CHAPTER 2 ALTERNATIVES

This chapter presents alternatives for management of lands and mineral estate administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Little Snake Resource Management Plan Planning Area (RMPPA). An interdisciplinary (ID) team developed the alternatives to present a reasonable range of management options to guide resource management and activities. These management decisions were developed to minimize adverse impacts on cultural and natural resources while providing for compatible resource use and development opportunities consistent with current laws, regulations, and policies. The alternatives discussed in this chapter include the No Action Alternative (labeled Alternative A) and three other alternatives (labeled Alternative B, Alternative C, and Alternative D).

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the development and consideration of a reasonable range of management alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, to analyze and disclose impacts and guide decisionmakers in selecting the Preferred Alternative, which will be presented in the proposed resource management plan (RMP) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Alternatives must be viable and reasonable. They must reflect a mix of resource protections, management use, and development; be responsive to issues identified during the scoping period; and meet established planning criteria (outlined in Chapter 1) as well as federal laws, regulations, and BLM policies. The alternatives are not management decisions; the alternatives represent reasonable approaches to managing resources and activities. BLM has the discretion to select an alternative in its entirety or to combine aspects of the various alternatives presented in this Draft RMP/EIS.

As part of the planning process, the public is invited to comment on this Draft RMP/EIS. When commenting on this draft document, the reader may address either entire alternatives or recommend elements of the various alternatives. BLM will take these comments into account and prepare a final plan and record of decision (ROD) containing the decisions that will guide future management of the Little Snake Field Office (LSFO).

2.1 FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Development of management alternatives for the Little Snake RMPPA was guided by NEPA and BLM land use planning policies. The purpose of developing alternatives is to prepare different combinations of management processes for resources and resource uses, to address issues identified by the public and stakeholders as well as BLM management concerns, and to resolve conflicts among resource uses.

To provide a foundation to guide development of management alternatives, an ID team developed a set of overall goals for the RMP (Section 2.3) listing the accomplishments BLM would like to achieve through the RMP. BLM then developed more-specific goals and objectives for each resource and resource use program (presented under each resource and resource use in Sections 2.5 and 2.6). These statements of goals and objectives are intended to identify specific desired outcomes for each program area. Upon completion of the statements of goals and objectives, key decisions were identified that were based on the scoping report, comments on the analysis of the management situation, meeting minutes from a cooperator/neighboring agency issues meeting, planning guidance, BLM staff knowledge, and the 1989 RMP and amendments. To advance the alternatives formulation, an alternatives shell was created to develop the range of options (including those from the outermost ends of the spectrum to those in the middle of the spectrum) for each resource and resource use. The alternatives shell used the goals and objectives, the existing decisions from the 1989 RMP and amendments, and previously identified key decisions. The management actions presented in Sections 2.5 and 2.6, and summarized in Section 2.7, are the results of this process.

In developing alternatives for this RMP, BLM undertook a highly collaborative, community-based planning process. BLM complied with the letter and the spirit of NEPA requirements in developing alternatives for this EIS, including seeking public input and analyzing an adequate range of reasonable alternatives that included a No Action Alternative. All alternatives meet the management goals and objectives for the RMP as well as for each BLM resource and resource use program. The four alternatives addressed in this EIS are described in Section 2.4.

2.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

The following alternatives and management options were considered as possible resolutions for issues but were eliminated from detailed analysis as either unreasonable or impractical because of technical, legal, or policy considerations.

2.2.1 No Grazing Alternative

Removing all livestock without proven need could be considered arbitrary and would not meet BLM's principle of multiple use and sustained yield; see Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) Sec. 302 (a) and Sec. 102(7). FLPMA Sec. 302(a) states that public lands shall be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with the land use plans (when available) developed under Section 202 of the act, except where a tract of public land has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law. FLPMA Sec. 102(7) directs that goals and objectives can be established by law as guidelines for public land use planning and that management can be based on multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law. BLM's management priority is to maintain functioning ecosystems, meeting the needs of the land. To achieve this, BLM developed the *Fundamentals of Rangeland Health* and their companion requirements, the *Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management*. Where lands are meeting the fundamentals as indicated by the *Standards for Rangeland Health*, there is a presumption that current grazing use may continue.

A No Grazing Alternative is inconsistent with the Taylor Grazing Act (1934): a regional closure to grazing would not comply with the intent of the act, which directs BLM to provide for livestock use of BLM lands. The purpose of the Taylor Grazing Act is "to stop injury to the public grazing lands by preventing overgrazing and soil deterioration; to provide for their orderly use, improvement, and development; to stabilize the livestock industry dependent upon the public range; and for other purposes." BLM has the authority to control the grazing use to ensure resource objectives are met, and FLPMA provides authority through land use planning to allocate uses.

2.2.2 No Leasing Alternative

Closing the RMPPA to new federal mineral leasing was considered a possible method to resolve conflicts with other resource uses. Because the federal leasable minerals in much of the planning area have already been leased and portions of the area are already developed, this option would not help resolve any conflicts that involve those leased parcels. In addition, because resource conflicts tend to be located in specific areas and are not found across the entire RMPPA, it is not considered reasonable to close the complete area to leasing on the basis of a localized resource conflict. Further, in dealing with many of the concerns identified during the planning process, it is considered a more reasonable approach to develop leasing stipulations that can be applied selectively to areas in the RMPPA. Closing the entire planning area to new mineral leasing would also eliminate the opportunity for mineral development and production at a time when national policy is encouraging such development to reduce reliance on foreign sources of energy.

In addition, based on the reasonably foreseeable oil and gas development scenario for the RMPPA, BLM does not anticipate a large amount of new development that would lead to unacceptably adverse effects in all areas of the RMPPA. The analysis of impacts indicated that effects are not anticipated on every acre and that not all acres where development would occur are so sensitive as to preclude all new development. Therefore, because the planning area in its entirety does not have conflicts with fluid mineral leasing, it is unreasonable to close the entire planning area to new leasing of federal oil and gas resources.

Because development is likely to be limited in scope and effect, it was concluded that it would not be reasonable to analyze this option in detail. However, not issuing new mineral leases in portions of the planning area in response to other identified resource needs is addressed in the alternatives analyzed in detail. These alternatives include various considerations for maximizing individual resource values and uses in specific areas where conflicts exist and for closing these areas to mineral leasing and related development.

2.2.3 Douglas Mountain Herd Area

BLM received a request from the public to consider reopening the Douglas Mountain herd area (HA) to wild horse management. The Douglas Mountain HA is discussed in the 1977 Vermillion Planning Area Management Framework Plan (MFP). The MFP is available to the public at the LSFO. The document recognized that wild horses inhabited two locations within the Vermillion Planning Unit: Douglas Mountain and Sand Wash Basin. The document outlined avenues through which the public was encouraged to participate in the planning process to determine where wild horse herds could be managed in the spirit of the 1971 Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act. The MFP documented the interagency coordination pursued during the MFP wild horse management planning process. The MFP specified that wild horses be managed in Sand Wash Basin and that all horses be removed from the Douglas Mountain HA. The decision to remove the Douglas Mountain HA from active wild horse management was based on the following conflicts:

- A total of 31,000 acres of the 108,000 acres encompassing the Douglas Mountain HA were part of the Dinosaur National Monument administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS considered wild horses as feral animals and therefore not part of the natural ecosystem. The NPS therefore requested removal of all wild (feral) horses from the Monument.
- A total of 11,000 acres of the Douglas Mountain HA were owned by private landowners, who repeatedly requested removal of the wild horses from their lands.
- These private lands contained the majority of dependable water sources on which the wild horse herd relied.
- Fencing the private land in from wild horse use would negatively impact the wild horse habitat by limiting water and forage availability.
- Managing a herd of wild horses on the Douglas Mountain HA would require substantial animal unit month (AUM) reductions by the livestock permittees, adversely affecting the operators.

The MFP (page 12) determined that further analysis of the 1971 Act reveals that "all management activities shall be at the minimal feasible level and shall be carried out in consultation with the wildlife agency of the State…" The Douglas Mountain HA does not lend itself to minimal management because of the complications from Dinosaur National Monument policy, landownership patterns, access, topography, available water, wildlife planning (State agency), and present range conditions. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) has been consulted regarding the wild horse population, and it has recommended removing all horses from Douglas Mountain in an effort to reestablish the vanishing deer herd and to encourage expansion of bighorn sheep back onto their historical range.

This alternative was eliminated from further consideration because the information leading to the decision reached in the 1977 Vermillion MFP and the reason for the original closure of Douglas Mountain to wild horse management remain valid.

2.2.4 Phased or Strategic Leasing and Development in Vermillion Basin

BLM received a request from the public to consider phased or strategic leasing and development for oil and gas resources in Vermillion Basin. After further research, BLM determined the alternative was not viable for the following reasons.

Phased leasing would cause delays in production of energy resources, and as a result, would increase prices because of increased demand and would also exacerbate energy shortages. There would also be a delay in the royalties paid to the Federal Government. In addition, phased leasing does not take into account supply and demand economics. Large areas need to be leased to justify exploration expenditures such as seismic studies. Without first conducting seismic studies, lessees would be drilling blind, which would result in a larger number of exploratory wells drilled. If seismic studies are not completed for the area and geologic structures are not therefore known, phased leasing could accidentally be implemented over part of a structure that may require immediate additional leasing to develop the structure logically. Such immediate leasing may not be permitted under a phased leasing plan, however. The number and miles of roads and the amount of infrastructure (compressor stations, etc.) may also increase as these are developed and sized for each phase. If the entire area to be leased is offered for leasing and developed in an orderly manner, development plans for large areas could minimize the number of roads and central facilities. Roads, central facilities, and pipelines would be better planned, sited, and sized. With a phased leasing regime, BLM would have the added burdens of deciding how much land to consider in each phase of leasing, of establishing criteria for that leasing (geologic or environmental: which is more important?), and of establishing time frames for that leasing without knowing the future economics of supply and demand.

Phased development, as with phased leasing, would also cause delays in production of energy resources and in the royalties paid to the Federal Government. Phased development also does not account for supply and demand economics. If numerous parties lease an area but only a limited number of wells are allowed to be drilled each year, some lessees would be prevented from developing their lease even as they are paying rental on the acreage they are leasing. BLM would have to suspend (extend) leases beyond the 10-year limit if the result of a phased development plan is that leases are not developed and therefore held by production. If leases could not be developed as a result of BLM phased leasing constraints, rental fees would have to be waived, with a loss of revenue to the government. If only a limited number of wells are allowed, BLM has the added burden of choosing who gets to drill in any particular year. As a result of phased development, gas production might occur slowly enough so that pipeline companies might find it not economically worthwhile to build the infrastructure needed to get the gas to market. There must be enough gas to fill the pipeline and make it economically worthwhile for companies to build that pipeline. BLM would have the added burden of deciding which areas to develop first. It must determine, again, what is more important—geology or environment. The number and miles of roads and the amount of infrastructure (compressor stations, etc.) may also increase as these are developed and sized for each phase. If the entire area is developed in an orderly manner with proper mitigation, then development plans could minimize roads and other support facilities. Roads, support facilities, and pipelines would be better planned, sited, and sized. Site-specific analysis at the application for permit to drill (APD) stage and the sundry notice stage would help mitigate environmental impacts.

2.3 RMP GOALS

The planning process included developing 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 community and visitor education that would 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.
- Encourage full funding of RMP implementation.

2.4 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF EACH ALTERNATIVE

Four alternatives are described and analyzed in detail in this Draft RMP/EIS, including Alternative A (the No Action Alternative) and Alternatives B, C, and D, each of which represents varying management actions for each resource and resource use for achieving the stated goals and objectives. These alternatives vary based on how fast the objective would be met, the degree to which the objective would be met, the priorities within the objective, the emphasis placed on different management activities, and what society would be willing to forego within the limitations of current policy. Integrated resource management was emphasized in formulating the alternatives.

2.4.1 Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

NEPA mandates consideration of a No Action Alternative. This alternative provides a basis for comparing the impacts of the other alternatives. The No Action Alternative involves continuing the management activities that already occur in the planning area and is based on reasonably foreseeable actions, available inventory data, existing planning decisions and policies, and existing land use allocations and programs. These activities are now governed by the existing LSFO RMP and ROD (1989) and by amendments that include the Oil and Gas Amendment (1991), the Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Amendment (1995), and the Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado Amendment (1996). These amendments are described in Table 2-1. Some actions have been determined to be unnecessary to carry forward into the RMP revision

because the action is not a land use planning decision, the action reiterates existing policy, or the action is a repeat of a similar management action. Ongoing programs initiated under existing legislation and regulations would continue, even as new plans are developed or new planning efforts are conducted within the RMP area.

Alternative A would maintain present uses by continuing present management direction and activities. 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 special recreation management areas (SRMA) would also be maintained. Minimal limitations on motorized travel would provide an enhanced motorized recreational experience.

Table 2-1. Relevant Plans and Amendments

Document Title	Year	Description
LSFO RMP and ROD	1989	Current RMP for the LSFO
Oil and Gas Amendment, Little Snake RMP/EIS	1991	Amendment/EIS for compliance with the *Supplemental Planning Guidance for Fluid Minerals* released in 1987
Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Amendment, Little Snake RMP/EIS	1995	Amendment/environmental assessment (EA) for proposed reintroduction of black-footed ferret as a nonessential experimental population into the Little Snake black-footed ferret management area
Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado (Colorado standards and guidelines)	1996	Amendment/EA for adoption of the Colorado standards and guidelines

2.4.2 Alternative B

This alternative 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 designations as areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC) would be removed from areas so designated currently, and no new such areas would be recommended. No wild and scenic river (WSR) segments would be recommended as suitable for designation. Current SRMA designations would also be removed, and no new SRMAs would be identified. Opportunities for "unmanaged" motorized recreational experiences would increase where fewer off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas are limited or closed. With this alternative, unlike Alternative A, areas designated as no surface occupancy (NSO) for oil and gas would also be designated as no ground disturbance (NGD) for other uses (Map 2-1).

2.4.3 Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)

This alternative would emphasize multiple resource use in the planning area by protecting sensitive resources and applying the most current information to allow BLM to set priorities for flexible, proactive management of public lands. Commodity production would be balanced against wildlife and vegetation

protection; however, exceptions would be granted according to adaptive criteria established (Appendix E). Protection of greater sage-grouse and other wildlife habitat characteristics would be maintained or increased. Adaptive management criteria would be used to prioritize implementation planning in areas with the greatest need for it (Appendix F). Area protections, such as designation as ACECs and WSRs, would be limited to those areas where such designations are necessary to protect sensitive resources, and specific management prescriptions would be applied to areas that do not receive such designations. 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. With this alternative, as in Alternative B, areas considered NSO for oil and gas would also be designated as NGD for other uses (Map 2-2). Alternative C would be implemented by using the principles of adaptive management. Appendix M explains the adaptive management approach to be employed in implementation of this alternative.

2.4.4 Alternative D

This alternative would allow the greatest extent of resource protection within the planning area, while still allowing resource uses. Commodity production would be constrained to protect natural resource values or to accelerate improvement in their condition. However, exceptions would be granted according to adaptive criteria (Appendix E). Protection of greater sage-grouse and other wildlife habitat characteristics would increase. Management would focus on restoring vegetation communities to ecologically desirable levels. Area protections such as designation as ACECs and WSRs 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. With this alternative, as in Alternatives B and C, areas considered NSO for oil and gas would also be designated as NGD for other uses (Map 2-3).

2.5 RESOURCE DESCRIPTIONS AND MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Resources are considered to be those natural, biological, and/or cultural components found in the Little Snake RMPPA. The requirements of the Colorado Standards for Healthy Rangelands 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 sections present the goals, objectives, and management actions, categorized by resource.

2.5.1 Air Quality

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 these have been accepted by the State of Colorado to comply with the Clean Air Act. 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 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 also provides requirements to minimize air quality impacts. 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.

2.5.1.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives for air quality are established through regulation. No additional goals or objectives were created for the air quality resource specific to this RMP.

2.5.1.2 Management Actions

Alternative A: Air quality was not specifically addressed in the 1989 RMP or in any RMP amendments.

Alternative B: The use of "green" or flareless well completions as a best management practice (BMP) for oil and gas operations would be encouraged.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B.

2.5.2 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.

2.5.2.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Soils Goal:** Maintain or restore soil conditions. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Mitigate negative impacts on soil productivity from accelerated erosion or physical or chemical degradation.
  - Stabilize and rehabilitate areas where accelerated erosion, runoff, and physical or chemical degradation have resulted in unacceptable resource conditions.
  - Prevent disturbance to fragile soil areas where resulting erosion could not be controlled.

2.5.2.2 Management Actions

<u>Fragile Soils</u>

Alternative A: Surface disturbing activities would 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 Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in the *Area Soil Survey Report* 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.

Surface occupancy on public land would be permitted only where adherence to performance objectives for surface disturbing activities within fragile-soil areas is ensured. Performance objectives for fragile soils include—

- Maintain soil productivity both by reducing soil loss from erosion and through proper handling of the soil material.
- Reduce the impact to offsite areas by controlling erosion and/or overland flow from these areas.
- Protect water quality and quantity of adjacent surface and ground water sources.
- Reduce accelerated erosion caused by surface disturbing activities.
- Select the best possible site for development to reduce impacts on soil and water resources.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative A.

Surface Use

Alternative A: For new oil and gas leases and all surface disturbing activities permitted under the 1989 RMP,[1] ensure that applicants would demonstrate compliance with performance objectives through a Plan of Development (POD) that uses either alternative measures or the following mitigation measures:

- Retain all sediments generated from the surface disturbing activity onsite.
- Do not allow construction or other surface disturbing activities when the soils are saturated to a depth of more than 3 inches.
- Limit vehicle use to existing roads and trails.
- Build all new permanent roads to meet BLM primary road standards in locations approved by the authorized officer (for oil and gas purposes, permanent roads are those used for production). Conduct all geophysical and geochemical exploration by helicopter, horseback, on foot, or from existing roads.
- Design any sediment-control structures, reserve pits, or disposal pits so that these can contain precipitation from a 100-year, 6-hour storm event, and provide storage volumes within these structures that have a design life of 25 years.
- Before reserve, production, or emergency pits are reclaimed, remove all residue and truck it offsite to an approved disposal location.
- Initiate reclamation of disturbed surfaces before November 1 each year.
- Approve all reclamation plans by the authorized officer in advance and require a bond, if necessary, or if one has not been previously posted.

[1] The requirements of the 1989 RMP do not supersede valid existing rights on approved applications for permits to drill, developing leases, or entry under the general mining laws. Construction or maintenance within the ROWs of Moffat County Roads 4, 67, and 126 would be allowed on a case-by-case basis. BLM would work with operators/permittees/county engineers to develop appropriate compliance measures.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative A.

2.5.3 Water Resources

Management of water quality is provided through compliance with federal, State, and local regulations. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) of 1977, as amended, requires the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The Clean Water Act places responsibility for protecting water quality with the States under the supervision of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Standards and goals under the Clean Water Act and water quality management objectives developed by the States, as required by the 1987 Water Quality Act Amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, were created to protect the quality of States' waters and to prevent, abate, and control water pollution. 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 would 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.

2.5.3.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Water 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.

- **Water 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 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, if 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.

2.5.3.2 Management Actions

In addition to the management actions listed below, the management actions for soil resources (summarized in Section 2.5.2.2) would also achieve water quality goals and objectives.

Alternative A: Establish NSO stipulations from within 500 feet to 0.25 miles of perennial water sources, depending on type and use of the water source, soil type, and slope steepness. Also see Alternative A decisions for soil resources management.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Establish NSO stipulations for up to 0.25 miles 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 E.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

2.5.4 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 Code of Federal Regulations [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 the 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 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 would direct the management of public lands and focus the implementation of this activity plan on the maintenance or attainment of healthy rangelands.

The Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990s (BLM 1991) establishes goals and objectives for managing riparian/wetland resources. Riparian areas would be 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 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 would be maintained, improved, or restored to enhance forage conditions, provide wildlife habitat, and improve stream and water quality. To achieve

PFC, riparian areas would be managed to maintain dominance by those species capable of stabilizing soils and stream banks. All riparian areas would be assessed, as needed, to determine their existing condition and whether specific management actions are needed for improvement.

2.5.4.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Vegetation Goal:** Collaborate with stakeholders and resource users in providing an array of habitats, suitably distributed across the landscape, that 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 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.

- **Sagebrush Goal A:** Sustain the integrity of the sagebrush biome to maintain 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.

- **Sagebrush Goal 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—
  - 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 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.

- **Forestry Goal:** 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.
  - Manage areas identified as old growth to fully maintain, or to contribute to the restoration of, the structure and composition of old growth stands as defined in *Old Growth Descriptions for the Major Cover Types in the Rocky Mountain Region*.
  - 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.

- **Riparian and Wetlands Goal A:** 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—
  - Manage human-caused disturbances in and near riparian/wetland systems.

- Maintain or improve watershed integrity and functioning hydrology.
- Recognize and manage riparian/wetland communities as a limited high-value vegetation type.

- **Riparian and Wetlands Goal B:** Achieve PFC in existing riparian/wetland systems that do not meet land health and water quality standards. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Identify and, if possible, remove existing sources of degradation.
  - Protect riparian/wetland systems from new sources of degradation.
  - Work with users to identify ways to improve riparian areas and to minimize degradation from existing uses.

- **Weeds Goal A:** Reduce the occurrence of noxious and undesirable plant species. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Ensure all land use actions that could potentially increase the occurrence of noxious weeds are conducted by using BMPs.
  - Apply principles of integrated pest management.

- **Weeds Goal B:** Integrate weed management across landscape and ownership boundaries. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Pursue, wherever possible, the use of cooperative agreements to coordinate weed management actions.
  - Identify ways of partnering with resource users and other stakeholders to reduce the occurrence of noxious weeds.

2.5.4.2 Management Actions

Desired Plant Communities

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: Upland and riparian vegetation would be managed to achieve DPC objectives that have been established for a localized area to meet the Colorado standards and guidelines and the objectives for the Little Snake Planning Area. The DPC objectives would be determined through consulting various references including the NRCS's *Range Site Guides* and updated ecological site inventory data, which are targeted to the specific objectives for the area. The DPC objectives would emphasize commodity uses while complying with existing regulations pertaining to sensitive resources.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B. The DPC objectives would emphasize wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, watershed, and biodiversity values while maintaining or enhancing habitat for Special Status Species.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B. The DPC objectives would emphasize wildlife habitat, watershed, and biodiversity values. There would be particular emphasis on maintaining or enhancing habitat for Special Status Species.

Vegetation Treatments

Alternative A: No similar action. Vegetation treatments would be conducted on a case-by-case basis, as needed.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A. In addition, vegetation treatments to increase forage production would be emphasized when consistent with healthy rangeland ecosystems.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Vegetation treatments would be applied to an average of 4,110 acres per year over the life of the plan to restore diversity of seral stages and species, as appropriate. Work with the Northwest Colorado Sage-Grouse Working Group to identify, maintain, and restore an average of 530 acres of sagebrush per year. Creation of functional blocks of sagebrush as sage-grouse habitat would be emphasized. In addition, vegetation treatments would be applied to an average of 1,600 acres per year to reduce encroachment of juniper and woody species to mimic natural conditions. During the planning period, a total of 80 acres per year of bitterbrush and other important winter forage species in the Sand Hills and Spring Creek watersheds would be restored. Further, an average of 100 acres per year of mountain shrub would be restored. Vegetation treatments should be used where land health assessments (LHA) indicate a standard is not being met for reasons other than livestock (such as areas where reclamation efforts have not been successful or areas with heavy OHV use) to improve conditions.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C, with the exception that vegetation treatments would be applied to an average of 8,750 acres per year over the life of the plan to restore diversity of seral stages and species, as appropriate. Work with the Northwest Colorado Sage-Grouse Working Group to identify, maintain, and restore an average of 2,000 acres of sagebrush per year. Creation of functional blocks of sagebrush would be emphasized. Further, vegetation treatments would be applied to an average of 3,500 acres per year to reduce encroachment of juniper and woody species so as to mimic natural conditions. An average of 50 acres per year of bitterbrush and other important winter forage species in all areas where LHAs have been conducted, starting with the Sand Hills and Spring Creek watersheds, would be restored. In addition, an average of 1,000 acres of per year of mountain shrub would be restored.

Forestry

Alternative A: Restoration, treatment, improvement, and maintenance would be done on a case-by-case basis as needed.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): An average of 200 acres per year of Ponderosa pine, primarily in the Douglas Mountain area, would be restored. Ponderosa pine restoration projects would likely be nonharvest methods such as prescribed fire and mechanical understory reduction. An average of 50 acres per year of lodgepole pine, primarily in the Cold Springs watershed, would be treated. Treatments would 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 would be improvement or maintenance of aspen community health on an average of 50 acres of stands per year, especially in the Cold Springs watershed and in Routt County. Aspen improvement would likely entail using nonharvest methods such as prescribed fire, chainsaw thinning, and other mechanical means aimed at promoting aspen regeneration. An average of 500 acres per year of pinyon-juniper woodland would be restored. The aim of pinyon-juniper restoration would be 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, mechanical mastication, and designated firewood gathering areas.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C, with the exception of restoring an average of 400 acres per year of ponderosa pine, primarily in the Douglas Mountain area; treating an average of 100 acres per year of lodgepole pine, primarily in the Cold Springs watershed; and improving or maintaining aspen community health on an average of 200 acres of stands per year, especially in the Cold Springs watershed and in Routt County.

Noxious Weeds

Alternative A: Noxious weeds would be identified and eliminated on a case-by-case basis, consistent with current policy.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The spread of noxious weeds would be prevented. Invasive species would be eliminated by focusing on areas of new infestations and, where possible, on extirpating existing populations, especially in the Axial, Powder Wash, Douglas Mountain, Sand Hills, and Williams Fork watersheds as well as in selected Routt County and Moffat County parcels. 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 would be encouraged.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

2.5.5 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

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 the 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.

BLM's role in the management of fish and other aquatic resources is to provide habitat that supports desired aquatic plants and animals. Plants, animals, and their interactions with each other and the physical environment are part of the ecological processes that are important for the health and function of aquatic ecosystems as well as of rangeland and forest ecosystems. Species manipulations, such as introductions and population management, are under the authority of CDOW.

Wildlife depends on riparian/wetland areas for vital habitat components. In managing riparian/wetland areas, the BLM should consider the consequences and relationships of its management to the life history needs of wildlife. The character of upland vegetation (arrangements, densities, age classes, etc.) greatly influences wildlife habitat quality and productivity. Because the character of upland vegetation can vary in response to federal land use authorizations, BLM considers the consequences of various land uses (such as grazing and mining) and treatments (such as commercial forest harvesting, burning, and seeding) to the health of wildlife habitat. The outcomes of what may be considered proper range or forest management may not necessarily result in satisfactory wildlife habitat. Wildlife must also have a reasonable amount of protection from the adverse impacts of human disturbances. This is especially true during breeding periods and on winter ranges and can apply to most human activity.

2.5.5.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Fish and Wildlife Goal A:** 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.

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

- **Fish and Wildlife Goal C:** 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—
  - Improve and/or maintain those areas that are key wildlife habitats and their desired plant communities.
  - Maintain or restore connectivity between habitat use areas.
  - Maintain, restore, or enhance the habitat of migratory bird species (i.e., neotropicals, waterfowl, raptors).
  - Promote conservation and minimize the take of migratory birds.
  - Maintain and promote high-quality habitat for big game populations.
  - Provide habitat to support sufficient raptor prey populations.
  - Provide sufficient nesting and fledging habitat to ensure sustainable raptor populations.

- **Fish and Wildlife Goal D:** Manage disturbances to wildlife populations. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Manage access to seasonal use areas during crucial time frames.
  - Manage access in crucial habitats.

- **Fish and Wildlife Goal E:** Provide an array of aquatic habitats that support biodiversity and viable populations of species. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Promote improvement and recovery of current, historic, and potential habitats of aquatic species.
  - Maintain or improve riparian conditions to provide for forage, habitat, and biodiversity.
  - Encourage sport fisheries where these would not be detrimental to native fish populations.

- **Fish and Wildlife Goal F:** Cooperate with CDOW. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - In collaboration with key agencies, provide input to CDOW on establishing fish and wildlife populations that can be sustained by the available habitat.
  - Seek input from CDOW on managing fish and wildlife habitat on public lands.

2.5.5.2 Management Actions

<u>Improving and Maintaining Sagebrush Habitat Functionality by Limiting Fragmentation</u>

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: Same as Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): To maintain and improve large blocks of functional sagebrush communities, oil and gas operators could opt into an agreement to limit habitat fragmentation in return for easing timing limitation stipulations and allowing year-round drilling.

This arrangement applies to the most critical sagebrush habitat within the RMPPA, which includes all areas located within 4 miles of a sage-grouse lek site and eight designated large patches of sagebrush habitat (Map 2-4). The 4-mile radius areas are based on known sage-grouse lek sites, but are intended to be flexible in the RMP so that new sites discovered during the life of the RMP will also be included. This agreement applies to both federal surface and federal mineral estates. Where private surface is underlain by federal minerals, this proposal would apply unless the surface landowner objects. Private and state mineral owners within the area would also be encouraged to participate on a voluntary basis.

Outside these identified areas, oil and gas development would proceed as described in this Draft RMP/EIS, with all appropriate stipulations applying, subject to the exception, modification, and waiver criteria described in Appendix E.

Inside the identified areas, all new leases would still be issued with the wildlife timing stipulations attached. However, if a proposal meets certain criteria, which are described below, BLM will grant an exception to big game and sage-grouse timing limitation stipulations. Until these criteria are met, timing limitation stipulations would apply to all development on the lease or unit. However, if an operator meets both criteria, the BLM will grant an exception to big game winter range and sage-grouse nesting and critical winter range timing stipulations for all APDs on the lease or unit, allowing year-round drilling in these areas. This agreement does not pertain to the 0.25-mile NSO stipulation around sage-grouse leks, which would remain in effect.

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. Operators must continually meet these criteria throughout development of the lease or unit, 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 would not allow the same operator to enter into this agreement again.

Criterion #1: No more than 5 percent of the surface area of each lease or unit will be disturbed at any time. In this context, surface disturbance pertains to only oil and gas actions. Other BLM permitted activities as well as nonpermitted activities do not count toward the 5 percent maximum. Oil and gas related rights-of-way (ROW) 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. Disturbed areas adjacent to facilities, not just the facility or well pad itself, also count toward the threshold,. In addition, existing oil and gas disturbance also counts toward the 5 percent threshold. For leases or units already exceeding 5 percent 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.

Disturbed areas can be recovered on a rolling-reclamation basis. Upon successful reclamation, reclaimed areas would no longer be counted toward the 5 percent limit, and the total area disturbed in the project

area would be decreased by that amount. Successful reclamation is defined in the Reclamation Performance Standard described in Appendix O.

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. In-kind offsite or compensatory mitigation could also count toward recuperating disturbed areas, if approved by the BLM. Reclamation and offsite mitigation would 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, the BLM would no longer grant exceptions to timing stipulations and would issue noncompliance to the leaseholder.

The same no-net-gain approach would apply to areas where existing disturbance is less than 5 percent but the threshold is exceeded during development. In other words, in a lease with 4 percent of its surface currently disturbed from oil and gas activity, the operator could develop up to 5 percent of the surface and then would have to remain at 5 percent to still qualify for the benefits of this tradeoff.

Criterion #2: Development and approval of a POD is required before the BLM will grant exceptions to wildlife timing limitation. The operator(s) need to have some level of confidence and certainty in their POD. If exploratory wells are needed to better define the resource before a POD is developed, the APDs will be subject to timing limitation stipulations. PODs may be developed in stages. The area of the project described in the POD could include multiple leases or units, either connected or not contiguous. However, the 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. The plan would 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
  - Minimizing oil- and gas-related activity in sagebrush habitats, including reducing traffic through field road management, closing routes 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)
  - Requiring mandatory acceptance of 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
- Applications for permit to drill for each federal well
- List of all permitting agencies involved
- Surface owner agreements
- Water mitigation agreements
- Any additional information.

Baseline Measurements and Monitoring

This approach requires a baseline measurement of existing disturbance as well as monitoring to determine when the 5 percent threshold is reached. Before a leaseholder enters into the agreement, a geographic information system (GIS) analysis of existing disturbance in the project area will be performed as part of the POD. In addition, the amount of surface to be disturbed will be calculated by the operator and included in the POD. Subsequent monitoring will take place to ensure compliance with the terms agreed upon in the POD.

Alternative D: Same as Alternative A

Raptors (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], buteos, and owls)

Alternative A: NSO would be allowed within a 0.125-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 would 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 suspended; they may also be suspended once the young have fledged and dispersed from the nest.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis as determined by site-specific analysis before authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: NSO/NGD would be allowed within a 0.25-mile radius of raptor nest sites. Raptor nesting and fledgling habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from February 1 to August 15 within a 0.25-mile buffer zone around the nest site. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Peregrine Falcon

Alternative A: NSO would be allowed within a 0.25-mile radius of cliff nesting complexes. There are no exceptions. Peregrine falcon cliff nesting complexes would 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 suspended. The stipulations may also be suspended once the young have fledged and dispersed from the nest.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): NSO/NGD would be allowed within a 0.25-mile radius of cliff nesting complexes. In addition, NSO/NGD 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 would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Waterfowl and Shorebird

Alternative A: NSO would be allowed on significant production areas, such as waterfowl habitat management areas and rookeries. There are no exceptions.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The same as described in Alternative A, except that NGD would also be applied to other activities. In addition, NSO/NGD 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 would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Big Game Species (mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, and bighorn sheep)

Alternative A: The crucial winter habitat of big game species would be closed to surface disturbing activities from December 1 to April 30. However, under mild winter conditions, the last 60 days of the seasonal limitation period may be suspended. The severity of winter would be determined based on snow depth, snow crusting, daily mean temperatures, and concentration of animals on winter range during winter months. Big game birthing areas would 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), Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep lambing (May 1 to July 15), and desert bighorn sheep lambing (March 16 to May 30). However, if it is determined through a site-specific environmental analysis that specific activities would not interfere with critical habitat function or compromise animal conditions within the vicinity of those activities, these restrictions may be altered or removed.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Crucial winter habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from December 1 to April 30, with the intent of this stipulation remaining consistent with big game hunting season. In the case that hunting season extends later, exceptions would be applied according to Appendix E. Big game birthing areas would 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 would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: Closures in crucial winter habitat would be the same as those described in Alternative A. Closures in big game birthing areas would be the same as those described in Alternative C. Exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Greater Sandhill Crane

Alternative A: Nesting and staging habitat areas would be closed to surface disturbing activities from March 1 to October 16. There are no exceptions.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Osprey

Alternative A: Osprey nesting and fledgling habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from April 1 to August 31. This closure would apply to a 0.5-mile buffer zone around the habitat to avoid nest abandonment.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Wildlife Use Adjustments

Alternative A: Wildlife use adjustments would be recommended to CDOW if monitoring data indicates such adjustments are necessary. No similar actions for controlled surface use (CSU), site-specific relocation (SSR), and timing stipulations.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative A.

White-Tailed Prairie Dogs

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Controlled surface use, SSR, and timing stipulations would be as follows. Surface disturbing activities occurring over more than 1 acre would not be permitted in active

prairie dog towns less than 10 acres in size. These activities would be relocated to the edge of the active prairie dog town. To protect prairie dog pups, surface disturbing activities occurring over less than 1 acre or within active prairie dog towns larger than 10 acres would not be permitted between April 1 and June 15. However, if a company has a well pad in place but for whatever reason is unable to complete the well before April 1, these timing restrictions would be granted an exception. Exceptions may also be considered on a case by case basis following Appendix E guidelines.

Alternative D: No similar action. The White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC, discussed in Special Management Areas, Section 2.5.11, would provide species management.

2.5.6 Special Status Species

Special Status Species are those plant and wildlife species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered, or that are proposed for listing, or that are candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 as amended. Special Status Species also include those species designated by each BLM State Director as sensitive, as well as those species designated by a State agency in a category implying potential endangerment or extinction. Section 102.8 of FLPMA requires that public land 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 policy, 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 would avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of any federally listed, State listed, or proposed for listing species; would actively promote species recovery; and would work to improve the status of candidate and sensitive species. If a federally listed species might 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 would 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. Maintenance may therefore be the preferred course of action when resource conditions are already considered to be high quality.

2.5.6.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Special Status Species Goal A:** Preserve and protect Special Status Species. Objectives for achieving this goal include—

- Maintain the populations of candidate, State-listed, BLM, and other sensitive species at levels that would avoid having to in the future list these species 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.

- **Special Status Species 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.

- **Special Status Species 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 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.

2.5.6.2 Management Actions

Colorado BLM Sensitive Species

Alternative A: Before any surface disturbance activity, surveys would be conducted of potential habitat for Colorado BLM Sensitive Species, including plants and wildlife. Should any such species be found, all disruptive activities would be halted until species-specific protective measures were developed and implemented.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): In addition to the measures described in Alternative A, BLM would survey for rare plant communities, and if any such communities were found, all disruptive activities would be delayed until specific protective measures were developed and implemented, if appropriate.

Alternative D: In addition to the measures described in Alternative C, BLM would review the Colorado Natural Heritage Database for sensitive plant species not listed on BLM's Sensitive Species List and would determine the appropriate management for species on a case-by-case basis.

Ferruginous Hawk

Alternative A: From February 1 to August 15, a 1-mile buffer around nesting and fledgling habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities to avoid nest abandonment.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Columbian Sharp-Tailed Grouse

Alternative A: NSO would 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.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A, except that NGD would also be applied for other activities. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Area Protections

Alternative A: The federally endangered Colorado squawfish, humpback chub, bonytail chub, as well as the State-protected razorback sucker, would be protected by designation of the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC.

Alternative B: No similar action. See Special Management Areas, Section 2.5.11, for more information on protections for federally endangered species.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative A.

