maintained in order to contribute to healthy wildlife populations, and important elk habitat may be enhanced to improve habitat conditions. The area will be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location and closed to oil and gas leasing, but will be available for common-variety mineral material and nonenergy leaseables on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives. The area will be closed to OHVs and over-the-snow vehicle use and will have a Class II VRM

## Recreation

designation. ROW proposals will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to constraints to protect sensitive resource value. No major wind energy, geothermal, or solar sites will be allowed. Additional communication sites will be considered if the proposed use was located adjacent to the existing communication towers on Emerald Mountain. No additional communication sites will be considered at other areas.

Trailhead, parking, and facilities will be provided. Overnight camping is not allowed. The discharge of firearms not associated with hunting will be prohibited. Marketing will be coordinated with BLM's community partners to provide maps, brochures, and other recreation information that targets the experience and benefit opportunities, the character of recreation settings, and the service environment that exists for each Zone. There is a possibility of BLM instituting user fees in the future if necessary criteria are met. Monitoring will occur to ensure user experiences are met, to ensure compliance with restrictions, and to track trail, trailhead, and facility maintenance and conditions.

### ***Zone 1 Management***

Zone 1 will be managed for strenuous activities. The niche will be destination. Objectives will include strenuous mountain biking and Nordic skiing on primitive trails. Experiences will include enjoying access to close-to-home outdoor activities, enjoying strenuous outdoor physical exercise and developing skills and abilities. Benefits will include improved physical fitness, greater competence and confidence, enhanced outdoor oriented lifestyle, and improved understanding of the community's dependence and impact on public lands and adjoining private lands. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character will be middle country. Under the activity-planning framework, management will be geared towards enhancing recreation opportunities for visitors to the Steamboat Springs area. A designated trail system will be developed for mountain bikers and Nordic skiers and similar activities. Mechanized travel will be limited to designated roads and trails. Non-mechanized muscle-powered travel (i.e., foot, ski, horse, stock) will be permitted anywhere within the zone. Trails south of Ridge Trail in Zone 1 will be closed to the public from December 1 to June 30. Additional travel restrictions could be applied by BLM during activity-level planning.

### ***Zone 2 Management***

Zone 2 will be managed for a nature experience. The niche will be community/backcountry. The objectives will include wildlife viewing, hiking and horseback riding. Experiences will include enjoying natural aesthetics and wildlife, escaping from crowds and enjoying tranquility and peacefulness. Benefits will include a closer relationship and appreciation of nature, reduced stress and positive change in mood and emotion, sense of well-being, enhanced awareness of community dependence on public lands and greater community involvement in recreation and land use decisions. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character will be backcountry. Under the activity-planning framework, management will be geared towards enhancing recreation activity opportunities for residents of the Steamboat Springs area. Informational signing and materials will be provided for wildlife viewing, hunting, and other targeted activities. Mechanized travel will be prohibited in Zone 2. Muscle-powered travel (e.g., foot, ski, horse, stock) will be permitted from July 1 to November 30.

### ***Little Yampa Canyon***

Little Yampa Canyon (27,310 acres) will be managed as a SRMA to provide river boating, big game hunting, camping, wildlife viewing, and interpretation/education opportunities for local communities and visitors to the area. Management of the SRMA is summarized in the table below, with additional management direction following (Map 17).

Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Destination
Activities	Non-motorized boating Motorized boating Camping	Motorized big game hunting Some non-motorized hunting Camping Wildlife watching Interpretation/education
OHV designation	Limited to designated roads and trails	Limited to designated roads and trails
VRM Class	VRM Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA VRM Class III elsewhere	VRM Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA VRM Class III elsewhere

### ***Management Applicable to Both Zones***

OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails. VRM Class II designation will apply to areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA, and a VRM Class III designation will apply everywhere else within the SRMA.

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### ***Zone 1 Management***

The niche will be community, where visitors and Yampa Valley residents depend on public lands for recreation and related tourism use. Objectives will include facilitating flatwater boating (which includes non-motorized and motorized boating) and camping activities. Experiences will include savoring canyon and river aesthetics, enjoying easy access to diverse backcountry recreation, enjoying the closeness of family and friends, enjoying exploration, and escaping everyday responsibilities for a while. Benefits will include improved outdoor knowledge, skills, self-confidence, and for enjoyment with others, a heightened sense of satisfaction with the community, a greater sense of adventure, and renewed human spirit. The physical prescribed setting character will be middle country east of Milk Creek, in which the landscape is natural in appearance although there are some modifications, such as roads and trails. West of Milk Creek, the setting is backcountry in which the landscape is more natural with limited signs of human presence. The social prescribed setting character will be middle country east of Milk Creek and backcountry west of Milk Creek. Group size will be anywhere from 4 to 6 people for the backcountry setting and up to 12 people per group for middle country setting. The administrative prescribed setting character will be backcountry. Brochures are available and information is posted at launch sites. Agency personnel will seldom be available to provide on-site assistance. Under the activity planning framework for management, management of this zone will be geared towards providing opportunities for tourists and Yampa Valley residents to engage in overnight flat-water boating for social groups and families in a natural river canyon atmosphere. Administrative and monitoring actions will be implemented through a site-specific Recreation Area Management Plan. Roads and trails will be modified as needed to mitigate impacts. For marketing, BLM will continue to partner with Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach programs. In conjunction with State Parks, motorized river boating will be monitored to gauge if management actions and the resulting use create the targeted recreational opportunities and facilitate their attainment as outcomes. Campsite conditions and use will also be monitored by agency staff. The development of a volunteer program with gateway communities/river users to assist with monitoring needs will be explored. The area will be administered as NSO for coal and oil and gas operations, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leasables, and recommended for withdrawal from locatable minerals. ROWs will be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

### ***Zone 2 Management***

For Zone 2, north of County Road (CR) 17, the niche will be destination, where national and/or regional recreation-tourism visitors value the area primarily for big game hunting. Objectives will be to provide opportunities for visitors to engage in motorized and some non-motorized big game hunting, camping, wildlife viewing, and interpretation/education. Experiences will include developing skills and abilities, gaining a greater sense of achievement, and savoring the sight and sound of wildlife. Benefits will include greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, an increased awareness and knowledge of wildlife, historical, and natural landscapes to reduce negative human impact, improved opportunity to view wildlife close-up, positive contributions to local and regional economic stability, and an increased desirability as a place to live or retire. The physical prescribed setting character will be middle country, in which the landscape is natural appearing except for obvious primitive and maintained roads. Rules and regulations are posted and trails are clearly marked. The social prescribed setting will be middle to front country. During hunting season, users will expect other visitors with anywhere from 7 to 25 people per group. There will be a variety of traditional camper trailers, pop-up tents, and conventional tents in concentrated areas. Areas of landscape alteration will be prevalent, including disturbed vegetation and trampled soils. Administrative prescribed setting character will be middle country. Area brochures and maps will be available and rules will be clearly posted. BLM personnel and law enforcement will be present to provide on-site assistance mainly during hunting season. Four-wheel drive, all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes are commonly encountered during hunting season. Under the activity-planning framework for management, management will be geared towards providing visitors and residents of the Yampa Valley, hunting-related wildlife viewing, interpretation/education, and other recreation activities. Dispersed camping sites will not be designated unless monitoring shows unacceptable impacts. Camping facilities will be provided in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. For marketing, in partnership with the CPAW and local BLM community partners, there will be increased education and interpretation programs to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. Administrative and monitoring actions will be implemented through a Recreation Area Management Plan. Visitor use will be monitored through a sign-in box and road counter at the main BLM access road. The area will be administered as open for oil and gas operations and as open to locatable minerals, mineral material sales, and nonenergy leasables and will be available to coal leasing.

### ***Juniper Mountain***

Juniper Mountain (1,780 acres) will be managed as a SRMA to provide opportunities for boating, hunting, camping, and hiking for visitors and Yampa Valley residents. Management of the SRMA is summarized in the table below, with additional management direction following (Map 17).

### Recreation

Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Destination
Activities	Day use Motorized and non-motorized boating	Hunting Camping Hiking Horseback riding
OHV designation	Limited to designated roads and trails	Limited to designated roads and trails
VRM Class	VRM Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA VRM Class III elsewhere	VRM Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA VRM Class III elsewhere

#### ***Management Applicable to Both Zones***

The area will be administered as NSO for coal and oil and gas operations and as open to locatable minerals and nonenergy leaseables. OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails and a managed and maintained motorized trail system will be developed. The area will have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight of the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs will be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

#### ***Zone 1 Management***

Zone 1 is the Yampa River corridor. The niche will be community where visitors and Yampa Valley residents depend on public lands for recreation and related tourism use. Objectives will include day-use motorized and non-motorized boating activities. Experiences will include enjoying canyon and river aesthetics, testing endurance, enjoying risk-taking adventure, easy access to diverse backcountry recreation, and temporarily escaping everyday responsibilities. Benefits will include improved outdoor knowledge, skills, and self-confidence for outdoor enjoyment with others, a heightened sense of satisfaction with the community, a greater sense of adventure, and renewed human spirit. The physical prescribed setting character will be middle country in which the landscape is natural in appearance although there are some modifications, such as roads and trails. The social prescribed setting character will be backcountry. Group size will be anywhere from 4 to 6 people. The administrative prescribed setting character will be backcountry. Brochures are available and information is posted at launch sites. Agency personnel will seldom be available to provide on-site assistance. Marketing, in partnership with Colorado State Parks, will include development of education, interpretation, and public outreach programs. In conjunction with State Parks, motorized river boating will be monitored to gauge if that use is changing the desired recreation experience. Under the activity-planning framework, management of this zone will be geared to providing opportunities for visitors and Yampa Valley residents to engage in a challenging boating experience in a naturally-appearing river canyon atmosphere. Administrative and monitoring actions will be implemented through a Recreation Area Management Plan.