Greater Sage-grouse

Alternative A: NSO would 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 would be closed to surface disturbing activities from March 1 to June 30. Crucial winter habitat would be closed from December 16 to March 15. There would be no exceptions.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): To reduce potential impacts on greater sage-grouse lek integrity, NSO/NGD would be allowed within a 0.25-mile radius of a lek site. The NSO/NGD 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. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

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 (as defined in Chapter 3) would be stipulated as CSU for

oil and gas exploration and development and avoidance areas (including SSR) for other surface disturbing activities within a 4-mile radius of the perimeter of a lek. All surface disturbing activities would avoid only nesting and early brood-rearing habitat within the 4-mile radius of the lek during this time period. Exceptions, modification, or waivers would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E. The actual area to be avoided would 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 would 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.
  - 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.

Management for crucial winter habitat would be the same as described in Alternative A. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

Alternative D: To further reduce potential impacts on greater sage-grouse lek integrity, NSO/NGD would be allowed within a 0.6-mile radius of a lek site. The NSO/NGD 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. In addition, exceptions may be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.

To prevent disturbing greater than 75 percent of nesting birds, between March 1 to June 30, greater sage-grouse nesting and early brood-rearing habitat (as defined in Chapter 3) would be stipulated as CSU for oil and gas exploration and development and avoidance areas (including SSR) for other surface disturbing and disruptive activities. Exceptions, modification, or waivers will be granted according to the criteria established in Appendix E. The actual area to be avoided would 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 BMPs, including habitat reclamation, footprint reduction, and reducing disturbance to birds, would be the same as described in Alternative C.

To reduce disturbance to the animals, greater sage-grouse winter habitat (Map 3-19) would be closed to surface disturbing and other disruptive activities from December 16 to March 15. In addition, to protect greater sage-grouse winter habitat, these areas would be CSU for oil and gas exploration and development and avoidance areas (including SSR) for other surface disturbing and disruptive activities. Exceptions would be granted according to the criteria established in Appendix E.

Black-Footed Ferret

Alternative A: No surface disturbing activities would be allowed that might significantly alter the prairie dog complex and make it unsuitable for reintroduction of the black-footed ferret. Per the 1995 Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Amendment, deterrent devices designed to prevent raptors from perching on powerline structures are required on all new construction to discourage predation on ferrets. Rangeland improvement projects (fences, water developments, etc.) within 0.25 miles of black-footed ferret release cages or release sites would not be allowed, to prevent disturbance or damage during the 3- to 4- month release period.

Compensation and operational plans would be developed for oil and gas field development in the Little Snake black-footed ferret management area. BLM would develop offsite mitigation plans for replacement of lost habitat, if necessary. 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 suspended for 3 to 4 months during the release period. There would 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 would also be suspended during the 3- to 4-month release period.

OHV use would not be allowed within 0.25 miles of black-footed ferret release cages or release sites for 3 to 4 months during the release period. Administrative OHV use would be allowed as necessary for implementation and monitoring of ferret releases. Target shooting, plinking, or any type of sport hunting would be prohibited within 0.25 miles of black-footed ferret release cages or 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 would be rerouted to avoid those prairie dog towns.

Alternative B: No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): 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) would 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. Compensation and operational plans would be developed for oil and gas field development in the Little Snake black-footed ferret management area. A plan for onsite or offsite mitigation, consistent with BLM policy, would be developed to replace lost habitat, if necessary. Management actions for new mineral material sales proposed in prairie dog habitat would be the same as those described in Alternative A.

OHV use would 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 would be prohibited within 0.25 miles of black-footed ferret release sites for 3 to 4 months during the release period. Management of ROWs in occupied black-footed ferret habitat would be the same as that described in Alternative A.

Alternative D: Restrictions on surface disturbing activities and requirements for deterrent devices would be the same as those described in Alternative A. For more information, see White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC management under Special Management Areas, Section 2.5.11. Restrictions on rangeland improvement projects near black-footed ferret release sites would be the same as those described in Alternative C. Requirements for compensation plans and plans of operation for oil and gas field development would be the same as those described in Alternative C. Management actions for new mineral material sales proposed in prairie dog habitat would be the same as those described in Alternative A.

Restrictions on OHV use and target shooting, plinking, or any type of sport hunting would be the same as those described in Alternative C. Management of ROWs in occupied black-footed ferret habitat would be the same as that described in Alternative A.

Mexican Spotted Owl

Alternative A: Mexican spotted owl nesting and fledgling habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from February 1 to July 31. This applies to territories where an owl (or owls) has been spotted but no nests or roosts have been confirmed and to territories where there has been confirmed nesting, feeding, and roosting activity. There would be no exceptions. NSO would be allowed within a 0.25-mile radius of the confirmed roost site and nesting site. There would be no exceptions.

Alternative B: NSO would 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 would require separate Section 7 consultation. Activities in PACs that are not surface disturbing would avoid the Mexican spotted owl breeding season, which runs from March 1 through August 31.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B.

Bald Eagle

Alternative A: NSO would be allowed within a 0.25-mile radius of roost or nest sites. The NSO area may be altered depending upon the active status of the roost or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening. There would be no exceptions for nest sites. The bald eagle nesting habitat is from December 15 to June 15. During this period, a 0.5-mile buffer zone would apply around the nest site, to prevent disruption of nesting. However, during years when a nest site is unoccupied by or after May 15, this timing limitation may be suspended, and it may also be suspended once the young have fledged and dispersed from the nest. From November 16 to April 15, a 0.5-mile buffer zone would apply around bald eagle winter roost sites, to avoid the eagles' relocating to less suitable areas. However, if there is a partial or complete visual screening of the area of activity, the primary zone around the roost site may be reduced to 0.25 miles.

Alternative B: Year-round NSO/NGD would be allowed within a 0.25-mile radius of 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.

No human activity or surface disturbance would 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 hunting perches if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography. Development may be permitted at other periods. If periodic visits, such as 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. CDOW has developed new guidelines that are based on current data. Exceptions would require consultation with the USFWS for each individual action.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B.

Statewide Programmatic Resource Management Plan Conservation Measures

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: BLM would implement final statewide programmatic RMP conservation measures. The statewide RMP amendment process is ongoing; therefore Appendix J outlines the conservation measures as of April 2005. These measures would be implemented by BLM unless new information, knowledge, and technology dictate a change in effective management strategies or actions. New courses of action would be analyzed to ensure that they support conservation and recovery of Special Status Species, including plants and animals.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B. In addition, BLM would implement the statewide programmatic conservation recommendations. The conservation recommendations as of April 2005 are outlined in Appendix J.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

2.5.7 Wild Horses

The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro 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.

2.5.7.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Wild Horses Goal:** Manage the Sand Wash wild horse herd and its habitat so as to encourage herd health while maintaining a thriving, natural ecological balance of rangeland resources. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - 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.
  - Recognize and proactively respond to potential conflicts, as they occur, between the wild horse herd and other resources.
  - Expeditiously remove wild horses that relocate outside of Herd Management Areas (HMA).

2.5.7.2 Management Actions

Alternative A: Manage habitat condition in the Sand Wash Basin HMA to maintain a herd range of between 163 and 362 wild horses on a 4-year schedule, with an AML of 362. In addition, continue to manage wild horses in the Sand Wash Basin HMA.

Alternative B: 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. Management of wild horses in the Sand Wash Basin HMA would be the same as that described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Management of the AML according to guidelines and criteria would be the same as that described in Alternative B. Management of wild horses in the Sand Wash Basin HMA would be the same as that described in Alternative A.

Alternative D: Management of the AML according to guidelines and criteria would be the same as that described in Alternative B. In addition, designate the Sand Wash Basin HMA as the Sand Wash Basin wild horse range and manage principally, though not exclusively, for the Sand Wash wild horse herd.

2.5.8 Wildland Fire Management

According to the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review (1995), 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. All uses of fire for resource management require a formal prescription. Management actions on wildland fire will be consistent with approved fire management plans. Wildland fire will be used to protect, maintain, and enhance resources and will be, to the extent possible, allowed to function in its natural ecological role. The 2004 Northwest Colorado Fire Program Area Fire Management Plan defines a strategy for managing and prioritizing wildland fires and prescribing vegetation treatments for fuel hazard reduction and resource benefit. 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 2.5.4.

2.5.8.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Wildland Fire Management Goal A:** Give first priority to protection of life or property. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Identify and reduce hazardous fuels, with an emphasis on urban interface areas.

- **Wildland Fire Management Goal B:** Create an integrated approach to fire and resource management to meet land health standards. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Reduce fire hazards in ecosystems and restore ecological community functions.
  - Use fire and allow it to protect, maintain, and enhance resources.
  - Use fire and allow it to function in its ecological role when appropriate for the site and situation.
  - Use mechanical or other vegetation treatments to reduce fire hazards, when appropriate.

- **Wildland Fire Management Goal C:** Integrate fire and fuels management across landscape, agency, and government boundaries. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Use cooperative agreements to coordinate fire and fuels management action.

2.5.8.2 Management Actions

Alternative A: Maximum suppression would be used in areas that have high resource values as well as with structures, commercial forests, oil and gas developments, cultural values, and improvements. It would also be used to prevent fire from spreading to adjacent private property and structures and to provide full protection to buffer areas near or adjacent to critical management areas for threatened, endangered, and candidate species, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, and research natural areas (RNA).

Conditional fire suppression would be used in areas that have resources of low value or that do not warrant full suppression actions and/or would have high suppression costs; these would include the Douglas Mountain area, the five wilderness study areas (WSA) adjacent to the Dinosaur National Monument, the Diamond Breaks WSA, the West Cold Spring WSA, and the Cross Mountain WSA.

Both planned and unplanned prescribed fire would be used to improve resource habitat and conditions. No similar action would be taken in areas where fire is desired.

Alternative B: Appropriate fire management response would 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.

Conditional fire suppression would be used in areas where fire is desired but where there may be mitigating social, political, or ecological constraints to fire such as air quality considerations, proximity to Class I air sheds or nonattainment areas, the presence of threatened or endangered species, or habitat considerations.

Minimal to no fire suppression would be used in areas where fire is desired. Both prescribed fire and wildfire would be used to improve resource habitat and conditions, where appropriate.

Prescribed fire will be used to meet identified resource management or hazard fuel reduction objectives. Use of prescribed fire will be guided by agency planning documents and consultation with appropriate agency staff.

Wildland fire management strategies have been categorized into A, B, C, or D polygons and associated objective tables, representing a continuum of appropriate management responses, from full suppression, in A polygons, through wildland fire use, in D polygons. Fire management units are described in Table 2-2 below and shown on Map 2-5.

Table 2-2. Fire Management Units

Fire Management Unit	Appropriate Management Response Strategy	Fire Use
A: Wildfire and prescribed fire not desired.	Full suppression response using direct strategy.	No
B: Wildfire not desired because of social, political, and resource value protection. Prescribed fire desired.	Suppression-oriented response using direct or perimeter strategy. Prescribed fire used to reduce fuels and to maintain ecosystem health.	No
C: Wildland fire desired, but some constraints limit fire use potential. Limited prescription.	Conditional response using direct, perimeter, or prescriptive strategy.	Yes, limited prescription
D: Wildland fire desired, with few constraints to limit fire use.	Unconditional response with emphasis on prescriptive strategy	Yes

In most cases, the fire management units may have in common fuel types, major fire regime groups, and topography. It is also possible that they may cross political boundaries. The fire management unit polygons are evaluated each year and may be altered. Following are some of the major evaluation criteria:

- 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
- Social/political changes.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B.

2.5.9 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 NHPA requires that federal agencies take into account the potential adverse effects to historic properties in the APE of an undertaking. Section 110 of NHPA requires that federal agencies manage and protect the cultural resources located on their lands. The BLM will follow the process identified in the National Programmatic Agreement (1998) agreed to with the National Council of State Historic Preservation

Officers (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 would be determined annually within constraints of available funds and staff.

BLM would 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 would 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 would occur prior to planned excavations or undertakings on BLM-administered lands, in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. BLM would protect and preserve Native American religious and cultural rights and practices on federal lands, in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

2.5.9.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Cultural Resources Program Goal A:** Develop an indepth 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.

- **Cultural Resources Program Goal B:** Determine cultural use allocations and desired outcomes for all cultural properties located in the RMP area. 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—
  - 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 to manage cultural resources located on BLM-administered lands.

- **Cultural Resources Support Services Goal A:** 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 this goal 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.
  - Assign use allocations for all cultural properties.

- **Cultural Resources Support Services Goal B:** 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 this goal include—

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

2.5.9.2 Management Actions

Cultural Resources Program

Alternative A: An overall cultural management plan would be developed to address both prehistoric and historic cultural presences. Separate plans, on a smaller scale, would be developed to include site-specific or region-specific areas of the RMPPA. Developed plans would address the existing data gaps and research questions identified in the Little Snake RMPPA Class I Overview (La Point 1987; McDonald and Metcalf 2006). Future plans would include the data orientation and collection designs needed to develop the basic knowledge of these resources that had been lacking in the past.

Alternative B: 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 would 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 will 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 sites for cultural resource surveys: Irish Canyon, Sand Wash Basin, and Vermillion Rim
- 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, 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, and Cross Mountain rock shelter
- Priority interpretation sites: Sand Wash and Vermillion Rim; maintain Irish Canyon interpretive site.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as Alternative B.

Cultural Site Use Allocations

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: Manage cultural site types on a site-specific basis, according to the allocations identified in Appendix K.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B.

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

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: The following process will be followed to mitigate potential adverse effects to historic properties within areas open to cross-country OHV travel.

In areas open to OHV travel, known cultural resources evaluated as potentially eligible (but need additional data to make a final determination) and eligible for the NRHP would be identified. Cultural resource site areas located within or immediately adjacent to existing routes would be protected by route or area closures to the types of travel that may cause adverse effects. The closure would remain in effect until the cultural resources are field-visited and documented and the needed mitigation measures are completed. The avoidance of cultural resources would be the primary mitigation measure, where possible. Significant cultural resource sites and areas may be mitigated through long-term route or area closure, rerouting and new construction, limitations on vehicle type and time or season of travel, excavation of archaeological resources, or other less common approaches.

Class III inventory, site evaluation, site mitigation, and reporting would be completed within 5 years following the signing of the ROD. A Class II inventory could be employed as part of this process. Identified cultural resources evaluated as potentially eligible (but need additional data to make a final determination) and eligible for the NRHP would be protected, and any adverse effects would be mitigated. Protection would follow the approach identified above for known cultural resources.

In addition, a monitoring program would be established to assess OHV impacts on cultural resources. The BLM cultural resource specialist, as part of the monitoring team, would identify an appropriate monitoring schedule for cultural resources. On the basis of the results of monitoring, the BLM would take any actions necessary to fulfill its obligations under existing law to protect cultural resources. 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.

Consultation with the SHPO and affected tribes is required for all planning efforts and, as necessary, with other consulting parties.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Transportation planning would be performed in Sand Wash Basin following the signing of the ROD, as described in Section 2.6.6.2, Adaptive OHV Designations. Protecting cultural resources in Sand Wash Basin would be an important aspect in the development of the transportation plan and designation of routes in the area. The same process as outlined for Alternative B would be employed for the area open to OHV travel in south Sand Wash Basin.

Alternative D: No similar action.

2.5.10 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 the BLM 8270 *Handbook* and the BLM *Manual for the Management of Paleontological Resources*.

2.5.10.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Paleontology Goal:** To identify and protect the paleontological resources within the LSFO. Objectives for achieving this goal 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.

2.5.10.2 Management Actions

Alternative A: All proposed surface disturbing actions would be evaluated to determine inventory needs and identify sites that would be potentially impacted by such activities. An accredited paleontologist approved by the authorized officer would inventory surface disturbing activities in Class I and II paleontological areas. Mitigation measures for specific locations would be identified on a case-by-case basis.

An overall paleontological management plan would be developed to address the fossil presence in the RMPPA. Separate plans, on a smaller scale, would be developed to include site-specific or region-specific areas of the RMPPA. Developed plans would address the existing data gaps and research questions identified in the *Little Snake Resource Area Paleontological Overview* (Armstrong and Wolny 1989). Future plans would be the data orientation and collection designs needed to develop the basic knowledge of these resources that had been lacking in the past.

There would be no similar action for the standard discovery stipulation.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A, but surface disturbing activities in Class I and II paleontological areas devoid of thick soils and vegetation and with steep, unsafe cliffs would be inventoried by a qualified paleontologist with a valid Colorado BLM paleontology permit who is approved by the authorized officer.

There would be no similar action for the paleontological management plans.

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 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 cultural 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.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B, except that management actions to develop a paleontological management plan would be the same as those described in Alternative A.

2.5.11 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 special management areas such as lands with wilderness characteristics that are outside existing WSAs. Management of these areas would 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 would focus on protecting sensitive resources 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 eligible rivers were evaluated for suitability.

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 will 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 is recognized as part of the spectrum of resource values considered during land use planning. Under the wilderness review program, the existing designated WSAs are managed in accordance with BLM's Interim Management Plan (IMP). The general standard for interim management is that land under wilderness review must be managed so as not to impair its suitability for future preservation as wilderness. Wilderness characteristics and values, described in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-577), must be protected and enhanced in all WSAs. In addition, the RMP process is open to new information, including public proposals for wilderness. 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 the 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. BLM policy states: "During the planning process and concluding with the actions after the planning process, BLM will not manage those lands under a congressionally designated nonimpairment standard, nor manage them as if they are or may become congressionally designated wilderness areas, but through the planning process BLM may manage them using special protections to protect wilderness characteristics."

2.5.11.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **Special Management Areas Goal:** Provide special management attention to those areas where special management is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important natural, cultural, recreational, or scenic resources and values. Objectives for achieving this goal 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 route designations for special management areas that are not closed to motorized vehicle use.

2.5.11.2 Management Actions

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Alternative A: The following sites, totaling 20,910 acres, would be designated to protect and enhance the associated values that are listed with the site (Table 2-3; Map 2-6). The Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA includes 1,400 acres with remnant plant associations, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, and scenic quality. The Irish Canyon ACEC, including the Ink Springs area, includes 11,910 acres with remnant plant associations, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, geologic values, cultural resources, and scenic quality. The Lookout Mountain ACEC includes 6,950 acres with Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species and scenic quality. The Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC includes 650 acres with threatened and endangered species, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, and scenic quality.

Alternative B: No additional ACECs would be designated, and ACEC designations would be removed from all existing ACECs. No areas would be managed as ACECs.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Retain designation of the Irish Canyon ACEC (11,910 acres) (Table 2-3; Map 2-8). The following areas would not be retained as ACECs: Limestone Ridge (1,400 acres), Lookout Mountain (6,950 acres), and Cross Mountain Canyon (650 acres). Management of these areas would be as described below.

Alternative D: Retain the Irish Canyon ACEC, the Limestone Ridge ACEC, the Lookout Mountain ACEC, and the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC. In addition, designate the White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC (271,730 acres), the Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC (1,210 acres), the Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC (5,500 acres), the Bull Canyon ACEC (3,390 acres), the G Gap ACEC (2,230 acres), the Little Juniper Canyon ACEC (20 acres), the Bassett Spring ACEC (110 acres), the No Name Spring ACEC (80 acres), the Pot Creek ACEC (2,240 acres), the Whiskey Springs ACEC (2,760 acres), the Willow Spring ACEC (100 acres), and the Deception Creek ACEC (110 acres) (Table 2-3; Map 2-9).

Table 2-3. ACECs Designated by Alternative

Area of Environmental Concern	Area (Acres)	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Limestone Ridge	1,400	X			X
Irish Canyon	11,910	X		X	X
Lookout Mountain	6,950	X			X
Cross Mt. Canyon	650	X			X
White-tailed Prairie Dog	271,730				X
Cold Desert Shrublands	1,210				X
Gibben's Beardtongue	5,500				X
Bull Canyon	3,390				X
G Gap	2,230				X
Little Juniper Canyon	20				X
Bassett Spring	110				X
No Name Spring	80				X
Pot Creek	2,240				X
Whiskey Springs	2,760				X
Willow Spring	100				X
Deception Creek	110				X
Total area (in acres)	310,390	20,910	0	11,910	310,390

Limestone Ridge ACEC

Alternative A: The existing ACEC designation would remain. There would be NSO for oil and gas exploration and development. The ACEC would be closed to locatable minerals activity, closed to mineral material sales, and not available for coal leasing. Leasing of other minerals for underground mining would be allowed with NSO stipulations. Leasing for surface mining would not be allowed. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have no visual resource management (VRM) designation. Limestone Ridge would be an exclusion area for ROWs unless they were associated with valid existing rights.

Alternative B: The ACEC designation would be removed because there is no need for special management attention. There would be no stipulations or prescriptions designed to protect relevant and important values. Limestone Ridge would be open to all exploration and development; however, it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be open to OHV use. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. There would be no restrictions on ROWs.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The ACEC designation would be removed because special management attention would not be required to protect the relevant and important values. The area objective would be to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic quality. Sensitive plants and remnant plant communities would be avoided through a CSU/SSR stipulation. Scenic values would be protected through a VRM Class II designation. The area would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location, closed to other mineral activity, not available for coal leasing, and would be an exclusion area for ROWs unless they were associated with valid existing rights.

Alternative D: The existing ACEC designation would remain. The area objective would be to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic quality. The area would be closed to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. The area would be a ROW exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.

Irish Canyon ACEC

Alternative A: The existing ACEC designation would remain. The area would be CSU for oil and gas operations and open to locatable and other minerals activity. The ACEC would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails. There would be no VRM designation. The area would be a ROW exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.

Alternative B: The ACEC designation would be removed because there is no need for special management attention. There would be no stipulations or prescriptions designed to protect relevant and important values. Irish Canyon would be open to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity; however, it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be open to OHV use. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. There would be no lands and realty restrictions.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The existing ACEC designation would remain because special management attention would be needed to protect the multiple relative and important values in the area, including rare plants, rare plant communities, and scenic, geologic, and 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 would be to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, cultural and geologic values, and scenic quality. Management of the area would be the same as that described in Alternative A, except that the area would be closed to oil and gas exploration and development and the area would be designated VRM Class II. The area would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location.

Alternative D: The existing ACEC designation would remain. The area objective would be to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, cultural and geologic values, and scenic quality. The area would be closed to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated areas. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. The area would be a ROW exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.

Lookout Mountain ACEC

Alternative A: The existing ACEC designation would remain. The area would be CSU for oil and gas operations and open to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, but the area would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails. There would be no VRM designation. The area would be a ROW exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.

Alternative B: The ACEC designation would be removed because there is no need for special management attention. There would be no stipulations or prescriptions designed to protect relevant and important values. Lookout Mountain would be open to oil and gas operations and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity; however, it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be open to OHV use. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. There would be no lands and realty limitations.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The ACEC designation would be removed because special management attention would not be required to protect the relevant and important values. The area objective would be to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic quality. Sensitive plants and remnant plant communities would be avoided through a CSU/SSR stipulation. Scenic values would be protected through a VRM Class II designation in areas where they occur. The area would be available for mineral location, closed to other mineral activity, and not available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have Class II and III VRM designations. Renewal of existing and authorization of future ROWs would be allowed upon approval of a site-specific development plan consistent with area resource objectives.

Alternative D: The existing ACEC designation would remain. The area objective would be to protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic quality. The area would be NSO for oil and gas operations, closed to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and not available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated areas. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. Communication sites and existing communication ROWs could be renewed at the end of their terms in accordance with area objectives and current regulations. No new communication sites would be authorized. The area would be a ROW exclusion area.

Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC

Alternative A: The existing ACEC designation would remain. The area would continue to receive protection by virtue of its location within the Cross Mountain WSA. The area would be NSO for oil and gas operations, closed to mineral material sales, and not available for coal leasing. Leasing of other minerals for underground mining would be allowed with NSO stipulations. Leasing for surface mining would not be allowed. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class I VRM designation. Cross Mountain Canyon would be a ROW exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.

Alternative B: The ACEC designation would be removed because there is no need for special management attention. This area lies completely within the Cross Mountain Canyon WSA. Therefore, all relative and important values are fully protected by the area's WSA status. The Cross Mountain Canyon area would continue to be managed consistent with WSA requirements.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as Alternative B.

Alternative D: The existing ACEC designation would remain. The area objective would be to protect sensitive plants, threatened and endangered species, and scenic quality. The area would be closed to oil and gas operations and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class I VRM designation. Cross Mountain Canyon would be an exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.

White-Tailed Prairie Dog ACEC

Alternative A: No ACEC would be designated for the white-tailed prairie dog habitat area because there is no need for special management attention. Active white-tailed prairie dog colonies would continue to be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities only within the black-footed ferret reintroduction area.

Alternative B: No ACEC would be designated for the white-tailed prairie dog habitat area because there is no need for special management attention. There would be no stipulations or prescriptions designed to protect relevant and important values.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as Alternative A. In addition, a CSU stipulation would protect towns less than 10 acres in size and timing limitation stipulations would apply to towns greater than 10 acres in size (see Section 2.5.5.2).

Alternative D: The area would be designated as an ACEC. The area objective would be to protect white-tailed prairie dog habitat. The following management would apply only to areas indicated on Map 2-9, which contains active/inactive white-tailed prairie dog colonies. The area would be NSO for oil and gas operations, closed to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and not available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated areas. There would be no VRM classifications specific to prairie dog colonies. The White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC would be a ROW exclusion area.

Natural Systems ACEC

Alternative A: No ACECs would be designated because there is no need for special management attention. Rare plant occurrences would be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities.

Alternative B: No ACECs would be designated because there is no need for special management attention. Rare plant and rare plant community occurrences would be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as Alternative B.

Alternative D: The following ACECs would be designated to compose the Natural Systems ACECs: Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC (1,210 acres), Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC (5,500 acres), Bull Canyon ACEC (3,390 acres), G Gap ACEC (2,230 acres), Little Juniper Canyon ACEC (20 acres), Bassett Spring ACEC (110 acres), No Name Spring ACEC (80 acres), Pot Creek ACEC (2,240 acres), Whiskey Springs ACEC (2,760 acres), Willow Spring ACEC (100 acres), and Deception Creek ACEC (110 acres). The objective of these ACECs would be to protect sensitive plants and plant communities. The following management would apply only to areas indicated on Map 2-9. SSR would be used for all surface disturbances. The area would be CSU for oil and gas development, closed to locatable and other minerals activity, and not available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails. There would be no VRM classifications specific to these ACECs. The ACECs would be ROW avoidance areas.

Wilderness Study Areas

Alternative A: WSAs (Map 2-6) would continue to be managed in compliance with BLM's IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) until they are reviewed and acted upon by Congress. Public land designated as wilderness would be managed in compliance with BLM's Wilderness Management Policy and the Wilderness Act of 1964. Site-specific wilderness management plans would be developed for areas designated by Congress as wilderness. The Cross Mountain, Diamond Breaks, West Cold Spring, Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp,

Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would not be leased for mineral development. This would represent 78,250 acres of BLM-administered mineral estate within the Little Snake RMPPA.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A. Public lands designated as wilderness would be managed in compliance with BLM's Wilderness Management Policy and the Wilderness Act of 1964 (Map 2-7). If any or all of the WSAs are released by Congress from wilderness study, the released lands would 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 woodcutting, would be reviewed to determine if changes in management were needed. If so, the RMP would be revised. As in Alternative A, the Cross Mountain, Diamond Breaks, West Cold Spring, Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would not be leased for mineral development.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B (Map 2-8).

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B (Map 2-9).

Diamond Breaks WSA

Alternative A: The Diamond Breaks WSA would be recommended as preliminarily suitable for wilderness designation (1989 RMP/ROD, page 22). If Congress does not designate Diamond Breaks as wilderness, the Colorado portion of the WSA (31,810 acres) would be managed as a recreation management unit and the Utah portion (3,900 acres) would be managed by the Vernal District according to existing management framework plans. The area would be closed to OHV use.

Alternative B: The Diamond Breaks WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it as wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases Diamond Breaks from wilderness study, it would be managed as multiple use, consistent with resource goals and objectives. The area would be closed to OHV use.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The Diamond Breaks WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it as wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases Diamond Breaks from wilderness study, the following management would apply: the area would remain closed to OHV use. It would also be closed to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. ROWs would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C, except the area would be excluded from ROWs if the area were released from wilderness study.

Cross Mountain WSA

Alternative A: The Cross Mountain WSA, which includes the proposed Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC, would be recommended as preliminarily suitable for wilderness designation. BLM would recommend that the proposed Cross Mountain wilderness remain open to oil and gas leasing with NSO stipulations. If Congress does not designate Cross Mountain as a wilderness, the area would be managed as a special recreation management area (13,620 acres), including the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC (650 acres).

Alternative B: The Cross Mountain WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it as wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases Cross Mountain from wilderness study, it would be managed as multiple use, consistent with resource goals and objectives.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The Cross Mountain WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it as wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases Cross Mountain from wilderness study, the following management would apply: the objective would be to protect sensitive plants, threatened and endangered species, and scenic values. Cross Mountain would also be closed to oil and gas leasing and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use and would have a Class II VRM designation. Cross Mountain would be a ROW exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

West Cold Spring WSA

Alternative A: The West Cold Spring WSA would be recommended as not suitable for wilderness designation. If Congress does not designate the area as wilderness, the Colorado portion of West Cold Spring would be managed as the Cold Spring and Little Snake River management unit (14,660 acres). The Utah portion of the WSA would be managed under the Brown's Park Management Framework Plan.

Alternative B: The West Cold Spring WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed that way until Congress either designates it as wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases West Cold Springs from wilderness study, it would be managed as multiple use, consistent with resource goals and objectives.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The West Cold Spring WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it as wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases West Cold Springs from wilderness study, the area would be managed in the same way as the adjacent wilderness characteristics area. The area would be closed to oil and gas leasing and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to existing roads, and trails and adaptive criteria would be applied. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. West Cold Spring would be a ROW avoidance area, and wind energy applications would be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative D: The West Cold Spring WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it as wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases West Cold Springs from wilderness study, the area would be managed in the same way as the adjacent SRMA. West Cold Spring would be identified as a backcountry SRMA. The area would be closed to oil and gas operations and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated areas. The area would have a Class I VRM designation. West Cold Spring would be a ROW exclusion area, and wind energy development would not be allowed.

Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs

Alternative A: Four WSAs evaluated under Section 202 of FLPMA—Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears—would be recommended as not suitable for wilderness designation but would be recommended to the Secretary of the Deparment of the Interior for forwarding to Congress for the final decision. If Congress does not designate these areas as wilderness, they would be managed as follows. The northwest corner of Ant Hills would be managed as the Douglas Mountain management unit and the remainder as the Scattered Sands management unit. Chew Winter Camp would be managed as the Scattered Sands management unit. The north third of Peterson Draw would be managed as the Scattered Sands management unit and the remainder as the Douglas Mountain management unit. Most of the Vale of Tears would be managed as the Little Snake River management unit, and the other portions in the northwest corner would be managed as either the Douglas Mountain or the Scattered Sands management units (1989 RMP).

Alternative B: The Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would be managed to preserve their wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates them as wilderness or releases them for other uses. If Congress releases Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears from wilderness study, the areas would be managed as multiple use, consistent with resource goals and objectives.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would be managed to preserve their wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates them as wilderness or releases them for other uses. If Congress releases Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears from wilderness study, they would be managed in the same way as the adjacent wilderness characteristics area. Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would be closed to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and they would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to existing roads and trails, and adaptive criteria would be applied. The areas would have Class II VRM designations. The areas would be ROW avoidance areas, and wind energy development would not be accepted.

Alternative D: The Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would be managed to preserve their wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates them as wilderness or releases them for other uses. If Congress releases Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears from wilderness study, they would be managed in the same way as the adjacent SRMA. Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would be identified as backcountry SRMAs. The areas would be closed to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and they would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated areas. The areas would have Class I VRM designations. The areas would be ROW exclusion areas, and wind energy development would not be accepted.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Alternative A: BLM would undertake no actions nor permit any activities that could adversely affect or impact any outstandingly remarkable values of the Yampa River segment in Cross Mountain, which is listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory List, making it eligible for inclusion in the NWSR System. Free-flowing characteristics of identified river segments cannot be modified, to the extent the BLM is authorized under law to control stream impoundments, diversions, or other development.

As directed by BLM IM-2004-196, all of the eligible river segments would be managed to protect their outstandingly remarkable values, free-flowing natures, and tentative classifications. In keeping with BLM Manual 8351, .32C and .33 C, there would not be suitability determinations made for any of the eligible river segments. They would remain eligible and would be managed to protect their outstandingly remarkable values, free-flowing natures, and tentative classifications to the degree that BLM has the authority to do so (i.e., BLM lands within the corridor) and within the parameters of decisions made in the previous planning documents, until such time as suitability determinations are made.

Alternative B: None of the eligible segments would be recommended as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Yampa River segments 1, 2, and 3 would be determined and managed as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System (Table 2-4, Map 2-8). Management actions would only apply to those portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. For sites within the segment where habitat loss is a risk, remedial actions would be implemented to ensure that the suitability of the spawning habitat is maintained or enhanced.

Alternative D: All eligible segments and tentative classifications would be determined and managed as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System (Table 2-4, Map 2-9): Beaver Creek segment 1 (wild), Vermillion Creek segment 1 (Lower Vermillion Creek, scenic), Yampa River segment 1 (River Mile 126 to Milk Creek, recreational), Yampa River segment 2 (Milk Creek to Duffy Tunnel, scenic), and Yampa River segment 3 (Cross Mountain Canyon, wild). Management actions would apply only to those portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM.

Table 2-4. WSR Segments Managed as Suitable, by Alternative

Stream Segment	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Yampa River segment 1			X	X
Yampa River segment 2			X	X
Yampa River segment 3			X	X
Beaver Creek segment 1				X
Vermillion Creek segment 1				X
Total area (in acres)	**0**	**0**	**6,260**	**8,480**

Beaver Creek Segment 1 (wild)

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): No similar action.

Alternative D: Manage Beaver Creek segment 1 as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System, with the tentative classification of "wild." Manage to protect the outstandingly remarkable values, including fish. Specific management prescriptions within 0.25 miles of each side of the river include being closed to OHV, being closed to oil and gas leasing, and recommending withdrawal from mineral entry.

Vermillion Creek Segment 1 (lower Vermillion Creek, scenic)

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): No similar action.

Alternative D: Manage Vermillion Creek segment 1 as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System, with the tentative classification of "scenic." Manage to protect the outstandingly remarkable values, including cultural and geologic. Specific management prescriptions within 0.25 miles of each side of the river include being closed to OHV, being closed to oil and gas leasing, and recommending withdrawal from mineral entry.

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

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): 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 routes, NSO for oil and gas leasing, and recommending withdrawal from mineral entry.

Alternative D: 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 being closed to OHV, being closed to oil and gas leasing, and recommending withdrawal from mineral entry. For sites within the segment where habitat loss is a risk, remedial actions would be implemented to ensure that the suitability of the spawning habitat is maintained or enhanced.

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

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): 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 routes, NSO for oil and gas leasing, and recommending withdrawal from mineral entry.

Alternative D: 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 being closed to OHV, being closed to oil and gas leasing, recommending withdrawal from mineral entry, and being closed to livestock grazing

during the months of June and July. For sites within the segment where habitat loss is a risk, remedial actions would be implemented to ensure that the suitability of the spawning habitat is maintained or enhanced.

Yampa Segment 3 (Cross Mountain Canyon, wild)

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Manage Yampa River segment 3 (3.3 miles through Cross Mountain Canyon) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR 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 OHV limited to designated routes, NSO for oil and gas leasing, and recommending withdrawal from mineral entry.

Alternative D: Manage Yampa River segment 3 (3.3 miles through Cross Mountain Canyon) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSR 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, being closed to oil and gas leasing, and recommending withdrawal from mineral entry.

Lands With Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs

Vermillion Basin

Alternative A: Vermillion Basin would be open to new oil and gas leasing and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, but it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be mostly open, but some use would be limited to existing use. There would be no VRM designation. ROWs would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative B: The area objectives would be to allow for oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development by utilizing state-of-the-art technology while protecting natural values. The area would be managed for minimal surface disturbance by focusing development near existing trails, ROWs, and canyons and washes, and by clustering wells where feasible. Visual intrusions would be minimized, such as by using Lookout Mountain as an observation point. Infrastructure would be controlled by requiring preplanning, including transportation planning. Leases would be issued in larger four-section blocks to facilitate seismic exploration and allow operators to drill fewer exploration wells. SSR would be used for surface disturbing activities. Vermillion Basin would be open to new oil and gas leasing with a CSU stipulation. The stipulation language would reference the objectives above. The area would be closed to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation, with a Class II designation for the Vermillion Bluffs area. ROW decisions would be made on a case-by-case basis, and ROW avoidance areas would be established for the Vermillion Bluffs and fragile soil areas.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The objective for Vermillion Basin would be to allow for coordinated and organized oil and gas development while protecting natural and scenic values. For all leases in the area, the BLM would stipulate that any oil- and gas-related activity or development must take place within a federal oil and gas unit. All leases would be limited to 2,560 acres in size; a unit must

include at least four leases, for a minimum of 10,240 total acres. The leases to be included in the unit as well as all the details of the unit agreement will be left to the discretion of leaseholders.

Surface disturbance would be limited to 1 percent of Vermillion Basin at any one time. This rule would be enforced on a unit basis, meaning that no more than 1 percent of the surface of a unit would be disturbed, except for situations described below.

A unit is composed of the area under exploration and development and could also include a "mitigation area." A mitigation area would be composed of any other participating leases that the operator chooses to include in the unit. The mitigation area would have to either be leased by one of the operators in the unit or a deal would have to be worked out with the leaseholder to purchase those acres as "disturbance credits." These leases do not have to be directly adjacent to the area of the unit under production but would still have to lie within Vermillion Basin. Mitigation leases could also be added to the unit at a later time as the operators begin to approach the 1 percent disturbance limit in the area of the unit being developed. Therefore, to increase the amount of acres they would be able to disturb within the unit without exceeding the 1 percent limit, operators could add more acres to the total unit by increasing the mitigation area.

For example, an operator leases four contiguous 2,560-acre leases in the northern portion of Vermillion Basin and also leases two 2,560-acre leases in the southern portion of Vermillion as a mitigation area. A unit is formed containing all six leases, totaling 15,360 acres. Once a POD is approved by the BLM, the operator would be allowed to disturb a total of 153.6 acres in the unit. After 5 years of development and 140 acres of surface disturbance, the operator finds an encouraging play. However, with only 13.6 more acres remaining to be disturbed, the operator cannot develop that play. Therefore, to increase the amount of surface the operator is able to disturb, the operator then leases another two 2,560-acre leases in southern Vermillion Basin. These leases would be included in the existing unit, which would now total 20,480 acres. This would allow for 204.8 acres of total surface disturbance, or 64.8 more acres in addition to the 140 already disturbed. If there were no additional areas within Vermillion Basin available to lease, the operator would be able to recover disturbance by reclaiming disturbed areas or by purchasing disturbance credits from other leaseholders.

Existing surface disturbance (i.e., existing routes and ways) is not included in the 1 percent limitation. Disturbed areas can be recovered on a rolling-reclamation basis. Upon successful reclamation, reclaimed areas would no longer be counted toward the 1 percent limit and the total area disturbed in the unit would be decreased by that amount. Successful reclamation is defined in the Reclamation Performance Standard described in Appendix O.

All of Vermillion Basin would be offered for lease simultaneously. However, if only portions of the basin were leased in the first lease sale, development could begin as long as a unit is formed and a POD is approved. Offered parcels within Vermillion Basin that are not nominated in the initial lease sale would be available for a 2-year period for noncompetitive leasing. If they were not picked up during this period, they would be available to be nominated for competitive leasing at a later time. These new leases could be added to a unit, thereby increasing the amount of surface that could be disturbed without exceeding the 1 percent limit. Alternatively, if they are sufficient in size, they could form a new unit.

The BLM would also stipulate that a POD must be developed for the unit before development would be authorized. (This POD is not the same document referenced in 43 CFR 3183.6.) The BLM recognizes that in the early stage of development of the unit, the POD may not contain more than a few exploratory wells. The POD would be updated annually by the lead operator.

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 surface disturbance and impacts on the natural values of the area. The plan would demonstrate significant control of surface disturbance in a number of ways, including—
  - Reducing surface spacing/density of facilities
  - Reducing road density/pipeline density
  - Focusing development near existing ROWs
  - Clustering facilities, including the use of directional drilling, where feasible
  - Reducing traffic through field road management, closing routes to public use, remote telemetry of wells, piping of produced fluids rather than trucking, etc.
  - Use of new technologies, including surface mats, self-contained rigs, limited impact drilling (e.g., small roads and small pads)
  - Employment of appropriate BMPs
- A reclamation report, to be updated annually, detailing a reclamation plan and the condition of all areas currently being reclaimed in the unit
- 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
- Applications for permit to drill for each federal well
- List of all permitting agencies involved
- Surface owner agreements
- Water mitigation agreements
- Any additional information.

This approach requires a baseline measurement of existing disturbance as well as monitoring to determine when the 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 as part of the POD. In addition, the amount of surface to be disturbed will be calculated by the operator and included in the POD. Subsequent monitoring will take place to ensure compliance with the terms agreed upon in the POD.

A CSU stipulation would be attached to all leases/units in Vermillion Basin. The area would be open to locatable minerals but closed to other minerals activity, and it would be not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes in some areas and closed in other areas. The area would have a Class III VRM designation, with a Class II designation for the Vermillion Bluffs area. ROWs would be processed on a case-by-case basis, and ROW avoidance areas would be established for the Vermillion Bluffs and fragile soil areas.

Map 2-2a shows constraints on oil and gas development in Vermillion Basin under Alternative C. Constraints include slopes equal to or greater than 35%, areas classified as fragile soils in the Vermillion

Creek and Dry Creek corridors, VRM Class II, and raptor nests. These surface use limitations do not necessarily prohibit oil and gas development in those areas, but may require extra mitigation or movement of facilities. Additionally, some restraints are not shown, such as timing limitation stipulations.

Alternative D: The objective for Vermillion Basin would be to provide quality primitive recreational experiences in a largely natural setting. The area would be identified as a backcountry SRMA. Vermillion Basin would be closed to new oil and gas leasing and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. Vermillion Basin would be a ROW exclusion area.

Dinosaur North

Alternative A: The area would be managed for multiple use outside existing WSAs. Dinosaur North would be open to minerals and energy, locatable minerals, and other minerals activity, but it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be open to OHV use. There would be no VRM designations. There would be no lands and realty restrictions, and ROWs would be processed on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The area objective would be to manage to protect naturalness, opportunities for semiprimitive recreation, and solitude. The area would have no designations, but the following prescriptions would be applied. Dinosaur North would be closed to oil and gas operations and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. Dinosaur North would be a ROW avoidance area, and wind energy development would not be allowed.

Alternative D: The area objective would be to provide quality primitive recreational experiences in a largely natural setting. Dinosaur North would be identified as a backcountry SRMA. The area would be closed to oil and gas operations and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. Dinosaur North would be a ROW exclusion area, and wind energy development would not be allowed.

Cold Springs Mountain

Alternative A: The area would be managed for multiple use outside existing WSAs. Cold Springs Mountain would be open to minerals and energy and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The majority of Cold Springs Mountain would be limited to existing areas, and the remainder would be open to OHV use. There would be no VRM designations. There would be no lands and realty restrictions, and ROW decisions would be processed on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The area objective would be to manage to protect naturalness, opportunities for semiprimitive recreation, and solitude. The area would have no designations, but the following prescriptions would be applied. Cold Springs Mountain would be closed to oil and gas operations and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. Cold Springs would be a ROW avoidance area, and wind energy applications would be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative D: The area objective would be to provide quality primitive recreational experiences in a largely natural setting. Cold Springs Mountain would be identified as a backcountry SRMA. The area would be closed to oil and gas operations and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. Cold Springs Mountain would be a ROW exclusion area, and wind energy development would not be allowed.

Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon

Alternative A: The Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area (19,290 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide unrestricted flatwater river floatboating in the region. Management specific to this area is discussed in Recreation, Section 2.6.3.

Alternative B: The Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area would be managed as an extensive recreation management area (ERMA). Management specific to this area is discussed in Recreation, Section 2.6.3.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA would be expanded to 27,310 acres (Map 2-36) and identified as the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA to provide quality camping experiences related to river boating and big game hunting in the region. Management specific to this area is discussed in Recreation, Section 2.6.3.

Alternative D: The existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA would be expanded to 29,380 acres (Map 2-37) and identified as the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA to provide quality camping experiences related to river boating and big game hunting in the region. Management specific to this area is discussed in Recreation, Section 2.6.3.

2.5.12 Visual Resource Management

Section 102 (8) of FLPMA declares that public land will 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…esthetically pleasing surroundings." Section 102 of NEPA requires agencies to "utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will 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*. The establishment of VRM classes on public land is based on an evaluation of the landscape's scenic qualities, public sensitivity toward certain areas (such as certain special recreation designations and WSAs), and the location of affected land as seen from major travel corridors (distance zoning).

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

2.5.12.1 Resource Goals and Objectives

- **VRM 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 this goal include—

- Maintain VRM 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.

2.5.12.2 Management Actions

VRM Class I

Alternative A: Visual resources for WSAs would be managed as VRM Class I in accordance with the IMP (Table 2-5; Map 2-10).

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A (Table 2-5; Map 2-11).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative A (Table 2-5; Map 2-12).

Alternative D: Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class I for WSAs and the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC (Table 2-5; Map 2-13).

Table 2-5. Areas Managed as VRM Class I, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
WSAs	X	X	X	X
Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC (within the Cross Mountain WSA)	X			X
Total area (in acres)	**78,250**	**78,250**	**78,250**	**78,250**

VRM Class II

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II for the Vermillion Bluffs area as well as portions of the Lookout Mountain ACEC (Table 2-6; Map 2-11).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II for suitable WSR corridors, the Limestone Ridge area, the Irish Canyon ACEC, the Lookout Mountain area, the Vermillion Bluffs area of Vermillion Basin, the Dinosaur North wilderness characteristic area, and the areas of Little Yampa Canyon SRMA and Juniper Mountain SRMA for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMAs (Table 2-6; Map 2-12).

Alternative D: Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class II for suitable WSR corridors, the Limestone Ridge ACEC, the Irish Canyon ACEC, the Lookout Mountain ACEC, the Vermillion Basin SRMA, the Dinosaur North SRMA, the Cold Springs Mountain SRMA, the Cross Mountain area outside the WSA, the Diamond Breaks area outside the WSA, the Pinyon Ridge area, and the areas of Little Yampa Canyon SRMA and Juniper Mountain SRMA for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMAs (Table 2-6; Map 2-13).

Table 2-6. Areas Managed as VRM Class II, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Suitable WSR corridors			X	X
Limestone Ridge area			X	X[1]
Irish Canyon ACEC			X	X
Lookout Mountain ACEC				X
Portion of Lookout Mountain		X	X	
Vermillion Basin SRMA				X
Vermillion Bluffs area		X	X	
Dinosaur North Area			X	X[2]
Portion of Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (within line of sight from the river within the SRMAs)			X	X
Portion of Juniper Mountain SRMA (within line of sight from the river within the SRMAs)			X	X
Cold Springs Mountain SRMA				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X
Total area (in acres)	**0**	**590**	**96,490**	**184,600**

Notes: [1] The Limestone Ridge area would be designated as an ACEC under Alternative D.
[2] Dinosaur North would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.

VRM Class III

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class III for Limestone Ridge, Irish Canyon, and a portion of Vermillion Basin (Table 2-7; Map 2-11).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class III for all remaining areas (Table 2-7; Map 2-12).

Alternative D: Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class III for all remaining areas (Table 2-7; Map 2-13).

Table 2-7. Areas Managed as VRM Class III, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Limestone Ridge area		X		
Irish Canyon area		X		
Portion of Lookout Mountain			X	
Portion of Vermillion Basin		X	X	

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Portion of Little Yampa Canyon SRMA			X	X
Portion of Juniper Mountain SRMA			X	X
Cold Springs Mountain			X	
Cedar Mountain SRMA			X	X
South Sand Wash SRMA Zone 3			X	X
Serviceberry SRMA			X	X
Fly Creek area			X[1]	X[1]
Cross Mountain backcountry area (outside the WSA)				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area (outside the WSA)				X
All areas not designated as VRM Class I, II, or IV			X	X
Total area (in acres)	**0**	**48,800**	**991,460**	**905,130**

Notes: [1] The Fly Creek area would be administered as a backcountry area under Alternative C and as a SRMA under Alternative D.

VRM Class IV

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class IV for all remaining areas (Table 2-8; Map 2-11).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class IV for the open OHV area in the south Sand Wash SRMA, for the Hiawatha and Powder Wash areas, for regions of Sand Wash Basin, and for areas suitable for coal leasing (Table 2-8; Map 2-12).

Alternative D: Visual resources would be managed as VRM Class IV for areas suitable for coal leasing (Table 2-8; Map 2-13).

Table 2-8. Areas Managed as VRM Class IV, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Hiawatha and Powder Wash areas			X	
Regions of Sand Wash Basin			X	
South Sand Wash SRMA, Zones 1 and 2			X	X
Areas suitable for coal mining			X	X
All areas not designated as VRM Class I, II, or III	X	X		
Total area (in acres)	**1,273,000**	**1,223,610**	**184,890**	**183,280**

2.6 DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCE USE DECISIONS

Resource uses involve activities that use the natural, biological, and/or cultural components of the RMPPA, such as livestock grazing, recreation, and mineral development. The following sections present the goals, objectives, allowable uses, and management actions, broken out by resource use.

2.6.1 Energy and Minerals

All minerals and energy resource management actions would recognize all valid existing mineral rights and would 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. BLM mineral policy (1984) states that public land shall remain open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawal or other administrative action is clearly justified in the national interest.

BLM would apply lease stipulations to new leases as necessary. These stipulations would notify the leaseholder that development activities might be limited, prohibited, or implemented with mitigation measures to protect specific resources. The stipulations would condition the leaseholder's development activities and would provide BLM with the authority to require mitigation or to deny some proposed exploration and development methods. The general types of resource protections in lease stipulations include closed to oil and gas leasing, NSO and CSU, timing limitations, and open with standard terms and conditions. Leasing of solid minerals would 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 would also comply with other regulatory requirements, including limitations on air and water discharges, waste management, spill prevention, and endangered species. Mining of mineral materials would comply with applicable regulatory requirements (43 CFR 3600) and air and water quality protection regulations. A site-specific analysis would be performed before any exploration or extraction activity to identify and locate resource elements that require protection or mitigation measures.

2.6.1.1 Resource Use Goals and Objectives

- **Oil and Gas Goal:** Allow for the availability of the federal oil and gas estate (including coalbed natural gas) for exploration and development. Objectives for achieving this goal 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.

- **Locatable Minerals, Mineral Materials, Nonenergy Leasable Minerals, and Other Minerals Goal:** Allow for the availability of federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, nonenergy leasable minerals, and other minerals for exploration and development consistent with national policy. Objectives for achieving this goal include—

- Identify and make available federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, nonenergy leasable minerals, and other minerals for exploration and development.
- Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, nonenergy leasable minerals, and other 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.

- **Coal and Oil Shale Goal:** Allow for the availability of the federal coal and oil shale estate for exploration and development. Objectives for achieving this goal 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.

2.6.1.2 Management Actions

Oil and Gas Leasing Decisions

Alternative A: BLM-administered mineral estate within the Little Snake RMPPA would be open to oil and gas leasing and development, subject to standard lease terms and conditions in addition to specified stipulations (as applicable) and lease stipulations noted in Appendix A of the amendment. Areas have been designated for leasing with standard stipulations, seasonal restrictions, avoidance stipulations, performance objectives, or NSO stipulations; areas where no new leasing would be allowed have also been identified (Table 2-9; Map 2-14).

Alternative B: Lease with standard lease terms and conditions and with nondiscretionary stipulations. Resources would be protected and impacts mitigated through site-specific analysis. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization. See Appendix H for explanation of the BLM's oil and gas leasing and development process. Areas have been designated for leasing with standard stipulations, CSU and NSO, closed to leasing, and timing limitations (Table 2-9; Map 2-15).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): 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 (Table 2-9; Map 2-16). Exceptions, modifications, and waivers could be provided as detailed in Appendix E.

Alternative D: 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 (Table 2-9; Map 2-17). Exceptions, modifications, and waivers could be provided as detailed in Appendix E.

Table 2-9. Summary of Oil and Gas Leasing Decisions, by Alternative (acres)

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Open to leasing, subject to standard terms and conditions	549,800	1,509,090	417,790	364,880

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Timing limitations	1,162,040	149,360	1,216,190	1,214,610
Controlled surface use (CSU)	116,210	153,890	184,840	94,210
No surface occupancy (NSO)	192,190	32,770	216,040	459,940
Closed to leasing	78,190	78,190	160,870	275,630

Closed to Oil and Gas Leasing

Closing an area to oil and gas leasing is not a permanent mineral withdrawal, but rather, is a discretionary deferral of leasing for the life of the plan.

Alternative A: WSAs would be closed to oil and gas leasing (Table 2-10).

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A (Table 2-10).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The WSAs, Dinosaur North, Cold Springs area outside the WSA, the Irish Canyon ACEC, and WSR segments 1, 2, and 3 would be closed to oil and gas leasing (Table 2-10).

Alternative D: The WSAs, Vermillion Basin, the Limestone Ridge ACEC, the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC, the Irish Canyon ACEC, all suitable WSR segments, the Cross Mountain backcountry area, the Diamond Breaks backcountry area, the Pinyon Ridge backcountry area, the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, the Juniper Mountain SRMA, the Cedar Mountain SRMA, the Dinosaur North SRMA, and the Cold Springs Area SRMA would be closed to oil and gas leasing (Table 2-10).

Table 2-10. Areas Designated as Closed to Oil and Gas Leasing, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
WSAs	X	X	X	X
Vermillion Basin				X
Limestone Ridge ACEC				X
Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC				X
Irish Canyon ACEC			X	X
Suitable WSR corridors			X	X
Cross Mountain backcountry area				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA				X
Juniper Mountain SRMA				X
Cedar Mountain SRMA				X
Dinosaur North area			X	X[1]
Cold Springs Mountain SRMA				X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Cold Springs Mountain, outside the WSA			X	
Total area (in acres)	**78,190**	**78,190**	**160,870**	**275,630**

Notes: [1] Dinosaur North would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.

No Surface Occupancy Stipulations

Alternative A: NSO areas would include leases for surface coal mines within the area of federally leased coal lands 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. There would be NSO stipulations on habitat areas containing Special Status Species, such as federally listed, proposed, and candidate species. NSO stipulations may be altered after important factors are considered in the impact analysis, such as the type and amount of surface disturbance, plant frequency and density, and the relocation of disturbances. NSO areas would include the Limestone Ridge ACEC, the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC, the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA, the Cedar Mountain recreation management unit, Steamboat Lake State Park, and Pearl Lake State Park (Table 2-11). There would be no exceptions.

Alternative B: NSO areas would 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. There would be no similar action for Special Status Plant Species habitats (see CSU stipulations). The remaining NSO areas would be limited to those required by law, regulation, or policy (Table 2-11).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): NSO areas would 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. There would be no similar action for Special Status Plant Species habitats (see CSU stipulations). NSO stipulations would apply to the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (except the southern expansion area, which would be open), the Juniper Mountain SRMA, and the Cedar Mountain SRMA (Table 2-11).

Developed recreation sites with established campgrounds, boat ramps, or other developed recreation facilities would be protected by a 40-acre NSO stipulation. Exceptions would be granted on a case-by-case basis consistent with the criteria identified in Appendix E. The list below shows recreation sites currently identified and is not comprehensive. The sites are shown on Map 2-18.

- 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.

Alternative D: NSO areas would 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. There would be no similar

action for Special Status Plant Species habitats (see CSU stipulations). NSO stipulations would apply to the Lookout Mountain ACEC and the White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC (Table 2-11).

Developed recreation sites with established campgrounds, boat ramps, or other developed recreation facilities would be protected by a 40-acre NSO stipulation. Exceptions would be granted on a case-by-case basis consistent with the criteria identified in Appendix E. The list below shows recreation sites currently identified and is not comprehensive. The sites are shown on Map 2-18.

- 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.

Table 2-11. Areas Designated as NSO to Oil and Gas Leasing, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Within 1/4 mile of raptor (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], buteos, and owls) nest sites.				X
Within 1/8 mile of raptor (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], buteos, and owls) nest sites.	X		X	
Within 1/4 mile of peregrine falcon cliff nesting complex.	X		X[1]	X[1]
Waterfowl and shorebird significant production areas (waterfowl habitat management areas and rookeries)	X		X[2]	X[2]
Within 1/4 mile of Colombian sharp-tailed grouse lek site	X[3]		X[3]	X[3]
Within 1/4 mile of greater sage-grouse lek site	X[3]		X[3]	
Within 3/5 mile of greater sage-grouse lek site				X[3]
Within critical or occupied habitat of Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), humpback chub (*Gila cypha*), and bonytail (*Gila elegans*)		X	X	X
Within 1/4 mile of suitable Yellow-billed Cuckoo habitat		X	X	X
Within 1/8 mile of occupied mountain plover nesting habitat			X[4]	X[4]
Within 1/4 mile of both occupied and unoccupied bald eagle nests		X	X	X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Within 1/4 mile of bald eagle roost or nest sites	X[5]			
Within 1/4 mile of known bald eagle roosts		X	X	X
Mexican spotted owl protected activity centers (PAC)		X	X	X
Within 1/4 mile of Mexican spotted owl confirmed roost sites and nesting sites	X			
Federally leased surface coal mines[7]	X	X	X	X
Special Status Plant Species habitat	X[6]			
Limestone Ridge ACEC	X			
White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC				X
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (except the southern expansion area)			X	
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA, Zone 1	X			
Juniper Mountain SRMA			X	
Cedar Mountain SRMA			X	
Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC	X			
Lookout Mountain ACEC				X
Yampa River segments 1, 2, 3			X	
Cedar Mountain recreation management unit	X			
Within 1/4 mile of perennial water sources	X		X	X
Developed recreation sites (40-acre blocks)			X	X
Steamboat Lake State Park	X			
Pearl Lake State Park	X			
Total area (in acres)	**192,190**	**32,770**	**216,040**	**459,940**

Notes: [1] NSO area may be altered depending upon the active status of the nesting complex or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening.
[2] NSO area may be altered depending upon the active status of the production areas or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening.
[3] 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.
[4] 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.
[5] NSO area may be altered depending upon the active status of the roost or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening. No exceptions for nest sites.
[6] NSO may be altered after important factors are considered in the impact analysis such as the type and amount of surface disturbance, plant frequency and density, and the relocation of disturbances.
[7] Data for locations of current surface or underground mines is not available, and area is not included in calculations or mapping.

Controlled Surface Use Stipulations

Alternative A: CSU stipulations would be attached to leases where operations proposed within the area of an approved underground coal mine would be relocated outside the area to be mined or to accommodate room and pillar mining operations (Table 2-12). CSU stipulations may be waived subject to outlined conditions.

For fragile soil areas, performance objectives must be met before surface disturbance. Before surface disturbance on slopes of, or greater than, 40 percent, an engineering/reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. CSU stipulations may be accepted subject to an onsite impact analysis. CSU stipulations would 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.

In the Irish Canyon ACEC, an inventory of sensitive plant and remnant vegetation associations would be required. Sensitive plants and associations identified would be avoided. Known geologic values and cultural resources would be avoided. There would be no exceptions. In the Lookout Mountain ACEC, an inventory for sensitive plant and remnant vegetation associations would be required. Sensitive plants and associations identified would be avoided. There would be no exceptions.

Alternative B: As in Alternative A, CSU stipulations would be attached to leases where operations proposed within the area of an approved underground coal mine would 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. CSU/SSR stipulations would be on habitat areas containing Special Status Species, such as federally listed, proposed, and candidate. Exception criteria detailed in Appendix E would apply. CSU stipulations would apply to the Vermillion Basin, Dinosaur North, and Cold Springs areas outside A

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): As in Alternative A, CSU stipulations would be attached to leases where operations proposed within the area of an approved underground coal mine would 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. As in Alternative B, CSU/SSR stipulations would be on habitat areas containing Special Status Species, such as federally listed, proposed, and candidate. Exception criteria detailed in Appendix E would apply. For fragile soil areas, see Soils, Section 2.5.2, for performance objectives and fragile soil criteria. Before surface disturbance on slopes of, or greater than, 35 percent, an engineering/reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. CSU stipulations may be accepted subject to an onsite impact analysis. CSU stipulations would 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. CSU stipulations would apply to the Vermillion Basin, Limestone Ridge area, and Lookout Mountain area (Table 2-12).

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C, except CSU stipulations would apply to Natural Systems ACECs and Vermillion Basin would be closed to leasing (Table 2-12).

Table 2-12. Areas Designated as Controlled Surface Use (CSU) to Oil and Gas Leasing, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Greater sage-grouse crucial winter habitat				X
Special Status Plant Species habitat		X	X	X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Approved underground coal mine[1]	X	X	X	X
Fragile soil areas	X		X	X
Vermillion Basin		X	X	
Slopes equal to or greater than 40 percent	X			
Slopes equal to or greater than 35 percent			X	X
Limestone Ridge area			X	
Irish Canyon ACEC	X			
Lookout Mountain area			X	
Dinosaur North (outside the WSA)		X		
Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC				X
Lookout Mountain ACEC	X			
Active white-tailed prairie dog colonies within black-footed ferret reintroduction areas	X	X	X	
Cold Springs Mountain (outside the WSA)		X		
Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC				X
Bull Canyon ACEC				X
G Gap ACEC				X
Little Juniper Canyon ACEC				X
Bassett Spring ACEC				X
No Name Spring ACEC				X
Pot Creek ACEC				X
Whiskey Springs ACEC				X
Willow Spring ACEC				X
Deception Creek ACEC				X
Total area (in acres)	**116,210**	**153,890**	**184,840**	**94,210**

[1] Data for locations of current surface or underground mines is not available, and area is not included in calculations or mapping.

Timing Limit Stipulations

Alternative A: No helicopter or motor vehicle use would be allowed in the wild horse HMA during foaling season, which runs from March 1 to June 30. There would be no exceptions. No drilling or development operations would be permitted between March 1 and December 1 within a 1-mile radius of Wild Horse Spring, Sheepherder Spring, Coffee Pot Spring, Two Bar Spring, and Dugout Draw Spring. Exceptions would include provision by the operator, before the authorized activity, of an alternate dependable water source at a suitable location outside the 1-mile radius of the spring in question (Table 2-13).

Alternative B: No similar action. Timing limitation stipulations required by law, regulation, and policy would continue to be applied (Table 2-13).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): No drilling or development operations would be permitted within 1-mile radius from wild horse water sources from March 1 to December 1. Exceptions would be

granted according to adaptive criteria established (Appendix E). No oil- and gas-related helicopter or motor vehicle use would be allowed in the wild horse HMA during foaling season, which runs from March 1 to June 30. Exceptions would be granted according to adaptive criteria established (Appendix E) and wild horse outcomes as described in wild horse goals and objectives section and the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act.

Alternative D: The wild horse HMA would be closed to motor vehicle use and to all permitted activities during the wild horse foaling period from March 1 to June 30 (Table 2-13).

Table 2-13. Timing Stipulations for Oil and Gas Leasing, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Within 1/4 mile of raptor nesting and fledgling habitat (golden eagle and all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], all buteos, and owls)	X		X	X
Within 1/2 mile of the cliff nesting complex of peregrine falcons	X		X	X
Mule deer crucial winter habitat	X		X	X
Elk crucial winter habitat	X		X	X
Pronghorn crucial winter habitat	X		X	X
Bighorn sheep crucial winter habitat	X		X	X
Elk calving areas	X		X	X
Pronghorn fawning areas	X		X	X
Bighorn sheep lambing area	X		X	X
Greater sandhill crane nesting and staging habitat areas	X		X	X
Osprey nesting and fledgling habitat *(applies to 1/2-mile buffer)*	X		X	X
Ferruginous hawk nesting and fledgling habitat *(applies to 1-mile buffer)*	X		X	X
Mexican spotted owl nesting and fledgling habitat	X			
Greater sage-grouse nesting habitat	X			X
Greater sage-grouse nesting habitat (nesting and early brood-rearing habitat within 4 miles of the perimeter of lek)			X	
Greater sage-grouse crucial winter habitat	X		X	X
Within 1/2 mile of bald eagle nest sites	X			
Within 1/2 mile of occupied bald eagle nest sites		X	X	X
Within 1/2 mile of bald eagle winter roost sites	X[1]			
Within 1/4 mile of known bald eagle winter hunting perches		X[2]	X[2]	X[2]
Within 1/4 mile of bald eagle critical night roosts		X[3]	X[3]	X[3]
Within 1/4 mile of occupied mountain plover nesting habitat			X[4]	X[4]

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Wild horse HMA	X		X	X
Within 1 mile of Wild Horse Spring	X		X	
Within 1 mile of Sheepherder Spring	X		X	
Within 1 mile of Coffee Pot Spring	X		X	
Within 1 mile of Two Bar Spring	X		X	
Within 1 mile of Dugout Draw Spring	X		X	
Total area (in acres)	**1,162,040**	**149,360**	**1,216,190**	**1,214,610**

Notes: [1]If there is partial or complete visual screening of the area of activity, the primary zone around the roost site may be reduced to 1/4 mile.
[2] Buffers can be reduced to 1/8 mile if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography.
[3] Buffers can be reduced to 1/4 mile for night roosts if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography.
[4] 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.

Open to Oil and Gas Leasing

Alternative A: A total of 549,800 acres would be subject to existing standard terms and conditions, consistent with applicable law.

Alternative B: A total of 1,509,090 acres would be subject to existing standard terms and conditions, consistent with applicable law.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): A total of 417,790 acres would be subject to existing standard terms and conditions, consistent with applicable law.

Alternative D: A total of 364,880 acres would be subject to existing standard terms and conditions, consistent with applicable law.

Best Management Practices for Development

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: The use of a variety of BMPs would 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.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B.

Exception, Waiver, and/or Modification

Alternative A: Stipulations or restrictions may be waived or reduced if resource conditions change and the protections are no longer necessary or if the lessee can demonstrate that operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts. COAs would 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.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Exceptions would be case-by-case and temporary, waivers would have permanent exemptions, and modification (change stipulation) criteria would be applied on a case-by-case basis consistent with the process identified in Appendix E. COAs would be applied in the same way as described in Alternative A.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Vermillion Basin

Alternative A: Vermillion Basin would be open to leasing, subject to standard terms and conditions and specific stipulations.

Alternative B: Vermillion Basin would be open to new oil and gas leasing, with a CSU stipulation. Stipulation language would reference the objectives below:

- Allow for oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development by using BMPs, while protecting natural values.
- Manage for the least amount of surface disturbance consistent with lease rights by focusing development near existing trails, ROWs, canyons, and washes, and by clustering wells where feasible.
- Manage to minimize visual intrusions, such as by using Lookout Mountain as an observation point.

Control infrastructure by requiring preplanning, including transportation planning. Lease in larger leases—four-section blocks—to facilitate seismic exploration and allow operators to drill fewer exploration wells.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The objective for Vermillion Basin would be to allow for coordinated and organized oil and gas development while protecting natural and scenic values. For all leases in the area, the BLM would stipulate that any oil- and gas-related activity or development must take place within a federal oil and gas unit. All leases would be limited to 2,560 acres in size, and a unit must include at least four leases, for a minimum of 10,240 total acres. The leases to be included in the unit as well as all the details of the unit agreement will be left to the discretion of leaseholders.

Surface disturbance would be limited to 1 percent of Vermillion Basin at any one time. This rule would be enforced on a unit basis, meaning that no more than 1 percent of the surface of a unit would be disturbed, except for situations described below.

A unit is composed of the area under exploration and development and could also include a "mitigation area." A mitigation area would be composed of any other participating leases that the operator chooses to include in the unit. The mitigation area would have to either be leased by one of the operators in the unit, or a deal would have to be worked out with the leaseholder to purchase those acres as "disturbance credits." These leases do not have to be directly adjacent to the area of the unit under production but would still have to lie within Vermillion Basin. Mitigation leases could also be added to the unit at a later time, as the operators began to approach the 1 percent disturbance limit in the area of the unit being developed. Therefore, to increase the amount of acres they would be able to disturb within the unit without exceeding the 1 percent limit, operators could add more acres to the total unit by increasing the mitigation area.

For example, an operator leases four contiguous 2,560-acre leases in the northern portion of Vermillion Basin and also leases two 2,560-acre leases in the southern portion of Vermillion as a mitigation area. A unit is formed containing all six leases, totaling 15,360 acres. Once a POD is approved by the BLM, the operator would be allowed to disturb a total of 153.6 acres in the unit. After 5 years of development and 140 acres of surface disturbance, the operator finds an encouraging play. However, with only 13.6 more acres remaining to be disturbed, the operator cannot develop that play. Therefore, to increase the amount of surface the operator is able to disturb, the operator then leases another two 2,560-acre leases in southern Vermillion Basin. These leases would be included in the existing unit, which would now total 20,480 acres. This would allow for 204.8 acres of total surface disturbance, or 64.8 more acres in addition to the 140 already disturbed. If there were no additional areas within Vermillion Basin available to lease, the operator would be able to recover disturbance by reclaiming disturbed areas or by purchasing disturbance credits from other leaseholders.

Existing surface disturbance (i.e., existing routes and ways) is not included in the 1 percent limitation. Disturbed areas can be recovered on a rolling-reclamation basis. Upon successful reclamation, reclaimed areas would no longer be counted toward the 1 percent limit and the total area disturbed in the unit would be decreased by that amount. Successful reclamation is defined in the Reclamation Performance Standard described in Appendix O.

All of Vermillion Basin would be offered for lease simultaneously. However, if only portions of the basin were leased in the first lease sale, development could begin as long as a unit is formed and a POD is approved. Offered parcels within Vermillion Basin that are not nominated in the initial lease sale would be available for a 2-year period for noncompetitive leasing. If they were not picked up during this period, they would be available to be nominated for competitive leasing at a later time. These new leases could be added to a unit, thereby increasing the amount of surface that could be disturbed without exceeding the 1 percent limit. Alternatively, if they are sufficient in size, they could form a new unit.

The BLM would also stipulate that a POD must be developed for the unit before development would be authorized. (This POD is not the same document referenced in 43 CFR § 3183.6.) The BLM recognizes that in the early stage of development of the unit, the POD may not contain more than a few exploratory wells. The lead operator would update the POD annually.

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 surface disturbance and impacts on the natural values of the area. The plan would demonstrate significant control of surface disturbance in a number of ways, including—
  - Reducing surface spacing/density of facilities
  - Reducing road density/pipeline density
  - Focusing development near existing ROWs
  - Clustering facilities, including the use of directional drilling where feasible
  - Reducing traffic through field road management, closing routes 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)
  - Employing appropriate BMPs

- A reclamation report, to be updated annually, detailing a reclamation plan and the condition of all areas currently being reclaimed in the unit
- 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
- Applications for permit to drill for each federal well
- List of all permitting agencies involved
- Surface owner agreements
- Water mitigation agreements
- Any additional information.

This approach requires a baseline measurement of existing disturbance as well as monitoring to determine when the 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 as part of the POD. In addition, the amount of surface to be disturbed will be calculated by the operator and included in the POD. Subsequent monitoring will take place to ensure compliance with the terms agreed upon in the POD.

A CSU stipulation would be attached to all leases/units in Vermillion Basin. The area would be open to locatable minerals but closed to other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes in some areas and closed in other areas. The area would have a Class III VRM designation, with a Class II designation for the Vermillion Bluffs area. ROWs would be processed on a case-by-case basis, and ROW avoidance areas would be established for the Vermillion Bluffs and fragile soil areas.

Map 2-2a shows constraints on oil and gas development in Vermillion Basin under Alternative C. Constraints include slopes equal to or greater than 35%, areas classified as fragile soils in the Vermillion Creek and Dry Creek corridors, VRM Class II, and raptor nests. These surface use limitations do not necessarily prohibit oil and gas development in those areas, but may require extra mitigation or movement of facilities. Additionally, some restraints are not shown, such as timing limitation stipulations.

Alternative D: Vermillion Basin would be closed to leasing.

Surface Reclamation

Alternative A: All disturbed areas not needed for lease operations will be revegetated as soon as possible. The operator will reestablish perennial vegetation that is compatible with surrounding undisturbed vegetation. The plant species to be seeded and the seeding rate will be approved by the authorized officer prior to seeding. Successful revegetation will be considered completed when the percent canopy cover is equal to surrounding undisturbed vegetation. The species considered in measuring percent cover will be those seeded as well as desirable preexisting species. Undesirable weedy species, such as kuchia, cheatgrass, and other noxious weeds, will not be included unless otherwise directed by the authorized officer. The operator will continue revegetation efforts with any and all cultural methods available until this standard is met.

Noxious weeds that may be introduced during soil disturbance and reclamation will be treated by methods to be approved by the authorized officer. These methods may include biological, mechanical, or chemical. Should chemical methods be approved, the lessee must submit a pesticide use proposal to the authorized officer 60 days before the planned application date.

In the event a producing well is developed, the unused disturbed areas surrounding the well location will be recontoured to appropriate confirmation (one that allows lease operations and avoids steep cut and fill slopes) as soon as possible. Some or all of the stockpiled topsoil will be evenly disturbed over these recontoured areas. Brush cleared before construction of the well site shall be scattered back over the recontoured area.

Mulching of the seedbed following seeding may be required under certain conditions (i.e., expected severe erosion), as determined by the surface owner/manager.

Surface soil material, if available, will be stripped from all areas where surface disturbance is necessary and stockpiled in a manner and location that will allow easy replacement. These stockpiles shall be protected from loss. After reshaping the site, soil material should be distributed to a uniform depth that will allow the establishment of desirable vegetation. The disturbed areas shall be scarified before replacement of surface soil material.

All disturbed areas will be recontoured to blend as nearly as possible with the natural topography. This includes removing all berms and refilling all cuts. All compacted portions of the pad will be ripped to a depth of 12 inches unless in solid rock.

After revegetation is complete, the stockpiled trees will be scattered evenly over the disturbed areas. The access will be blocked to prevent vehicular access.

Seed certification tags will be submitted to the authorized officer for seed used in reclamation.

Before abandoning the facilities authorized by this grant, the holder shall contact the authorized officer to arrange a joint inspection of the ROW. The inspection will be held to agree on an acceptable abandonment and rehabilitation plan. The authorized officer must approve the plan in writing before the holder commences any abandonment and/or rehabilitation activities. The plan may include activities such as removal of surfacing material from the road, recontouring, replacement of topsoil, seeding, or mulching.

Cut and fill slopes shall be reduced and graded to conform the site to the adjacent terrain. The disturbed sites will be prepared to provide a seedbed for reestablishment of desirable vegetation and reshaped to blend with the natural contour. Such practices may include contouring, terracing, gouging, scarifying, mulching, fertilizing, seeding, and planting.

Should additional site-specific environmental analyses at the time of exploration or development reveal the need for additional restrictions or the continuance of existing lease stipulations, these restrictions will become part of the development or operational plan.

Alternative B: 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 O 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 would be maintained.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as Alternative B.

Locatable Minerals, Mineral Materials, Nonenergy Leasable Minerals, and Other Materials

Alternative A: All public land is open to mineral entry and development under the General Mining Law of 1872 unless it is proposed for administrative withdrawal or wilderness designation. Locatable mineral exploration and development on public land would be regulated under 43 CFR 3800. All areas would be open to locatable minerals, mineral materials, and nonenergy leasable minerals activity, except for the WSAs and Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC (Table 2-14, Table 2-15, and Table 2-16; Maps 2-19, 2-23, and 2-27).