#### ***Zone 2 Management***

Zone 2 is outside the river corridor. The niche will be destination where national and/or regional recreation-tourism visitors value the area primarily for big game hunting. Objectives will be to provide opportunities for visitors to engage in big game hunting, camping, hiking, and horseback riding activities. Experiences will include developing skills and abilities, gaining a greater sense of achievement, enjoying strenuous outdoor physical exercise, and enjoying easy access to diverse backcountry recreation. Benefits will include greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, improved physical fitness, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability. The prescribed physical setting character will be middle country. There will be a natural landscape with some primitive and maintained roads and trails, a marked trail system, and simple trailhead developments. The prescribed social and administrative setting character will be backcountry, where encounters with other people will be from 3 to 6 people and landscape alterations are uncommon. Four-wheel drives, all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, in addition to non-motorized, mechanized use will be the modes of travel. Maps of the area will be available, and staff will occasionally be present to provide on-site assistance. Marketing will involve collaboration with BLM community partners, adjacent landowners, and permitted outfitters to provide access and hunting experiences. For monitoring, campsite conditions and use will be monitored as well as user experiences and satisfaction. Under the activity-planning framework, management will be geared towards providing visitors and residents of the Yampa Valley, hunting-related, hiking, and horseback riding opportunities. Administrative and monitoring actions will be implemented through an approved Recreation Area Management Plan.

#### ***Cedar Mountain***

Cedar Mountain (900 acres) will be managed as a SRMA to provide opportunities primarily to residents of Craig for hiking, nature interpretation, and picnicking. Management of the SRMA is summarized in the table below, with additional management direction following (Map 17).



### Recreation

Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Community
Activities	Day-use Picnicking Hiking Wildlife viewing	Hiking Jogging Horseback riding Wildlife viewing Interpretation/Education
OHV designation	Limited to designated roads and trails	Limited to designated roads and trails
VRM Class	VRM Class III	VRM Class III

#### ***Management Applicable to Both Zones***

Cedar Mountain will be a day-use only area. Vehicle parking, facilities, interpretation, and a trail system will be provided. Overnight camping and the discharge of firearms not associated with hunting will be prohibited. Marketing will be coordinated with the City of Craig, BLM community partners, communication site providers, and local sport shops to provide maps, brochures, and other recreation information. Administrative and monitoring actions will be implemented through an approved Recreation Area Management Plan. Monitoring will occur to ensure user experiences are met, to ensure compliance with restrictions, and to keep track of trail maintenance and conditions. The area will be administered as NSO for oil and gas operations, recommended for withdrawal from mineral location, closed to mineral material sales and nonenergy leaseables, and will not be available for coal leasing. OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails. A seasonal closure to motorized vehicles of the portion of the Cedar Mountain road above day-use parking area will be implemented when necessary to reduce disturbance to nesting raptors and prevent nest abandonment. Administrative access to facilities above the day-use area will be permitted. The area will have a Class III VRM designation and will be an avoidance area for additional ROWs.

#### ***Zone 1 Management***

Zone 1 is the picnic area. The niche will be community, where Craig residents look to recreate on public lands close to town. Objectives will include day-use picnicking, hiking, and wildlife viewing. Experiences will include enjoying access to close-to-home outdoor activities, easy access to natural landscapes, the closeness of family, and savoring the sights and sounds of wildlife. Benefits will include improved physical fitness, better maintenance of physical facilities, an increased awareness of wildlife and natural landscapes, stronger ties to family and friends, and an enhanced appreciation for the Yampa Valley and surrounding areas through the use of vantage points. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character will be rural. The natural landscape is substantially modified by communication towers and modern facilities. Contact with other people is eminent and encounters with others tend to be impersonal. Under the activity-planning framework for management, management will be geared towards providing family-oriented activities for residents of Craig.

#### ***Zone 2 Management***

Zone 2 is the trail system. The niche will be community, where Craig residents look to recreate on public lands close to town. Objectives will include hiking, jogging, horseback riding, interpretation/education and wildlife viewing. Experiences will include enjoying access to close-to-home outdoor activities, enjoying easy access to natural landscapes, enjoying the closeness of family, and seeing visitors getting excited about the area. Benefits will include improved physical fitness and better health maintenance, improved understanding of rural-urban interface, and increased awareness, knowledge, and stewardship of wildlife and natural landscapes. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character will be rural. The natural landscape is substantially modified by communication towers and modern facilities. Contact with other people is intermittent, but human use is evident. Under the activity-planning framework for management, a managed, non-motorized trail system will be provided and maintained to enhance recreation and interpretive/education activity opportunities for residents of Craig.

#### ***South Sand Wash***

South Sand Wash (35,510 acres) will be managed as a SRMA to provide OHV experiences in the Yampa Valley. Management of the SRMA is summarized in the table below, with additional management direction following (Map 17).

Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Community
Activities	Off-road motorized recreation	Single-track and double-track OHV riding, novice to expert levels
OHV designation	Open	Limited to designated roads and trails
VRM Class	VRM Class IV	VRM Class III

## Recreation

### *Management Applicable to Both Zones*

Marketing will be coordinated with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, BLM community partners, and Moffat County to provide maps, brochures, interpretation opportunities, and road/trail planning and development. The area will be available for mineral location, oil and gas leasing, and nonenergy leasables. ROWs will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### *Zone 1 Management*

Zone 1 is the open play area. The niche will be community, where Yampa Valley residents depend on public lands primarily for OHV recreation. Objectives will include off-road motorized vehicle recreational experiences. Experiences will include enjoying risk-taking adventure, enjoying the closeness of family, and developing riding skills and abilities. Benefits will include an enhanced sense of personal freedom, a restoration of mind from unwanted stress, a greater sense of adventure, improved maintenance of physical facilities, and positive contributions to the local economy. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character will be rural. The area will be on or near improved country roads and a highway. Group sizes will range from 26 to 50 people and people would seem to be everywhere. There is conspicuous and large-scale landscape alteration from OHV use. Area maps and brochures, and occasional regulatory signing will be present. Enforcement and staff presence will be routine. Under the activity-planning framework for management, a comprehensive management plan will be developed. Management will be geared towards providing family-oriented and skill-developing activities for visitors to the area. Main access roads and trails through the area will be identified and signed. Monitoring will determine if or when open recreation use approaches or exceeds resource capacity. OHV use will be open. Developed recreation sites will be closed to all mineral actions. The area will have a Class IV VRM designation.

### *Zone 2 Management*

Zone 2 is the designated roads and trails area. The niche will be community, where Yampa Valley residents depend on public lands primarily for OHV recreation. Objectives will include single-track and double-track OHV riding, from novice to expert levels. Experiences will include enjoying risk-taking adventure and new challenges and temporarily escaping from everyday responsibilities. Benefits will include greater retention of desired recreational experience; a reduction in the negative impacts from such things as litter, trampling of vegetation, and unplanned trails; positive contributions to the local economy; and an enhanced sense of personal freedom. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character will be middle to front country. Recreation will be on or near improved country roads and contact with people will be eminent, but still intermittent. There will be from 7 to 29 encounters expected a day during peak season and users may be unnerved but may not necessarily move off routes, areas, or sites to accommodate others. Area maps and brochures, occasional regulatory signing, and a designated marked trail system will be present. Four-wheel drives, all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes and some two-wheel drive vehicles will be predominant. Enforcement and staff presence will be routine. Under the activity-planning framework for management, a comprehensive management plan will be developed. Management will be geared towards enhancing OHV trail riding activities for visitors to the area. Together with user groups and local government, there will be a system of designated trails identified and signed to accommodate a wide range of vehicle types and riding levels. Crucial winter range and other seasonally limited wildlife habitat areas will be closed to surface disturbing activities. Monitoring will ensure that user experiences and expectations are being met and that resources are being protected. The area will be available for mineral location, but it will not be available for coal leasing. OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails. The area will have a Class III VRM designation.

### *Serviceberry*

Serviceberry (12,380 acres) will be managed as a SRMA to provide backcountry, non-motorized hunting, and heritage interpretation/education experiences for Yampa Valley residents and visitors to the area. Management of the SRMA is summarized in the table below, with additional management direction following (Map 17).

Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Destination	Backcountry
Activities	Non-motorized big game hunting Camping Heritage Interpretation/Education	Non-motorized big game hunting Undeveloped camping
OHV designation	Limited to designated roads and trails	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class III	VRM Class III

### *Management Applicable to Both Zones*

Marketing, in partnership with CPAW and local Chambers of Commerce, will increase educational and interpretation programs during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. The area will be administered as open to oil and gas leasing and development and also open to nonenergy leasables and mineral

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location, but not open to coal leasing. The area will have a Class III VRM designation. ROWs will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Zone 1 Management***

Zone 1 is the Willow Creek and north Serviceberry access. The niche will be destination, where national and/or regional recreation-tourism visitors and other constituents value the area primarily for big game hunting. Objectives will be to provide opportunities for visitors to engage in big game hunting and associated camping activities, and heritage interpretation/education. Experiences will include developing skills and abilities, gaining a greater sense of achievement, and enjoying easy access to recreation. Benefits will include a reduction in wildlife disturbance from recreation users, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge, self-confidence, improved physical fitness, positive contributions to local and regional economic stability, and a greater understanding of the area's heritage. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character will be middle country. The landscape will be naturally-appearing except for obvious primitive and maintained roads. Expected encounters will range from 7 to 14 people per day, with group sizes approximately the same size. Occasional regulatory signing, trail marking, and interpretation will be present, along with staff and law enforcement to provide on-site assistance mainly during hunting season. Under the activity-planning framework, management will be geared towards providing visitors and residents of the Yampa Valley, hunting-related, heritage interpretation/education, and other recreation activities. Camping facilities will be provided, and there will be improvements to the roads to these facilities in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. A managed and maintained trail system will be developed within the area. User experience and satisfaction, as well as campsite and historic homestead conditions and use, will be monitored. OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails.

### ***Zone 2 Management***

Zone 2 is the Serviceberry backcountry. The niche will be backcountry, where national and/or local recreation-tourism visitors and communities would value the area for its dispersed, open, and undeveloped character. Objectives will be to provide opportunities for visitors to engage in non-motorized big game hunting and undeveloped camping, hiking, and other primitive recreation activities. Experiences will include developing skills and abilities, gaining a greater sense of achievement, feeling good about solitude and being isolated, enjoying primitive and unconfined outdoor recreation environments, and enjoying exploration. Benefits will include a greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge, improved physical fitness, closer relationship with the natural world, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character will be backcountry. The landscape will be naturally-appearing with any modifications not readily noticeable and some trails primitive. Encounters with other people will range from 3 to 6 per day because of the open spaces and non-motorized mode of travel. Basic maps for the area will be available, but staff will seldom be available to provide on-site assistance if needed. Under the activity-planning framework, management will be geared towards providing opportunities for visitors and the Yampa Valley residents to engage in primitive hunting and other recreation activities. Some managed and maintained non-motorized trails will be developed within the area. User experience and satisfaction will be monitored. Monitoring will also occur to ensure compliance with motor vehicle road closures. The area will be closed to OHV use.

### ***Fly Creek***

Fly Creek (12,340 acres) will be managed as a SRMA to provide backcountry non-motorized hunting experiences. Management of the SRMA is summarized in the table below, with additional management direction following (Map 17).

Zones	Zone 1
Niche	Destination
Activities	Non-motorized big game hunting Undeveloped camping
OHV designation	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class III

The area will be one recreation management zone. The niche will be destination. Objectives will include non-motorized big game hunting and associated undeveloped camping activities. Experiences will include developing skills and abilities and gaining a greater sense of achievement. Benefits will include a reduction in wildlife disturbance from recreation users, a reduction in hunter conflicts, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved self-confidence, enhanced outdoor knowledge, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability. The physical and administrative prescribed setting character will be backcountry. The social prescribed setting character will be primitive. Under the activity-planning framework for management, a managed and maintained non-motorized trail system will be developed within the area. Educational and interpretation activities will be increased during

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hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. Property boundary signing will be maintained. Marketing will be coordinated with CPAW, BLM community partners, local adjacent landowners, and permitted outfitters to provide hunting and recreation information. Monitoring will occur to ensure compliance with motor vehicle road closures. User experiences and satisfaction will also be monitored. The area will be administered as open to oil and gas operations and also open to nonenergy leasables. The area will be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location and will not be available for coal leasing. The area will be closed to OHV use. The area will have a Class III VRM designation. ROWs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Extensive Recreation Management Areas

All BLM-managed lands within the planning area that are not identified as a SRMA will be considered as ERMA. Objectives for the ERMA are as follows. For visitor health and safety, provide direction and destination signing for public safety and service and foster better understanding of the safety hazards and risks associated with recreation activities. For user conflicts, focus public land boundary signing on fragmented lands to reduce trespassing onto private lands and monitor user conflicts to determine if changes are needed in transportation or other activity planning. Use education to further enhance resource protection. The criteria in Appendix F will be used to determine if activity planning should be triggered.

### Developed Recreation Sites

The number of interpretive sites and roadside pullouts for viewing will increase as the need and opportunities arise. Developed recreation sites (campgrounds, boat launches, and picnic sites) will be provided in association with SRMAs.

For the purposes of ensuring public health and safety and preserving quality recreation experiences, the following restriction will apply to BLM lands within the LSFO RMPPA: Disposal or abandonment of game carcasses or carcass parts will be prohibited within 300 feet of any existing developed or dispersed campsite, parking area, trailhead, or developed day-use area. Moving game carcasses or carcass parts beyond 300 feet may not be accomplished by motorized vehicles.

In order to minimize resource impacts and help prevent new user-created routes, users are allowed to park motorized or mechanized modes of travel immediately adjacent and parallel to available designated routes for any purpose. Parking is limited to one vehicle-width from the edge of the route. Users will be encouraged to park motorized or mechanized modes of travel in already disturbed areas whenever possible, consider safety, and keep routes passable for other users.

Short spur routes leading to popular dispersed campsites will be designated and identified. Dispersed camping will be allowed in other areas, consistent with parking requirements described above.

### Management of the Yampa River Corridor

Within the Yampa River corridor, the quality of the following indicators of recreational experience will be monitored and the use of sites and access points regulated accordingly: site disturbance, user conflict, public health and safety, and other resource impacts.

### Special Recreation Permits

Special recreation permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on applications received. Commercial outfitter camps will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Commercial use permits that provide recreational opportunities, enhance recreational experiences, and protect resources will be authorized.

No competitive events will be permitted in WSAs. Motorized and non-motorized competitive events will be authorized consistent with OHV area and road/trail designations. Permitted commercial events in the backcountry portions of SRMAs (the Serviceberry SRMA, Fly Creek SRMA, and portions of the Emerald Mountain SRMA) will be limited to 50 participants and to non-motorized events. Permission for commercial events in the ERMA and non-backcountry SRMAs (portions of the Emerald Mountain SRMA, Cedar Mountain SRMA, South Sand Wash SRMA, Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, and Juniper Mountain SRMA) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Vending in conjunction with organized events or when the vending is necessary to support protection of resources or recreation use will be authorized.

Cooperative agreements with Colorado State Parks for the management of the Yampa River will be maintained. Coordination with local and regional recreation and economic development organizations, such as the Moffat County Chamber of Commerce and the Yampa Valley Alliance, will continue. In addition, BLM will work proactively with local communities and governments to identify opportunities for establishing heritage tourism (scenic backcountry byways such as Godiva Rim and Lookout Mountain), sites for watching wildlife, and cultural tours.

## 2.16 Forestry

Forestry
<p>The Materials Act of 1947 authorized disposal of timber on public land. Section 102 of the FLPMA requires that public land be managed for multiple use and sustained yield in a manner that would protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values. Section 102 also states that public land would be managed in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber.</p>
Goals and Objectives
<p><b>Goal:</b> Management of forest and woodland communities that are resilient to disturbances from insects, disease, and wildfires. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide forest and woodland products on a sustainable basis.</li> <li>• Manage forest stands to maintain appropriate species composition and stand density.</li> </ul>
Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions
<p>Forest communities will be managed for forest health with fire and other treatments, and product sales will be allowed. Harvesting forest products killed by wildfires and bark beetle attacks may be warranted when consistent with resource goals/objectives. Woodland communities will be managed for woodland health with fire and other treatments, and product sales will be allowed.</p> <p>Authorization to harvest forest or woodland products, commercially or non-commercially, will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Commercial forest and woodland product harvest, personal use firewood gathering, and Christmas tree harvest will not be permitted in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Yampa Canyon SRMA,</li> <li>• Juniper Mountain SRMA,</li> <li>• Cedar Mountain SRMA, and</li> <li>• Irish Canyon ACEC.</li> </ul> <p>Restrictions on personal use firewood gathering do not apply to campfire wood. However, only dead material can be harvested for campfire wood.</p>

## 2.17 Lands and Realty

Lands and Realty
<p>Section 102 of FLPMA requires that public land be retained in federal ownership unless disposal of a particular parcel would serve the national interest. Guidance provided by Sections 203 and 206 of FLPMA applies to all surface land tracts identified as available for disposal under the land use allocations. Retention and acquisition of land containing significant resource values would provide for long-term protection and management of those values. Any acquired land or acquired interest in land would be managed for the purposes for which the land was acquired or in the same manner as adjacent or comparable public land.</p> <p>Section 503 of FLPMA provides for the designation of ROW corridors and encourages use of in-common ROWs to minimize environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate ROWs. BLM policy, as described in BLM Manual 2801.13B1, is to encourage prospective applicants to locate their proposals within corridors.</p>
Goals and Objectives
<p><b>Goal A:</b> Consolidate BLM's landownership patterns in Routt County and in Moffat County. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify all the lands for exchange, sale, or disposal within the LSFO by zone.</li> <li>• Through exchange or sale, look for opportunities for consolidation of BLM lands and/or for acquiring additional lands.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal B:</b> Increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of public land management. Objectives for achieving this goal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify criteria for the disposal of public land through sale or exchange.</li> </ul>

## Lands and Realty

### Goal C:

Allow for appropriate ROW routes and development sites (e.g., renewable energy, communication), while identifying areas that will not be compatible with such use. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Provide access for the development of renewable energy resources, in an environmentally responsible manner.
- Provide access for the development of roads and trails, utilities, transmission lines, communication sites, and other uses, in an environmentally responsible manner.
- Provide access for the development of oil and gas pipeline routes and other uses associated with oil and gas development in an environmentally responsible manner.
- Identify and establish major utility and transportation corridors within the planning area.

### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

#### Land Tenure Adjustments

BLM-administered lands in the LSFO RMPPA are divided into three retention and disposal zones: the East Zone, Central Zone, and West Zone (Map 18). Disposal land tenure adjustment actions (both exchanges and sales) will be allowed on lands within any zone that meet the following criteria:

- Lands suitable for public purposes adjacent to or of special importance to local communities and to State and/or federal agencies for purposes including, but not limited to, community expansion, extended community services, or economic development
- Lands without legal public access
- Lands that have facilities that are in trespass and predate the RMP
- Isolated lands with public access by foot or horseback only
- Lands that are irregularly shaped, or lands that are narrow parcels or small parcels, or lands of any other configuration that makes the land difficult to manage and that increases the occurrence of trespass
- Lands with public road access that are so small that they cannot be proactively managed for a variety of resource values
- Lands that would be better suited to private or other agency ownership.

Additional criteria for each zone is described as follows:

#### East Zone:

- Actively seek opportunities to exchange or dispose of BLM lands to facilitate better management of BLM lands and to benefit the public. Sales should be tied to identification of the purchase of nonfederal lands within the planning area, as appropriate and in the public's interest.
- Look to exchange lands with the appropriate local and State agencies to facilitate one-agency management in particular areas, including, but not limited to, Stagecoach State Park, Steamboat Lake State Park, Indian Run State Wildlife Area, Steamboat Springs Mountain Park, and the Jimmy Dun Gulch CPAW/State Land Board lease area.
- Retain and seek acquisition of additional lands within identified acquisition areas, including, but not limited to, Sleeping Giant, West Gibraltar Peak, Copper Ridge, Pagoda/Hamilton, Dry Fork/Bull Gulch, Sage Creek, Bear Gulch, Little Middle Creek, Rattle Snake Butte (near Oak Creek), and Watson Creek (near Yampa) areas.
- Additional retention or acquisition areas can be identified during the life of the plan for the public good.

#### Central Zone:

- When the opportunity arises, exchange or sell lands (surface and/or mineral estate) to facilitate better management of BLM lands and to benefit the public. Sales should be tied to identification of the purchase of non-federal lands within the planning area, as appropriate and in the public's interest.
- Land Utilization (LU)<sup>1</sup> lands should be retained as much as possible, and acquisition of additional lands in the area should be actively sought to protect wildlife habitat, especially sage-grouse.
- Look to exchange lands with the appropriate State agencies to facilitate one-agency management in particular areas, including, but not limited to, the Little Snake State wildlife area.
- Retain and seek acquisition of additional lands within identified acquisition areas, including, but not limited to, the Thornburg Mountain and Serviceberry Mountain areas, the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, and the Juniper Mountain SRMA.
- Additional retention or acquisition areas can be identified during the life of the plan for the public good.

#### West Zone:

- In rare cases, exchange or dispose of lands to facilitate better management of BLM lands and to benefit the public. Sales should be tied to identification of the purchase of nonfederal lands within LSFO, as appropriate and in the public's interest.

<sup>1</sup> Lands acquired under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937, that are administered by BLM.

Lands and Realty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look to exchange lands with the appropriate parties to facilitate contiguous management by one-agency.</li> <li>• Additional retention or acquisition areas can be identified during the life of the plan for the public's interest.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rights-of-Way</b> Encourage ROWs in the following existing corridors: major roads including county roads (e.g., CR 20, 4, 7, and 57), power transmission lines, and oil and gas pipelines.</p> <p><b>Exclusion Areas</b> The following areas (161,040 acres) are designated as ROW exclusion areas (Map 19):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing WSAs</li> <li>• Limestone Ridge area</li> <li>• Irish Canyon ACEC</li> <li>• Vermillion Basin area with wilderness characteristics</li> </ul> <p><b>Avoidance Areas</b> The following areas (106,840 acres) are designated as ROW avoidance areas (Map 19):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupied black-footed ferret habitat</li> <li>• VRM Class II areas</li> <li>• Cold Spring Mountain area (outside the WSA)</li> <li>• Emerald Mountain SRMA</li> <li>• Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, Zone 1</li> <li>• Juniper Mountain SRMA</li> <li>• Cedar Mountain SRMA</li> <li>• Dinosaur North area (outside the WSA)</li> </ul> <p>The remainder of the LSFO (1,069,020 acres) will be open for the consideration of ROWs on a case-by-case basis, with stipulations identified during activity level environmental reviews.</p>
<p><b>Easements</b> Actively pursue easements through specific parcels to improve access to public lands for recreational use such as hunting and fishing. In addition, actively pursue easements for access to develop identified transportation and utility corridors.</p>
<p><b>Communication Sites</b> All sites will be open except in ROW exclusion areas. Priority will go to collocation of facilities and use of existing sites to minimize number of total sites. Use, where possible, best available technologies, such as tower guy wires, to reduce migratory bird mortality.</p>
<p><b>Renewable Energy</b> See ROW actions for more information on wind energy development. Wind energy development will be encouraged in areas rated excellent and above (Map 20) as long as they are consistent with resource objectives. Use, where possible, best available technologies to reduce migratory bird mortality. Solar energy development will be encouraged in the LSFO RMPPA as long as it is consistent with resource objectives.</p>

## 2.18 Transportation and Access and Travel Management

Transportation and Access and Travel Management
<p>Access will be provided across public lands to landlocked private and State lands consistent with FLPMA. Management of OHV activities will be in accordance with Executive Order 11644, as amended by Executive Order 11989, and with applicable regulations (43 CFR 8340) that address OHV use on public lands. Designation and authorization of OHV use will be designed to provide a quality recreation experience, protect resource values, promote safety of users, and minimize conflict among various uses of public lands. Federal regulations (43 CFR Part 8340) and BLM planning guidance require BLM to designate all BLM-administered land as either open, limited, or closed in regard to OHV use. Areas designated as limited to designated roads and trails will be managed as limited to existing roads and trails until transportation planning and road/trail designation occurs. Vehicle closures do not apply to BLM ROWs, county or State roads, or other valid existing rights. Permitted uses may be allowed under special authorization on a case-by-case basis.</p>

## Transportation and Access and Travel Management

### Goals and Objectives

**Goal A (Transportation and Access):**

Provide a transportation system that is manageable and maintainable, meets management needs, and minimizes impacts on resources and habitats. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Use collaborative transportation planning to identify and designate roads and trails and to manage the levels of road construction and habitat fragmentation.
- County and local governments and affected interests will be invited to participate in transportation planning.
- The transportation plan will identify both the kind of road construction and the maintenance standards needed to protect resources and accommodate anticipated traffic types and use levels.

**Goal B (Transportation and Access):**

Provide a mix of motorized, non-motorized, and non-mechanized legal public access to public lands. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Work with county and local governments and affected interests to identify priority access needs.

**Goal C (Travel Management):**

Provide for types or modes of access and travel that will balance resource protection with use. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- County and local governments and affected interests will be invited to participate in travel management.
- Design a road and trail system within the planning area that can be well managed and provides quality recreation opportunities.
- Reduce the number of unmanaged roads and trails.

### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

**Transportation and Access**

Develop an access/transportation plan that:

- Enables access where needed
- Limits points of access to reduce the number of redundant roads and trails
- Reroutes, rehabilitates, or eliminates existing roads and trails that are causing damage to cultural or natural resources
- Reroutes roads and trails that are landlocked by private parcels
- Restricts access to meet resource objectives (seasonal road closures, gating, etc.)
- Concentrates stream and riparian crossings
- Reduces habitat fragmentation
- Considers new construction and reconstruction of roads and trails.

Actively pursue access to specific parcels to improve access to public lands for land management purposes. Refer to the Lands and Realty Section (2.17) for more information.

**Travel Management**

Areas are designated as open, limited, or closed to vehicle use, as detailed below and displayed on Map 21.

OHV Area Designation	Acres
Open to OHV use	19,710
Limited to existing roads and trails	992,780 <sup>1</sup>
Limited to designated roads and trails	199,790
Closed to OHV use	124,620
Note: 1) Area designations where OHV use is limited to existing routes will only apply until comprehensive transportation planning occurs, at which point OHV use will be limited to designated routes.	