Applications for removing common-variety mineral materials, including sand and gravel, would continue to be processed as these are received. An ID review of each proposal would determine stipulations to protect important surface values. Mineral material sales would not be allowed in WSAs, the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC, the Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA, the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA, and the Cedar Mountain recreation management unit. BLM would consider leasing geothermal energy resources or other leasable minerals as each application is received. Minerals leasable only on lands acquired under the Bankhead Jones Act would be treated as other leasable minerals. In the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC, the Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA, the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA, and the Cedar Mountain recreation management unit, leasing of other minerals for underground mining would be allowed with NSO stipulations; leasing for surface mining, however, would not be allowed in these four areas. Existing decisions would apply. Specific areas would be leased consistent with oil and gas leasing categories, by alternative. New leases and mineral material sales within fragile soil and water areas such as the Vermillion management unit would be subject to the performance objectives described in Soil Resources, Section 2.5.2.2.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A (Table 2-14, Table 2-15, and Table 2-16; Maps 2-20, 2-24, and 2-28). Vermillion Basin would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location. In addition, specific areas would be leased consistent with the oil and gas leasing categories above. Underground mining would be allowed throughout the RMPPA except where limited by applicable law.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The WSAs; WSR suitable segments 1, 2, and 3; Dinosaur North; Cold Springs Mountain; Limestone Ridge; Irish Canyon ACEC; and Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (line of sight from the river within the SRMA) would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location. The WSAs; the Limestone Ridge Area; the Lookout Mountain Area; the Cross Mountain Canyon Area; WSR suitable segments 1, 2, and 3; Vermillion Basin; and the Cedar Mountain SRMA would be closed to mineral material sales. Specific areas would be leased consistent with oil and gas leasing categories above. Underground mining would be allowed throughout the RMPPA except where limited by applicable law. As in Alternative A, new leases and mineral material sales within fragile soil and water areas, such as the Vermillion management unit, would be subject to the performance objectives described under Soil Resources, Section 2.5.2.2 (Table 2-14, Table 2-15, and Table 2-16; Maps 2-21, 2-25, and 2-29).

Alternative D: The WSAs, all ACECs, all suitable WSR segments, Vermillion Basin, Dinosaur North, the Cross Mountain backcountry area, the Diamond Breaks backcountry area, the Pinyon Ridge backcountry area, the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, the Juniper Mountain SRMA, the Cedar Mountain SRMA, the south Sand Wash SRMA, the Serviceberry SRMA, the Fly Creek SRMA, and the Cold Springs Mountain SRMA would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location. The WSAs, all ACECs, all suitable WSR segments, Vermillion Basin, Dinosaur North, Lookout Mountain Area,

Limestone Area, Cross Mountain area, the Diamond Breaks backcountry area, the Pinyon Ridge backcountry area, the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, the Juniper Mountain SRMA, the Cedar Mountain SRMA, the Serviceberry SRMA, and the Cold Springs Mountain SRMA would be closed to mineral material sales. Specific areas would be leased consistent with oil and gas leasing categories above. Underground mining would be allowed throughout the RMPPA except where limited by applicable law. As in Alternative A, new leases and mineral material sales within fragile soil and water areas such as the Vermillion management unit would be subject to the performance objectives described under Soil Resources, Section 2.5.2.2 (Table 2-14, Table 2-15, and Table 2-16; Maps 2-22, 2-26, and 2-30).

Table 2-14. Areas Recommended for Withdrawal From Mineral Location, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
WSAs	X	X	X	X
Vermillion Basin		X		X
Lookout Mountain ACEC				X
Cross Mountain Canyon area	X[1]	X		X[1]
Suitable WSR corridors			X	X
Dinosaur North Area (outside the WSA)			X	X[2]
Cold Springs Mountain area (outside the WSA)			X	X[3]
Cedar Mountain SRMA				X
South Sand Wash SRMA				X
Serviceberry SRMA				X
Fly Creek SRMA				X
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA				X
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (line of sight from the river within the SRMA)			X	
Juniper Mountain SRMA				X
Limestone Ridge area			X	X[4]
Cross Mountain backcountry area				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X
Irish Canyon ACEC			X	X
White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC				X
Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC				X
Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC				X
Bull Canyon ACEC				X
G Gap ACEC				X
Little Juniper Canyon ACEC				X
Bassett Spring ACEC				X
No Name Spring ACEC				X
Pot Creek ACEC				X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Whiskey Springs ACEC				X
Willow Spring ACEC				X
Deception Creek ACEC				X
Total Area (in acres)	**79,190**	**153, 310**	**194,400**	**587,220**

Notes: [1] Cross Mountain Canyon would be designated as an ACEC under Alternatives A and D.
[2] Dinosaur North would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[3] Cold Springs would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[4] Limestone Ridge would be designated as an ACEC under Alternative D.

Table 2-15. Areas Closed to Mineral Material Sales, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
WSAs	X	X	X	X
Suitable WSR corridors			X	X
Vermillion Basin			X	X
Cedar Mountain area	X	X	X[1]	X[1]
All ACECs				X
Dinosaur North SRMA				X
Lookout Mountain area			X	X[2]
Limestone Ridge area	X[3]		X	X[3]
Cross Mountain Canyon area	X[4]	X	X	X[4]
Cross Mountain backcountry area				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA	X			
Little Yampa Canyon area		X		X[5]
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA Zone 1			X	
Juniper Mountain SRMA		X		X[6]
Serviceberry SRMA				X
Cold Springs Mountain SRMA				X
Total area (in acres)	**97,790**	**97,790**	**157,910**	**540,510**

Notes: [1] Cedar Mountain would be administered as a SRMA under Alternatives C and D.
[2] Lookout Mountain would be designated as an ACEC under Alternative D.
[3] Limestone Ridge would be designated as an ACEC under Alternatives A and D.
[4] Cross Mountain Canyon would be designated as an ACEC under Alternatives A and D.
[5] Little Yampa Canyon would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[6] Juniper Canyon would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.

Table 2-16. Areas Closed to Removal of Other Minerals, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
WSAs	X	X	X	X
Vermillion Basin		X	X	X
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA				X
Juniper Mountain SRMA				X
Cedar Mountain SRMA			X	X
Dinosaur North area			X	X[1]
Cold Springs Mountain area			X	X[2]
Limestone Ridge area			X	X[3]
Irish Canyon ACEC				X
Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC				X
Lookout Mountain area			X	X[4]
White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC				X
Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC				X
Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC				X
Bull Canyon ACEC				X
G Gap ACEC				X
Little Juniper Canyon ACEC				X
Bassett Spring ACEC				X
No Name Spring ACEC				X
Pot Creek ACEC				X
Whiskey Springs ACEC				X
Willow Spring ACEC				X
Deception Creek ACEC				X
Cross Mountain backcountry area				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X
Total area (in acres)	**78,230**	**153,310**	**233,330**	**484,130**

Notes: [1] Dinosaur North would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[2] Cold Springs Mountain would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[3] Limestone Ridge would be designated as an ACEC under Alternative D.
[4] Lookout Mountain would be designated as an ACEC under Alternative D.

Coal

Alternative A: Approximately 638,800 acres, containing an estimated 5.8 billion tons of coal, are acceptable for further consideration for federal coal leasing (Table 2-17 and Table 2-18; Map 2-31). Of this total, approximately 457,090 acres, containing an estimated 4.2 billion tons of coal, are acceptable for further consideration for leasing for surface or underground development. Approximately 181,670 acres, containing an estimated 1.3 billion tons of coal, are acceptable for further consideration for leasing for underground development only (1989 RMP/ROD, pages 7–8). Approximately 266 million tons of coal

throughout the region are not available for surface mining. Site-specific activity planning, including additional environmental analysis, would be needed before a decision to lease specific tracts can be made. Exploratory drilling would be allowed to obtain sufficient data for resource management decisions and to make fair market value determinations.

NSO stipulations would be used to protect the Cross Mountain Canyon and the Limestone Ridge ACECs; the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA and the Cedar Mountain recreation management unit; Steamboat Lake and Pearl Lake State Parks; coal mines where development would be incompatible with the planned coal extraction; grouse, raptor, bald eagle, peregrine falcon, Mexican spotted owl, waterfowl, and shorebird nests; and Special Status Plant Species. CSU stipulations would be used to protect coal mines from oil and gas development where the mining method or location is such that location of subsequent wells can avoid significant conflicts, including fragile soil areas, steep slopes, riparian/wetland vegetation, and the Irish Canyon and Lookout Mountain ACECs.

Alternative B: Lands found acceptable in this RMP would 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 would 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 671,170 acres of federal coal lands. This entire area is available for underground coal mining. Unsuitability criteria have been applied to these lands to determine the areas unsuitable for surface mining. Results are shown in Appendix C. After applying unsuitability criteria and exceptions, approximately 621,980 acres have been deemed acceptable for further consideration for leasing for either surface or underground development (Table 2-17 and Table 2-18; Map 2-32).

Similar to that described in Alternative A, site-specific activity planning, including additional environmental analysis, would be needed before a decision to lease specific tracts can be made. Exploratory drilling would be allowed to obtain sufficient data for resource management decisions and to make fair market value determinations. NSO/NGD stipulations would be applied to the same areas as listed in Alternative A; in addition, the Stagecoach State Park would also be designated NSO/NGD. CSU stipulations would be applied to the same areas as listed in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B (Table 2-17 and Table 2-18; Map 2-33).

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B, but only 594,670 acres would be suitable for surface mining after the no-lease decision for Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (Table 2-17 and Table 2-18; Map 2-34).

Table 2-17. Areas Closed to Coal Leasing, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
WSAs	X	X	X	X
Suitable WSR corridors			X	X
Vermillion Basin	X	X	X	
Limestone Ridge area	X[1]	X	X	X[1]
Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC	X			X
Irish Canyon area	X[2]	X	X[2]	X[2]
Lookout Mountain area	X[3]	X	X	X[3]
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA				X
Juniper Mountain SRMA				X
Cedar Mountain SRMA	X		X	X
South Sand Wash SRMA			X	X
Serviceberry SRMA			X	X
Fly Creek area			X	X[4]
Dinosaur North area	X	X	X	X[5]
Cold Springs Mountain area	X	X	X	X[6]
White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC				X
Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC				X
Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC				X
Bull Canyon ACEC				X
G Gap ACEC				X
Little Juniper Canyon ACEC				X
Bassett Spring ACEC				X
No Name Spring ACEC				X
Pot Creek ACEC				X
Whiskey Springs ACEC				X
Willow Spring ACEC				X
Deception Creek ACEC				X
Cross Mountain backcountry area				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X
Total area in the area managed for coal resources (in acres)[7]	**0**	**0**	**230**	**230**

Notes: [1] Limestone Ridge would be designated as an ACEC under Alternatives A and D.
[2] Irish Canyon would be designated as an ACEC under Alternatives A, C, and D.
[3] Lookout Mountain would be designated as an ACEC under Alternatives A and D.
[4] Fly Creek would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[5] Dinosaur North would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[6] Cold Springs Mountain would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[7] Acreages were limited to the area with coal potential located in the southeastern portion of the LSFO.

Table 2-18. Areas of NSO for Coal Leasing, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Steamboat Lake State Park	X	X	X	X
Pearl Lake State Park	X	X	X	X
Stagecoach State Park		X	X	X
Incompatible coal mines	X	X	X	X
Greater sage-grouse nest sites	X	X	X	X
Sharp-tailed grouse nest sites	X	X	X	X
Raptor nest sites	X	X	X	X
Bald eagle nest sites	X	X	X	X
Peregrine falcon nest sites	X	X	X	X
Mexican spotted owl nest sites	X	X	X	X
Waterfowl and shorebirds nest sites	X	X	X	X
Special Status Plant Species	X	X	X	X
Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC	X			
Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA	X			
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA	X			
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA		X	X[1]	
Juniper Mountain SRMA		X	X[2]	
Cedar Mountain Recreation Management Unit	X			
Total area in the area managed for coal resources (in acres)[3]	**13,920**	**13,920**	**13,870**	**13,870**

Notes: [1] Little Yampa Canyon would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative C.
[2] Juniper Mountain would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative C.
[3] Acreages were limited to the area with coal potential located in the southeastern portion of the LSFO.

Oil Shale

Alternative A: BLM would consider leasing other leasable minerals as each application is received (1989 ROD, p. 10).

Alternative B: BLM would consider leasing oil shale as each application is received. Lands available for leasing are consistent with lands available for oil and gas leasing or coal leasing, depending on the extraction method, i.e., in situ or mined.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B, while recognizing that different areas would be open to leasing because of consistency with oil, gas, and coal decisions in this alternative.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B, while recognizing that different areas would be open to leasing because of consistency with oil, gas, and coal decisions in this alternative.

2.6.2 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 Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (Appendix A) apply to all resource uses on public lands. 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 livestock grazing was a factor in not meeting the standards, appropriate management actions would be implemented, as determined through cooperation among BLM, livestock operators, stakeholders, and interested members of the public. 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.

2.6.2.1 Resource Use Goals and Objectives

- **Livestock Grazing 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.

- **Livestock Grazing 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 AUM retirements or transfers. An RCA is an 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 an approved rangeland restoration/recovery project.

- **Livestock Grazing Goal C:** Contribute to the stability and sustainability of the livestock industry.

2.6.2.2 Management Actions

Alternative A: Appropriate actions for improving allotments that do not meet the standards and guidelines could include, but would 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 utilizing federal preferences would be allowed (166,895 AUMs) until monitoring studies are completed. Rangelands would be monitored on M and I category allotments to yield the information needed to make decisions on livestock stocking rates, which would proceed, as funding and staff allow, from worst to better forage conditions as

established by the 1981–1983 rangeland inventories and including 13 conflict allotments (Numbers 4203, 4206, 4207, 4209, 4210, 4219, 4225, 4302, 4431, 4332, 4520, 4521, and 4522). BLM would work closely with CDOW to reduce livestock/big game conflicts, which would improve vegetative and forage conditions. Vegetation land treatments would be implemented on 68 allotments according to the following guidelines:

- Use such treatments as interseeding, burning and reseeding, spraying, and plowing and reseeding.
- Adhere to established procedures and design specifications to protect all resource uses and values.
- Complete a benefit/cost analysis and environmental analysis before any treatments are implemented.

Range improvement projects would be constructed on 69 allotments according to the following guidelines:

- Use improvements that would control livestock use, improve distribution, and improve riparian/wetland habitat.
- Complete a benefit/cost analysis and environmental analysis before any projects are implemented.

The two existing RCAs (Experiment Station and College Station) would remain and continue to be used for emergency situations.

Alternative B: Same actions as those described in Alternative A for improving allotments that do not meet the Colorado standards and guidelines. Livestock grazing would be managed by using standards and guidelines processes, while working closely with permittees to increase livestock forage. Rangelands would be monitored, focusing on allotments where land health standards have not been met and/or riparian assessments are "functioning at risk" or are in a "downward trend." BLM would work closely with CDOW to reduce livestock/big game conflicts and would focus on decreasing big game populations. When consistent with healthy rangeland ecosystems, emphasize vegetation treatments to increase forage production. Range improvement developments would be considered to increase livestock forage where such improvements are economically feasible and consistent with other resources.

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

- Priority would 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.

All lands that have been acquired through exchanges since the completion of the last RMP and all lands that will be acquired in the future, unless noted specifically otherwise, will be open to grazing.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same actions as those described in Alternative A for improving allotments that do not meet the Colorado standards and guidelines. Livestock grazing would be managed by using standards and guidelines processes, while working closely with permittees to develop sustainable ranching operations. As described in Alternative B, rangelands would be monitored, focusing on allotments where land health standards have not been met and/or riparian assessments are "functioning at risk" or are in a "downward trend." As described in Alternative A, BLM would work closely with CDOW to reduce livestock/big game conflicts so as to improve vegetative and forage conditions. Land Health Assessments and determinations of whether standards are being met would set the criteria for where vegetation treatments are needed and if treatments should be implemented (see Vegetation, Section 2.5.4, for more information on treatment targets). Range improvement developments would be

considered to improve rangeland diversity, condition, and sustainability by such actions as controlling pinyon-juniper encroachment and decadent sagebrush. RCAs would be established on the basis of the criteria described in Alternative B. Livestock grazing on acquired lands would be the same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same actions as those described in Alternative A for improving allotments that do not meet Colorado standards and guidelines. Livestock grazing would be managed utilizing standards and guidelines processes to improve habitat for other resources. As described in Alternative B, rangelands would be monitored, focusing on allotments where land health standards have not been met and/or riparian assessments are "functioning at risk" or are in a "downward trend." Livestock/big game conflicts would be reduced by focusing on decreasing livestock use, which would improve vegetative and forage conditions. When consistent with healthy rangeland ecosystems, emphasize vegetation treatments to help maintain or increase a variety of habitats for wildlife species (see Vegetation, Section 2.5.4, for more information on treatment targets). Range improvements would be allowed only to maintain sustainable natural diversity of plant communities and only when identified through the rangeland health assessment process. RCAs would be established based on the criteria described in Alternative B. Livestock grazing on acquired lands would be the same as described in Alternative B.

2.6.3 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 8300 direct the 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 designated as an ERMA, where there is only a limited commitment of resources required to provide extensive, unstructured recreation activities.

In May of 2003, a working plan was developed for BLM to address recreation uses on public lands. This plan entitled "The BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services" is essentially a management shift from a traditional activity-based approach to management specifically designed to address individual, social, and economic benefits. Three primary goals are outlined in this plan: (1) improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities on Department of the Interior (DOI) managed or partnered lands and waters, (2) ensure a quality experience and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources on DOI managed or partnered lands and waters, and (3) provide for and receive fair value in recreation.

2.6.3.1 Resource Use Goals and Objectives

- **Recreation Goal A:** Provide a diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities, activities, and experiences for various user groups. Objectives for achieving this goal include the following:
  - Increase managed motorized and nonmotorized use trails.
  - Focus the development of nonmotorized and nonmechanized 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 semiprimitive 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 the following:

- 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.

- **Recreation Goal C:** Support tourism efforts for local economic diversification associated with public land resources. Objectives for achieving this goal include the following:
  - 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 Chambers of Commerce and community organizations.
  - Pursue cooperative agreements with other agencies and governments.

2.6.3.2 Management Actions

Special Recreation Management Areas

SRMAs are created 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. SRMAs identified by alternative are displayed in Table 2-19. Management of the SRMAs is described in the following sections.

Table 2-19. Special Recreation Management Areas, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA	X			
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA			X	X
Juniper Mountain SRMA			X	X
Cedar Mountain SRMA			X	X
South Sand Wash SRMA			X	X
Serviceberry SRMA			X	X
Fly Creek SRMA				X
Dinosaur North SRMA				X
Cold Springs Mountain SRMA				X
Vermillion Basin SRMA				X
Total area (in acres)	**19,290**	**0**	**77,870**	**245,460**

Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon

Alternative A: The Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area (19,290 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide unrestricted flatwater river floatboating in the region (Map 2-35).

Zone 1 is the Yampa River corridor. The niche would be community. Objectives would include facilitating flatwater boating (which includes nonmotorized and motorized boating) and camping activities. Experiences would include savoring canyon and river aesthetics, testing endurance, and enjoying risk-taking adventure. Benefits would include improved skills for outdoor enjoyment with others, a heightened sense of satisfaction with the community, and a greater sense of adventure. The physical prescribed setting character would be middle country east of Milk Creek and backcountry west of Milk Creek. The social prescribed setting character would be middle country east of Milk Creek and backcountry west of Milk Creek. The administrative prescribed setting character would be backcountry. Under the activity-planning framework for management, access would be negotiated for parking areas at entrance and exit points. Other facilities would be constructed as needed for public sanitation and safety. For marketing, a map/brochure would be developed to promote visitor health and safety, provide resource protection, and inform the public of available opportunities. BLM should involve Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach programs. Motorized river boating would 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 would also be monitored. The area would be administered as closed to mineral material sales and NSO for oil and gas exploration and development and leasing of other minerals. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. VRM would not be determined.

Zone 2, north of county road (CR) 17, would not be included in the SRMA.

Alternative B: The Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area would be identified as an ERMA (see the ERMA objectives below).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA would be expanded by 8,020 acres (Map 2-36) and identified as the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA to provide camping experiences related to river boating and big game hunting in the region. Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-20.

The niche, objectives, and prescribed setting character for Zone 1, the Yampa River corridor, would be the same as those described in Alternative A. Under the activity planning framework for management, roads and trails would be modified as needed to mitigate impacts. For marketing, BLM should involve Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach programs. In conjunction with State Parks, motorized river boating would 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 would also be monitored. The area would be administered as NSO for oil and gas exploration and development, closed to mineral material sales, and recommended for withdrawal from locatable minerals. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

For Zone 2, north of CR 17, the niche would be destination. Objectives would include predominantly motorized big game hunting and some nonmotorized hunting, camping, and wildlife watching. Experiences would include developing skills and abilities and gaining a greater sense of achievement. Benefits would include greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be middle country. Under the activity-planning framework for management, camping facilities and improved roads to these facilities would be provided in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. For marketing, in partnership with the CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, there would be increased education and interpretation programs during

hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. For monitoring, user experiences and satisfaction, as well as campsite conditions and use, would be monitored. The area would be administered as open for oil and gas exploration and development and as open to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Table 2-20. Little Yampa Canyon SRMA—Alternative C

SRMA Name	Little Yampa Canyon SRMA	
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Destination
Activities	Nonmotorized boating Motorized boating Camping	Motorized big game hunting Some nonmotorized hunting Camping Wildlife watching
OHV designation	Limited to designated routes	Limited to designated routes
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

Alternative D: The existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA would be expanded to 29,380 acres (Map 2-37) to include roadless areas to the north as part of Zone 1 and identified as the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA to provide camping experiences related to river boating and big game hunting in the region. Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-21.

For Zone 1, Yampa River corridor, the niche would be the same as that for Alternative A. Objectives would be the same as those for Alternative A, except that motorized boating activities would be limited. Experiences would also include feeling good about solitude and isolation from other people and services, and benefits would also include establishing closer relationships with the natural world and conserving entire ecosystems in a natural state. The physical prescribed setting character would be middle country east of Milk Creek and backcountry west of Milk Creek. The social prescribed setting character would be backcountry. The administrative prescribed setting character would be primitive. Under the activity-planning framework for management, roads with no administrative benefit would be closed and restored to pristine condition and motorized access to the river would be restricted. For marketing, BLM would involve Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach programs. Motorized river boating would 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 would also be monitored. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development and as closed to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be closed on 8,820 acres and limited to designated routes on 20,560 acres. The area would have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

For Zone 2, north of CR 17, the niche would be the same as that with Alternative C. Objectives would be the same as those with Alternative A, except experiences would also include feeling good about solitude

and isolation from other people and services, and benefits would also include establishing closer relationships with the natural world and conserving entire ecosystems in a natural state. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be backcountry. Under the activity-planning framework for management, camping facilities would be provided in high-impact areas related to hunting season use. For marketing, in partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, there would be increased education and interpretation programs during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. User experience and satisfaction, as well as campsite conditions and use, would be monitored. Monitoring would also occur to ensure compliance with motor-vehicle road closures. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development and as closed to locatable minerals, — coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Table 2-21. Little Yampa Canyon SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	Little Yampa Canyon SRMA	
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Destination
Activities	Nonmotorized boating Limited motorized boating Camping	Nonmotorized big game hunting Some motorized hunting Camping Wildlife watching
OHV designation	Closed Limited to designated routes	Limited to designated routes
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

Juniper Mountain

Alternative A: Juniper Mountain would continue to be managed within the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA (see Little Yampa Canyon SRMA).

Alternative B: Juniper Mountain would be identified as an ERMA (see the ERMA objectives below).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The Juniper Canyon portion of the existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA would be identified as the Juniper Mountain SRMA (Map 2-36). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-22.

Zone 1 is the Yampa River corridor. The niche would be community. Objectives would include day-use motorized and nonmotorized boating activities. Experiences would include enjoying canyon and river aesthetics, testing endurance, and enjoying risk-taking adventure. Benefits would include improved skills for outdoor enjoyment with others, a heightened sense of satisfaction with the community, and a greater sense of adventure. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be middle country. Under the activity-planning framework for management, roads and trails would be modified as needed to mitigate impacts. Marketing, in partnership with Colorado State Parks, would include development of education, interpretation, and public outreach programs. In conjunction with State Parks,

motorized river boating would be monitored to gauge if that use is changing the desired recreation experience. The area would be administered as NSO for oil and gas exploration and development and as open to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Zone 2 is outside the river corridor. The niche would be destination. Objectives would include hunting and camping activities. Experiences would include developing skills and abilities and gaining a greater sense of achievement. Benefits would include greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability. The prescribed physical, social, and administrative setting character would be middle country. Under the activity-planning framework for management, camping facilities would be provided in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. A managed and maintained motorized trail system would be developed within the area during hunting season. Marketing would involve collaboration with Chambers of Commerce, adjacent landowners, and permitted outfitters to provide access and hunting experiences. For monitoring, campsite conditions and use would be monitored as well as user experiences and satisfaction. The area would be administered as NSO for oil and gas exploration and development and as open to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Table 2-22. Juniper Mountain SRMA—Alternative C

SRMA Name	Juniper Mountain SRMA	
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Destination
Activities	Day use Motorized and nonmotorized boating	Hunting Camping
OHV designation	Limited to designated routes	Limited to designated routes
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

Alternative D: The Juniper Canyon portion of the existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA would be identified as the Juniper Mountain SRMA (Map 2-37). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-23.

For Zone 1, the Yampa River corridor, the niche would be the same as that for Alternative C. Objectives would be the same as those for Alternative C except that motorized boating activities would be limited. Experiences would also include feeling good about solitude and isolation from other people and services, and benefits would also include establishing a closer relationship with the natural world. The physical prescribed setting character would be middle country. The social and administrative prescribed setting character would be backcountry. Under the activity-planning framework for management, roads with no administrative benefit would be closed and restored. Marketing would involve partnership with Colorado State Parks to develop interpretation, education, and public outreach programs. For monitoring, user experience and satisfaction would be monitored. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development and as closed to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV

use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

For Zone 2, the Outside River Corridor, the niche, objectives, and prescribed setting character would be the same as those for Alternative C. Under the activity-planning framework for management, camping facilities would be provided in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. A managed and maintained nonmotorized trail system would be developed within the area during hunting season. For marketing, there would be work with Chambers of Commerce, adjacent landowners, and permitted outfitters to provide access and hunting experiences. For monitoring, campsite conditions and use would be monitored as well as user experience and satisfaction. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development and as closed to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA and a Class III designation elsewhere. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Table 2-23. Juniper Mountain SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	Juniper Mountain SRMA	
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Destination
Activities	Day use Nonmotorized boating Limited motorized boating	Hunting Camping
OHV designation	Limited to designated routes	Limited to designated routes
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

Cedar Mountain

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: Cedar Mountain would be managed as an ERMA. See the ERMA objectives below.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The Cedar Mountain area (900 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide opportunities close to the City of Craig for hiking, nature interpretation, and picnicking (Map 2-36). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-24.

Zone 1 is the picnic area. The niche would be community. Objectives would include day-use picnicking, hiking, and wildlife viewing. Experiences would include enjoying access to close-to-home outdoor activities, enjoying easy access to natural landscapes, and enjoying the closeness of family. Benefits would include improved physical fitness, better maintenance of physical facilities, an increased awareness of 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 would be rural. Under the activity-planning framework for management, vehicle parking for picnicking and trail use would be provided. Overnight camping and the discharge of firearms not associated with hunting would be prohibited. Marketing would be coordinated with the City of Craig, the Chamber of Commerce, communication site providers, and local sport shops to provide

maps, brochures, and other recreation information. Monitoring would occur to ensure user experiences are met, to ensure compliance with restrictions, and to keep track of trail maintenance and conditions. The area would be administered as NSO for oil and gas exploration and development and as closed to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation and would be an avoidance area for additional ROWs.

Zone 2 is the trail system. The niche would be community. Objectives would include hiking, jogging, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing. Experiences would include enjoying access to close-to-home outdoor activities, enjoying easy access to natural landscapes, and enjoying the closeness of family. Benefits would include improved physical fitness, better maintenance of physical facilities, an increased awareness of natural landscapes, and greater knowledge of wildlife, natural landscapes, and ecology. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be rural. Under the activity-planning framework for management, a managed, nonmotorized trail system would be provided and maintained. Marketing would be coordinated with the City of Craig, the Chamber of Commerce, communication site providers, and local sport shops to provide maps, brochures, and other recreation information. Monitoring would occur to ensure user experiences are being met, to ensure compliance with restrictions, and to keep track of trail maintenance and conditions. The area would be administered as NSO for oil and gas exploration and development, and as closed to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation and would be an avoidance area for additional ROWs.

Table 2-24. Cedar Mountain SRMA—Alternative C

SRMA Name	Cedar Mountain SRMA	
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Community
Activities	Day use Picnicking Hiking Wildlife viewing	Hiking Jogging Horseback riding Wildlife viewing
OHV designation	Limited to designated routes	Limited to designated routes
VRM Class	VRM Class III	VRM Class III

Alternative D: The Cedar Mountain area (900 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide opportunities close to the City of Craig for hiking, nature interpretation, and picnicking (Map 2-37). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-25.

For Zone 1, the picnic area, the niche, objectives, and prescribed setting character would be the same as those for Alternative C. The activity-planning framework would be the same as that for Alternative C; in addition, recreational use of the area would be restricted to day use (between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.). Marketing and monitoring would be the same as those for Alternative C. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development, and as closed to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. The area would be an exclusion area for additional ROWs, and the collocation of communication facilities would be required.

For Zone 2, the trail system, the niche, objectives, and prescribed setting character would be the same as those for Alternative C. The activity-planning framework would be the same as that for Alternative C; in

addition, the trail system would be nonmechanized as well as nonmotorized. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development, and it would also be closed to locatable minerals, coal, and other minerals activity. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. The area would be an exclusion area for additional ROWs, and communication facilities would be collocated.

Table 2-25. Cedar Mountain SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	Cedar Mountain SRMA	
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Community	Community
Activities	Day use Picnicking Hiking Wildlife viewing	Hiking Jogging Horseback riding Wildlife viewing
OHV designation	Limited to designated routes	Limited to designated routes
VRM Class	VRM Class III	VRM Class III

South Sand Wash

Alternative A: The south Sand Wash area would continue to be managed as an OHV open area for cross-country use within the ERMA.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The south Sand Wash area (35,510 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide OHV experiences (Map 2-36). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-26.

Zone 1 is the road corridors area. The niche would be community. Objectives would include motorized recreation experiences and associated camping (both with and without developed facilities) activities. Experiences would include enjoying risk-taking adventure, enjoying the closeness of family, and escaping from everyday stress and responsibilities. Benefits would include more proceeds from tourism and increased revenues from local taxes, greater bonding among families, diminished negative impacts such as litter and disturbance to wildlife and wild horses, and an enhanced awareness and understanding of nature through recreational opportunities. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be rural. Under the activity-planning framework for management, there would be coordination with Moffat County and stakeholder groups to improve CR access in the south Sand Wash area by putting gravel on the surface of these roads. Trailhead, parking, and developed camping facilities would also be provided. Marketing would be coordinated with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide facilities, road improvements, and interpretation opportunities. In coordination with local stewardship and motorized recreation groups, there would be monitoring to determine the number of developed campsites and the extent of trailhead parking needed and the requisite level of development, as well as to determine any additional service needs, to enhance user experiences and meet user expectations. User experience and satisfaction would also be monitored. The area would be administered as open to oil and gas leasing and development and also open to other minerals activity. The area would be closed to locatable minerals activity, and it would also not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be open. Developed recreation sites would be

closed to all mineral actions. The area would have a Class IV VRM designation. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Zone 2 is the open play area. The niche would be community. Objectives would include off-road motorized vehicle recreational experiences. Experiences would include enjoying risk-taking adventure, enjoying the closeness of family, and developing riding skills and abilities. Benefits would 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 would be rural. Under the activity-planning framework for management, main access routes through the area would be identified and signed. Marketing would be coordinated with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide maps, brochures, and interpretation opportunities. Monitoring would determine if or when this use approaches or exceeds resource capacity. The area would be administered as open to oil and gas leasing and development and also open to other minerals activity. The area would be closed to locatable minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be open. Developed recreation sites would be closed to all mineral actions. The area would have a Class IV VRM designation. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Zone 3 is the designated routes area. The niche would be community. Objectives would include single-track and double-track OHV riding, from novice to expert levels. Experiences would include enjoying risk-taking adventure and new challenges and escaping from everyday responsibilities for a while. Benefits would 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 would be front country. Under the activity-planning framework for management, together with user groups and local government, there would be a system of 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 would be closed to surface disturbing activities. Marketing would be coordinated with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide maps, brochures, interpretation opportunities, and route planning and development. Monitoring would ensure that user experiences and expectations are being met and that resources are being protected. The area would be administered as open to oil and gas leasing and development and also open to other minerals activity. The area would be closed to locatable minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Table 2-26. South Sand Wash SRMA—Alternative C

SRMA Name	South Sand Wash SRMA		
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Niche	Community	Community	Community
Activities	Motorized recreation Developed and undeveloped camping	Off-road motorized recreation	Single-track and double-track OHV riding, novice to expert levels
OHV designation	Open	Open	Limited to designated routes
VRM Class	VRM Class IV	VRM Class IV	VRM Class III

Alternative D: The south Sand Wash area (35,510 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide OHV experiences (Map 2-37). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-27.

With Zone 1 (the road corridors area) as well as Zones 2 and 3 (the designated routes area), the niche, objectives, prescribed setting character, activity-planning framework, and area administration would be the same as those for Alternative C except that all zones would also be limited to designated routes under this alternative.

Table 2-27. South Sand Wash SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	South Sand Wash SRMA		
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3
Niche	Community	Community	Community
Activities	Motorized recreation Developed and undeveloped camping	Single-track and double-track OHV riding, novice to expert levels	Single-track and double-track OHV riding, novice to expert levels
OHV designation	Limited to designated routes	Limited to designated routes	Limited to designated routes
VRM Class	VRM Class IV	VRM Class IV	VRM Class III

Serviceberry

Alternative A: The Serviceberry area would be open to OHV use under the current RMP; however, the area would be temporarily closed to OHV use. This area would continue to be managed as part of the ERMA.

Alternative B: The same as described in Alternative A, except that temporary OHV closures would be removed and would be managed as open to OHV use.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The Serviceberry area (12,380 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide backcountry, nonmotorized hunting experiences (Map 2-36). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-28.

Zone 1 is the Willow Creek and north Serviceberry access. The niche would be destination. Objectives would include nonmotorized hunting and associated camping activities. Experiences would include developing skills and abilities and gaining a greater sense of achievement. Benefits would include a reduction in wildlife disturbance from recreation users, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved self-confidence, enhanced outdoor knowledge, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be middle country. Under the activity-planning framework for management, camping facilities would be provided, and there would be improvements to the roads to these facilities in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. A managed and maintained trail system would be developed within the area. Marketing, in partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, would increase educational and interpretation programs during hunting season so as to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. User experience and satisfaction, as well as campsite conditions and use, would be monitored. The area would be administered as open to oil and gas leasing and development and also open to other minerals activity. The area would be closed to locatable minerals activity and not be available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.

Zone 2 is the Serviceberry backcountry. The niche would be destination. Objectives would include nonmotorized big game hunting and associated undeveloped camping activities. Experiences would include developing skills and abilities and gaining a greater sense of achievement. Benefits would include a reduction in wildlife disturbance from recreation users, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved self-confidence, enhanced outdoor knowledge, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be backcountry. Under the activity-planning framework for management, a managed and maintained trail system would be developed within the area. Marketing, in partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, would increase educational and interpretation programs during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. User experience and satisfaction, as well as campsite conditions and use, would be monitored. Monitoring would also occur to ensure compliance with motor-vehicle road closures. The area would be administered as open to oil and gas leasing and development and also open to other minerals activity. The area would be closed to locatable minerals activity and would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. ROWs would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Table 2-28. Serviceberry SRMA—Alternative C

SRMA Name	Serviceberry SRMA	
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Destination	Backcountry
Activities	Nonmotorized hunting Camping	Nonmotorized big game hunting Undeveloped camping
OHV designation	Limited to designated routes	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class III	VRM Class III

Alternative D: The Serviceberry area (12,380 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide backcountry, nonmotorized hunting experiences (Map 2-37). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-29.

For Zone 1 (the Willow Creek and north Serviceberry access), the niche, objectives, prescribed setting character, activity-planning framework, and area administration would be the same as those for Alternative C.

For Zone 2 (the Serviceberry backcountry), the niche, objectives, prescribed setting character, activity planning framework, and area administration would be the same as those for Alternative C except that the trail system would be nonmotorized and minimally managed.

Table 2-29. Serviceberry SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	Serviceberry SRMA	
Zones	Zone 1	Zone 2
Niche	Destination	Backcountry
Activities	Nonmotorized hunting Camping	Nonmotorized big game hunting Undeveloped camping
OHV designation	Limited to designated routes	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class III	VRM Class III

Fly Creek

Alternative A: The Fly Creek area would be open to OHV use under the current RMP; however, it is now temporarily closed to OHV use. This area would continue to be managed as part of the ERMA.

Alternative B: The same as described in Alternative A, except that temporary OHV closures would be removed and therefore the area would be managed as open to OHV use.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The Fly Creek area (12,340 acres) would be administered as a backcountry nonmotorized hunting area. Educational and interpretation activities would be increased during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. A managed and maintained nonmotorized trail system would be developed within the area. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would be open to oil and gas exploration and development, and it would also be open to other minerals activity. The area would be closed to locatable minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. ROWs would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative D: The Fly Creek area (12,340 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide backcountry nonmotorized hunting experiences (Map 2-37). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-30.

The area would be one recreation management zone. The niche would be destination. Objectives would include nonmotorized big game hunting and associated undeveloped camping activities. Experiences would include developing skills and abilities and gaining a greater sense of achievement. Benefits would 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 would be backcountry. The social prescribed setting character would be primitive. Under the activity-planning framework for management, a managed and maintained nonmotorized trail system would be developed within the area. Educational and interpretation activities would be increased during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. Property boundary signing would be maintained. Marketing would be coordinated with CDOW, local adjacent landowners, and permitted outfitters to provide hunting and recreation information. Monitoring would occur to ensure compliance with motor-vehicle road closures. User experiences and satisfaction would also be monitored. The area would be administered as open to oil and gas exploration and development and also open to other minerals activity. The area would be closed to locatable minerals activity and would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. ROWs would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Table 2-30. Fly Creek SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	Fly Creek SRMA
Zones	One zone
Niche	Destination
Activities	Nonmotorized big game hunting Undeveloped camping
OHV designation	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class III

Dinosaur North Area

Alternative A: The area is multiple use outside existing WSAs. The area would be administered as CSU for oil and gas exploration and development, open to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and not available for coal leasing. The area would be open to OHV use. VRM would not be designated. ROWs would be authorized on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative B: The same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The area objective would be to manage to protect the area's natural condition and to enhance opportunities for solitude and semiprimitive recreation. There would be no special area designation. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development, closed to locatable minerals, open to other minerals, and not available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. The area would be an avoidance area for ROWs, and wind energy development would not be allowed.

Alternative D: The Dinosaur North area (45,620 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide primitive recreational experiences in a largely natural setting (Map 2-37). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-31.

The area would be one recreation management zone. The niche would be community. Objectives would include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, camping, and hunting. Experiences would include feeling good about solitude and isolation, experiencing a greater sense of independence, and enjoying some physical exercise. Benefits would include a closer relationship with the natural world, improved physical fitness, greater retention of distinctive natural landscapes, and conservation of entire ecosystems in their natural state. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be primitive. Under the activity-planning framework for management, there would be minimally developed trailhead parking, and also interpretive information, provided adjacent to roads that lead to the edges of access points. Marketing would be coordinated with Chambers of Commerce, nonmotorized recreation organizations, and adjacent landowners to provide maps, brochures, and recreation information. Monitoring would occur to ensure compliance with motor-vehicle road closures. User experience and satisfaction would also be monitored. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development and closed to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. The area would be an exclusion area for ROWs, and wind energy development would not be allowed.

Table 2-31. Dinosaur North SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	Dinosaur North SRMA
Zones	One zone
Niche	Community
Activities	Hiking Backpacking Horseback riding Camping Hunting
OHV designation	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class II

Cold Springs Area

Alternative A: The area is multiple use outside existing WSAs. The area would be administered as CSU for oil and gas exploration and development and would be open to locatable minerals and other minerals activity, and it would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be mostly limited to existing routes, and the remainder would be open to OHV use. VRM would not be designated. ROWs would be authorized on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative B: The same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The objective would be to manage to protect the area's natural condition and to enhance opportunities for solitude and semiprimitive recreation. There would be no special area designation. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development, closed to locatable minerals activity and open to other minerals activity, and not available for coal leasing. OHV use would be limited to designated routes. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. The area would be an avoidance area for ROWs, and wind energy applications would be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative D: The Cold Springs Mountain area (30,470 acres) would be identified as a SRMA to provide primitive recreational experiences in a largely natural setting (Map 2-37). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-32.

The area would be one recreation management zone. The niche would be community. Objectives would include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, camping, and hunting. Experiences would include feeling good about solitude and isolation, experiencing a greater sense of independence, and enjoying some physical exercise. Benefits would include a closer relationship with the natural world, improved physical fitness, greater retention of distinctive natural landscapes, and conservation of entire ecosystems in their natural state. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be primitive. Under the activity-planning framework for management, there would be minimally developed trailhead parking, as well as interpretive information, provided adjacent to roads that lead to the edges of access points. A minimally managed and signed trail system would be provided. Marketing would be coordinated with the Browns Park Wildlife Refuge, Chambers of Commerce, nonmotorized recreation organizations, and adjacent landowners to provide maps, brochures, and recreation information. Monitoring would occur to ensure compliance with motor-vehicle road closures. User experience and satisfaction would also be monitored. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity and would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class II VRM designation. The area would be an exclusion area for ROWs, and wind energy development would not be allowed.

Table 2-32. Cold Springs SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	Cold Springs SRMA
Zones	One zone
Niche	Community

SRMA Name	Cold Springs SRMA
Activities	Hiking Backpacking Horseback riding Camping Hunting
OHV designation	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class II

Vermillion Basin

Alternative A: No SRMA would be designated. The area would be managed as described in the Lands With Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs section (page 2-47).

Alternative B: No SRMA would be designated. The area would be managed as described in the Lands With Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs section (page 2-47).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): No SRMA would be designated. The area would be managed as described in the Lands With Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs section (page 2-47).

Alternative D: The Vermillion Basin area (77,080 acres) would be identified as a backcountry SRMA to provide primitive recreational experiences in a largely natural setting (Map 2-37). Management of the SRMA is summarized in Table 2-33.

The area would be one recreation management zone. The niche would be community. Activities would include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, camping, and hunting. Experiences would include feeling good about solitude and isolation, experiencing a greater sense of independence, and enjoying physical exercise. Benefits would include a closer relationship with the natural world, improved physical fitness, greater retention of distinctive natural landscapes, and conservation of entire ecosystems in their natural state. The physical, social, and administrative prescribed setting character would be primitive. Under the activity-planning framework for management, there would be minimally developed trailhead parking, as well as interpretive information, provided adjacent to roads that lead to the edges of access points. A minimally managed and signed trail system would be provided. Marketing would be coordinated with Chambers of Commerce, nonmotorized recreation organizations, and adjacent landowners to provide maps, brochures, and recreation information. Monitoring would occur to ensure compliance with motor-vehicle road closures. User experience and satisfaction would also be monitored. The area would be administered as closed to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity and would not be available for coal leasing. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would have a Class II VRM designation and be an exclusion area for ROWs.

Table 2-33. Vermillion Basin SRMA—Alternative D

SRMA Name	Vermillion Basin SRMA
Zones	One zone
Niche	Community

SRMA Name	Vermillion Basin SRMA
Activities	Hiking Backpacking Horseback riding Camping Hunting
OHV designation	Closed
VRM Class	VRM Class II

Extensive Recreation Management Area

Alternative A: The remainder of the RMPPA would receive limited management as an ERMA where recreational use is dispersed and would require only minimal management. BLM would provide basic information on public safety and recreational opportunities within the RMPPA and would provide access and minimal facilities as demand warrants.

Alternative B: All BLM-managed lands within the planning area that are not identified as a SRMA would be considered as an ERMA. Objectives for the ERMA are as follows. For visitor heath 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. For resource protection, monitor resource conditions to determine if changes are needed in transportation or other activity planning and use education to further enhance resource protection.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): All BLM-managed lands within the planning area that are not identified as a SRMA would be considered as ERMA. Objectives for the ERMA would be the same as those listed in Alternative B except that criteria in Appendix F would be used to determine if activity planning should be triggered.

Alternative D: The same as described in Alternative C.

Lands With Backcountry Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The Fly Creek area (12,340 acres) would be administered as a backcountry nonmotorized hunting area (see Map 2-38). Educational and interpretation activities would be increased during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. A managed and maintained nonmotorized trail system would be developed within the area. The area would be closed to OHV use. The area would be open to oil and gas exploration and development and open to other minerals activity. The area would be closed to locatable minerals activity and would not be available for coal leasing. The area would have a Class III VRM designation. ROWs would be considered on a case-by-case basis. No other areas with backcountry characteristics outside existing WSAs would be designated.

Alternative D: Three backcountry areas would be designated (see Map 2-39): the Cross Mountain area (3,040 acres adjacent to the Cross Mountain WSA), the Diamond Breaks area (1,750 acres adjacent to the Diamond Breaks WSA), and the Pinyon Ridge area (4,870 acres). These areas would be administered as

backcountry areas to provide a recreation experience in predominantly natural settings. These areas would be closed to oil and gas exploration and development and to locatable minerals and other minerals activity and not available for coal leasing. These areas would be closed to OHV use. The Cross Mountain and Diamond Breaks areas would have Class III VRM designations, and the Pinyon Ridge area would have a Class II VRM designation. These areas would be exclusion areas for ROWs.

Developed Recreation Sites

Alternative A: The existing developed recreation sites would remain. These include the boat ramp on the Yampa River, campgrounds at Irish Canyon and Rocky Reservoir, and picnic sites at Irish Canyon and Cedar Mountain.

Alternative B: No additional recreation sites would be developed, and current sites would remain at the same service and use levels.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The number of interpretive sites and roadside pullouts for viewing would increase as the need and opportunities arise. Developed recreation sites (campgrounds, boat launches, and picnic sites) would be provided in association with SRMAs. Current sites would remain at the same service and use levels.

Alternative D: The same as described in Alternative C.

Management of the Yampa River Corridor

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action.

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

Alternative D: The same as described in Alternative C.

Special Recreation Permits

Alternative A: Special recreation permits would be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on applications received. Commercial outfitter camps would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Commercial use permits that provide recreational opportunities, enhance recreational experiences, and protect resources would be authorized. There would continue to be no guidance on competitive events or vending per current plans. Cooperative agreements with Colorado State Parks for the management of the Yampa River would 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, would continue.

Alternative B: The same as described in Alternative A for special recreation permits, commercial outfitters camps, and commercial use permits. No competitive events would be permitted in WSAs. Motorized and nonmotorized competitive events would be authorized consistent with OHV area and route designations. Permission for commercial events in the ERMA would 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 would be authorized. Cooperative agreements and coordination

would be the same as described in Alternative A; in addition, BLM would 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.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The same as described in Alternative B; in addition, permitted commercial events in backcountry SRMAs (the Serviceberry SRMA) would be limited to 50 participants and to nonmotorized events. Permission for commercial events in the ERMA and non-backcountry SRMAs (Cedar Mountain SRMA, south Sand Wash SRMA, Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, and Juniper Mountain SRMA) would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative D: The same as described in Alternative C except that commercial outfitter camps would be discouraged on BLM-administered land. In addition, permitted commercial events in backcountry SRMAs (Serviceberry SRMA, Fly Creek SRMA, Cold Springs Mountain SRMA, and Dinosaur North SRMA) would be limited to 25 participants and to nonmotorized events. Vending would not be allowed in conjunction with organized events.

2.6.4 Forestry

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 will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values. Section 102 also states that public land will be managed in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber.

2.6.4.1 Resource Use Goals and Objectives

- **Forestry Goal:** Management of forest and woodland communities that are resilient to disturbances from insects, disease, and wildfires. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Provide forest and woodland products on a sustainable basis.

2.6.4.2 Management Actions

Alternative A: BLM would manage 6,330 acres of commercial forest lands to produce a variety of forest products on a sustained-yield basis and would manage the remaining commercial forest lands with the use of such limited techniques as natural revegetation and minimal cultural treatments. Approximately 37,600 acres of woodland would be managed to produce a variety of woodland products on a sustained-yield basis, and limited management would be applied to the remaining woodland acreage.

Alternative B: The same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Forest communities would be managed for forest health with fire and other treatments, and product sales would be allowed. Harvesting forest products killed by wildfires and bark beetle attacks may be warranted when consistent with resource goals/objectives. Woodland communities would be managed for woodland health with fire and other treatments, and product sales would be allowed. See Vegetation, Section 2.5.4, for more information.

Authorization to harvest forest or woodland products would be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, areas meeting one or more of the following criteria would be off limits to harvest:

- Areas with an NSO or NGD designation as well as areas closed to oil and gas leasing

- Areas with fragile soils or slopes of greater than 20 percent
- Areas with specific wildlife concerns, such as habitats important to woodland-dependent species.

Alternative D: The same as described in Alternative C.

2.6.5 Lands and Realty

Section 102 of FLPMA requires that public land be retained in federal ownership unless disposal of a particular parcel will 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 will 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.

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.

2.6.5.1 Resource Use Goals and Objectives

- **Lands and Realty Goal A:** Consolidate BLM's landownership patterns in Routt County and in Moffat County. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Identify all the lands for exchange, sale, or disposal within the LSFO by zone.
  - Through exchange or sale, look for opportunities for consolidation of BLM lands and/or for acquiring additional lands.

- **Lands and Realty Goal B:** Increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of public land management. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - Identify criteria for the disposal of public land through sale or exchange.

- **Lands and Realty Goal C:** Allow for appropriate ROW routes and development sites (e.g., renewable energy, communication), while identifying areas that would 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 transportation routes, 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.

2.6.5.2 Management Actions

<u>Land Tenure Adjustments</u>

Alternative A: The BLM-administered lands in the RMPPA have been divided into general retention and disposal areas. The retention area is the existing land base to be managed under multiple use concepts. All land tenure adjustment actions (including recreation and public purposes' actions and exchanges), except sales, under Section 203 of FLPMA would be considered on a case-by-case basis if the public

interest would be served. Section 302 leases and permits would be allowed. Conveyance actions would be precluded in wilderness and other special management areas.

Disposal land tenure adjustment actions would be allowed on approximately 6,670 acres of public land that meet the criteria for disposal under applicable authority. Section 302 leases and permits would also be allowed. Acquisition of land would be pursued based on identified resource values and needs (RMP/ROD, pp. 30–31).

Alternative B: Disposal land tenure adjustment actions (both exchanges and sales) would be allowed on lands 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.

Acquisition land tenure adjustment actions would be allowed on lands that meet the following criteria:

- Lands that would help consolidate existing BLM land
- Lands near communities, which provide open spaces and which preserve agriculture, protect wildlife, protect the environment, enhance recreational opportunities, and generally serve the public good
- Lands that would provide public access to public lands or other public assets such as, but not limited to, river access.

Retain lands that are consolidated, have public access, have significant public value, and are efficient to manage. Other land tenure adjustments would be processed on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The BLM-administered lands in the RMPPA would be divided into three retention and disposal zones: the East Zone, Central Zone, and West Zone (Map 2-40). Disposal and exchange criteria specific to each zone are the same as in Alternative B, with the additional criteria for each zone described as follows:

- East Zone—
  - Actively seek opportunities to 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 nonfederal lands within the LSFO, as appropriate and in the public's interest.
  - Look to exchange lands with the appropriate local, State, and federal 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 CDOW/State Land Board (SLB) lease area.
  - Retain and seek acquisition of additional lands within identified acquisition areas, including, but not limited to, Sleeping Giant, Emerald Mountain, 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 LSFO, as appropriate and in the public's interest.
  - Land Utilization (LU)[2] 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 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 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 nonfederal lands within LSFO, as appropriate and in the public's interest.
  - Look to exchange lands with the appropriate State agencies to facilitate one-agency management in particular areas, including, but not limited to, Sand Wash Basin and Vermillion Basin.
  - Additional retention or acquisition areas can be identified during the life of the plan for the public good.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Rights-Of-Way

Alternative A: No ROW corridors are formally designated. The existing and potential corridors identified as suitable on page 29 of the RMP/ROD and displayed on pages 32 and 33 of the RMP/ROD are considered open and are preferred routes. Minor ROWs would be processed on a case-by-case basis, generally guided by the criteria identified for major ROWs. ROWs would be allowed in all areas if these are needed to develop valid existing rights.

Specific areas unsuitable for major ROWs are the WSAs, the Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA, the Lookout Mountain ACEC, the Irish Canyon ACEC, and the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA (lower unit). Specific areas that are sensitive for siting major ROWs are the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA (upper unit), the Lookout Mountain ACEC, Horse Draw, Vermillion Creek, Ace-in-the-Hole, Vermillion Bluffs, G Gap, Hells Canyon, portions of Vermillion Creek Drainage, Sand Wash Drainage, Buffalo Gulch/Twelvemile Mesa, Little Snake River, Sand Creek, Conway Draw, Deception Creek, and occupied black-footed ferret habitat (Table 2-34 and Table 2-35; Map 2-41).

Alternative B: ROWs would be allowed on a case-by-case basis. ROW exclusions would include the WSAs and areas designated as Class I VRM. ROW avoidance areas would include areas designated as

[2] Lands acquired under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937, that are administered by the BLM.

Class II VRM, occupied black-footed ferret habitat areas, Vermillion Bluffs, and fragile soil areas of the Vermillion Basin (Table 2-34 and Table 2-35; Map 2-42).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): 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. ROW exclusions would include the WSAs, areas designated as Class I VRM, portions of Vermillion Basin Zone 2, the Limestone Ridge area, and the Irish Canyon ACEC. ROW avoidance areas would include areas designated as Class II VRM, as well as Cold Springs Mountain, the Cedar Mountain SRMA, Dinosaur North, Vermillion Bluffs in Vermillion Basin Zone 1, fragile soil areas of Vermillion Basin, portions of Vermillion Basin Zone 2, occupied black-footed ferret habitat, and the West Cold Springs WSA; in addition, if these are released by Congress from wilderness study, WSAs recommended as nonsuitable would be Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears (Table 2-34 and Table 2-35; Map 2-43).

Alternative D: ROWs would be encouraged in the following existing corridors: major roads including CRs (e.g., CR 20, 4, 7, and 57), power transmission lines, and oil and gas pipelines. ROW exclusions would include the WSAs, areas designated as Class I and Class II VRM, the Lookout Mountain ACEC, the Limestone Ridge ACEC, the Irish Canyon ACEC, the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC, the White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC, Vermillion Basin, the Dinosaur North SRMA, the Cold Springs Mountain SRMA, the Cedar Mountain SRMA, and Cross Mountain, Diamond Breaks, Pinyon Ridge backcountry areas; in addition, if these are released from Congress from wilderness study, WSAs recommended as nonsuitable would be Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears. ROW avoidance areas would include—

- The Natural Systems ACECs: the Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC (1,210 acres), the Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC (5,500 acres), the Bull Canyon ACEC (3,390 acres), the G Gap ACEC (2,230 acres), the Little Juniper Canyon ACEC (20 acres), the Bassett Spring ACEC (110 acres), the No Name Spring ACEC (80 acres), the Pot Creek ACEC (2,240 acres), the Whiskey Springs ACEC (2,760 acres), the Willow Spring ACEC (100 acres), and the Deception Creek ACEC (110 acres).
- Occupied black-footed ferret habitat (Table 2-34 and Table 2-35; Map 2-44).

Table 2-34. Right-Of-Way Exclusion Area, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
WSAs	X	X	X	X
VRM Class I areas		X	X	X
VRM Class II areas				X
Lookout Mountain ACEC	X			X
Limestone Ridge area	X[1]		X	X[1]
Irish Canyon ACEC	X		X	X
Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC	X			X
White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC				X
Portion of Vermillion Basin				X
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA (lower unit)	X			
Dinosaur North SRMA				X
Cold Springs Mountain SRMA				X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Cedar Mountain SRMA				X
Cross Mountain backcountry area				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X
Total Area (in acres)	**108,470**	**78,250**	**91,560**	**499,700**

Notes: [1] Limestone Ridge would be designated as an ACEC under Alternatives A and D.

Table 2-35. Right-Of-Way Avoidance Areas, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Occupied black-footed ferret habitat	X	X	X	X
VRM Class II areas		X	X	
Cold Springs Mountain			X	
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA (upper unit)	X			
Cedar Mountain SRMA			X	
Lookout Mountain ACEC	X			
Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC				X
Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC				X
Bull Canyon ACEC				X
G Gap ACEC				X
Little Juniper Canyon ACEC				X
Bassett Spring ACEC				X
No Name Spring ACEC				X
Pot Creek ACEC				X
Whiskey Springs ACEC				X
Willow Spring ACEC				X
Dinosaur North			X	
Horse Draw	X			
Vermillion Creek	X			
Portions of Vermillion Creek Drainage	X			
Fragile soil areas of Vermillion Basin & Vermillion Bluffs		X	X	
Ace-in-the-Hole	X			
Vermillion Bluffs	X	X	X	
G Gap	X			
Hells Canyon	X			
Sand Wash Drainage	X			
Buffalo Gulch/Twelvemile Mesa	X			

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Little Snake River	X			
Sand Creek	X			
Conway Draw	X			
Deception Creek	X			X
Total area (in acres)	**535,390**	**555,440**	**141,260**	**15,190**

Easements

Alternative A: Easements for access to public lands would be pursued on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): 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.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Communication Sites

Alternative A: Communication site proposals would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative B: All sites would be open except in ROW exclusion areas. Priority would 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.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: All new facilities would be located on existing sites. Best available technologies, such as tower guy wires, would be required to reduce migratory bird mortality.

Renewable Energy

Alternative A: Wind energy development is processed on a case-by-case basis as a ROW action and generally guided by the criteria identified for major ROWs. Solar energy development is processed on a case-by-case basis as a ROW action and generally guided by the criteria identified for major ROWs.

Alternative B: There would be no access restrictions. Wind energy development would be encouraged in areas rated excellent and above (Map 3-36). Use, where possible, best available technologies to reduce migratory bird mortality. Solar energy development would be encouraged in the RMPPA.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): See ROW actions for more information on wind energy development. Wind energy development would be encouraged in areas rated excellent and above (Map 3-36) as long as they are consistent with resource objectives. Use, where possible, best available technologies to reduce migratory bird mortality. Solar energy development would be encouraged in the RMPPA as long as it is consistent with resource objectives.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C. See ROW actions for more information on wind energy and solar energy development.

2.6.6 Transportation and Access and Travel Management

Access would be provided across public lands to landlocked private and State lands consistent with FLPMA. Management of OHV activities would 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 would be designed to 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 the BLM to designate all BLM-administered land as either open, limited, or closed in regard to OHV use. Until specific designations are put in place, all motorized vehicle use on BLM-administered lands would be limited to existing legal routes of travel until route designation decisions are completed through activity plans or amendments to this plan. Areas designated as limited to designated routes will be managed as limited to existing routes until transportation planning and route designation occurs. Vehicle closures do not apply to BLM ROWs, permitted uses, county or State roads, or other valid existing rights.

2.6.6.1 Resource Use Goals and Objectives

- **Transportation and Access Goal A:** 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 transportation routes and to manage the levels of road construction and habitat fragmentation.
  - County and local governments and affected interests would be invited to participate in transportation planning.
  - Identify criteria to determine when detailed transportation planning should occur.
  - The transportation plan would identify both the kind of road construction and the maintenance standards needed to protect resources and accommodate anticipated traffic types and use levels.

- **Transportation and Access Goal B:** Provide a mix of motorized, nonmotorized, and nonmechanized 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.

- **Travel Management Goal:** Provide for types or modes of access and travel that would balance resource protection with use. Objectives for achieving this goal include—
  - County and local governments and affected interests would be invited to participate in travel management.
  - Develop criteria to guide travel management implementation actions.
  - Design a managed road, route, and trail system within the planning area.
  - Reduce the number of unmanaged roads and trails.

2.6.6.2 Management Actions

<u>Transportation and Access</u>

Alternative A: An access/transportation plan would be prepared, listing areas needing attention, types of access to be acquired, preferred and alternate routes, roads and trails to be closed or constructed, survey and support needs, and construction or maintenance guidelines. This would be based on other resource

program needs to meet their program objectives. Access to public lands would be acquired as funding and time permit in the areas identified.

Alternative B: Transportation planning would be conducted and access pursued on a case-by-case basis. See Lands and Realty, Section 2.6.5, for more information.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): 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 resource damage
- 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. See Lands and Realty, Section 2.6.5, for more information.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative C.

Travel Management

Alternative A: Areas have been designated as open, limited, or closed to vehicle use (RMP/ROD, p. 28). Table 2-36 and Map 2-45 show the areas listed in the table of the 1989 RMP/ROD. A vehicle-use implementation plan would be completed within 1 year of RMP approval.

Alternative B: Areas have been designated as open, limited, or closed to vehicle use as detailed below (Table 2-36 and Map 2-46).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Areas have been designated as open, limited, or closed to vehicle use as detailed below (Table 2-36 and Map 2-47).

Alternative D: Areas have been designated as limited or closed to vehicle use as detailed below (Table 2-36 and Map 2-48).

Table 2-36. Summary of OHV Use Designations, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Open to OHV use	991,920	1,172,950	21,940	0
Seasonal closures	0	0	0	161,810
Limited to existing roads and trails	229,925	54,850	1,039,500	0
Limited to designated roads and trails	56,930	77,080	203,100	1,079,440
Closed to OHV use	72,480	46,370	86,710	289,650

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Closed to over-the-snow vehicles	46,080	46,080	839,940	861,030

Closed

Alternative A: The following areas would be managed as closed to OHV use: the Diamond Breaks WSA, the Limestone ACEC, the Cross Mountain WSA, the Serviceberry and Fly Creek areas, and the Maybell uranium pit (Table 2-37).

Alternative B: The following areas would be managed as closed to OHV use: the Diamond Breaks WSA, the Cross Mountain WSA, and the Maybell uranium pit (Table 2-37).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The following areas would be managed as closed to OHV use: the Diamond Breaks WSA, Limestone Ridge, and the Cross Mountain WSA (including the WSR segment) (Table 2-37).

Alternative D: The following areas would be managed as closed to OHV use: all WSAs, the Limestone Ridge ACEC, the Serviceberry SRMA, the Fly Creek SRMA, the Dinosaur North SRMA, the Maybell uranium pit, and the water impoundments within the Sand Wash Basin HMA (year-round) and within the high water mark when dry, except where a designated road crosses impoundment (Table 2-37).

Table 2-37. Areas Closed to OHV Use, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
All WSAs				X
Diamond Breaks WSA	X	X	X	X
Cross Mountain WSA	X	X	X	X
Suitable WSR corridors				X
Vermillion Basin				X
Limestone Ridge ACEC	X[1]		X	X[1]
Serviceberry area	X			
Serviceberry SRMA, Zone 2			X	X
Dinosaur North SRMA				X
Maybell uranium pit	X	X		X
Fly Creek area	X		X	X[2]
Portion of Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, Zone 1				X
Cold Springs Mountain SRMA				X
Cross Mountain backcountry area				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Total area (in acres)	**72,480**	**46,370**	**86,710**	**289,650**

Notes: [1] Limestone Ridge would be designated as an ACEC under Alternatives A and D.
[2] Fly Creek would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.

Limited to Designated Roads and Trails

Alternative A: The following areas would be managed as limited to designated roads and trails: the Lookout Mountain ACEC, the Irish Canyon ACEC, sections of the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA, the Cottonwood Creek area, Cedar Mountain, the Browns Park cellular site, the Wild Mountain area, and the Hoy Mountain area (Table 2-38).

Alternative B: Vermillion Basin would be managed as limited to designated roads and trails (Table 2-38).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Designate routes determined through adaptive management and travel management planning. The following areas would be immediately managed as limited to designated routes for OHV use: the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, the Cedar Mountain SRMA, the Cottonwood Creek area, the Irish Canyon ACEC, the Lookout Mountain ACEC, the Browns Park cellular site, the Wild Mountain area, the Hoy Mountain area, and zones within the south Sand Wash SRMA (Table 2-38).

Alternative D: All areas not managed as open or closed would be managed as limited to designated roads and trails. Transportation planning would occur for the entire field office by 5 years after the signing of the ROD. Criteria in Appendix F would be used to prioritize areas for transportation planning (Table 2-38).

Table 2-38. OHV Areas Limited to Designated Trails, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Lookout Mountain area	X		X	X
Irish Canyon ACEC	X		X	X
Yampa River segments 1, 2,3			X	
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA, Zone 1	X			
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA			X	
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA Zone 2 and Portions of Zone 1				X
Juniper Mountain SRMA			X	X
Cedar Mountain SRMA			X	
South Sand Wash SRMA, Zone 3			X	X
South Sand Wash SRMA, all zones				X
Serviceberry SRMA, Zone 1			X	

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Cottonwood Creek area	X		X	
Dinosaur North			X	
Cedar Mountain	X			
Cold Springs Mountain			X	
Browns Park cellular site	X		X	
Wild Mountain area	X		X	
Hoy Mountain area	X		X	
Vermillion Basin		X		
Portion of Vermillion Basin			X	
White-tailed Prairie dog ACEC				X
Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC				X
Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC				X
Bull Canyon ACEC				X
G Gap ACEC				X
Little Juniper Canyon ACEC				X
Bassett Spring ACEC				X
No Name Spring ACEC				X
Pot Creek ACEC				X
Whiskey Springs ACEC				X
Willow Spring ACEC				X
Deception Creek ACEC				X
All areas not designated as open or closed				X
Total area (in acres)	**56,930**	**77,080**	**203,100**	**1,079,440**

Limited to Existing Roads and Trails

Alternative A: The following areas would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails: areas that meet fragile soil criteria, all WSAs except Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain, lands adjacent to the Cross Mountain WSA, sections of the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA, the Pole Gulch area, the Big Hole Gulch area, Cold Springs Mountain, sections of Axial Basin, the Willow Creek area, and the South Nipple area (Table 2-39).

Alternative B: The following areas would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails: all WSAs except Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain and areas that meet fragile soil criteria (Table 2-39). Fragile soil criteria areas are rated as highly or severely erodible by wind or water, as described by the NRCS in the *Area Soil Survey Report*, or as described by an onsite inspection, and have slopes greater than or equal to 35 percent. They also have one of the 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.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): All areas not managed as open, closed, or limited to designated roads and trails would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails until route designation is initiated through the adaptive OHV designation process (Table 2-39). Areas limited to existing roads and trails would be prioritized for transportation planning, eventually leading to designation of routes across the entire field office. Because of lack of necessary resources, only partial route inventories have been performed in the RMPPA, resulting in incomplete data on existing roads and trails. Without a dependable baseline, existing routes would be inventoried in priority areas as the BLM progresses through the transportation planning process. In addition, BLM would continue to sign and maintain the existing road system. See the adaptive OHV designation process explained below.

Alternative D: No areas would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails (Table 2-39).

Table 2-39. OHV Areas Limited to Existing Trails, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Areas that meet fragile soil criteria	X	X		
All WSAs except Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain	X	X		
Lands adjacent to Cross Mountain WSA	X			
Portion of Little Yampa Canyon SRMA	X			
Pole Gulch area	X			
Big Hole Gulch area	X			
Portion of Cold Springs Mountain	X	X		
Sections of Axial Basin	X			
Willow Creek area	X			
South Nipple area	X			
Portion of Vermillion Basin	X			
All areas not designated as open, closed, or limited to designated roads and trails			X	
Total area (in acres)	**229,925**	**54,850**	**1,039,500**	**0**

Seasonal Closures

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: No similar action.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): No similar action.

Alternative D: The wild horse HMA would be closed to motor vehicle use during the wild horse foaling period from March 1 to June 30 (Table 2-40).

Table 2-40. OHV Seasonal Closures, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Wild Horse HMA				X
Total area (in acres)	**0**	**0**	**0**	**161,810**

Open

Alternative A: Approximately 74 percent of the field office would be managed as open to OHV use (Table 2-41).

Alternative B: All areas of the LSFO would be open that would not be managed as limited or closed to OHV use (Table 2-41).

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): The following areas would be managed as open to OHV use: Zones 1 and 2 of the south Sand Wash SRMA (play area south edge and Clay Buttes area) (Table 2-41).

Alternative D: No areas would be managed as open to OHV use (Table 2-41).

Table 2-41. Areas Open to OHV Use, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
South Sand Wash	X	X		
South Sand Wash SRMA, Zones 1 and 2 (play area south edge and Clay Buttes area)			X	
All areas not designated as limited or closed to OHV use	X	X		
Total area (in acres)	**991,920**	**1,172,950**	**21,940**	**0**

Adaptive OHV Designations

Alternative A: All areas within the LSFO, except for the Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain WSAs, would be open to over-the-snow vehicles (Table 2-42).

Alternative B: Same as described in Alternative A: all areas within the LSFO, except for the Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain WSAs, would be open to over-the-snow vehicles (Table 2-42). BLM would consider temporarily opening closed areas to enhance big game harvest. There would be no closures in wild horse foaling areas.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Transportation planning would be initiated progressively, consistent with the prioritization process identified in Appendix F. Through application of the criteria in Appendix F, Sand Wash Basin will be the first area to undergo transportation planning. The Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain WSAs and crucial winter range and other seasonally limited wildlife habitat

areas would be closed to over-the-snow vehicles unless there were exceptions through application of adaptive management criteria outlined in Appendix E (Table 2-42). Seasonal OHV closures in big game crucial winter range and production areas would be considered on the basis of site-specific transportation planning results (see above). Seasonal OHV closures of wild horse foaling areas would be considered on the basis of site-specific transportation planning results (see above). Temporarily opening closed areas to enhance big game harvest would be considered in coordination with CDOW.

Alternative D: All WSAs and crucial winter range and other seasonally limited wildlife habitat areas would be closed to over-the-snow vehicles (Table 2-42). Big game crucial winter range and production areas would be closed to OHV use from December 1 to April 30. The entire wild horse HMA would be closed to OHV use, from March 1 to June 30, during foaling season.

Table 2-42. Areas Closed to Over-the-Snow Vehicles, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
WSAs				X
Diamond Breaks WSA	X	X	X	
Cross Mountain WSA	X	X	X	
Within 1/4 mile of raptor nesting and fledgling habitat (golden eagle and all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], all buteos, and owls)			X	X
Within 1/2 mile of the cliff nesting complex of peregrine falcon			X	X
Mule deer crucial winter habitat			X	X
Elk crucial winter habitat			X	X
Pronghorn crucial winter habitat			X	X
Bighorn sheep crucial winter habitat			X	X
Elk calving areas			X	X
Pronghorn fawning areas			X	X
Bighorn sheep lambing area			X	X
Greater sandhill crane nesting and staging habitat areas			X	X
Osprey nesting and fledgling habitat *(applies 1/2-mile buffer)*			X	X
White pelican nesting and feeding habitat areas			X	X
Ferruginous hawk nesting and fledgling habitat *(applies to 1-mile buffer)*			X	X
Greater sage-grouse nesting habitat (nesting and early brood-rearing habitat within 4 miles of the perimeter of the lek)			X	
Greater sage-grouse nesting habitat				X
Greater sage-grouse crucial winter habitat			X	X
Within 1/2 mile of occupied bald eagle nest sites			X	X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Within 1/4 mile of known bald eagle winter hunting perches			X	X
Within 1/2 mile of bald eagle critical night roosts			X	X
Within 1/4 mile of occupied mountain plover nesting habitat			X	X
Total area (in acres)	**46,080**	**46,080**	**839,940**	**861,030**

2.6.7 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.

2.6.7.1 Resource Use Goals and Objectives

- **Social and Economic Goal:** Manage public lands to provide social and economic benefits to residents, businesses, visitors, and future generations. 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.

2.6.7.2 Management Actions

Alternative A: No similar action.

Alternative B: 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.

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative): Same as described in Alternative B.

Alternative D: Same as described in Alternative B.

2.7 SUMMARY OF SURFACE DISTURBANCE RESTRICTIONS

Alternatives B, C, and D would apply restrictions to all permitted surface disturbing activities, which do not include OHV use. These restrictions would be applied as NGD, SSR, or seasonal limitations, as determined through the management actions for resources and resource uses as specified under the alternatives. Maps 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3 indicate areas where these restrictions would apply. Table 2-43, Table 2-44, and Table 2-45 below provide a summary of, respectively, the NGD restrictions, the SSR restrictions, and seasonal limitations, broken out by alternative.

Table 2-43. No Ground Disturbance Restrictions for Surface Disturbing Activities, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Within 1/4 mile of raptor (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], buteos, and owls) nest sites.				X
Within 1/8 mile of raptor (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], buteos, and owls) nest sites.			X	
Within 1/4 mile of peregrine falcon cliff nesting complex.			X[1]	X[1]
Waterfowl and shorebird significant production areas (waterfowl habitat management areas and rookeries)			X[2]	X[2]
Within 1/4 mile of Colombian sharp-tailed grouse lek site			X[3]	X[3]
Within 1/4 mile of greater sage-grouse lek site			X[3]	
Within 3/5 mile of greater sage-grouse lek site				X[3]
Within critical or occupied habitat of Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), humpback chub (*Gila cypha*), and bonytail (*Gila elegans*)		X	X	X
Within 1/4 mile of suitable Yellow-billed Cuckoo habitat		X	X	X
Within 1/8 mile of occupied mountain plover nesting habitat			X[4]	X[4]
Within 1/4 mile of both occupied and unoccupied bald eagle nests		X	X	X
Within 1/4 mile of known bald eagle roosts		X	X	X
Mexican spotted owl protected activity centers (PAC)		X	X	X
Within 1/4 mile of perennial water sources			X	X
WSAs		X	X	X
Limestone Ridge ACEC				X
Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC				X
Irish Canyon ACEC			X	X
Lookout Mountain area				X[5]
Suitable WSR segments			X	X
Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (except the southern expansion area)			X	X
Juniper Mountain SRMA			X	X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Cedar Mountain SRMA			X	X
Dinosaur North area			X	X[6]
Cold Springs Mountain area				X[7]
White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC				X
Cross Mountain backcountry area				X
Diamond Breaks backcountry area				X
Pinyon Ridge backcountry area				X
Total affected area (in acres)	**NA**	**89,240**	**273,100**	**632,940**

Notes: [1] NGD area may be altered depending on the active status of the nesting complex or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening.
[2] NGD area may be altered depending on the active status of the production areas or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening.
[3] NGD area may be altered depending on the active status of the lek or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening to the lek site.
[4] 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.
[5] Lookout Mountain would be designated as an ACEC under Alternative D.
[6] Dinosaur North would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.
[7] Cold Springs Mountain would be administered as a SRMA under Alternative D.

Table 2-44. SSR Restrictions for Surface Disturbing Activities, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Greater sage-grouse crucial winter habitat				X
Active white-tailed prairie dog colonies within black-footed ferret reintroduction areas.		X	X	
Special Status Plant Species habitat		X	X	X
Fragile soil areas			X	X
Slopes equal to or greater than 35 percent			X	X
Vermillion Basin		X	X	
Dinosaur North area (outside the WSA)		X		
Limestone Ridge area			X	
Lookout Mountain area			X	
Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC				X
Cold Springs Mountain area (outside the WSA)		X		
Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC				X
Bull Canyon ACEC				X
G Gap ACEC				X

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Little Juniper Canyon ACEC				X
Bassett Spring ACEC				X
No Name Spring ACEC				X
Pot Creek ACEC				X
Whiskey Springs ACEC				X
Willow Spring ACEC				X
Deception Creek ACEC				X
Total area (in acres)	**NA**	**158,950**	**137,780**	**297,000**

Table 2-45. Seasonal Limitations on Surface Disturbing Activities, by Alternative

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Within 1/4 mile of raptor nesting and fledgling habitat (golden eagle and all accipiters, falcons [except the kestrel], all buteos, and owls)			X	X
Within 1/2 mile of the cliff nesting complex of peregrine falcon			X	X
Mule deer crucial winter habitat			X	X
Elk crucial winter habitat			X	X
Pronghorn crucial winter habitat			X	X
Bighorn sheep crucial winter habitat			X	X
Elk calving areas			X	X
Pronghorn fawning areas			X	X
Bighorn sheep lambing area			X	X
Greater sandhill crane nesting and staging habitat areas			X	X
Osprey nesting and fledgling habitat *(applies 1/2-mile buffer)*			X	X
White pelican nesting and feeding habitat areas			X	X
Ferruginous hawk nesting and fledgling habitat *(applies to 1-mile buffer)*			X	X
Greater sage-grouse nesting habitat				X
Greater sage-grouse nesting habitat (nesting and early brood-rearing habitat within 4 miles of the perimeter of the lek)			X	
Greater sage-grouse crucial winter habitat			X	X
Within 1/2 mile of occupied bald eagle nest sites		X	X	X
Within 1/4 mile of known bald eagle winter hunting perches		X[1]	X[1]	X[1]

Area	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Within 1/2 mile of bald eagle critical night roosts		X[2]	X[2]	X[2]
Within 1/4 mile of occupied mountain plover nesting habitat			X[3]	X[3]
Within 1 mile of Wild Horse Spring				X
Within 1 mile of Sheepherder Spring				X
Within 1 mile of Coffee Pot Spring				X
Within 1 mile of Two Bar Spring				X
Within 1 mile of Dugout Draw Spring				X
Total affected area (in acres)	**NA**	**71,220**	**810,680**	**825,690**

Notes: [1] Buffers can be reduced to 1/8 mile if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography.
[2] Buffers can be reduced to 1/4 mile for night roosts if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography.
[3] 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.