**Closed**

The following areas (124,620 acres) will be managed as closed to OHV use:

- Diamond Breaks WSA
- Cross Mountain WSA
- West Cold Spring WSA
- Ant Hills WSA
- Chew Winter Camp WSA



## Transportation and Access and Travel Management

- Peterson Draw WSA
- Vale of Tears WSA
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 3
- Portions of Vermillion Basin
- Limestone Ridge area
- Serviceberry SRMA, Zone 2
- Emerald Mountain SRMA
- Maybell uranium pit
- Fly Creek SRMA

### ***Limited to Designated Roads and Trails***

Designate roads and trails determined through comprehensive transportation planning as described in Appendix F. The following areas (199,790 acres) will be immediately managed as limited to designated roads and trails for OHV use:

- All WSAs except Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain
- Irish Canyon ACEC
- Lookout Mountain area
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 1
- Wild and Scenic River, Yampa Segment 2
- Little Yampa Canyon SRMA
- Juniper Mountain SRMA
- Cedar Mountain SRMA
- South Sand Wash SRMA, Zone 2
- Serviceberry SRMA, Zone 1
- Cottonwood Creek area
- Dinosaur North area (outside the WSA)
- Cold Spring Mountain area (outside the WSA)
- Browns Park cellular site
- Wild Mountain area
- Hoy Mountain area
- Portion of Vermillion Basin

The initial designated roads and trails system for the LSFO is shown on Map 22. This system is based on previous implementation-level decisions and provides the primary framework of key road, primitive road, and trails needed for future access throughout the LSFO. Subsequent transportation planning, as described in Appendix F, will identify additional roads and trails needed for designation to provide continued access needs.

Driving off designated roads and trails will be allowed for camping, firewood collecting and picnicking within 300 feet from a designated roads and trail. This will also apply to existing routes before routes are designated.

### ***Limited to Existing Roads and Trails***

All areas not managed as open, closed, or limited to designated roads and trails (992,780 acres) will be managed as limited to existing roads and trails until road/trail designation is initiated through the transportation planning. Area designations where OHV use is limited to existing routes will only apply until comprehensive transportation planning occurs, at which point OHV use will be limited to designated routes.

Areas limited to existing roads and trails will be prioritized for transportation planning, eventually leading to designation of roads and trails across the entire LSFO (Appendix F). BLM will continue to sign and maintain the existing road system.

### ***Seasonal Closures***

Seasonal OHV closures in big game crucial winter range and production areas, as well as wild horse foaling areas, will be considered on the basis of site-specific transportation planning results.

### ***Open***

Manage Zone 1 of the South Sand Wash SRMA (area on south edge and Clay Buttes area – 19,710 acres) as open to cross country OHV use.

On the basis of the results of monitoring, BLM will take any actions necessary to fulfill its obligations to protect natural resources in the open area. This may include changing certain aspects of management of the area, such as allowable use, or implementing mitigation measures, such as fencing or closing areas.

### ***Over-the-Snow Vehicles***

The Diamond Breaks, Cross Mountain, West Cold Spring, Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw and Vale of Tears WSAs and the Emerald Mountain SRMA will be closed to over-the-snow vehicles. In all other areas of the

### Transportation and Access and Travel Management

LSFO, over-the-snow vehicles will be allowed if snow depth is equal to or greater than 2 feet. Over-the-snow vehicles will not be permitted in areas of snow depth less than 2 feet. If winter conditions warrant, BLM will temporarily close areas to over-the-snow vehicles in order to reduce stress to wildlife. BLM over-the-snow restrictions do not apply to county roads, permitted uses and administrative uses.

## 2.19 Social and Economic Values

### Social and Economic Values

As part of any undertaking of a community-based planning effort, social and economic values are at the heart of the community. Management actions integrate the community values as part of the RMP.

#### Goals and Objectives

**Goal:**

Manage public lands to provide social and economic benefits to residents, businesses, visitors, and future generation. Objectives for achieving this goal include:

- Work cooperatively with private and community groups and local government to provide for customary uses consistent with other resource objectives and to sustain or improve local, regional, and national economies.
- Maintain and promote the cultural, economic, ecological, and social health of northwest Colorado.

#### Management Actions: Allowable Uses and Actions

Provide for predictable and sustainable levels of commodity outputs. Provide natural resource amenities on public lands which promote local communities as places to live, work, or visit. Protect natural and cultural values for the enjoyment of future generations. Target local economies for BLM business activities and contracts associated with public land management to the extent permitted by the existing authorities.

## 3. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN IMPLEMENTATION

Plan implementation is a continuous process that will occur throughout the life of the Approved RMP. The public can be involved in RMP implementation through a variety of venues. Some of the management decisions contained in this document will require preparation of detailed, site-specific NEPA analyses prior to implementation. This type of analysis often requires public input during the initial scoping period, and provides further protest or appeal opportunities.

After issuing the Approved RMP and ROD, an Implementation Strategy will be developed. The implementation strategy may also be a sub-set of the Assessment Guidance Document, if one is developed as part of the Adaptive Management strategy. The regular coordination associated with that document will include an update on implementation of the plan, foreseeable activities for the upcoming year, and opportunities for continued collaboration with the RMP cooperators. Additional coordination meetings could be held as needed.

Some of the decisions contained in this document will require preparation of detailed, project-level NEPA analyses prior to implementation. Tribal consultation and public involvement opportunities, including further protest or appeal opportunities, may be provided. Other decisions have been addressed to a sufficient level of detail to be implemented over time without further public involvement opportunities.

## 4. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Approved RMP will be implemented as funding and workforce allow. Most of the land use plan decisions are effective upon approval of this document. However, some decisions will take a number of years to implement on the ground. Implementation monitoring will track which decisions have been implemented and when.

Decisions in this plan will be implemented over a period of years depending on budget and staff availability. After issuing the ROD/Approved RMP, BLM will prepare an Implementation Plan that establishes tentative timeframes for completion of “one-time” actions identified in the Approved RMP. Most of these actions require additional analysis and site specific activity planning. This schedule does not include the decisions which are effective immediately upon approval of the plan (usually allocations), or the actions which describe the ongoing management that will be incorporated and applied as site-specific proposals are analyzed on an ongoing basis. This schedule will assist BLM managers and staff in preparing budget requests and in scheduling work. However, the proposed schedule must be considered tentative and will be affected by future funding, changing program priorities, non-discretionary workloads, and cooperation by partners and external publics. Periodic review of the plan will provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and provide information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation.

Plan implementation is a continuous and active process. Decisions presented in the Section 2 of this Approved RMP are of three types: Immediate, One-Time, and Long- Term.

**Immediate Decisions:** These decisions go into effect upon signature of the ROD and Approved RMP. These include decisions such as the allocation of lands as available or unavailable for oil and gas leasing, ACEC designations, and OHV designations. Immediate decisions require no additional analysis and provide the framework for any subsequent activities proposed in the planning area. Proposals for actions such as oil and gas leasing, land adjustments, and other allocation-based actions will be reviewed against these decisions/allocations to determine if the proposal is in conformance with the plan.

**One-Time Decisions:** These types of decisions include those that are implemented after additional site-specific analysis is completed. Examples are implementation of the recommendations to withdraw lands from locatable mineral entry or development of a habitat management plan or a special recreation management area plan. One-time decisions usually require additional analysis and are prioritized as part of BLM’s budget process. Priorities for implementation of “one-time” RMP decisions will be based on several criteria, including:

- Current and projected resource needs and demands,
- National and Statewide BLM management direction and program emphasis, and
- Funding.

**Long-Term Guidance/Life of Plan Direction:** These decisions include the goals, objectives, and management actions established by the plan that are applied during site-specific analyses and activity planning. This guidance is applied whether the action is initiated by BLM or by a non-BLM project proponent. Long-term guidance and plan direction is incorporated into BLM management as implementation level planning and project analysis occurs (for example, as a result of the watershed assessment process or receipt of a land use application)

Interdisciplinary impact analysis will be based on this RMP/EIS and other applicable EIS’s. If the analysis prepared for site-specific projects finds potential for significant impacts not already described in an existing EIS, another EIS or a supplement to an existing EIS may be warranted.

Site-specific environmental analyses and documentation (including the use of categorical exclusions and determinations of NEPA adequacy where appropriate) may be prepared for one or more individual projects in accordance with management objectives and decisions established in the approved land use plan. In addition, BLM will ensure that the environmental review process includes evaluation of all critical elements, including cultural resources and threatened and endangered species, and completes required USFWS Section 7 consultations and coordination with the SHPO.

Upon providing public notice of a decision, environmental documentation will be sent to affected interests and made available to others on request. Decisions to approve implementation-level plans or to implement site-specific projects are subject to administrative review at the time such decisions are made.

## **5. PLAN EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Plan Evaluation**

Evaluation is a process in which the plan and monitoring data are reviewed to determine if management goals and objectives are being met and if management direction is sound. Land use plan evaluations determine if decisions are being implemented, if mitigation measures are satisfactory, if there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, if there is new data of significance, and if decisions should change through amendment or revision. Monitoring data gathered over time is examined and used to determine whether management actions are meeting objectives. Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or to identify what changes need to be made in management practices to meet RMP objectives.

BLM will use land use plan evaluations to determine if the decisions in the RMP, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, are still valid in light of new information and monitoring data. Evaluation of the RMP will generally be conducted every five years, unless unexpected actions, new information, or significant changes in other plans, legislation, or litigation triggers an evaluation.

Evaluations will follow the protocols established by BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) and 43 CFR Part 1610.4-9 or other appropriate guidance in effect at the time the evaluation is initiated.