2.8 DETAILED TABLE OF ALTERNATIVES

A comparison of the alternatives considered is presented in Table 2-46. Summary of Alternatives.

Table 2-46. Summary of Alternatives

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
AIR QUALITY			
Goals and objectives for air quality are established through regulation. No additional goals or objectives were created for the air quality resource specific to this RMP.			
No similar action.	Encourage the use of "flareless completions" or "green completions" as a BMP for oil and gas operations.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
SOIL RESOURCES			
Goal A: Maintain or restore soil conditions.			
Goal A Objectives: 1. Mitigate negative impacts on soil productivity from accelerated erosion, or physical or chemical degradation. 2. Stabilize and rehabilitate areas where accelerated erosion, runoff, and physical or chemical degradation have resulted in unacceptable resource conditions. 3. Prevent disturbance to fragile soil areas where resulting erosion could not be controlled.			
FRAGILE SOILS			
Allow surface disturbing activities on isolated sites that meet fragile soil criteria only where 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 *Area Soil Survey Report* or as described by onsite inspection • Have slopes greater than or equal to 35%, if they also have one of the following soil characteristics: – Surface texture that is sand, loamy sand, very fine sandy	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
loam, silty clay, or clay. – Depth to bedrock less than 20 inches – Erosion condition rated as ”poor” – K factor greater than 0.32.			
Permit surface occupancy on federal surface only where adherence to performance objectives for surface disturbing activities within fragile-soil areas is assured. Performance objectives for fragile soils are the following: • Maintain the soil productivity by reducing soil loss from erosion and through proper handling of the soil material • Reduce impact on offsite areas by controlling erosion and overland flow from these areas • Protect water quality and quantity of adjacent surface and ground water sources • Reduce accelerated erosion caused by surface disturbing activities • Select best possible site for development to reduce the impacts on the soil and water resources.	No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
SURFACE USE			
For new oil and gas leases and all surface disturbing activities permitted under the *1989 RMP*[3] ensure that applicants demonstrate compliance with performance objectives through a POD, using alternative measures, or use of the following mitigative	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.

[3] These requirements do not supersede valid existing rights on approved applications for permits to drill, developing leases, or entry under the general mining laws. ROW construction will be allowed along Moffat County Roads 4, 67, and 126 on a case-by-case basis. BLM will work with operators/permittees/county engineers to develop appropriate compliance measures.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
measures: • Retain all sediments generated from the surface disturbing activity onsite • Do not allow construction or other surface disturbing activities when the soils are saturated to a depth of more than 3 inches • Limit vehicle use to existing roads and trails • Build all new permanent roads to meet BLM primary road standards in locations approved by the authorized officer (for oil and gas purposes, permanent roads are those used for production) • Conduct all geophysical and geochemical exploration by helicopter, horseback, on foot, or from existing roads • Design any sediment-control structures, reserve pits, or disposal pits to contain a 100-year, 6-hour storm event, and provide storage volumes within these structures that have a design life of 25 years • Before reserve, production, or emergency pits are reclaimed, remove all residue and truck it offsite to an approved disposal site • Initiate reclamation of disturbed surfaces before November 1 each year • Approve all reclamation plans by the authorized officer in advance, and require a bond if necessary, if one has not been previously posted.			
WATER RESOURCES			
Goal A: Protect and maintain present ground water quality.			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
Goal B: Maintain or improve the surface water quality and quantity, the integrity of streams, and their associated riparian values on public lands.			
Goal A Objectives: 1. Ensure actions that could potentially affect ground water quality are conducted using BMPs. **Goal B Objectives:** 1. Use BMPs to limit disturbance in and near streams or riparian/wetland systems. 2. Maintain watershed integrity and functioning hydrology. 3. Achieve PFC in existing riparian/wetland systems that do not meet land health and water quality standards. 4. Identify and, if possible, remove existing sources of degradation. 5. Prevent, where possible, accelerated erosion, physical degradation, or chemical degradation in upland areas. 6. Ensure that land uses use BMPs to protect surface water resources. 7. 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. 8. Strive for sufficient quantity, quality, and timing of water to support human and economic uses of water public lands, including livestock grazing, recreation, forestry, and mineral development.			
See also decisions for Soil Resources.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Establish NSO stipulations from within 500 feet to 1/4 mile of perennial water sources, depending on type and use of source, soil type, and slope steepness.	No similar action. BLM may apply COAs on a case-by-case basis based on site-specific analysis prior to authorization.	Establish NSO stipulations up to 1/4 mile from perennial water sources, if necessary, depending on type and use of source, soil type, and slope steepness. Exceptions granted according to Appendix E.	Same as Alternative C.
VEGETATION			
Overall Goal: Collaborate with stakeholders and resource users in providing an array of habitats, well-distributed across the landscape that supports biodiversity and viable populations of native plant and animal species. **Sagebrush Goal A:** Sustain the integrity of the sagebrush biome to maintain viable populations of Greater sage-grouse and other sagebrush-obligate species. **Sagebrush Goal B:** Identify and initiate restoration and rehabilitation of sagebrush habitat while maintaining a mosaic of canopy cover and seral stages. **Forestry Goal:** Manage for healthy forest and woodland communities. **Riparian and Wetlands Goal A:** Maintain or improve the integrity of streams and their associated riparian values on public lands that meet land health and water quality standards. **Riparian and Wetlands Goal B:** Achieve PFC in existing riparian/wetland systems that do not meet land health and water quality standards. **Weeds Goal A:** Reduce the occurrence of noxious and undesirable plant species. **Weeds Goal B:** Integrate weed management across landscape and ownership boundaries.			
Overall Objectives:			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
1. Manage for a diversity of seral stages within plant communities. 2. Manage for connections among a variety of plant communities on a landscape scale. 3. Manage for juniper and other woody species within their historic range of natural variability. 4. Restore natural disturbance regimes, such as fire, and use vegetation treatments in accomplishing biodiversity objectives. 5. Establish DPCs in coordination with stakeholders across the LSFO, focusing on native communities and intact biosystems while allowing non-native species, where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis. **Sagebrush Goal A Objectives:** 1. Maintain large patches of high-quality sagebrush habitats consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado. 2. Maintain connections among sagebrush habitats on a landscape scale, as allowed by range site condition. **Sagebrush Goal B Objectives:** 1. Reconnect large patches of sagebrush habitat consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado. 2. Reduce encroachment of juniper and other woody species into sagebrush habitat. 3. Restore a diversity of seral stages within sagebrush communities. 4. Restore the quantity, species composition, and species diversity of sagebrush understories. **Forest and Woodland Goal Objectives:** 1. 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 timber and other forest products. 2. Manage areas identified as old growth to fully maintain or contribute to the restoration of the structure and composition of old growth stands as defined in *Old Growth Descriptions for the Major Cover Types in the Rocky Mountain Region*. 3. Maintain the appropriate species diversity and age-class distribution for forest and woodland communities that are resilient to disturbances. 4. Recognize and manage aspen as a unique and limited high-value forest type for a wide variety of resources. **Riparian and Wetlands Goal A Objectives:** 1. Manage human-caused disturbance in and near riparian/wetland systems. 2. Maintain or improve watershed integrity and functioning hydrology. 3. Recognize and manage riparian/wetland communities as a limited high-value vegetation type. **Riparian and Wetlands Goal B Objectives:** 1. Identify and, if possible, remove existing sources of degradation. 2. Protect riparian/wetland systems from new sources of degradation. 3. Work with users to identify ways to improve riparian areas and to minimize degradation from current uses. **Weeds Goal A Objectives:** 1. Ensure all land use actions that could potentially increase the occurrence of noxious weeds are conducted using BMPs. 2. Apply principles of integrated pest management. **Weeds Goal B Objectives:**			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
1. Pursue, wherever possible, the use of cooperative agreements to coordinate weed management actions. 2. Identify ways to partner with resource users and other stakeholders to reduce the occurrence of noxious weeds.			
DESIRED PLANT COMMUNITIES			
No similar action.	Upland and riparian vegetation would be managed to achieve DPC objectives established for a localized area to meet the Colorado Standards for Rangeland Health and objectives for the planning area. DPC objectives will be determined through use of various reference information, including NRCS range site guides and updated ecological site inventory data in conjunction with the specific objectives for the area.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
No similar action.	DPC objectives would emphasize commodity uses while complying with existing regulations pertaining to sensitive resources.	DPC objectives would emphasize wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, watershed, and biodiversity values while maintaining or enhancing habitat for Special Status Species.	DPC objectives would emphasize wildlife habitat, watershed, and biodiversity values. Emphasis would be placed on maintaining or enhancing habitat for Special Status Species.
VEGETATION TREATMENTS			
Conducted on case-by-case basis, as needed.	When consistent with healthy rangeland ecosystems, emphasize vegetation treatments to increase forage production.	Use vegetation treatments on an average of 4,110 acres per year over the life of the plan to restore diversity of seral stages and species, as appropriate. Work with the Northwest Colorado Sage-Grouse Working Group to identify, maintain, and restore an average of 530 acres of sagebrush per year. Emphasize creation of functional blocks of sagebrush as sage-grouse habitat. Use vegetation treatments on an average of 1,600 acres per year to reduce encroachment of juniper and woody species to mimic natural conditions.	Use vegetation treatments on an average of 8,750 acres per year over the life of the plan to restore diversity of seral stages and species, as appropriate. Work with the Northwest Colorado Sage-Grouse Working Group to identify, maintain, and restore an average of 2,000 acres of sagebrush per year. Emphasize creation of functional blocks of sagebrush as sage-grouse habitat. Use vegetation treatments on an average of 3,500 acres per year to reduce encroachment of juniper and woody species to mimic natural conditions.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		Restore a total of 80 acres per year during the planning period of bitterbrush and other important winter forage species in the Sand Hills and Spring Creek watersheds. Restore an average of 100 acres per year of mountain shrub.	Restore an average of 50 acres per year of bitterbrush and other important winter forage species in all areas where LHAs have been conducted, starting with the Sand Hills and Spring Creek watersheds. Restore an average of 1,000 acres of per year mountain shrub.
No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.	Use vegetation treatments where land health assessments indicate a standard is not being met for reasons other than livestock (e.g., areas where reclamation efforts have not been successful, or heavy-use OHV areas) to improve conditions.	Same as Alternative C.
FORESTS AND WOODLANDS			
Conducted on case-by-case basis, as needed.	Same as Alternative A.	Restore an average of 200 acres per year of Ponderosa Pine, primarily in the Douglas Mountain area, using primarily non-harvest methods such as prescribed fire and mechanical understory reduction.	Restore an average of 400 acres per year of Ponderosa pine, primarily in the Douglas Mountain area, using primarily non-harvest methods such as prescribed fire and mechanical understory reduction.
Conducted on case-by-case basis, as needed.	Same as Alternative A.	Treat an average of 50 acres per year of Lodgepole Pine, primarily in the Cold Springs watershed, using a mix of commercial timber sales and fuels-related treatments aimed at maintaining an overall viable stand and reducing the threat of large fires in the area.	Treat an average of 100 acres per year of Lodgepole Pine, primarily in the Cold Springs watershed, using a mix of commercial timber sales and fuels-related treatments aimed at maintaining an overall viable stand and reducing the threat of large fires in the area.
Conducted on case-by-case basis, as needed.	Same as Alternative A.	Improve/maintain aspen community health on an average of 50 acres per year of the stands, especially in Cold Springs watershed and in Routt County, using primarily non-harvest methods such as prescribed fire, chainsaw thinning, and other mechanical means aimed at promoting	Improve/maintain aspen community health on an average of 200 acres per year of the stands, especially in Cold Springs watershed and in Routt County, using primarily non-harvest methods such as prescribed fire, chainsaw thinning, and other mechanical means aimed at promoting

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		aspen regeneration.	aspen regeneration.
Conducted on case-by-case basis, as needed.	Same as Alternative A.	Restore an average of 500 acres per year of pinyon-juniper woodland, with the aim to maintain a mosaic of age classes and to balance the amount of treatment against natural pinyon-juniper expansion, using a combination of prescribed burning, mechanical mastication, and designated firewood-gathering areas.	Same as Alternative C.
NOXIOUS WEEDS			
Identify and eliminate noxious weeds on a case-by-case basis consistent with current policy.	Same as Alternative A.	Prevent the spread of noxious weeds. Eliminate invasive species, focusing on areas of new infestations, and, where possible, extirpate existing populations, especially in Axial, Powder Wash, Douglas Mountain, Sand Hills, and Williams Fork watersheds, and in selected Routt County and Moffat County parcels. Partner with resource users and other stakeholders to reduce the occurrence of noxious weeds. Maximize use of cooperative agreements to control invasive species.	Same as Alternative C.
FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT			
Goal A: 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. **Goal B:** Identify and initiate restoration and rehabilitation of sagebrush habitat while maintaining a mosaic of canopy cover and seral stages. **Goal C:** Manage habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species endemic to key vegetation types by maintaining adequate habitat quantity, quality, and continuity. **Goal D:** Manage disturbance to wildlife populations. **Goal E:** Provide an array of aquatic habitats that support biodiversity and viable populations of species. **Goal F:** Cooperate with the CDOW.			
Goal A Objectives: 1. Maintain large patches of high-quality sagebrush habitats consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado. 2. Maintain connections among sagebrush habitats on a landscape scale.			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
Goal B Objectives: 1. Reconnect large patches of sagebrush habitat consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado. 2. Reduce encroachment of juniper and other woody species into sagebrush habitat. 3. Restore a diversity of seral stages within sagebrush communities. 4. Restore the quantity, species composition, and species diversity of sagebrush understories. **Goal C Objectives:** 1. Improve and/or maintain those areas that are key wildlife habitats and their desired plant communities. 2. Maintain or restore connectivity among habitat use areas. 3. Maintain, restore, or enhance the habitat of migratory bird species (e.g., neotropicals, waterfowl, and raptors). 4. Promote conservation and minimize the take of migratory birds. 5. Maintain and promote high-quality habitat for big game populations. 6. Provide habitat to support sufficient raptor prey populations. 7. Provide sufficient nesting and fledging habitat to ensure sustainable raptor populations. **Goal D Objectives:** 1. Manage access to seasonal use areas during crucial time frames. 2. Manage access in crucial habitats. **Goal E Objectives:** 1. Promote improvement and recovery of current, historic, and potential habitats of aquatic species. 2. Maintain or improve riparian condition to provide for forage, habitat, and biodiversity. 3. Encourage sport fisheries in areas where they will not be detrimental to native fish populations. **Goal F Objectives:** 1. In collaboration with key agencies, provide CDOW input on establishing fish and wildlife populations that can be sustained by available habitat. 2. Seek input from CDOW on managing fish and wildlife habitat on public lands.			
IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING SAGEBRUSH HABITAT FUNCTIONALITY BY LIMITING FRAGMENTATION			
No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.	To maintain and improve large blocks of functional sagebrush communities, oil and gas operators could opt into an agreement to limit habitat fragmentation in return for easing timing limitation stipulations and allowing year-round drilling. This arrangement applies to the most critical sagebrush habitat within the RMPPA, which includes all areas	Same as Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		located within 4 miles of a sage-grouse lek site and eight designated large patches of sagebrush habitat (Map 2-4). The 4-mile-radius areas are based on known sage-grouse lek sites, but are intended to be flexible in the RMP, so that new sites discovered during the life of the RMP will also be included. This agreement applies to both federal surface and federal mineral estates. Where private surface is underlain by federal minerals, this proposal would apply unless the surface landowner objects. Private and State mineral owners within the area would also be encouraged to participate on a voluntary basis. Outside these identified areas, oil and gas development would proceed as currently described in this Draft RMP/EIS, with all appropriate stipulations applying, subject to the exception, modification, and waiver criteria described in Appendix E. Inside the identified areas, all new leases would still be issued with the wildlife timing stipulations attached. However, if a proposal meets certain criteria, which are described in Section 2.5.5.2, BLM will grant an exception to big game and sage-grouse timing limitation stipulations. Until these criteria are met, timing limitation stipulations would apply to all development on the lease or unit. However, if an 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 APDs	

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		on the lease or unit, allowing year-round drilling in these areas. This agreement does not pertain to the 1/4-mile NSO stipulation around sage-grouse leks, which would remain in effect. Approval of exceptions to big game and sage-grouse timing limitation stipulations for year-round drilling will require active monitoring for compliance with the COAs. Operators must continually meet these criteria throughout development of the lease or unit, or the authorization for the exception of timing stipulations will terminate. Compliance history will be a factor in approving this trade-off for future development. If an operator were to breach the agreement, BLM would not allow the same operator to enter into this agreement again. <u>Baseline measurements and monitoring</u> This approach requires a baseline measurement of existing disturbance as well as monitoring to determine when the 5% threshold is reached. Before a leaseholder enters into the agreement, a GIS analysis of existing disturbance in the project area will be performed as part of the POD. In addition, the amount of surface to be disturbed will be calculated by the operator and included in the POD. Subsequent monitoring will take place to ensure compliance with the terms agreed upon in the POD.	
RAPTORS (GOLDEN EAGLE, OSPREY, ALL ACCIPITERS, FALCONS [EXCEPT KESTREL], BUTEOS, AND OWLS)			
Raptors (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except kestrel],	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.	Raptors (golden eagle, osprey, all accipiters, falcons [except kestrel],

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
buteos, and owls): NSO within 1/8-mile radius of nest site. NSO area could be altered depending on the active status of the nest site or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening to the nest site.			buteos, and owls): NSO/NGD within 1/4-mile radius of nest site. In addition, exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.
Raptor nesting and fledgling habitat (golden eagle, and all accipiters, falcons [except kestrel], buteos, and owls) would be closed to surface disturbing activities from February 1 to August 15. Applies to 1/4-mile buffer zone around the nest site. Exceptions—During years when a nest site is unoccupied or unoccupied by or after May 15, the seasonal limitation could be suspended. It could also be suspended after the young have fledged and dispersed from the nest.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A. In addition, exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	Same as Alternative C.
PEREGRINE FALCON			
Peregrine Falcon—NSO within 1/4-mile radius of cliff nesting complexes. No exceptions.	No similar action.	NSO/NGD within 1/4-mile radius of cliff nesting complex. In addition, NSO/NGD area could be altered depending on the active status of nesting complexes or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers, and vegetation screening.	Same as Alternative C.
Peregrine falcon cliff nesting complexes would be closed to surface disturbing activities from March 16 to July 31 within a 1/2-mile buffer area around the nesting complex to prevent abandonment and desertion of established territories Exceptions—During years when a	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A. In addition, exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
nest is unoccupied or unoccupied by or after May 15, the seasonal stipulation could be suspended. It could also be suspended after the young have fledged and dispersed from the nest.			
WATERFOWL AND SHOREBIRD			
Waterfowl and Shorebird—NSO on significant production areas (Waterfowl Habitat Management Areas and rookeries). No exceptions.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A, except NGD would also be applied for other activities. In addition, NSO/NGD area could be altered depending on the active status of the production areas or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening. Exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	Same as Alternative C.
BIG GAME SPECIES (MULE DEER, ELK, PRONGHORN ANTELOPE, AND BIGHORN SHEEP)			
Big game species (mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, and bighorn sheep) crucial winter habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from December 1 to April 30. Exceptions—Under mild winter conditions, the last 60 days of the seasonal limitation period could be suspended. Severity of winter determined on basis of snow depth, snow crusting, daily mean temperatures, and concentration of animals on winter range during winter months.	No similar action.	Big game species (mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, and bighorn sheep) crucial winter habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from December 1 to April 30, with the intent of this stipulation remaining consistent with big game hunting season. In the case that hunting season would extend later, exceptions would be applied according to Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver. Exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	Same as Alternative A.
Big game birthing areas would be	No similar action.	Big game birthing areas would be	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
closed to surface disturbing activities for the following species and dates: • Elk calving—April 16 to June 30 • Pronghorn Antelope fawning—May 1 to July 15 • Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep lambing—May 1 to July 15 • Desert Bighorn Sheep lambing—March 16 to May 30. Exceptions—When it is determined through a site-specific environmental analysis that specific actions would not interfere with critical habitat function, or compromise animal conditions within the project vicinity, the restriction may be altered or removed.		closed to surface disturbing activities for the following species and dates: • Elk calving—April 16 to June 30 • Pronghorn Antelope fawning—May 1 to July 15 • Bighorn Sheep lambing—May 1 to July 15. Exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	
GREATER SANDHILL CRANE			
Greater Sandhill crane nesting and staging habitat areas would be closed to surface disturbing activities from March 1 to October 16. No exceptions.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A. In addition, exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	Same as Alternative C.
OSPREY			
Osprey nesting and fledgling habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from April 1 to August 31. Applies to a 1/2-mile buffer zone to avoid nest abandonment.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A. In addition, exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	Same as Alternative C.
WILDLIFE USE ADJUSTMENTS			
Recommend wildlife use adjustments to CDOW if monitoring data indicate that adjustments are necessary.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
WHITE-TAILED PRAIRIE DOGS			
No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.	CSU, SSR, and Timing Stipulations—Surface disturbing activities that are larger 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. Surface disturbing activities smaller than 1 acre or within towns that are larger than 10 acres will not be permitted between April 1 and June 15 to protect prairie dog pups. Exception Criteria—If a company has a well pad in place, but for whatever reason is not able to complete the well before April 1, this timing restriction would be granted an exception. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis following Appendix E guidelines.	No similar action. See White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC management under Special Designations section.
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES			
Goal A: Preserve and protect Special Status Species. **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. **Goal C:** Identify and initiate restoration and rehabilitation of sagebrush habitat while maintaining a mosaic of canopy cover and seral stages.			
Goal A Objectives: 1. Maintain the populations of candidate, State-listed, BLM, and other sensitive species at a level that will avoid the need to list these species. 2. Maintain, restore, or enhance the habitat of Special Status Species, including designated critical habitats for listed species. 3. Maintain or restore the populations of Special Status Species to the extent possible. 4. Prioritize inventories, monitoring, and other scientific studies to better understand the ecology of Special Status Species in order to improve their management. **Goal B Objectives:** 1. Maintain large patches of high-quality sagebrush habitats consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado. 2. Maintain connections among sagebrush habitats on a landscape scale. **Goal C Objectives:**			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
1. Reconnect large patches of sagebrush habitat consistent with the natural range of variability for sagebrush communities in northwest Colorado. 2. Reduce encroachment of juniper and other woody species into sagebrush habitat. 3. Restore a diversity of seral stages within sagebrush communities. 4. Restore the quantity, species composition, and species diversity of sagebrush understories.			
COLORADO BLM SENSITIVE SPECIES			
Colorado BLM Sensitive Species (plant and wildlife)—Surveys of potential habitat for Colorado BLM Sensitive Species would be conducted before any surface disturbance. Should any such species be found, all disruptive activities would be halted until species-specific protective measures were developed and implemented.	Same as Alternative A.	In addition to Alternative A, BLM would survey for rare plant communities, and if any such communities are found, all disruptive activities would be delayed until specific protective measures were developed and implemented, if appropriate.	In addition to Alternative C, review Colorado Natural Heritage Database for sensitive plant species not listed on BLM Sensitive Species list and determine appropriate management for species on a case-by-case basis.
FERRUGINOUS HAWK			
Ferruginous hawk nesting and fledgling habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from February 1 to August 15 within a 1-mile buffer zone to avoid nest abandonment.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A. In addition, exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	Same as Alternative C.
COLOMBIAN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE			
Colombian sharp-tailed grouse—NSO within 1/4-mile radius of a lek site. NSO area could be altered depending on the active status of the lek or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening to the lek site.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A, except NGD would also be applied for other activities. In addition, exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E, Procedures and Criteria for Granting Exceptions, Modification, or Waiver.	Same as Alternative C.
AREA PROTECTIONS			
Protect the federally endangered American peregrine falcon, Colorado squawfish, humpback chub, bonytail	See Special Designations section.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
chub, and the State-protected razorback sucker by designation of Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC.			
GREATER SAGE-GROUSE			
Greater sage-grouse—NSO within 1/4-mile radius of a lek site. NSO area could be altered depending on the active status of the lek or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening to the lek site.	No similar action.	For the purpose of reducing potential impacts on greater sage-grouse lek integrity, NSO/NGD within 1/4-mile radius of a lek site. NSO/NGD area could be altered depending on the active status of the lek or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers, and vegetation screening to the lek site. In addition, exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.	For the purpose of further reducing potential impacts on greater sage-grouse lek integrity, NSO/NGD within a 0.6-mile radius of a lek site. NSO/NGD area could be altered depending on the active status of the lek or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening to the lek site. Exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.
Greater sage-grouse nesting habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from March 1 through June 30.	No similar action.	For the purpose of preventing disturbing up to 75% of nesting birds, from March 1 through June 30, greater sage-grouse nesting and early brood–rearing habitat (as defined in Chapter 3) would be CSU for oil and gas exploration and development, and avoidance areas (SSR) for other surface disturbing activities within a 4-mile radius of the perimeter of a lek. All surface disturbing activities would avoid only nesting and early brood–rearing habitat within the 4-mile radius of the lek during this time period. Exceptions, modification, or waivers granted according to criteria in Appendix E. The actual area to be avoided would 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	For the purpose of preventing disturbing greater than 75% of nesting birds, from March 1 through June 30, greater sage-grouse nesting and early brood–rearing habitat (as defined in Chapter 3) would be CSU for oil and gas exploration and development, and avoidance areas (SSR) for other surface disturbing and disruptive activities. Exceptions, modification, or waivers granted according to criteria in Appendix E. The actual area to be avoided would 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.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		appropriate entities. The use of the BMPs cited below will be encouraged for all surface disturbing activities. BLM may require implementation of some of these BMPs. Use of these BMPs becomes even more important once disturbance reaches 10% of nesting habitat within a 4-mile radius of an active lek. As new BMPs are developed, they could be added to or replace BMPs on the list. Habitat Reclamation • Use early and effective reclamation techniques, including interim reclamation, to allow sage-grouse habitat to be reestablished as soon as possible, which could 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 • Practice reclamation techniques that speed recovery of preexisting vegetation • Avoid 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 long-term footprint of facilities to the smallest practical	BMPs would be the same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		space • Design and construct roads to minimize duplication • 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 to minimize impact on 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 used, larger pads are needed for multiple wells.) • Minimize width of field surface roads. Avoid engineered and graveled roads, when possible, to reduce the footprint Bird Disturbance Reduction • 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 a.m. and before 4 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 might occur • Reduce number of daily visits to well pads and road travel to the extent possible in sage-grouse habitat • Use remote telemetry to monitor	

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		wells, when practical, to reduce number of daily visits to wells • Gate field service roads or otherwise limit regular public access on field service roads (consistent with landowner wishes and direction for split-estate wells or ROW access across private lands)	
Crucial winter habitat would be closed from December 16 to March 15. No exceptions.	No similar action	Same as Alternative A. In addition, exceptions would be granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.	To reduce disturbance to the animals, greater sage-grouse winter habitat (Map 3-19) would be closed to surface disturbing and disruptive activities from December 16 to March 15. In addition, for the purpose of protecting greater sage-grouse winter habitat, these areas would be CSU for oil and gas exploration and development, and avoidance areas (SSR) for other surface disturbing and disruptive activities. Exceptions granted according to criteria established in Appendix E.
BLACK-FOOTED FERRET			
No surface disturbing activities will be allowed that could significantly alter the prairie dog complex in a way that makes it unsuitable for reintroduction of the black-footed ferret.	No similar action.	Surface disturbing activities will be minimized to the extent reasonable in order to reduce landscape disturbance to prairie dog habitat for black-footed ferret.	Same as Alternative A. In addition, see White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC management under Special Designations section.
Per the 1995 Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Amendment 1995, require the use of deterrent devices designed to prevent raptors from perching on powerline structures on all new construction to discourage predation on ferrets.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Do not allow rangeland improvement projects (e.g., fences, water developments) within 1/4 mile of black-footed ferret release cages or	No similar action.	Do not allow rangeland improvement projects (e.g., fences, water developments) within 1/4 mile of black-footed ferret release sites to	Same as Alternative C

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
release sites to prevent disturbance or damage during the 3 to 4 month release period.		prevent disturbance or damage during the 3 to 4 month release period.	
Compensation plans and plans of operation will be developed for oil and gas field development in the Little Snake Black-Footed Ferret Management Area. BLM would develop offsite mitigation plans for replacement of lost habitat, if necessary.	No similar action.	Compensation plans and plans of operation will be developed for oil and gas field development in the Little Snake Black-Footed Ferret Management Area. A plan for onsite or offsite mitigation, consistent with BLM policy, will be developed for the purpose of replacing lost habitat, if necessary.	Same as Alternative C.
New mineral material sales (sand and gravel) proposed in prairie dog towns within 1/4 mile of black-footed ferret release sites could be required to delay or suspend operations for 3 to 4 months during the release period. Mineral material sales operations existing at the time of release site selection will not be restricted. Sales within the common use areas within 1/4 mile of release sites will also be suspended during the 3 to 4 month release period.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
OHV use will be closed within 1/4 mile of black-footed ferret release cages or release sites for 3 to 4 months during the release period.	No similar action.	OHV use will be closed within 1/4 mile of black-footed ferret release sites for 3 to 4 months during the release period. Administrative OHV use would be allowed as necessary for implementation and monitoring of black-footed ferret releases.	Same as Alternative C.
Target shooting, plinking, or any type of sport hunting will be prohibited within 1/4 mile of black-footed ferret release cages or release sites for 3 to 4 months during the release period.	No similar action.	Target shooting, plinking, or any type of sport hunting will be prohibited within 1/4 mile of black-footed ferret release sites for 3 to 4 months during the release period.	Same as Alternative C.
ROWs on public land that have the potential to disturb occupied black-	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
footed ferret habitat will be rerouted to avoid those prairie dog towns.			
MEXICAN SPOTTED OWL			
Mexican spotted owl nesting and fledgling habitat would be closed to surface disturbing activities from February 1 to July 31. Applied to territories where an owl(s) has been spotted, but no nests or roosts have been confirmed, and in territories where there is confirmed nesting, feeding, and roosting activity. No exceptions.	NSO would be applied to all PACs. Other surface disturbing activities within protected or restricted habitats such as prescribed fires and fuels reduction could occur in specific cases, but will require separate Section 7 consultation.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
Mexican spotted owl—NSO within 1/4-mile radius of confirmed roost site and nesting site. No exceptions.	Non-surface disturbing activities in PACs would avoid the Mexican spotted owl breeding season (March 1 through August 31).	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
BALD EAGLE			
Bald eagle—NSO within a 1/4-mile radius of roost or nest site. NSO area could be altered depending on the active status of the roost or the geographical relationship of topographical barriers and vegetation screening. No exceptions for nest sites.	Year-round NSO/NGD within a1/4-mile radius of both occupied and unoccupied nests. Definition of "occupied nest" from *Northern States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan 1983*, page D4: (a) young were observed, (b) eggs were laid (eggs or eggshell fragments observed), (c) one adult observed in incubating ("sitting low") posture on the nest during the incubation period, (d) two adults observed at an empty nest or within the breeding area, and (e) one adult and one eagle in immature plumage at or near a nest, especially if mating or reproductive behavior (e.g., display flights, copulation, nest repair) was observed.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
Bald eagle nesting habitat—Apply 1/2-mile buffer zone around the nest site to prevent disruption of nesting from	No human activity or other surface disturbance within 1/2-mile radius of occupied nests from November 15	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
December 15 to June 15. Exceptions—During years when a nest site is unoccupied by or after May 15, timing limitation could be suspended. Timing limitation could also be suspended after the young have fledged and dispersed from nest.	through July 31.		
Bald eagle winter roost site—Apply 1/2-mile buffer area around the roost site from November 16 to April 15 to avoid relocation to less suitable areas. Exceptions—If there is partial or complete visual screening of the area of activity, the primary zone around the roost site may be reduced to 1/4 mile.	Human activities within 1/4 mile of known winter hunting perches and 1/2 mile of critical night roosts on BLM land should be restricted from November 15 to March 15. Buffers can be reduced to 1/4 mile for night roosts and 1/8 mile for hunting perches if the activity is visually screened by vegetation or topography. Development may be permitted at other periods. If periodic visits (e.g., oil well maintenance work) are required within the buffer zone after development, activity should be restricted to the hours between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. from November 15 to March 15 (new guidelines developed by CDOW based on current data). Exceptions will require consultation with USFWS for each individual action.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
STATEWIDE PROGRAMMATIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSERVATION MEASURES			
No similar action.	BLM would implement the Statewide Programmatic RMP Conservation Measures. The Statewide RMP Amendment process is ongoing; therefore Appendix J outlines the Conservation Measures as of April 2005.	Same as Alternative B. In addition, BLM would implement the Statewide Programmatic Conservation Recommendations. The Conservation Recommendations as of April 2005 are outlined in Appendix J.	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
WILD HORSES			
Goal: Manage the Sand Wash Basin wild horse herd and the herd's habitat in a manner that encourages herd health while maintaining a thriving, natural, ecological balance of rangeland resources.			
Objectives: 1. Manage the Sand Wash wild horse herd at an AML as an integral part of the public lands ecosystem. Periodically reevaluate the existing AML to ensure herd size remains compatible with the other resources. 2. Recognize and proactively respond to potential conflicts among wild horses and other resources as conflicts occur. 3. Remove wild horses that relocate outside of HMAs expeditiously.			
Manage habitat condition in Sand Wash Basin HMA to maintain a herd ranging from 163 to 362 wild horses on a 4-year schedule with an AML of 362.	Maintain current HMA status. Manage at AML, currently identified as a range of 163 to 362 wild horses. The AML is a dynamic number that would be adjusted as range conditions warrant. Guidelines and criteria for adjusting AML include the following: • Current monitoring data • Rate of herd increase • Competing uses • Frequency of gather cycle • Other population management options • Herd genetics.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
Continue to manage wild horses in the Sand Wash Basin HMA.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Designate the Sand Wash Basin HMA as the Sand Wash Basin Wild Horse Range, and manage principally, though not exclusively, for the Sand Wash wild horse herd.
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT			
Goal A: Give first priority to protection of life or property. **Goal B:** Create an integrated approach to fire and resource management to meet land health standards. **Goal C:** Integrate fire and fuels management across landscape, agency, and government boundaries.			
Goal A Objectives: 1. Identify and reduce hazardous fuels with emphasis on wildland-urban interface areas. **Goal B Objectives:**			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
1. Reduce fire hazards in ecosystems and restore ecological community functions. 2. Use and allow fire to protect, maintain, and enhance resources. 3. Use and allow fire to function in its ecological role when appropriate for the site and situation. 4. Use mechanical or other vegetation treatments to reduce fire hazards when appropriate. **Goal C Objectives:** 1. Use cooperative agreements to coordinate fire and fuels management action.			
Use maximum suppression on areas with high resource values, structures, commercial forest, oil and gas developments, cultural values, or improvements to prevent fire from spreading to adjacent private property/structures and provide full protection to buffer areas near or adjacent to critical management areas for threatened, endangered, and candidate species, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, and research natural areas (RNA).	Use appropriate fire management response in areas where fire or wildfire is not desired such as in ecosystems where fire never played a significant positive role in its function; areas where suppression is required to prevent direct threats to life or property; private lands and wildland-urban interfaces; important cultural resources; areas with unnatural fuel buildups; and areas in which a seed bank to use for natural reseeding does not exist.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
Use conditional fire suppression in areas with resources of low value or that do not warrant full suppression actions or high suppression costs, including fires in the Douglas Mountain area (the five WSAs adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument, Diamond Breaks WSA, West Cold Spring WSA, and Cross Mountain WSA).	Use conditional fire suppression in areas where fire is desired, but where there might be social, political, or ecological constraints such as air quality considerations (near Class I airsheds or nonattainment areas), threatened or endangered species, or habitat considerations.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
No similar action.	Use minimal to no fire suppression in areas where fire is desired.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
Use planned and unplanned prescribed fire to improve resource habitat and condition.	Use prescribed fire and wildfire to improve resource habitat and condition, where appropriate. Prescribed fire will be used to meet identified resource management or hazard fuel reduction objectives. Use of prescribed fire will be guided by	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	agency planning documents and consultation with appropriate agency staff. Wildland fire management strategies have been categorized into A, B, C, or D polygons and associated objective tables, representing a continuum of appropriate management responses, from full suppression in A polygons through Wildland Fire Use in D polygons. Fire Management Units are described in Table 2-2 and shown on Map 2-5. In most cases, the Fire Management Units may have in common fuel types, major fire regime groups, and topography. It is also possible they cross political boundaries. The Fire Management Unit polygons are evaluated each year and may be altered. Following are some of the major evaluation criteria: • Acres burned in 1 year • Acres burned in 10 years • New residential and commercial development • Changes in wildlife and plant Special Status Species • Other vegetation treatments that may alter the fire regime and condition class • Social/political changes.		
CULTURAL AND HERITAGE RESOURCES			
Cultural Resources Program Goals: 1. Develop an indepth understanding of archeological and historical resources in accordance with NHPA Section 110. 2. Determine cultural use allocations and desired outcomes for all cultural properties in the RMPPA. Cultural use allocations include scientific use, conservation for future use, traditional use, public use, experimental use, or discharge from management.			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
Support Services Goals: 1. Seek to reduce threats and to resolve potential conflicts from either natural or human-caused deterioration or potential conflict by other program uses in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA. 2. Preserve and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA.			
Cultural Resource Program Objectives: 1. Identify areas for development of cultural RMPs and sites appropriate for interpretation. 2. Identify research and partnership opportunities for site excavation, stabilization, rehabilitation, and monitoring. 3. Complete site nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). 4. Enhance the understanding of past human occupation by studying the physical presence of cultural resources in the planning area. Identify cultural study needs based on sound archeological methods and practices. 5. Partner with universities, research facilities, and other institutions to encourage research and publish findings or cultural studies. 6. Expand regional interpretation activities through the recreation programs and contributions from local partners to manage cultural resources located on BLM-administered lands. **Support Services Objectives:** **Goal 1:** 1. 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. 2. Pursue programmatic agreements with tribal governments to streamline consultation procedures. 3. Assign use allocations for all cultural properties. **Goal 2:** 1. Identify priority areas for new field surveys, based on a probability for consumptive use conflicts on significant resources. 2. Improve legal enforcement.			
CULTURAL RESOURCE PROGRAM			
An overall cultural RMP will be developed to address the prehistoric and historic cultural presence in the RMPPA. Separate plans, on a smaller scale, would be developed to include site-specific or region-specific areas of the RMPPA. These plans would address the existing data gaps and research questions that have been developed in the *Little Snake RMPPA Class I Overview* (La Point 1987).	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	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
These future plans will include the data orientation and collection designs needed to develop basic knowledge about these resources, which has been lacking in the past.	systematic monitoring of cultural sites treatments are to be completed annually. The level of proactive cultural resource program work would be determined annually and within the 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 will change throughout the life of the plan as more becomes known about the cultural resources in the planning area. In general, priority will be given to sites eligible for nomination to the NRHP and sites for which data are needed: • Priority areas for development of cultural RMPs: Sand Wash Basin, Irish Canyon • Priority sites for cultural resource surveys: Irish Canyon, Sand Wash Basin, Vermillion Rim • 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, and Cross Mountain rock shelter • Priority site monitoring: Vermillion BuffaloTrap, 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		

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	shelter, Red Army rock shelter, and Cross Mountain rock shelter • Priority interpretation sites: Sand Wash and Vermillion Rim; maintain Irish Canyon interpretive site.		
MITIGATION OF POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS TO HISTORIC PROPERTIES IN OPEN OHV AREAS			
No similar action.	The process below will be followed to mitigate potential adverse effects to historic properties within areas open to cross-country OHV travel. In areas open to OHV travel, known cultural resources evaluated as potentially eligible (need data) and eligible for the NRHP would be identified. Cultural resource site areas located within or immediately adjacent to existing routes would be protected by route or area closures to the types of travel that may cause adverse effects. The closure would remain in effect until the cultural resources are field-visited, documented, and needed mitigation measures are completed. The avoidance of cultural resources would be the primary mitigation measure, where possible. Significant cultural resource sites and areas may be mitigated through long-term route or area closure, rerouting and new construction, limitations on vehicle type and time or season of travel, excavation of archaeological resources, or other less common approaches. Class III inventory, site evaluation, site mitigation and reporting would be completed within 5 years following the signing of the ROD. A Class II inventory could be part of this process. Identified cultural resources evaluated	Transportation planning would be performed in Sand Wash Basin following the signing of the ROD, as described in Section 2.6.6.2, Adaptive OHV Designations. Protecting cultural resources in Sand Wash Basin would be an important aspect in the development of the transportation plan and designation of routes in the area. The same process as outlined for Alternative B would be used for the area open to OHV travel in south Sand Wash Basin.	No similar action.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	as potentially eligible (need data) and eligible for the NHRP would be protected and any adverse effects would be mitigated. Protection would follow the approach identified above for known cultural resources. In addition, a monitoring program would be established to assess OHV impacts to cultural resources. The BLM cultural resource specialist, as part of the monitoring team, would identify an appropriate monitoring schedule for cultural resources. Based on the results of monitoring, BLM would take any actions necessary to fulfill its obligations under existing law to protect cultural resources. This may include changing certain aspects of management of the area (e.g., allowable use) or implementing mitigation measures (e.g., fencing or closing areas). Consultation with the SHPO and affected tribes is required for all planning efforts and, as necessary, with other consulting parties.		
CULTURAL SITE USE ALLOCATIONS			
No similar action.	Manage cultural sites types on a site-specific basis according to allocations identified in Appendix K.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES			
Paleontological Resources Program Goal: Identify and protect the paleontological resources within the LSFO.			
Paleontological Resource Program Objectives: 1. Expand paleontological support activity such as data gathering, GIS integration, and Class I surveys. 2. Provide educational and interpretation opportunities for paleontological resources. 3. Improve law enforcement.			
Evaluate all proposed surface	Same as Alternative A, except—	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
disturbing actions to determine inventory needs and sites potentially affected by such activities. Surface disturbing activities in Classes I and II Paleontological Areas will have an inventory performed by a qualified paleontologist with a valid Colorado BLM paleontology permit approved by the authorized officer. Mitigation measures for specific locations will be identified on a case-by-case basis.	Surface disturbing activities in Classes I and II Paleontological Areas devoid of thick soils, vegetation, and steep unsafe cliffs will have an inventory performed by a qualified paleontologist with a valid Colorado BLM paleontology permit.		
An overall paleontological management plan will be developed that addresses the fossil presence in the RMPPA. Separate plans on a smaller scale would be developed to include site-specific or region-specific areas of the RMPPA. These developed plans would address the existing data gaps and research questions that have been developed in the *Little Snake Resource Area Paleontological Overview* (Armstrong and Wolny 1989). These future plans will include the data orientation and collection designs needed to develop the basic knowledge about these resources, which has been lacking in the past.	No similar action.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A.
No similar action.	Standard Discovery Stipulation: If paleontological resources are discovered during exploration operations, the licensee shall immediately notify the Field Office Manager and should not disturb such discovered resources until the Field Office Manager issues specific instructions. Within 5 working days after	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	notification, the Field Office Manager will evaluate any paleontological resources discovered, and determine whether any action would be required to protect or preserve such discoveries. The cost of data recovery for cultural resources discovered during exploration operations will be borne by the licensee, if the licensee is ordered to take any protective measures. Ownership of paleontological resources discovered will be determined in accordance with applicable law.		
SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS			
Goal: Provide special management attention to those areas where it is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important natural, cultural, recreational, or scenic resources and values.			
Objectives: 1. Manage WSAs to protect wilderness characteristics until designated or released by Congress. 2. Manage to protect the values of areas where special management prescriptions are identified. 3. Complete motorized route designations for special management areas that are not closed to motorized vehicle use.			
AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN			
The following sites, totaling 20,910 acres, are designated to protect and enhance the values noted: • Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA (1,400 acres, remnant plant associations, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, scenic quality) • Irish Canyon ACEC, including the Ink Springs area (11,910 acres, remnant plant associations, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, geologic values, cultural resources, scenic quality) • Lookout Mountain ACEC (6,950	Designate no additional ACECs, and remove ACEC designation from all existing ACECs (manage 0 acres as ACEC).	Retain designation of the Irish Canyon ACEC (11,910 acres). The below-listed following areas would not be retained as ACECs. Management of these areas would be as described in the following: • Limestone Ridge (1,400 acres) • Lookout Mountain (6,950 acres) • Cross Mountain Canyon (650 acres).	Retain Irish Canyon ACEC, Limestone Ridge ACEC, Lookout Mountain ACEC, and Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC. In addition, designate the following: • White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC (271,730 acres) • Natural Systems ACECs, which include— – Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC (1,210 acres) – Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC (5,500 acres) – Bull Canyon ACEC (3,390 acres)

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
acres, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, scenic quality) • Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC (650 acres, threatened and endangered species, Colorado BLM Sensitive Plant Species, scenic quality).			– G Gap ACEC (2,230 acres) – Little Juniper Canyon ACEC (20 acres) – Bassett Spring ACEC (110 acres) – No Name Spring ACEC (80 acres) – Pot Creek ACEC (2,240 acres) – Whiskey Springs ACEC (2,760 acres) – Willow Spring ACEC (100 acres) – Deception Creek ACEC (110 acres).
Limestone Ridge			
Retain existing ACEC with the following management: • Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas exploration and development – Mineral Material Sales—Closed – Other Minerals—NSO – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Not applicable • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.	No ACEC designated. • Minerals and Energy—Open to all exploration and development; however, not available for coal leasing. • OHV—Open • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—No restrictions	No ACEC designated. Objective—Protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic quality. Special management attention would not be required to protect the relevant and important values. • Minerals and Energy – CSU/SSR for oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights	Retain existing ACEC with the following management: Objective—Protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic values. • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights
Irish Canyon			
Retain existing ACEC with the following management: • Minerals and Energy – CSU for oil and gas operations – Locatable—Open	No ACEC designated. • Minerals and Energy—Open to all exploration and development; however, not available for coal leasing.	Retain existing ACEC with the following management: Objective—Protect sensitive plant, remnant plant communities, scenic, cultural, and geologic values.	Retain existing ACEC with the following management: Objective—Protect sensitive plant, remnant plant communities, scenic, cultural, and geologic values.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
– Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated • VRM—Not applicable • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.	• OHV—Open • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—No restrictions	• Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development. – Locatable—Recommended for withdrawal – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.	• Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development. – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.
Lookout Mountain			
Retain existing ACEC with the following management: • Minerals and Energy – CSU for oil and gas operations – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated • VRM—Not applicable • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.	No ACEC designated. • Minerals and Energy—Open to all exploration and development; however, not available for coal leasing • OHV—Open • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—No limitations	No ACEC designated. Objective—Protect sensitive plants, remnant plant communities, and scenic quality. • Minerals and Energy – CSU/SSR for oil and gas operations – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated • VRM—Class II and III • Lands and Realty—Renewal of existing and authorization of future ROWs will be allowed on approval of a site-specific development plan consistent with area resource objectives	Retain existing ACEC with the following management: Objective—Protect sensitive plant, remnant plant communities, and scenic values. • Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty— – Existing communication sites may be renewed at the end of their term in accordance with area objectives and current regulations. No new communication sites will be authorized. – Exclusion area for ROWs.
Cross Mountain Canyon (Area is currently within Cross Mountain WSA)			
Retain existing ACEC with the following management:	No ACEC designated, but management would be consistent with	Same as Alternative B.	Retain existing ACEC with the following management:

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
• Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas operations – Mineral Material Sales—Closed – Other Minerals—NSO – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class I • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.	WSA requirements.		Objective—Protect sensitive plants, threatened and endangered species, and scenic values. • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class I • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.
White-Tailed Prairie Dog			
No ACEC designated. Active white-tailed prairie dog colonies are avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities only within black-footed ferret reintroduction area.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	ACEC would be designated. Objective—Protect white-tailed prairie dog habitat. The following management applies only to areas indicated on Map 2-9 containing active/inactive white-tailed prairie dog colonies: • Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated • VRM—No classification related to prairie dog colonies • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area.
Natural Systems ACECs			
No ACEC designated.	No ACEC designated.	No ACEC designated.	ACEC would be designated, which would include the following: • Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC (1,210 acres)

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			• Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC (5,500 acres) • Bull Canyon ACEC (3,390 acres) • G Gap ACEC (2,230 acres) • Little Juniper Canyon ACEC (20 acres) • Bassett Spring ACEC (110 acres) • No Name Spring ACEC (80 acres) • Pot Creek ACEC (2,240 acres) • Whiskey Springs ACEC (2,760 acres) • Willow Spring ACEC (100 acres) • Deception Creek ACEC (110 acres). The objective of these ACECs is to protect sensitive plants and plant communities. The following management applies only to areas indicated on Map 2-9: • Surface Disturbance—SSR • Minerals and Energy – CSU for oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—No classification related to ACECs • Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance area.
WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS			
The Diamond Breaks WSA will be recommended as preliminarily suitable for wilderness designation (RMP/ROD page 22). If Congress does not designate Diamond Breaks as wilderness, the Colorado portion of the WSA (31,810 acres) would be	Diamond Breaks WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it wilderness or releases it for other	Diamond Breaks WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it wilderness or releases it for other	Diamond Breaks WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it wilderness or releases it for other

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
managed as a recreation management unit and the Utah portion (3,900 acres) would be managed by the Vernal District according to existing management framework plans. The area would be closed to OHV use.	uses. If Congress releases Diamond Breaks from wilderness study, it would be managed as multiple use consistent with resource goals and objectives. The area would be closed to OHV use.	uses. If Congress releases Diamond Breaks from wilderness study, it would be managed as follows: • Minerals – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW would be considered on a case-by-case basis.	uses. If Congress releases Diamond Breaks from wilderness study, it would be managed as follows: • Minerals – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area.
The Cross Mountain WSA (including the proposed Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC) will be recommended as preliminarily suitable for wilderness designation. BLM will recommend that the proposed Cross Mountain wilderness remain open to oil and gas leasing with NSO stipulations. If Congress does not designate Cross Mountain as wilderness, the area would be identified as a SRMA (13,620 acres), including the Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC (650 acres).	Cross Mountain WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases Cross Mountain from wilderness study, it would be managed as multiple use consistent with resource goals and objectives.	Cross Mountain WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it wilderness or releases it for other uses. 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. • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area unless associated with valid existing rights.	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
The West Cold Spring WSA will be recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation. If Congress does not designate the area as wilderness, the Colorado portion of West Cold Spring would be managed as the Cold Spring and Little Snake River Management Units (total of 14,660 acres). The Utah portion of the WSA would be managed under the Brown's Park Management Framework Plan.	West Cold Spring WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases West Cold Springs from wilderness study, it would be managed as multiple use consistent with resource goals and objectives.	West Cold Spring WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases West Cold Spring from wilderness study, it would be managed the same as the adjacent wilderness characteristics area: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited (apply adaptive criteria) • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance area; accept wind energy applications on case-by-case basis.	West Cold Spring WSA would be managed to preserve its wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates it wilderness or releases it for other uses. If Congress releases West Cold Springs from wilderness study, it would be managed the same as the adjacent SRMA: • Identify as a backcountry SRMA • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class I • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area; no wind energy.
Four WSAs evaluated under Section 202 of FLPMA (Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears) will be recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation, but would be recommended to the secretary for forwarding to Congress for the final decision. If Congress does not designate these areas as wilderness, they would be managed as follows: • The northwest corner of Ant Hills would be managed as the Douglas Mountain Management Unit and the remainder as the Scattered Sands Management Unit.	Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would be managed to preserve their wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates them wilderness or releases them for other uses. If Congress releases Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears from wilderness study, they would be managed as multiple use consistent with resource goals and objectives.	Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would be managed to preserve their wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates them wilderness or releases them for other uses. 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: • Minerals and Energy	Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs would be managed to preserve their wilderness values according to the IMP (BLM-H-8550-1) and would continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates them wilderness or releases them for other uses. 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 SRMA: • Identify as a backcountry SRMA • Minerals and Energy

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
• Chew Winter Camp would be managed as the Scattered Sands Management Unit. • The northern third of Peterson Draw would be managed as the Scattered Sands Management Unit and the remainder as the Douglas Mountain Management Unit. • Most of the Vale of Tears would be managed as the Little Snake River Management Unit and the other portions in the northwest corner would be managed as the Douglas Mountain and Scattered Sands Management Units (*Little Snake Resource Management Plan* [1989]). • 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.		– Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed • Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited (apply adaptive criteria) • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance area; no wind energy.	– Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated • VRM—Class I • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area; no wind energy.
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.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
WSAs would continue to be managed in compliance with BLM's IMP until they were reviewed and acted on by Congress.	If any or all of the 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 ACEC. Resource allocations restricted because of WSA management policies	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	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 will be initiated.		
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.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS			
BLM would undertake no actions nor permit any activities that could adversely affect or impact any outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) of the Yampa River segment in Cross Mountain (Yampa River segment 3). Yampa River segment 3 is listed in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory List, which makes it eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS. Free-flowing characteristics of identified river segments cannot be modified; to the extent BLM is authorized under law to control stream impoundments, diversions, or other development. As directed by BLM IM-2004-196, manage all of "eligible" river segments to protect their ORVs, free-flowing nature, and tentative classification. In keeping with BLM Manual 8351, .32C and .33 C, suitability determinations would not be made for any of the eligible river segments. They would remain eligible and would	No recommendations as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS.	Determine and manage Yampa River segments 1, 2, and 3 as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS.	Determine and manage all eligible segments and tentative classifications (listed below) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS: • Beaver Creek segment 1 (wild) • Vermillion Creek segment 1 (Lower Vermillion Creek, scenic) • Yampa River segment 1 (River Mile 126 to Milk Creek, recreational) • Yampa River segment 2 (Milk Creek to Duffy Tunnel, scenic) • Yampa River segment 3 (Cross Mountain Canyon, wild).

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
be managed to protect their ORVs, free-flowing nature, and tentative classification to the degree that BLM has authority (i.e., BLM lands within the corridor) and within the parameters of decisions made in the previous planning documents until such time as suitability determinations are made.			
No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.	The following management actions would apply only to the portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. Manage Beaver Creek segment 1 as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS with the tentative classification of "wild." Manage to protect the ORVs, including fish. Specific management prescriptions within 1/4 mile of each side of the river include— • Closed to OHV • Closed to oil and gas leasing • Recommended withdrawal from mineral entry.
No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.	The following management actions would apply only to the portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. Manage Vermillion Creek segment 1 as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, with the tentative classification of "scenic." Manage to protect the ORVs, including cultural and geology. Specific management prescriptions within 1/4 mile of each side of the river include— • Closed to OHV • Closed to oil and gas leasing

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			• Recommended withdrawal from mineral entry.
No similar action.	No similar action.	The following management actions would apply only to the portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. Manage Yampa River segment 1 (2.8 miles from River Mile 126 to Milk Creek area) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, with the tentative classification of "recreational." Manage to protect the ORVs, including recreation and fish. Specific management prescriptions within a 1/4 mile of each side of the river include— • OHV—Limited to designated routes • Oil and Gas Leasing—NSO • Recommended withdrawal from mineral entry. For sites within the segment where habitat loss is a risk, remedial actions would be implemented to ensure that the suitability of the spawning habitat is maintained or enhanced.	The following management actions would only apply to the portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. Manage segment 1 of the Yampa River (2.8 miles from River Mile #126 to Milk Creek area) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS with the tentative classification of "recreational." Manage to protect the ORVs, including recreation and fish. Specific management prescriptions within a 1/4 mile of each side of the river include— • Closed to OHV • Closed to oil and gas leasing • Recommended withdrawal from mineral entry. For sites within the segment where habitat loss is a risk, remedial actions would be implemented to ensure that the suitability of the spawning habitat is maintained or enhanced.
No similar action.	No similar action.	The following management actions would apply only to the portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. Manage Yampa River segment 2 (15.9 miles from Milk Creek to Duffy Tunnel) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, with the tentative classification of "scenic." Manage to protect the ORVs, including recreation and fish. Specific management prescriptions within a 1/4 mile of each side of the river include—	The following management actions would apply only to the portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. Manage Yampa River segment 2 (15.9 miles from Milk Creek to Duffy Tunnel) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, with the tentative classification of "scenic." Manage to protect the ORVs, including recreation and fish. Specific management prescriptions within a 1/4 mile of each side of the river include—

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		• OHV limited to designated routes • Oil and gas leasing would be NSO • Recommended withdrawal from mineral entry. For sites within the segment where habitat loss is a risk, remedial actions would be implemented to ensure that the suitability of the spawning habitat is maintained or enhanced.	• Closed to OHV • Closed to oil and gas leasing • Recommended withdrawal from mineral entry • Closed to livestock grazing during the months of June and July. For sites within the segment where habitat loss is a risk, remedial actions would be implemented to ensure that the suitability of the spawning habitat is maintained or enhanced.
No similar action.	No similar action.	The following management actions would apply only to the portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. Manage Yampa River segment 3 (3.3 miles through Cross Mountain Canyon) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, with the tentative classification of "wild." Manage to protect the ORVs, including scenic, recreation, geologic, and fish. Specific management prescriptions within a 1/4 mile of each side of the river include— • OHV limited to designated routes • Oil and gas leasing would be NSO • Recommended withdrawal from mineral entry.	The following management actions would apply only to the portions of the river segments where the river corridor is managed by BLM. Manage Yampa River segment 3 (3.3 miles through Cross Mountain Canyon) as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, with the tentative classification of "wild." Manage to protect the ORVs, including scenic, recreation, geologic, and fish. Specific management prescriptions within a 1/4 mile of each side of the river include— • Closed to OHV • Closed to oil and gas leasing • Recommended withdrawal from mineral entry.
LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS OUTSIDE EXISTING WSAS			
Vermillion Basin			
The following management would apply: • Minerals and Energy – Open to new oil and gas leasing – Locatable—Open	Objectives • Allow for oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development by using state-of-the-art technology while protecting natural values.	Objectives • Allow coordinated and organized oil and gas development while protecting natural and scenic values. • For all leases in the area, BLM	Identify as a backcountry SRMA with the following management: Objective—Provide quality primitive recreational experiences in largely natural settings.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
– Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Open, some limited to existing • VRM—Not applicable • Lands and Realty—Considered on a case-by-case basis.	• Manage for minimal surface disturbance by focusing development near existing trails, ROWs, canyons, and washes and clustering wells where feasible. • Manage to minimize visual intrusions; Lookout Mountain as observation point • Control infrastructure by requiring pre-planning, including transportation planning. • Lease in larger leases (4 section blocks) to facilitate seismic exploration and allow operators to drill fewer exploration wells. The following management would apply: • Surface Disturbance—SSR • Minerals and Energy – Open to new oil and gas leasing with a CSU stipulation. Stipulation language would reference the above objectives. – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III, Class II for Vermillion Bluffs area • Lands and Realty—Case-by-case basis; avoidance for Vermillion Bluffs and fragile soil areas.	would stipulate that any oil- and gas-related activity or development must take place within a federal oil and gas unit. • All leases would be limited to 2,600 acres in size, and a unit must include at least four leases, for a minimum of 10,000 total acres. • The leases to be included in the unit as well as all the details of the unit agreement will be left to the discretion of leaseholders. • A unit is composed of the area under exploration and development and could also include a “mitigation area.” • Surface disturbance would be limited to 1% of Vermillion Basin at any one time. Existing surface disturbance (i.e., existing routes and ways) is not included in the 1% limitation. Disturbed areas can be recovered on a rolling-reclamation basis. Upon successful reclamation, reclaimed areas would no longer be counted toward the 1% limit, and the total area disturbed in the unit would be decreased by that amount. Successful reclamation is defined in the Reclamation Performance Standard described in Appendix O. • All of Vermillion Basin would be offered for lease simultaneously. However, if only portions of the basin were leased in the first lease sale, development could begin as long as a unit is formed and a POD is approved. Offered parcels within Vermillion Basin that are not nominated in the initial lease sale would be available for a 2-year	• Minerals and Energy – Closed to new oil and gas leasing – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		period for non-competitive leasing. If they were not picked up during this period, they would be available to be nominated for competitive leasing at a later time. These new leases could be added to a unit, thereby increasing the amount of surface that could be disturbed without exceeding the 1% limit. Alternatively, if they are sufficient in size, they could form a new unit. Further explanation is provided in Section 2.5.11.2. • BLM would also stipulate that a POD must be developed for the unit before development would be authorized. BLM recognizes that in the early stage of development of the unit, the POD may not contain more than a few exploratory wells. The POD would be updated annually by the lead operator. A list of POD components is included in Section 2.5.11.2. The following management would apply: • Surface Disturbance—SSR • Minerals and Energy – Open to new oil and gas leasing with a CSU stipulation attached to all leases/units in Vermillion Basin – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes in some areas and closed in other areas • VRM—Class III; Class II for Vermillion Bluffs area	

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		• Lands and Realty—Case-by-case basis; avoidance for Vermillion Bluffs and fragile soil areas.	
Dinosaur North			
Multiple use outside existing WSAs, with the following management: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas leasing with standard stipulations – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Open • VRM—Not applicable • Lands and Realty—No restrictions, case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative A.	No designation, with the following prescriptions: Objective—Manage to protect naturalness, opportunities for semi-primitive recreation, and solitude. • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance area; no wind energy.	Identify as a backcountry SRMA with the following management: Objective—Provide quality primitive recreational experiences in largely natural settings. • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area; no wind energy.
Cold Springs Mountain			
Multiple use outside existing WSAs, with the following management: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas leasing with standard stipulations – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Majority limited to existing, remainder is open • VRM—Not applicable • Lands and Realty—No restrictions, case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative A.	No designation, with the following prescriptions: Objective—Manage to protect naturalness, opportunities for semi-primitive recreation, and solitude. • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance area; accept wind energy applications on case-by-case basis.	Identify as a backcountry SRMA with the following management: Objective—Provide quality primitive recreational experiences in largely natural settings. • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area; no wind energy.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon			
The Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area (19,290 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide unrestricted flatwater river floatboating in the region. See management highlighted under Recreation.	Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area will be identified as an ERMA. See management highlighted under Recreation.	The existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA will be expanded to 27,310 acres (Map 2-36) and identified as the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA to provide quality camping experiences related to river boating in the region and big game hunting. See management highlighted under Recreation.	The existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA will be expanded to 29,380 acres (Map 2-37) and identified as the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA to provide quality camping experiences related to river boating in the region and big game hunting. See management highlighted under Recreation.
VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (VRM)			
VRM Goals: Recognize and manage visual resources for overall multiple use and quality of life for local communities and visitors to public lands.			
VRM Objectives: 1. Maintain VRM characteristics and values as designated by management classes. 2. Land management projects and uses will meet VRM objectives within the boundaries of the designated VRM management class.			
VRM CLASS I			
• WSAs (manage in accordance with the IMP)	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	• WSAs • Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC
VRM CLASS II			
No similar action.	• Vermillion Bluffs	• Suitable WSR corridors • Limestone Ridge area • Irish Canyon ACEC • Portions of Lookout Mountain area • Vermillion Bluffs areas of Vermillion Basin • Dinosaur North wilderness characteristics area • Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (within line of sight from the river within the SRMAs) • Juniper Mountain SRMA (within line-of-sight from the river within the SRMAs)	• Suitable WSR corridors • Limestone Ridge ACEC • Irish Canyon ACEC • Lookout Mountain ACEC • Vermillion Basin SRMA • Dinosaur North SRMA • Cold Springs Mountain SRMA • Cross Mountain area outside WSA • Diamond Breaks area outside WSA • Pinyon Ridge area • Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (within line-of-sight from the river within the SRMAs) • Juniper Mountain SRMA (within line of sight from the river within the

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			SRMAs)
VRM CLASS III			
No similar action.	• Limestone Ridge • Irish Canyon • Portion of Vermillion Basin	• All remaining areas	• All remaining areas
VRM CLASS IV			
No similar action.	• All remaining areas	• Open OHV area in south Sand Wash SRMA • Hiawatha and Powder Wash areas • Regions of Sand Wash Basin • Areas suitable for coal mining	• Hiawatha and Powder Wash areas • Areas suitable for coal mining
ENERGY AND MINERALS			
Oil and Gas			
Goal: Allow for the availability of the federal oil and gas estate (including coalbed natural gas [CBNG]) for exploration and development.			
Objectives: 1. Identify and make available the federal oil and gas estate (including CBNG) for exploration and development. 2. Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of oil and gas resources (including CBNG). 3. Promote the use of BMPs, including implementation of sound reclamation standards.			
Leasing Decisions			
Lease with standard lease terms and conditions and specified stipulations. The RMPPA is available for oil and gas leasing. Areas have been designated for leasing with standard stipulations, seasonal restrictions, avoidance stipulations, performance objectives, or NSO stipulations. Areas where no new leasing is allowed have also been identified. BLM-administered mineral estate within the Little Snake RMPPA is open to oil and gas leasing and development, subject to the lease terms and (as applicable) lease	Lease with standard lease terms and conditions, and non-discretionary stipulations. Resources would be protected and impacts mitigated through site-specific NEPA documents. See Appendix H for explanation of BLM's oil and gas leasing and development process.	Lease with standard lease terms and conditions, and specified stipulations. Exceptions, modifications, and waivers could be provided as detailed in Appendix E.	Lease with standard lease terms and conditions, and specified stipulations. Exceptions, modifications, and waivers could be provided as detailed in Appendix E.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
stipulations noted in Appendix A of the Amendment.			
CLOSED TO OIL AND GAS LEASING			
• WSAs	• WSAs	• WSAs • Dinosaur North • Cold Springs Area (outside WSA) • Irish Canyon ACEC • WSR Yampa River segments 1, 2, and 3	• WSAs • Vermillion Basin • Limestone Ridge ACEC • Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC • Irish Canyon ACEC • All suitable WSR segments • Cross Mountain backcountry area • Diamond Breaks backcountry area • Pinyon Ridge backcountry area • Little Yampa Canyon SRMA • Juniper Mountain SRMA • Cedar Mountain SRMA • Dinosaur North SRMA • Cold Springs Area SRMA
NO SURFACE OCCUPANCY STIPULATIONS			
Leases within the area of federally leased coal lands where oil and gas development would likely be incompatible with coal extraction. Stipulation may be waived if lessee agrees to outlined conditions.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Special Status Plant Species—NSO on habitat areas containing Special Status Species (federally listed, proposed, or candidate). NSO may be altered after important factors are considered in the impact analysis, such as the type and amount of surface disturbance, plant frequency and density, and the relocation of disturbances.	No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.
NSO areas—	No similar action.	NSO areas—	NSO areas—

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
• Limestone Ridge ACEC • Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC • Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA • Cedar Mountain SRMA • Steamboat Lake State Park • Pearl Lake State Park. No exceptions. A complete list of NSO areas, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-11.		• Little Yampa Canyon SRMA (except the southern expansion area). • Juniper Mountain SRMA. • Cedar Mountain SRMA. • Developed recreation sites with established campgrounds, boat ramps, or other developed recreation facilities would be protected by a 40-acre NSO stipulation. • Exceptions would be granted on a case-by-case basis consistent with the criteria identified in Appendix E. • A complete list of NSO areas, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-11.	• Lookout Mountain ACEC. • White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC. • Developed recreation sites with established campgrounds, boat ramps, or other developed recreation facilities would be protected by a 40-acre NSO stipulation. • Exceptions would be granted on a case-by-case basis consistent with the criteria identified in Appendix E. • A complete list of NSO areas, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-11.
CONTROLLED SURFACE USE STIPULATIONS			
No similar action.	Special Status Plant Species—CSU/SSR on habitat areas containing Special Status Species (federally listed, proposed, or candidate). Exception criteria in Appendix E apply.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
Attached to leases where operations proposed within the area of an approved surface or underground coal mine will be relocated outside the area to be mined or to accommodate room and pillar mining operations. Stipulations may be waived subject to outlined conditions.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Fragile Soil Areas—Performance objectives must be met before surface disturbance.	No similar action.	Fragile Soil Areas (see Soils section for performance objectives and fragile soil criteria).	Same as Alternative C.
Before surface disturbance on slopes of 40% or greater, an engineering or	No similar action.	Before surface disturbance on slopes of 35% or greater, an engineering or	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. Stipulations may be accepted subject to an onsite impact analysis. Stipulation not applied where the authorized officer determines that relocation up to 200 meters can be applied to protect the riparian system during well siting.		reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. Stipulations may be accepted subject to an onsite impact analysis. Stipulation not applied where the authorized officer determines that relocation up to 200 meters can be applied to protect the riparian system during well siting.	
Irish Canyon ACEC—Inventory for sensitive plant and remnant vegetation associations will be required. Sensitive plants and associations identified will be avoided. Known geologic values and cultural resources will be avoided. No exceptions.	No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.
Lookout Mountain ACEC—Inventory for sensitive plant and remnant vegetation associations will be required. Sensitive plants and associations identified will be avoided. No exceptions.	No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.
No similar action. A complete list of CSU areas, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-12.	CSU areas— • Vermillion Basin • Dinosaur North • Cold Springs Area (outside WSA) • A complete list of CSU areas, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-12.	CSU areas— • Vermillion Basin • Limestone Ridge area • Lookout Mountain area • A complete list of CSU areas, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-12.	CSU areas— • Natural Systems ACECs • A complete list of CSU areas, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-12.
TIMING LIMITATIONS STIPULATIONS			
No helicopter or motor vehicle use allowed in the wild horse HMA during foaling season (from March 1 to June 30). No exceptions.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A, except that exceptions would be granted according to adaptive criteria established (see Appendix E) and wild horse outcomes as described in wild	The wild horse HMA would be closed to motor vehicle use and all permitted activities during the wild horse foaling period (from March 1 to June 30).