### **5.2 Plan Maintenance**

Land use plan decisions and supporting information can be maintained to reflect minor changes in data, but maintenance is limited to refining, documenting, and/or clarifying previously approved decisions. Some examples of maintenance actions include:

- Correcting minor data, typographical, mapping, or tabular data errors
- Refining baseline information as a result of new inventory data (e.g., changing the boundary of an archaeological district, refining the known habitat of special status species or big game crucial winter ranges, or adjusting the boundary of a fire management unit based on updated fire regime condition class inventory, fire occurrence, monitoring data, and/or demographic changes)
- Applying an existing oil and gas lease stipulation to a new area prior to the lease sale based on new inventory data (e.g., apply an existing protective stipulation for sage-grouse to a newly discovered sage-grouse lek.)

BLM expects that new information gathered from field inventories and assessments, research, other agency studies, and other sources will update baseline data and/or support new management techniques, best management practices, and scientific principles. Adaptive management strategies may be used when monitoring data is available as long as the goals and objectives of the plan are met. Where monitoring shows land use plan actions or best management practices are not effective, modifications or adjustments may occur without amendment or revision of the plan as long as assumptions and impacts disclosed in the analysis remain valid and broad-scale goals and objectives are not changed.

Plan maintenance will be documented in supporting records. Plan maintenance does not require formal public involvement, interagency coordination, or the NEPA analysis required for making new land use plan decisions.

### **5.3 Changing/Amending the Plan**

The Approved RMP may be changed, should conditions warrant, through a plan amendment or plan revision process. A plan amendment may become necessary if major changes are needed or to consider a proposal or action that is not in conformance with the plan. The results of monitoring, evaluation of new data, or policy changes and changing public needs might also provide the impetus for an amendment. Generally, an amendment is issue-specific. If several areas of the plan become outdated or otherwise obsolete, a plan revision may become necessary. Plan amendments and revisions are accomplished with public input and the appropriate level of environmental analysis.

## **6. MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Monitoring**

Monitoring the Approved RMP involves tracking the implementation and effectiveness of land use plan decisions (implementation monitoring) identified in Section 2. Implementation monitoring tracks the completion of land use plan decisions whereas effectiveness monitoring helps determine whether completion of land use plan decisions achieves anticipated desired outcomes. If implementation of land use plans does not achieve anticipated desired outcomes, adaptive management may be necessary.

Management actions identified for the LSFO RMPPA are based on studies and the best scientific and commercial information available. However, conditions may change over time. Experience has shown that implemented management actions can be improved as new technology and new information become available. It is also possible that changes in land use will require a different management action to protect the resources. To address the changing conditions and provide management flexibility using BMPs, the LSFO will monitor and evaluate the Approved RMP using a process that provides the optimum means of checking the effectiveness of management actions. This process will measure the effectiveness of existing actions by monitoring these actions and applying the results of new scientific research. To do this, the process will analyze the current resource conditions resulting from implemented actions and identify and recommend alternatives or modified actions, as necessary, to reach established objectives and goals. Because capability to conduct the process at the optimum level can vary from year to year, the actions to be monitored will be prioritized. Appendix F includes direction on collecting data and monitoring a variety of resource indicators. By implementing the monitoring direction in Appendix F, BLM will continue to gather important information to ensure the goals and objectives identified in the Approved RMP are met. If monitoring indicates the goals and objectives are not being met, the adaptive management process will be implemented to adjust actions and improve resource condition.

### **6.2 Adaptive Management**

Adaptive management (AM) is a system of management practices based on clearly identified outcomes, monitoring to determine if management actions are meeting outcomes, and, if not, facilitating management changes that will best ensure that outcomes are met or to re-evaluate the outcomes. An appendix, Appendix M, was included in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS describing the AM process BLM will consider implementing based on budget, personnel availability, and resource objectives.

The LSFO will implement the AM process for decisions appropriate to be adapted in order to meet resource goals and objectives. Monitoring, reports, documents, and timelines associated with the AM process will be subject to Field Office budget and staffing constraints.

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## Acronyms

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
AIRFA	American Indian Religious Freedom Act
AM	Adaptive Management
AML	Appropriate Management Level
APD	Application for Permit to Drill
APE	Area of Potential Effect
AUM	Animal Unit Month
BA	Biological Assessment
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practices
CEQ	Council of Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COA	Conditions of Approval
CPAW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife
CR	County Road
CSU	Controlled Surface Use
CWP	Citizens' Wilderness Proposal
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
DPC	Desired Plant Community
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPCA	Energy Policy and Conservation Act
ERMA	Extensive Recreation Management Area
ESA	Endangered Species Act of 1973
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
HMA	Herd Management Area
IB	Information Bulletin
IM	Instruction Memorandum
IMP	Interim Management Policy
LHA	Land/Landscape Health Assessment
LSFO	Little Snake Field Office
LU	Land Utilization
MLP	Master Leasing Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1996
NOA	Notice of Availability
NOI	Notice of Intent
NRCS	National Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSO	No Surface Occupancy
NWCOS	Northwest Colorado Stewardship
NWSR	National Wild and Scenic Rivers (Act)
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
PA	Programmatic Agreement

PAC	Protected Activity Center
PFC	Proper Functioning Condition
PFYC	Potential Fossil Yield Classification
PL	Public Law
POD	Plan of Development
PRIA	Public Rangeland Improvement Act
RCA	Reserve Conservation Allotment
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RMPPA	Resource Management Plan Planning Area
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right-of-Way
RS 2477	Revised Statue 2477
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIP	State Air Quality Implementation Plan
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SSR	Site-Specific Relocation
U.S.	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VRI	Visual Resource Inventory
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WO	Washington Office
WSA	Wilderness Study Areas
WSR	Wild and Scenic River



## Glossary

**Air Pollution.** The contamination of the atmosphere by any toxic or radioactive gases and particulate matter as a result of human activity.

**Allotment Management Plan (AMP).** A concisely written program of livestock grazing management, including supportive measures, if required, designed to attain specific management goals in a grazing allotment. An AMP is prepared in consultation with the permittee(s), lessee(s), and other affected interests. Livestock grazing is considered in relation to other uses of the range and to renewable resources, such as watershed, vegetation, and wildlife. An AMP establishes seasons of use, the number of livestock to be permitted, the range improvements needed, and the grazing system.

**Allotment.** An area of land in which one or more livestock operators graze their livestock. Allotments generally consist of BLM lands but may also include other federally managed, state owned, and private lands. An allotment may include one or more separate pastures. Livestock numbers and periods of use are specified for each allotment.

**Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS).** Assessment of the current management direction. It includes a consolidation of existing data needed to analyze and resolve identified issues, a description of current BLM management guidance, and a discussion of existing problems and opportunities for solving them.

**Appropriate Management Response (AMR).** Any specific action suitable to meet Fire Management Unit (FMU) objectives. Typically, the AMR ranges across a spectrum of tactical options (from monitoring to intensive management actions). The AMR is developed by using Fire Management Unit strategies and objectives identified in the Fire Management Plan.

**Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).** Areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards (from H-6310-1, Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures).

**AUM (Animal Unit Month).** The amount of forage needed by an “animal unit” (AU) grazing for one month. The animal unit in turn is defined as one mature 1,000-pound cow and her suckling calf.

**Avoidance Area.** Areas with sensitive resource values where rights-of-way and Section 302 permits, leases, and easements would be strongly discouraged. Authorizations made in avoidance areas would have to be compatible with the purpose for which the area was designated and not otherwise be feasible on lands outside the avoidance area.

**Backcountry Byways.** Vehicle routes that traverse scenic corridors utilizing secondary or back country road systems. National back country byways are designated by the type of road and vehicle needed to travel the byway.

**Big Game.** Indigenous ungulate wildlife species that are hunted, such as elk, deer, bison, bighorn sheep, and pronghorn antelope.

**Candidate species.** Plant and animal taxa considered for possible addition to the list of endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. These are taxa for which the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has on file sufficient information on biological vulnerability and

threat(s) to support issuance of a proposal to list, but issuance of a proposed rule is presently precluded by higher priority listing actions. Separate lists for plants, vertebrate animals, and invertebrate animals are published periodically in the Federal Register. Candidate species and their habitats are managed as BLM sensitive species. (from BLM-M-6840, Special Status Species Management)

**Clean Air Act of 1963 (CAA) and Amendments.** Federal legislation governing air pollution control.

**Closed.** Generally denotes that an area is not available for a particular use or uses; refer to specific definitions found in law, regulations, or policy guidance for application to individual programs. For example, 43 CFR 8340.0-5 sets forth the specific meaning of “closed” as it relates to off-highway vehicle use, and 43 CFR 8364 defines “closed” as it relates to closure and restriction orders (from H-1601-1, BLM Land Use Planning Handbook).

**Condition Class (Fire Regimes).** Fire Regime Condition Classes are a depiction of the degree of departure from historical fire regimes, possibly resulting in alterations of key ecosystem components. These classes categorize and describe vegetation composition and structure conditions that currently exist inside the Fire Regime Groups. Based on the coarse-scale national data, they serve as generalized wildfire rankings. The risk of loss of key ecosystem components from wildfires increases from Condition Class 1 (lowest risk) to Condition Class 3 (highest risk).

**Conditions of Approval.** Conditions or provisions (requirements) under which an Application for a Permit to Drill or a Sundry Notice is approved.

**Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).** An advisory council to the President of the United States established by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. It reviews Federal programs to analyze and interpret environmental trends and information.

**Critical Habitat.** The specific areas within the geographical area currently occupied by a species, at the time it is listed in accordance with the ESA, on which are found those physical or biological features (i) essential to the conservation of the species and (ii) that may require special management considerations or protection, and (2) specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by a species at the time it is listed upon determination by the FWS that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species. (from BLM-M-6840, Special Status Species Management)

**Crucial winter range.** That part of the overall range where 90 percent of the individuals are located during the average five winters out of ten from the first heavy snowfall to spring green-up, or during a site specific period of winter as defined for each Colorado Division of Wildlife Data analysis unit.

**Designated roads and trails.** Specific roads and trails identified by the BLM (or other agencies) where some type of motorized vehicle use is appropriate and allowed either seasonally or year-long. (from H-1601-1, BLM Land Use Planning Handbook).

**Disposal.** Transfer of public land out of federal ownership to another party through sale, exchange, Recreation and Public Purposes Act, Desert Land Entry or other land law statutes.

**Easement.** A right afforded a person or agency to make limited use of another’s real property for access or other purposes.

**Eligibility.** Qualification of a river for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System through the determination (professional judgment) that it is free flowing and, with its adjacent land area,

possesses at least one river-related value considered to be outstandingly remarkable (from M-8351, BLM WSR Policy and Program).

**Endangered Species.** Any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. (from BLM-M-6840, Special Status Species Management)

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).** A detailed statement prepared by the responsible official in which a major Federal action which significantly affects the quality of the human environment is described, alternatives to the proposed action provided, and effects analyzed (from BLM National Management Strategy for OHV Use on Public Lands).

**Exclusion Area.** Areas with sensitive resource values where rights-of-way and 302 permits, leases, and easements would not be authorized.

**Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA).** Areas in which significant recreation opportunities and problems are limited and explicit recreation management is not required. Minimal management actions related to the Bureau's stewardship responsibilities are adequate in these areas.

**Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).** Public Law 94-579, October 21, 1976, often referred to as the BLM's "Organic Act," which provides the majority of the BLM's legislated authority, direction policy and basic management guidance (from BLM National Management Strategy for OHV Use on Public Lands).

**Fire Suppression.** All work activities connected with fire extinguishing operations, beginning with discovery of a fire and continuing until the fire is completely out.

**Fluid Minerals.** Oil, gas, coal bed natural gas, and geothermal resources.

**Forest and Woodland.** Areas dominated by coniferous and deciduous trees. These areas include aspen, coniferous forests and pinyon-juniper woodlands vegetation types.

**Functioning at Risk.** (1) Condition in which vegetation and soil are susceptible to losing their ability to sustain naturally functioning biotic communities. Human activities, past or present, may increase the risks. Rangeland Reform Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) at 26. (2) Uplands or riparian-wetland areas that are properly functioning, but a soil, water, or vegetation attribute makes them susceptible to degradation and lessens their ability to sustain natural biotic communities. Uplands are particularly at risk if their soils are susceptible to degradation. Human activities, past or present, may increase the risks (Rangeland Reform Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Glossary). SEE ALSO Properly Functioning Condition and Nonfunctioning Condition (from H-4180-1, BLM Rangeland Health Standards Manual).

**Grazing Preference.** The total number of AUMs on public land apportioned and attached to base property owned or controlled by a lessee.

**Greater Sandhill Crane Staging Area.** An area below 9,500 feet where greater sandhill cranes traditionally congregate during spring and fall migration, and including a buffer zone of 500 meters.

**Habitat.** An environment which meets a specific set of physical, biological, temporal or spatial characteristics that satisfy the requirements of a plant or animal species or group of species for part or all of their life cycle.

**Herd Management Area (HMA).** Public land under the jurisdiction of the BLM that has been designated for special management emphasizing the maintenance of an established wild horse or burro herd.

**K factor.** A soil erodibility factor used in the universal soil loss equation that is a measure of the susceptibility of soil particles to detachment and transport by rainfall and runoff. Estimation of the factor takes several soil parameters into account, including: soil texture, percent of sand greater than 0.10 mm, soil organic matter content, soil structure, soil permeability, clay mineralogy, and coarse fragments. K factor values range from .02 to .64, the greater values indicating the highest susceptibilities to erosion.

**Land Tenure adjustments.** Ownership or jurisdictional changes are referred as "Land Tenure Adjustments". To improve the manageability of the BLM lands and improve their usefulness to the public, BLM has numerous authorities for "repositioning" lands into a more consolidated pattern, disposing of lands, and entering into cooperative management agreements. These land pattern improvements are completed primarily through the use of land exchanges, but also through land sales, jurisdictional transfers to other agencies, and through the use of cooperative management agreements and leases.

**Land use allocation.** The identification in a land use plan of the activities and foreseeable development that are allowed, restricted, or excluded for all or part of the planning area, based on desired future conditions. (from H-1601-1, BLM Land Use Planning Handbook).

**Land use plan.** A set of decisions that establish management direction for land within an administrative area, as prescribed under the planning provisions of FLPMA; an assimilation of land-use-plan-level decisions developed through the planning process outlined in 43 CFR 1600, regardless of the scale at which the decisions were developed. The term includes both RMPs and MFPs. (from H-1601-1, BLM Land Use Planning Handbook).

**Lease.** Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) provides the BLM's authority to issue leases for the use, occupancy, and development of the public lands. Leases are issued for purposes such as a commercial filming, advertising displays, commercial or noncommercial croplands, apiaries, livestock holding or feeding areas not related to grazing permits and leases, harvesting of native or introduced species, temporary or permanent facilities for commercial purposes (does not include mining claims), residential occupancy, ski resorts, construction equipment storage sites, assembly yards, oil rig stacking sites, mining claim occupancy if the residential structures are not incidental to the mining operation, and water pipelines and well pumps related to irrigation and non-irrigation facilities. The regulations establishing procedures for the processing of these leases and permits are found in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2920.

**Lek.** An assembly area where birds, especially sage grouse, carry on display and courtship behavior.

**Limited.** Designated areas and trails where the use of off-road vehicles is subject to restrictions, such as limiting the number or types of vehicles allowed, dates and times of use (seasonal restrictions), limiting use to existing roads and trails, or limiting use to designated roads and trails. Under the designated roads and trails designation, use would be allowed only on roads and trails that are signed for use. Combinations of restrictions are possible, such as limiting use to certain types of vehicles during certain times of the year (from BLM National Management Strategy for OHV Use on Public Lands).

**Locatable Minerals.** Minerals subject to exploration, development, and disposal by staking mining claims as authorized by the Mining Law of 1872, as amended. This includes deposits of gold, silver, and other uncommon minerals not subject to lease or sale.

**LU project lands.** Privately owned submarginal farmlands incapable of producing sufficient income to support the family of a farm owner and purchased under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937. These acquired lands became known as "Land Utilization Projects" and were subsequently transferred from jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the U.S. Department of the Interior. They are now administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

**Mineral Entry.** The filing of a claim on public land to obtain the right to any locatable minerals it may contain.

**Mineral Estate.** The ownership of minerals, including rights necessary for access, exploration, development, mining, ore dressing, and transportation operations.

**Mineral Materials.** Materials such as sand and gravel and common varieties of stone, pumice, pumicite, and clay that are not obtainable under the mining or leasing laws, but that can be acquired under the Materials Act of 1947, as amended.

**Mineral.** Any naturally formed inorganic material, solid or fluid inorganic substance that can be extracted from the earth, any of various naturally occurring homogeneous substances (as stone, coal, salt, sulfur, sand, petroleum, water, or natural gas) obtained for man's use, usually from the ground. Under Federal laws, considered as locatable (subject to the general mining laws), leasable (subject to the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920), and salable (subject to the Materials Act of 1947).

**Mining Claim.** A parcel of land that a miner takes and holds for mining purposes, having acquired the right of possession by complying with the Mining Law and local laws and rules. A mining claim may contain as many adjoining locations as the locator may make or buy. There are four categories of mining claims: lode, placer, millsite, and tunnel site.

**Multiple use.** The management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people; making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to changing needs and conditions; the use of some land for less than all of the resources; a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historical values; and harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit output (FLPMA). (from BLM-M-6840, Special Status Species Management)

**National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.** A system of nationally designated rivers and their immediate environments that have outstanding scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, and other similar values and are preserved in a free-flowing condition. The system consists of three types of streams: (1) recreation—rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad and that may have some development along their shorelines and may have undergone some impoundments or diversion in the past, (2) scenic—rivers or sections of rivers free of impoundments with shorelines or watersheds still largely undeveloped but accessible in places by roads, and (3) wild—

rivers or sections of rivers free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trails, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted.

**Nonfunctioning Condition.** (1) Condition in which vegetation and ground cover are not maintaining soil conditions that can sustain natural biotic communities. FEIS at 25. (2) Riparian-wetland areas are considered to be in nonfunctioning condition when they don't provide adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris to dissipate stream energy associated with high flows and thus are not reducing erosion, improving water quality, or other normal characteristics of riparian areas. The absence of a floodplain may be an indicator of nonfunctioning condition (DEIS Glossary). SEE ALSO Properly Functioning Condition and Functioning at Risk (from H-4180-1, BLM Rangeland Health Standards Manual).

**Off-highway vehicle (OHV).** Any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding: (1) any non-amphibious registered motorboat; (2) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (3) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer, or otherwise officially approved; (4) vehicles in official use; and (5) any combat or combat support vehicle when used for national defense. (from H-1601-1, BLM Land Use Planning Handbook).

**Open.** Designated areas and trails where off-road vehicles may be operated, subject to operating regulations and vehicle standards set forth in BLM Manuals 8341 and 8343; or an area where all types of vehicle use is permitted at all times, subject to the standards in BLM Manuals 8341 and 8343 (from BLM National Management Strategy for OHV Use on Public Lands).

**Outstandingly Remarkable Values.** Values among those listed in Section 1(b) of the Act: "scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historical, cultural, or other similar values..." Other similar values which may be considered include ecological, biological or botanical, paleontological, hydrological, scientific or research values (from M-8351, BLM WSR Policy and Program).

**Ozone.** A faint blue gas produced in the atmosphere from chemical reactions of such sources as burning coal, gasoline and other fuels, and chemicals found in products including solvents, paints, hairsprays, etc.

**Perennial Stream.** Perennial streams carry flowing water continuously throughout the year, regardless of weather conditions. It exhibits well-defined geomorphological characteristics and in the absence of pollution, thermal modifications, or other man-made disturbances has the ability to support aquatic life. During hydrological drought conditions, the flow may be impaired.

**Permitted Use.** The forage allocated by, or under the guidance of, an applicable land use plan for livestock grazing in an allotment under a permit or lease, and is expressed in Animal Unit Months (AUMs) (43 CFR § 4100.0-5) (from H-4180-1, BLM Rangeland Health Standards Manual).

**Prescribed Fire.** Any fire ignited by management actions to meet specific objectives.

**Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD).** An air pollution permitting program intended to ensure that air quality does not diminish in attainment areas.

**Primitive and Unconfined Recreation.** Non-motorized, non-mechanized (except as provided by law), and undeveloped types of recreational activities. Bicycles are considered mechanical transport (from H-6310-1, Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures).

**Proper Functioning Condition.** (1) An element of the Fundamental of Rangeland Health for watersheds, and therefore a required element of State or regional standard and guidelines under 43 CFR § 4180.2(b). (2) Condition in which vegetation and ground cover maintain soil conditions that can sustain natural biotic communities. For riparian areas, the process of determining function is described in the BLM Technical Reference TR 1737-9. FEIS at 26, 72. (3) Riparian-wetland areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris is present to dissipate stream energy associated with high waterflows, thereby reducing erosion and improving water quality; filter sediment, capture bedload, and aid floodplain development; improve floodwater retention and groundwater recharge; develop root masses that stabilize streambanks against cutting action; develop diverse ponding and channel characteristics to provide the habitat and the water depth, duration, and temperature necessary for fish production, waterfowl breeding, and other uses; and support greater biodiversity. The functioning condition of riparian-wetland areas is influenced by geomorphic features, soil, water, and vegetation (DEIS Glossary). (4) Uplands function properly when the existing vegetation and ground cover maintain soil conditions capable of sustaining natural biotic communities. The functioning condition of uplands is influenced by geomorphic features, soil, water, and vegetation (DEIS Glossary). SEE ALSO Nonfunctioning Condition and Functioning at Risk (from H-4180-1, BLM Rangeland Health Standards Manual).

**Public land.** Land or interest in land owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the BLM without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf, and land held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos. (from H-1601-1, BLM Land Use Planning Handbook).

**Recreational River.** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

**Remnant Plant Community.** A remnant or fragment of the vegetation of an area that remains from a former period when the vegetation was more widely distributed.

**Resource Management Plan (RMP).** A land use plan as prescribed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act that establishes, for a given area of land, land-use allocations, coordination guidelines for multiple-use, objectives, and actions to be achieved.

**Right-of-Way (ROW).** Means the public lands authorized to be used or occupied for specific purposes pursuant to a right-of-way grant, which are in the public interest and which require rights-of-way over, upon, under, or through such lands.

**Riparian Area.** A form of wetland transition between permanently saturated wetlands and upland areas. Riparian areas exhibit vegetation or physical characteristics that reflect the influence of permanent surface or subsurface water. Typical riparian areas include lands along, adjacent to, or contiguous with perennially and intermittently flowing rivers and streams, glacial potholes, and the shores of lakes and reservoirs with stable water levels. Excluded are ephemeral streams or washes that lack vegetation and depend on free water in the soil.

**Scenic River.** A river or section of a river that is free of impoundments and whose shorelines are largely undeveloped but accessible in places by roads.

**Seral.** The stage of succession of a plant community that is transitional. If left alone, the seral stage will give way to another plant community that represents a further stage of succession.

**Severe winter range.** Areas within the winter range where 90% of the individuals are located when annual snow pack is at its maximum and/or temperatures are at a minimum in the two worst winters out of ten.

**Special recreation management area (SRMA).** A public lands unit identified in land use plans to direct recreation funding and personnel to fulfill commitments made to provide specific, structured recreation opportunities (i.e., activity, experience, and benefit opportunities). The BLM recognizes three distinct types of SRMAs: community-based; intensive; and undeveloped big open. (from H-1601-1, BLM Land Use Planning Handbook).

**Stand.** A group of forest trees of sufficiently uniform species composition, age, and condition to be considered a homogeneous unit for management purposes.

**State Implementation Plan (SIP).** A detailed description of the programs a state will use to carry out its responsibilities under the Clean Air Act. State implementation plans are collections of the regulations used by a state to reduce air pollution.

**Sustained Yield.** Sustained yield of wood fiber that properly harvested and mitigated, would sustain the underlying ecosystem processes.

**Threatened Species.** Any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range (from M6840, Special Status Species Manual).

**Undertaking.** A term with legal definition and application i.e., “actions carried out by or on behalf of the agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; those requiring a Federal permit, license, or approval; and those subject to State or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a federal agency.” (See National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and Section 301(7), Appendix 5; 36 CFR Part 800). However, Section 106 does not apply to actions subject to State or local regulation only. The vast majority of land use authorizations approved by BLM, as well as BLM-funded projects, are undertakings for purposes of Section 106 of the NHPA.

**Valid Existing Rights.** Any lease established (and valid) prior to a new authorization, change in land designation, or in regulation.

**Visibility (Air Quality).** A measurement of the ability to see and identify objects at different distances.

**Visitor Use.** Visitor use of a resource for inspiration, stimulation, solitude, relaxation, education, pleasure, or satisfaction.

**Visual Resources.** The visible physical features of a landscape (topography, water, vegetation, animals, structures, and other features) that constitute the scenery of an area.

**Visual Resource Management (VRM).** The system by which BLM classifies and manages scenic values and visual quality of public lands. The system is based on research that has produced ways of assessing aesthetic qualities of the landscape in objective terms. After inventory and evaluation, lands are given relative visual ratings (see definition for Visual Resource Management Classes), which determine the amount of modification allowed for the basic elements of the landscape.

**VRM Classes.** A class is based on the physical and sociological characteristics of any given homogeneous area and serves as a management objective. Categories assigned to public lands based on scenic quality, sensitivity level, and distance zones. Each class has an objective which prescribes the



amount of change allowed in the characteristic landscape. (from H-1601-1, BLM Land Use Planning Handbook). The four classes are described below:

**VRM Class I Objective.** To preserve the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

**VRM Class II Objective.** To retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low.

**VRM Class III Objective.** To partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate.

**VRM Class IV Objective.** To provide for management activities that requires major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high.

**Wild and Scenic Study River.** Rivers identified in Section 5 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for study as potential additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The rivers shall be studied under the provisions of Section 4 of the Act (from M-8351, BLM WSR Policy and Program).

**Wild River.** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

**Wild, Scenic, and/or Recreational (WSR).** The term used in this Manual Section for what is traditionally shortened to "Wild and Scenic" rivers. Designated river segments are classified, i.e., wild, scenic, and/or recreational, but cannot overlap (from M-8351, BLM WSR Policy and Program).

**Wilderness Characteristics.** Wilderness characteristics include size, the appearance of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. They may also include ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. However Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 has been updated by IM-2003-195, dated June 20, 2003. Indicators of an area's naturalness include the extent of landscape modifications; the presence of native vegetation communities; and the connectivity of habitats. Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation may be experienced when the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people are rare or infrequent, in locations where visitors can be isolated, alone or secluded from others, where the use of the area is through non-motorized, non-mechanical means, and where no or minimal developed recreation facilities are encountered.

**Wilderness Study Area (WSA).** A designation made through the land use planning process of a roadless area found to have wilderness characteristics as described in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (from H-6310-1, Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures).

**Wilderness.** A congressionally designated area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, that is protected and managed to preserve its natural conditions and that (1) generally appears to have been affected mainly by the forces of nature, with human imprints substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least 5,000 acres or is large enough to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value. The definition contained in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 891) (from H-6310-1, Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures).

**Wildfire.** An unplanned, unwanted wildland fire including unauthorized human-caused fires, escaped wildland fire use events, escaped prescribed fire projects, and all other wildland fires where the objective is to put the fire out.

**Wildland fire.** Any non-structure fire that occurs in the wildland. Three distinct types of wildland fire have been defined and include wildfire, wildland fire use, and prescribed fire.

**Wildland Fire Use.** The application of the appropriate management response to naturally-ignited wildland fires to accomplish specific resource management objectives in pre-defined designated areas outlined in Fire Management Plans.

## References

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