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		horse goals and objectives section and the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act.	
No drilling or development operations permitted within 1-mile radius from March 1 to December 1 from Wild Horse Spring, Sheepherder Spring, Coffee Pot Spring, Two Bar Spring, and Dugout Draw Spring. Exceptions would include provision by the operator of an alternate dependable water source at a suitable location outside the 1-mile radius of the spring before authorized activity.	No similar action.	Same as Alternative A, except that exceptions would be granted according to adaptive criteria established (see Appendix E).	Same as Alternative A.
A complete list of timing stipulations, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-13.	A complete list of timing stipulations, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-13.	A complete list of timing stipulations, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-13.	A complete list of timing stipulations, including those established through protection of wildlife habitat or designation of special management areas, is provided in Table 2-13.
OPEN			
All remaining areas subject to existing standard terms and conditions consistent with applicable law.	All remaining areas subject to existing standard terms and conditions consistent with applicable law.	All remaining areas subject to existing standard terms and conditions consistent with applicable law.	All remaining areas subject to existing standard terms and conditions consistent with applicable law.
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR DEVELOPMENT			
No similar action.	Encourage the use of a variety of BMPs, as defined by "Best Management Practices for Oil and Gas Development on Public Lands," http://www.blm.gov/bmp/. (These BMPs may be changed over time).	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
EXCEPTION, WAIVER, AND/OR MODIFICATION			
Stipulations or restrictions may be waived or reduced if resource conditions change, the protection is no longer necessary, or if the lessee can demonstrate that operations can be conducted without causing	Same as Alternative A.	Exception (case-by-case temporary), waiver (permanent exemption), and modification (change stipulation) criteria would be applied on a case-by-case basis consistent with the process identified in Appendix E.	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
unacceptable impacts.			
COAs will be applied to operational approvals as determined necessary by the authorized officer to protect other resources and values within the terms, conditions, and stipulations of the lease contract.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
VERMILLION BASIN			
Open to leasing subject to standard terms and conditions and specific stipulations.	Open to new oil and gas leasing with a CSU stipulation. Stipulation language would reference the following objectives: • Allow for oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development by using BMPs while protecting natural values • Manage for the least amount of surface disturbance consistent with lease rights by focusing development near existing trails, ROWs, canyons, washes, and clustering wells, where feasible • Manage to minimize visual intrusions; Lookout Mountain as observation point • Control infrastructure by requiring pre-planning, including transportation planning • Lease in larger leases (4 section blocks) to facilitate seismic exploration and allow operators to drill fewer exploration wells.	Open to new oil and gas leasing with a CSU stipulation. Stipulation language would reference the following objectives: • Allow for coordinated and organized oil and gas development while protecting natural and scenic values.. • For all leases in the area, BLM would stipulate that any oil- and gas-related activity or development must take place within a federal oil and gas unit. • All leases would be limited to 2,600 acres in size, and a unit must include at least four leases, for a minimum of 10,000 total acres. • The leases to be included in the unit as well as all the details of the unit agreement will be left to the discretion of leaseholders. • A unit is composed of the area under exploration and development and could also include a “mitigation area.” • Surface disturbance would be limited to 1% of Vermillion Basin at any one time. • All of Vermillion Basin would be offered for lease simultaneously.	Closed to leasing.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		• BLM would also stipulate that a POD must be developed for the unit before development would be authorized.	
SURFACE RECLAMATION			
All disturbed areas not needed for lease operations will be revegetated as soon as possible. The operator will reestablish perennial vegetation that is compatible with surrounding undisturbed vegetation. The plant species to be seeded and the seeding rate will be approved by the authorized officer prior to seeding. Successful revegetation will be considered completed when the percent canopy cover is equal to surrounding undisturbed vegetation. The species considered in measuring percent cover will be those seeded as well as desirable preexisting species. Undesirable weedy species (e.g., kuchia, cheatgrass, and other noxious weeds) will not be included unless otherwise directed by the authorized officer. The operator will continue revegetation efforts using any and all cultural methods available until this standard is met. Noxious weeds, which may be introduced due to soil disturbance and reclamation, will be treated by methods to be approved by the authorized officer. These methods may include biological, mechanical, or chemical methods. If chemical methods are approved, the lessee must submit a Pesticide Use Proposal to the authorized officer 60 days prior to the planned application date.	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 O will be attached as a COA to APDs and associated ROWs. The Surface Reclamation Standard could be modified based on new information or to meet specific needs, but the protection level envisioned in the COAs would be maintained.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
Further detail is provided in Section 2.6.1.2.			
LOCATABLE MINERALS, MINERAL MATERIALS, NON-ENERGY LEASABLE MINERALS, AND OTHERS			
Goal: Allow for the availability of federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, non-energy leasable minerals, and others for exploration and development consistent with national policy.			
Objectives: 1. Identify and make available federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, non-energy leasable minerals, and others for exploration and development. 2. Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of federal locatable minerals, mineral materials, non-energy leasable minerals, and other minerals. 3. Provide mineral materials needed for community and economic purposes. 4. Minimize and eliminate fraudulent claims. 5. Promote the use of BMPS, including implementation of sound reclamation standards.			
All public land is open to mineral entry and development under the General Mining Law of 1872 unless it is proposed for administrative withdrawal or wilderness designation. Locatable mineral exploration and development on public land would be regulated under 43 CFR 3800. All areas open except— • WSAs • Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC.	Same as Alternative A, except that Vermillion Basin would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location.	All areas open, except that the following would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location: • WSAs • WSR suitable segments • Dinosaur North • Cold Springs Mountain • Limestone Ridge • Irish Canyon ACEC • Little Yampa Canyon SRMA.	All areas open, except that the following would be recommended for withdrawal from mineral location: • WSAs • All ACECs • All suitable WSR segments • Vermillion Basin • Dinosaur North • Cross Mountain backcountry area • Diamond Breaks backcountry area • Pinyon Ridge backcountry area • Little Yampa Canyon SRMA • Juniper Mountain SRMA • Cedar Mountain SRMA • South Sand Wash SRMA • Serviceberry SRMA • Fly Creek SRMA • Cold Springs Mountain SRMA.
Applications for removing common variety mineral materials, including sand and gravel, will continue to be processed as they are received. Interdisciplinary review of each	Same as Alternative A.	The following areas would be closed to mineral material sales: • WSAs • Limestone Ridge area	The following areas would be closed to mineral material sales: • WSAs • All ACECs

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
proposal will determine stipulations to protect important surface values. Mineral material sales will not be allowed in the following areas: • WSAs • Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC • Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA • Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA • Cedar Mountain Recreation management unit.		• Lookout Mountain area • Cross Mountain Canyon area • WSR suitable segments • Vermillion Basin • Cedar Mountain SRMA.	• All suitable WSR segments • Vermillion Basin • Dinosaur North • Cross Mountain backcountry area • Diamond Breaks backcountry area • Pinyon Ridge backcountry area • Little Yampa Canyon SRMA • Juniper Mountain SRMA • Cedar Mountain SRMA • Serviceberry SRMA • Cold Springs Mountain SRMA.
BLM will consider leasing geothermal energy resources or other leasable minerals as each application is received. Minerals that are leasable only on lands acquired under the Bankhead Jones Act will be treated as other leasable minerals. In Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC, Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA, Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA, and Cedar Mountain recreation management unit, leasing of other minerals for underground mining will be allowed with NSO stipulations. Leasing for surface mining will not be allowed in these four areas. Existing decisions apply. Specific areas to be consistent with oil and gas leasing categories by alternative (surface only).	Lease specific areas consistent with oil and gas leasing categories above. Underground mining will be allowed throughout the RMPPA, except where limited by applicable law.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
New leases and mineral material sales within fragile soil and water areas (e.g., Vermillion Management Unit) will be subject to the performance objectives described under Soil Resources.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
COAL AND OIL SHALE			
Goal: Allow for the availability of the federal coal and oil shale estate for exploration and development.			
Objectives: 1. Identify and make available the federal coal and oil shale estate for exploration and development consistent with appropriate suitability studies to increase energy supplies. 2. Facilitate reasonable, economical, and environmentally sound exploration and development of federal coal and oil shale estate. 3. Promote the use of BMPs, including implementation of sound reclamation standards.			
Coal			
Approximately 638,800 acres (containing an estimated 5.8 billion tons of coal) are acceptable for further consideration for federal coal leasing. Of this total, approximately 457,090 acres (an estimated 4.2 billion tons of coal) are acceptable for further consideration for leasing for surface or underground development.	Lands found acceptable in RMP will be available for further consideration for leasing and exchange; however, all lands determined to be suitable, unsuitable, or unacceptable for further consideration for leasing and exchange may be reviewed, and suitability determinations modified based on new data during activity planning efforts. Unsuitability criteria apply only to surface coal mining, not 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.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B, but only 594,670 acres are suitable for surface mining after no lease decision for Little Yampa Canyon SRMA.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	• T. 9 N., R. 86 W. The coal planning area contains approximately 671,170 acres of federal coal lands that are available for underground coal mining. Unsuitability criteria were applied to these lands to determine areas unsuitable for surface mining. Results are shown in Appendix C. After applying unsuitability criteria and exceptions, approximately 621,980 acres are acceptable for further consideration for leasing for surface or underground development.		
Approximately 181,670 acres (an estimated 1.3 billion tons of coal) are acceptable for further consideration for leasing for underground development only (RMP/ROD pages 7–8). Approximately 266 million tons of coal throughout the region are not available for surface mining.	No similar action (see above).	No similar action (see above).	No similar action (see above).
Site-specific activity planning, including additional environmental analysis, is needed before a decision to lease specific tracts can be made.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Exploratory drilling will be allowed to obtain sufficient data for resource management decisions and fair market value determinations.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
NSO stipulations will be used to protect Cross Mountain Canyon and Limestone Ridge ACECs, Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon, Cedar Mountain SRMAs, Steamboat Lake and Pearl Lake State Parks, coal mines where development would be incompatible with the planned coal extraction, grouse, raptor, bald eagle,	Same as Alternative A. In addition, Stagecoach State Park would also be designated NSO/NGD.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
peregrine falcon, Mexican spotted owl, waterfowl and shorebird nests, and Special Status Plant Species.			
CSU stipulations will be used to protect coal mines from oil and gas development where the mining method or location is such that location of subsequent wells can avoid significant conflicts, fragile soil areas, steep slopes, riparian/wetland vegetation, Irish Canyon, and Lookout Mountain ACECs.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Oil Shale			
BLM will consider leasing other leasable minerals as each application is received (ROD page 10).	BLM will consider leasing oil shale as each application is received. Lands available for leasing are consistent with lands available for oil and gas leasing or coal leasing, depending on the extraction method (e.g., in situ or mined).	Same as Alternative B; recognizing that different areas will be open to leasing because of consistency with oil and gas and coal decisions under this alternative.	Same as Alternative B; recognizing that different areas will be open to leasing because of consistency with oil and gas and coal decisions under this alternative.
LIVESTOCK GRAZING			
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. **Goal B:** Provide for efficient management of livestock grazing allotments. **Goal C:** Contribute to the stability and sustainability of the livestock industry.			
Goal A Objectives: 1. Maintain and improve forage species diversity and abundance by managing to meet plant reproductive and physiological needs. 2. Minimize conflicts between livestock and other grazing animals in areas of increased pressure on forage and riparian zones. 3. Manage plant use by all foraging species at a level that maintains plant health and protects watersheds. **Goal B Objective:** 1. To sustain flexible and viable agriculture operations, allow the opportunity to create reserve conservation allotment (RCA) by partnering with State, federal, or private landowners when lands or permits become available without requiring involuntary AUM retirements or transfers. An RCA is an 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 an approved rangeland restoration/recovery project.			
Appropriate actions for improving allotments that do not meet *Standards*	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
and Guides could include, but would not be limited to, adjustment of permitted AUMs, modified turnout dates, livestock water developments, range improvements, modified grazing periods, growing season rest, modified grazing systems, closing areas, riparian pastures, exclosures, implementation of forage utilization levels, and livestock conversions.			
Allow livestock grazing using federal preference (166,895 AUMs) until monitoring studies are completed.	Manage livestock grazing using *Standards and Guides* process while working closely with permittees to increase livestock forage.	Same as Alternative B.	Manage livestock grazing using *Standards and Guides* process to improve habitat for other resources.
Monitor rangelands on M and I category allotments to yield information needed to make decisions on livestock stocking rates, proceeding as funding and staff allow from worst to better forage conditions as established by 1981–1983 rangeland inventories, and including 13 conflict allotments (numbers 4203, 4206, 4207, 4209, 4210, 4219, 4225, 4302, 4431, 4332, 4520, 4521, 4522).	Monitor rangelands focusing on allotments where land health standards have not been met or riparian assessments are “functioning at risk” or show a “downward trend.”	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
Work closely with CDOW to reduce livestock/big game conflicts that would improve vegetative and forage conditions.	Work closely with CDOW to reduce livestock/big game conflicts, focusing on decreasing big game populations.	Same as Alternative A.	Reduce livestock/big game conflicts, which would improve vegetative and forage conditions, by focusing on decreasing livestock use.
Implement vegetation land treatments on 68 allotments. Use such treatments as interseeding, burning and reseeding, spraying, and plowing and reseeding. Adhere to established procedures and design specifications to protect all resource uses and values. Complete a benefit/cost analysis and environmental analysis before any	When consistent with healthy rangeland ecosystems, emphasize vegetation treatments to increase forage production.	When consistent with healthy rangeland ecosystems, emphasize vegetation treatments to maintain a variety of habitats and sustainable livestock grazing. See Vegetation section for treatment targets.	When consistent with healthy rangeland ecosystems, emphasize vegetation treatments to maintain or increase a variety of habitats for wildlife species. See Vegetation section for treatment targets.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
treatments are implemented.			
Construct range improvement projects on 69 allotments. Use improvements that will control livestock use, improve distribution, and improve riparian/wetland habitat. Complete a benefit/cost analysis and environmental analysis before any projects are implemented.	Consider range improvement developments for the purpose of increasing livestock forage where they are economically feasible and consistent with other resources.	Consider range improvement developments for the purpose of improving rangeland diversity, condition, and sustainability, by such actions as control of pinyon-juniper encroachment and decadent sagebrush.	Range improvements would be allowed only to maintain sustainable natural diversity of plant communities, and only when identified through the Rangeland Health assessment process.
The two existing RCAs (Experiment Station and College Station) would remain and continue to be used for emergency situations.	Criteria in Appendix F would be used to establish RCAs. Management plans will be developed for all allotments to be used as an RCA. Criteria for Permittee/Lessee Use— • 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.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
No similar action.	All lands that have been acquired through exchanges since completion of the last RMP, and all lands that will be acquired in the future, unless noted specifically otherwise, will be open to grazing.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
RECREATION			
Goal A: Provide a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities, activities, and experiences for various user groups. **Goal B:** Provide visitor services including interpretive and educational information. **Goal C:** Support tourism efforts for local economic diversification associated with public land resources.			
Goal A Objectives: 1. Increase managed motorized and non-motorized use trails.			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
2. Focus development of non-motorized/non-mechanized trails in backcountry areas or where public demand warrants. 3. Provide legal public access opportunities for recreational uses. 4. Manage for special recreation permit (SRP) services. 5. Identify strategies and decisions that could be applied to protect or preserve primitive and semi-primitive areas to provide solitude and backcountry opportunities. 6. Manage motorized recreation to reduce impacts on big game hunt quality and to promote successful big game harvest n BLM lands. **Goal B Objectives:** 1. Provide developed facilities in heavy use areas where use is affecting resources and experiences. 2. Use education as a means to further resource protection. 3. Enhance recreational experiences by providing boundary signing and information, and managing campsites and access. 4. Continue to coordinate with organized interpretive associations. **Goal C Objectives:** 1. Maintain cooperative agreements with Colorado State Parks, Moffat County, and Moffat County Sheriff for management of the Yampa River. 2. Continue to coordinate with local and regional recreation economic development organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce and community organizations. 3. Pursue cooperative agreements with other agencies and governments.			
SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREAS			
Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon			
The Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area (19,290 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide unrestricted flatwater river float-boating in the region.	Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area will be identified as an ERMA. See ERMA objectives below.	The existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA will be expanded by 8,020 acres (Map 2-36) and identified as the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA to provide camping experiences related to river boating in the region and big game hunting.	The existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA will be expanded to 29,380 acres (Map 2-37) and identified as the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA to provide camping experiences related to river boating in the region and big game hunting.
Zone 1—Yampa River corridor Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Flatwater boating (including non-motorized and motorized boating) and camping • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy canyon and river aesthetics, test endurance, and participate in risk-	No similar action.	Zone 1—Yampa River corridor Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Non-motorized boating, motorized boating, camping • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy canyon and river aesthetics, test endurance, and participate in risk-taking adventure	Zone 1—Yampa River corridor Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Non-motorized boating, limited motorized boating, camping • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy canyon and river aesthetics and solitude/isolation from others and services, test endurance, and

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
taking adventure • Benefits—Improved skills for outdoor enjoyment with others, heightened sense of satisfaction with community, and sense of adventure Prescribed Setting Character • Physical—Middle Country east of Milk Creek, backcountry west of Milk Creek • Social—Middle Country east of Milk Creek, backcountry west of Milk Creek • Administrative—Backcountry Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Access will be negotiated for parking areas at put-in and take-out points. Other facilities will be constructed as needed for public sanitation and safety. • Marketing—Develop a map/brochure to promote visitor health and safety, provide resource protection, and inform the public of available opportunities. Involve Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach. • Monitoring—Monitor motorized river boating to gauge if management actions and resulting use are producing targeted recreation opportunities and facilitating their attainment as outcomes. Monitor campsite conditions and use. Administration:		• Benefits—Improved skills for outdoor enjoyment with others, heightened sense of satisfaction with community, and sense of adventure Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle Country east of Milk Creek, Backcountry west of Milk Creek • Social—Middle Country east of Milk Creek, backcountry west of Milk Creek. • Administrative—Backcountry Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Modify roads and trails as needed to mitigate impacts • Marketing—Involve Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach. • Monitoring—In conjunction with State Parks, monitor motorized river boating to gauge if management actions and resulting use are producing targeted recreation opportunities and facilitating their attainment as outcomes. Monitor campsite conditions and use. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Recommended for withdrawal – Mineral Material Sales—Closed – Coal—Underground mining will be allowed with NSO stipulations • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II for areas within line	participate in risk-taking adventure • Benefits—Improved skills for outdoor enjoyment with others, heightened sense of satisfaction with community, sense of adventure, close relationship with the natural world, and conservation of entire ecosystems in natural state Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle Country east of Milk Creek, backcountry west of Milk Creek • Social—Backcountry • Administrative—Primitive Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Close and restore roads that have no administrative benefit. Restrict motorized access to the river. • Marketing—Involve Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach. • Monitoring—Monitor motorized river boating to gauge if management actions and resulting use are producing targeted recreation opportunities and facilitating their attainment as outcomes. Monitor campsite conditions and use. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Closed • OHV—8,820 acres Closed; 20,560 acres limited to designated routes

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
• Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas exploration and development – Mineral Material Sales—Closed – Other Minerals—NSO – Coal—Underground mining will be allowed with NSO stipulations • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Not determined		of sight from the river within the SRMA; Class III in all other areas • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives	• VRM—Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA; Class III in all other areas • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives.
<u>Zone 2—North of CR 17</u> No similar action. This area was not included in the SRMA.	No similar action.	<u>Zone 2—North of CR 17</u> Niche—Destination Objective: • Activities—Predominantly motorized big game hunting and some non-motorized hunting, camping, and wildlife watching • Experiences—Develop skills and abilities; gain greater sense of achievement • Benefits—Greater self-reliance gained from hunting; improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence; positive contributions to local and regional economic stability Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle country • Social—Middle country • Administrative—Middle country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide camping facilities and improved roads to these facilities in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. • Marketing—In partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and	<u>Zone 2—North of CR 17</u> Niche—Destination Objective: • Activities—Predominantly non-motorized big game hunting and some motorized hunting, camping, and wildlife watching • Experiences—Develop skills and abilities; gain greater sense of achievement; enjoy physical exercise; feel good about solitude and isolation from other people and from services • Benefits—Greater self-reliance gained from hunting; improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence; positive contributions to local and regional economic stability; closer relationship with the natural world; conservation of entire ecosystems in natural state Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Backcountry • Social—Backcountry • Administrative—Backcountry Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide camping facilities in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		conflicts. • Monitoring—Monitor user experience and satisfaction, campsite conditions, and use. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Open – Other Mineral—Open – Coal—Open • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA; Class III in all other areas • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives	• Marketing—In partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. • Monitoring—Monitor user experience and satisfaction, campsite conditions, and use. Monitor to ensure compliance with motor vehicle closures. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Closed • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA, Class III in all other areas • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives
Juniper Mountain			
Juniper Mountain is currently managed within the Little Yampa /Juniper Canyon SRMA. See Little Yampa Canyon SRMA.	Juniper Mountain will be identified as an ERMA. See ERMA objectives below.	The Juniper Canyon portion of the existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA will be identified as the Juniper Mountain SRMA.	The Juniper Canyon portion of the existing Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA will be identified as the Juniper Mountain SRMA.
No similar action.	No similar action.	Zone 1—Yampa River corridor Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Day use motorized and non-motorized boating • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy canyon and river aesthetics, test	Zone 1—Yampa River corridor Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Day use non-motorized boating and limited motorized boating • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		endurance, and participate in risk-taking adventure • Benefits—Improved skills for outdoor enjoyment with others, heightened sense of satisfaction with community, and greater sense of adventure Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle country • Social—Middle country • Administrative—Middle country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Modify roads and trails as needed to mitigate impacts • Marketing—Involve Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach. • Monitoring—In conjunction with Colorado State Parks, monitor motorized river boating to gauge if the use is changing the desired recreation experience. Administration : • Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Open • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA; Class III in all other areas • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives	canyon and river aesthetics, feel good about solitude and isolations from others and from services, test endurance, and participate in risk-taking adventure • Benefits—Improved skills for outdoor enjoyment with others, heightened sense of satisfaction with community, greater sense of adventure, and closer relationship with the natural world Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle country • Social—Backcountry • Administrative—Backcountry Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Close and restore roads that have no administrative benefit. • Marketing—Involve Colorado State Parks in developing interpretation, education, and public outreach. • Monitoring—Monitor user experience and satisfaction Administration : • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Closed • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA; Class III in all other areas • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
No similar action.	No similar action.	Zone 2—Outside river corridor Niche—Destination Objective: • Activities—Hunting and camping • Experiences—Opportunity to develop skills and abilities and to gain a greater sense of achievement • Benefits—Greater self-reliance gained from hunting; improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence; and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle Country • Social—Middle Country • Administrative—Middle Country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide camping facilities in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. Develop a managed and maintained motorized trail system within the area during hunting season. • Marketing—Work with Chambers of Commerce, adjacent landowners, and permitted outfitters to provide access and hunting experiences. • Monitoring—Monitor campsite conditions and use as well as user experience and satisfaction. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Open	Zone 2—Outside river corridor Niche—Destination Objective: • Activities—Hunting and camping • Experiences—Opportunity to develop skills and abilities and to gain a greater sense of achievement • Benefits—Greater self-reliance gained from hunting; improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence; and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle country • Social—Middle country • Administrative—Middle country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide camping facilities in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. Develop a managed and maintained non-motorized trail system within the area during hunting season. • Marketing—Work with Chambers of Commerce, adjacent landowners, and permitted outfitters to provide access and hunting experiences. • Monitoring—Monitor campsite conditions and use, user experience and satisfaction. Monitor to ensure compliance with motor vehicle closures. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		– Coal—Open • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA; Class III in all other areas • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives	– Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Closed • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II for areas within line of sight from the river within the SRMA; Class III in all other areas • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives
Cedar Mountain			
No similar action.	Cedar Mountain is managed as an ERMA. See ERMA objectives below.	The Cedar Mountain area (900 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide opportunities near the City of Craig for hiking, nature interpretation, and picnicking.	Same as Alternative C.
No similar action.	No similar action.	Zone 1—Picnic area Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Day use picnicking, hiking, and wildlife viewing • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy access to close-to-home outdoor activities, easy access to natural landscapes, and the closeness of family • Benefits—Improved physical fitness, improved maintenance of physical facilities, increased awareness of natural landscapes, and stronger ties with family and friends. Improved appreciation for the Yampa Valley and surrounding areas by vantage points. Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Rural • Social—Rural	Zone 1—Picnic area Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Day use picnicking, hiking, and wildlife viewing • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy access to close-to-home outdoor activities, easy access to natural landscapes, and the closeness of family • Benefits—Improved physical fitness, improved maintenance of physical facilities, increased awareness of natural landscapes, and stronger ties with family and friends. Improved appreciation for the Yampa Valley and surrounding areas by vantage points. Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Rural • Social—Rural

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		• Administrative—Rural Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Vehicle parking for picnicking and trail use will be provided. Overnight camping and discharging of firearms not associated with hunting is prohibited. • Marketing—Coordinate with City of Craig, Chambers of Commerce, communication site providers, and local sport shops to provide maps, brochures, and other recreation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure user experiences are as intended. Monitor compliance with restrictions and trail maintenance conditions. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas leasing – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Closed • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty— – Require collocation of communication facilities – Avoidance area for additional ROW	• Administrative—Rural Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Vehicle parking for picnicking and trail use will be provided. Overnight camping and discharging of firearms is prohibited. Recreational use of area would be restricted to day use (6 a.m. to 10 p.m.). • Marketing—Coordinate with City of Craig, Chambers of Commerce, communication site providers, and local sport shops to provide maps, brochures, and other recreation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure user experiences are as intended. Monitor compliance with restrictions and trail maintenance conditions. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas leasing – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Closed • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty— – Require collocation of communication facilities – Exclusion area for additional ROW
No similar action.	No similar action.	Zone 2—Trail system Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Hiking, jogging, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing	Zone 2—Trail system Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Hiking, jogging, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		• Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy access to close-to-home outdoor activities, easy access to natural landscapes, and the closeness of family. • Benefits—Improved physical fitness, improved maintenance of physical facilities, increased awareness of natural landscapes, and increased knowledge of wildlife, natural landscapes, and ecology. Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Rural • Social—Rural • Administrative—Rural Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide and maintain a managed non-motorized trail system. • Marketing—Coordinate with City of Craig, Chambers of Commerce, communication site providers, and local sport shops to provide maps, brochures, and other recreation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure user experiences are as intended. Monitor compliance with restrictions and trail maintenance conditions. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – NSO for oil and gas leasing – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Closed • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty	• Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy access to close-to-home outdoor activities, easy access to natural landscapes, and the closeness of family. • Benefits—Improved physical fitness, improved maintenance of physical facilities, increased awareness of natural landscapes, and increased knowledge of wildlife, natural landscapes, and ecology. Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Rural • Social—Rural • Administrative—Rural Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide and maintain a managed non-motorized and non-mechanized trail system. • Marketing—Coordinate with City of Craig, Chambers of Commerce, communication site providers, local sport shops, and CDOW to provide maps, brochures, and other recreation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure user experiences are as intended. Monitor compliance with restrictions and trail maintenance conditions. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas leasing – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Closed • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		– Require collocation of communication facilities – Avoidance area for additional ROW	– Require collocation of communication facilities – Exclusion area for additional ROW
South Sand Wash			
Currently, the south Sand Wash area is managed as open to cross-country OHV use within the ERMA.	Same as Alternative A.	The south Sand Wash area (35,510 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide OHV experiences.	Same as Alternative C.
No similar action.	No similar action.	Zone 1—Road corridors Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Motorized recreation experiences and associated developed and undeveloped camping • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy risk-taking adventure, the closeness of family, and escape from everyday stress and responsibilities • Benefits—Increased local tax and tourism revenue, greater family bonding, reduced negative impacts (e.g., litter and disturbance to wildlife and wild horses), enhanced awareness and understanding of nature, and recreation opportunities Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Rural • Social—Rural • Administrative—Rural Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Coordinate with Moffat County and stakeholder groups to improve county road access in south Sand Wash and to gravel the surface of these county roads. Provide trailhead, parking	Zone 1—Road corridors Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Motorized recreation experiences and associated developed and undeveloped camping • Experiences— Opportunity to enjoy risk-taking adventure, the closeness of family, and escape from everyday stress and responsibilities • Benefits—Increased local tax and tourism revenue, greater family bonding, reduced negative impacts (e.g., litter and disturbance to wildlife and wild horses), enhanced awareness and understanding of nature, and recreation opportunities Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Rural • Social—Rural • Administrative—Rural Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Coordinate with Moffat County and stakeholder groups to improve county road access in south Sand Wash and to gravel the surface of these county roads. Provide trailhead, parking

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		and developed camping facilities. • Marketing—Coordinate with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide facilities, road improvements, and interpretation. • Monitoring—In coordination with local stewardship and motorized recreation groups, monitor to determine how many developed campsites and how much trailhead parking is needed, what the development levels are, and additional service needs to enhance user experiences and meet expectations. Monitor user experience and satisfaction. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Oil and Gas Leasing—Open – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Open • Developed Recreation Sites—Closed to all mineral actions • VRM—Class IV • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives	and developed camping facilities. • Marketing—Coordinate with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide facilities, road improvements, and interpretation. • Monitoring—In coordination with local stewardship and motorized recreation groups, monitor to determine how many developed campsites and how much trailhead parking is needed, what their development levels are, and additional service needs to enhance user experiences and meet expectations. Monitor user experience and satisfaction. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Oil and Gas Leasing—Open – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • Developed Recreation Sites—Closed to all mineral actions • VRM—Class IV • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives
No similar action.	No similar action.	<u>Zone 2—Open play area</u> Market—Community Objective: • Activities—Off-road motorized recreation experiences • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy risk-taking adventure, the closeness	<u>Zone 2—Designated routes area</u> Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Single-track and double-track OHV riding, novice to expert levels • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		of family, and developing riding skills and abilities • Benefits—Enhanced sense of personal freedom, reduced mental stress, greater sense of adventure, improved maintenance of physical facilities, and positive contribution to local economy Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Rural • Social—Rural • Administrative—Rural Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Identify and sign main access routes through the area. • Marketing—Coordinate with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide maps, brochures, and interpretation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to determine if or when this use approaches or exceeds resource capacity. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Oil and gas leasing—Open – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Open • VRM—Class IV • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives	risk-taking adventure and new challenges, and temporarily escape everyday responsibilities • Benefits—Greater retention of desired recreation experience, reduced negative impacts (e.g., litter, vegetative trampling, and unplanned trails), positive contribution to local economy, and enhanced sense of personal freedom Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Front country • Social—Front country • Administrative—Front country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Together with user groups and local government, identify and sign a system of trails to accommodate a wide range of vehicle types and difficulty levels. Crucial winter range and other seasonally limited wildlife habitat areas would be closed to surface disturbing activities. • Marketing—Coordinate with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide maps, brochures, interpretation information, and route planning and development. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure user experiences and expectations are being met and to ensure that resources are protected. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Oil and gas leasing—Open

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			– Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class IV • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives
No similar action.	No similar action.	<u>Zone 3—Designated routes area</u> Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Single-track and double-track OHV riding, novice to expert levels. • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy risk-taking adventure and new challenges and to temporarily escape everyday responsibilities • Benefits—Greater retention of desired recreation experience, reduced negative impacts (e.g., litter, vegetative trampling, and unplanned trails), positive contribution to local economy, and enhanced sense of personal freedom. Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Front country • Social—Front country • Administrative—Front country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Together with user groups and local government, identify and sign a system of trails to accommodate a wide range of vehicle types and difficulty levels. Crucial winter range and other seasonally limited wildlife habitat	<u>Zone 3—Designated routes area</u> Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Single-track and double-track OHV riding, novice to expert levels. • Experiences—Opportunity to enjoy risk-taking adventure and new challenges and to temporarily escape everyday responsibilities • Benefits—Greater retention of desired recreation experience, reduced negative impacts (e.g., litter, vegetative trampling, and unplanned trails), positive contribution to local economy, and enhanced sense of personal freedom. Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Front country • Social—Front country • Administrative—Front country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Together with user groups and local government, identify and sign a system of trails to accommodate a wide range of vehicle types and difficulty levels. Crucial winter range and other seasonally limited wildlife habitat

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		areas would be closed to surface disturbing activities. • Marketing—Coordinate with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide maps, brochures, interpretation information, and route planning and development. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure user experiences are as intended and expectations are being met, and to ensure that resources are protected. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Oil and gas leasing—Open – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives	areas would be closed to surface disturbing activities. • Marketing—Coordinate with local OHV groups, commercial motorized vehicle suppliers, Chambers of Commerce, and Moffat County to provide maps, brochures, interpretation information, and route planning and development. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure user experiences are as intended and expectations are being met, and to ensure that resources are protected. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Oil and gas leasing—Open – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives
Serviceberry			
The Serviceberry area is open to OHV use under the current RMP; however, it is temporarily closed to OHV use. This area is currently managed as part of the ERMA.	Same as Alternative A, except that temporary OHV closures would be removed and managed as open to OHV use.	The Serviceberry area (12,380 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide backcountry, non-motorized hunting experiences.	Same as Alternative C.
No similar action.	No similar action.	Zone 1—Willow Creek and north Serviceberry access Niche—Destination Objective: • Activities—Non-motorized hunting and associated camping • Experiences—Developing your skills	Zone 1—Willow Creek and north Serviceberry access Niche—Destination Objective: • Activities—Non-motorized hunting and associated camping • Experiences—Developing your skills

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		and abilities, gaining a greater sense of achievement • Benefits—Reduced wildlife disturbance from recreation users, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle country • Social—Middle country • Administrative—Middle country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide camping facilities and improved roads to these facilities in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. Develop a managed and maintained trail system within the area. • Marketing—In partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. • Monitoring—Monitor user experience and satisfaction, and campsite conditions and use. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III	and abilities, gaining a greater sense of achievement • Benefits—Reduced wildlife disturbance from recreation users, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Middle country • Social—Middle country • Administrative—Middle country Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide camping facilities in high-impact areas related to hunting season uses. Develop a managed and maintained trail system within the area. • Marketing—In partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. • Monitoring—Monitor user experience and satisfaction, and campsite conditions and use. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—Determined on a

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		• Lands and Realty—Determined on a case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives	case-by-case basis consistent with SRMA objectives
No similar action.	No similar action.	Zone 2—Serviceberry Backcountry Objective: • Activities—Non-motorized big game hunting and associated undeveloped camping • Experiences—Opportunity to develop skills and abilities and to gain a greater sense of achievement • Benefits—Reduced wildlife disturbance from recreation users, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Backcountry • Social—Backcountry • Administrative—Backcountry Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Develop a managed and maintained non-motorized trail system within the area. • Marketing—In partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. • Monitoring—Monitor user experience and satisfaction, and campsite conditions and use. Monitor to ensure compliance with motor vehicle closures.	Zone 2—Serviceberry Backcountry Objective: • Activities—Non-motorized big game hunting and associated undeveloped camping • Experiences—Opportunity to develop skills and abilities and to gain a greater sense of achievement • Benefits—Reduced wildlife disturbance from recreation users, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Backcountry • Social—Backcountry • Administrative—Backcountry Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Develop a minimally managed and maintained non-motorized trail system within the area. • Marketing—In partnership with CDOW and local Chambers of Commerce, increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. • Monitoring—Monitor user experience and satisfaction, and campsite conditions and use. Monitor to ensure compliance with

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—ROW would be considered on a case-by-case basis	motor vehicle closures. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—ROW would be considered on a case-by-case basis
Fly Creek			
The Fly Creek area is open to OHV use under the current RMP; however, it is temporarily closed to OHV use. This area is currently managed as part of the ERMA.	Same as Alternative A, except that temporary OHV closures would be removed and managed as open to OHV use.	The Fly Creek area (12,340 acres) will be administered as a backcountry, non-motorized hunting area. Increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. Develop a managed and maintained non-motorized trail system within the area. Management: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—ROW would be considered on a case-by-case basis.	The Fly Creek area (12,340 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide backcountry, non-motorized hunting experiences. <u>All one zone</u> Niche—Destination Objective: • Activities—Non-motorized big game hunting and associated undeveloped camping • Experiences—Opportunity to develop skills and abilities and to gain a greater sense of achievement • Benefits—Reduced wildlife disturbance from recreational users, reduced hunter conflicts, greater self-reliance gained from hunting, improved outdoor knowledge and self-confidence, and positive contributions to local and regional economic stability. Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Backcountry • Social—Primitive

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			• Administrative—Backcountry Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Develop a managed and maintained non-motorized trail system within the area. Increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. Maintain property boundary signing. • Marketing—Coordinate with CDOW, local adjacent landowners, and permitted outfitters to provide hunting and recreation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure compliance with motor vehicle closures. Monitor user experience and satisfaction. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Open to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—ROW would be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Dinosaur North Area (outside of WSA)			
Multiple use outside existing WSAs, with the following management: • Minerals and Energy – CSU for oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing	Same as Alternative A.	No designation, with the following prescriptions: Objective—Manage to protect naturalness, opportunities for semi-primitive recreation, and solitude • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development	The Dinosaur North area (45,620 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide primitive recreational experiences in largely natural settings. <u>All one zone</u> Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Hiking, backpacking,

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
• OHV—Open • VRM—Not applicable • Lands and Realty—No restrictions, case-by-case basis.		– Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance; no wind energy.	horseback riding, camping, and hunting • Experiences—Solitude and isolation, sense of independence, and physical exercise • Benefits—Closer relationship with the natural world, improved physical fitness, greater retention of distinctive natural landscapes, and conservation of entire ecosystems in natural state Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Primitive • Social—Primitive • Administrative—Primitive Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide minimally developed trailhead parking and interpretive information adjacent to roads that provide access to the edges of access points. • Marketing—Coordinate with Chambers of Commerce, non-motorized recreation organizations, and adjacent landowners to provide maps, brochures, and recreation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure compliance with motor vehicle closures. Monitor user experience and satisfaction. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			• OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion; no wind energy
Cold Springs Area (outside of WSA)			
Multiple use outside existing WSAs, with the following management: • Minerals and Energy – CSU for oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Open – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Majority limited to existing, remainder is open • VRM—Not applicable • Lands and Realty—No restrictions, case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative A.	No designation, with the following prescriptions: Objective—Manage to protect naturalness, provide opportunities for semi-primitive recreation and solitude. • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Limited to designated routes • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—ROW avoidance; accept wind energy applications on case-by-case basis.	The Cold Springs Mountain area (30,470 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide primitive recreational experiences in largely natural settings. <u>All one zone</u> Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, camping, and hunting • Experiences—Solitude and isolation, greater sense of independence, and physical exercise • Benefits—Closer relationship with the natural world, improved physical fitness, greater retention of distinctive natural landscapes, and conservation of functioning ecosystems in natural state Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Primitive • Social—Primitive • Administrative—Primitive Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide minimally developed trailhead parking and interpretive information adjacent to roads that provide access to the edges of access points. Provide minimally managed and signed trail system.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			• Marketing—Coordinate with Browns Park Wildlife Refuge, Chambers of Commerce, non-motorized recreation organizations, and adjacent landowners to provide maps, brochures, and recreation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure compliance with motor vehicle closures. Monitor user experience and satisfaction. Administration: • Minerals and Energy— – Closed to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion; no wind energy
Vermillion Basin Area (outside of WSA)			
No SRMA would be designated. Area would be managed as described in the Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs section.	No SRMA would be designated. Area would be managed as described in the Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs section.	No SRMA would be designated. Area would be managed as described in the Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs section.	The Vermillion Basin area (77,080 acres) will be identified as a SRMA to provide primitive recreational experiences in largely natural settings. <u>All one zone</u> Niche—Community Objective: • Activities—Hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, camping, and hunting • Experiences—Solitude and isolation, greater sense of independence, and physical exercise • Benefits—Closer relationship with

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			the natural world, improved physical fitness, greater retention of distinctive natural landscapes, and conservation of functioning ecosystems in natural state Prescribed Setting Character: • Physical—Primitive • Social—Primitive • Administrative—Primitive Activity Planning Framework: • Management—Provide minimally developed trailhead parking and interpretive information adjacent to roads that provide access to the edges of access points. Provide minimally managed and signed trail system. • Marketing—Coordinate with Chambers of Commerce, non-motorized recreation organizations, and adjacent landowners in to provide maps, brochures, and recreation information. • Monitoring—Monitor to ensure compliance with motor vehicle closures. Monitor user experience and satisfaction. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to new oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—Exclusion area

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
EXTENSIVE RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREAS			
The remainder of the RMPPA will receive limited management as an ERMA where recreation use is dispersed and requires only minimal management. BLM will provide basic information on public safety and recreation opportunities within the RMPPA, and provide access and minimal facilities as demand warrants.	All BLM-managed lands within the planning area that are not identified as a SRMA in an ERMA. Objectives for the ERMA are as follows: • Visitor Health and Safety – Provide direction and destination signing for public safety and service – Achieve greater understanding of safety hazards and risks associated with recreation activities • User Conflicts – Focus public land boundary signing in fragmented lands to reduce trespass onto private lands – Monitor user conflicts to determine if changes in transportation planning or other activity planning are needed • Resource Protection – Monitor resource conditions to determine if changes in transportation planning or other activity planning are needed – Use education as a means to further resource protection	All BLM-managed lands within the planning area that are not identified as a SRMA in an ERMA. Objectives for the ERMA are as follows: • Visitor Health and Safety – Provide direction and destination signing for public safety and service – Achieve greater understanding of safety hazards and risks associated with recreation activities • User Conflicts – Focus public land boundary signing in fragmented lands to reduce trespass onto private lands – Monitor user conflicts and apply criteria in Appendix F to determine if transportation planning or other activity planning is triggered • Resource Protection – Monitor resource conditions and apply criteria in Appendix F to determine if transportation planning or other activity planning is triggered – Use education as a means to further resource protection	Same as Alternative C.
LANDS WITH BACKCOUNTRY CHARACTERISTICS OUTSIDE EXISTING WSAS			
No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.	Cross Mountain Area 3,040 acres adjacent to Cross Mountain WSA. See Map 2-39. Objective—Provide backcountry recreation experience in predominantly natural settings.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area
No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.	<u>Diamond Breaks Area</u> 1,750 acres adjacent to Diamond Breaks WSA. See Map 2-39. Objective—Provide backcountry recreation experience in predominantly natural settings. Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area
No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.	<u>Pinyon Ridge Area</u> 4,870 acres. See Map 2-39. Objective—Provide backcountry recreation experience in predominantly natural settings Administration: • Minerals and Energy – Closed to oil and gas operations – Locatable—Closed – Other Minerals—Closed – Coal—Not available for leasing

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			• OHV—Closed • VRM—Class II • Lands and Realty—ROW exclusion area
No similar action.	No similar action.	The Flycreek area (12,340 acres) will be administered as a backcountry, non-motorized hunting area. Increase education and interpretation during hunting season to reduce resource impacts and conflicts. Develop a managed and maintained non-motorized trail system within the area. Administration: • Minerals – Open to oil and gas exploration and development – Locatable—Closed – Other minerals—Open – Coal—Not available for leasing • OHV—Closed • VRM—Class III • Lands and Realty—ROW would be considered on a case-by-case basis	No similar action.
DEVELOPED RECREATION SITES			
No similar action.	No similar action.	Increase number of interpretive sites and viewing pullouts as need and opportunities arise.	Same as Alternative C.
The following current sites would remain at the same service and use levels: • Boat Ramp (Yampa) • Campgrounds at Irish Canyon and Rocky Reservoir • Picnic Sites at Irish Canyon and Cedar Mountain.	No additional recreation sites would be developed, and current sites would remain at the same service and use levels.	Current sites would remain at the same service and use levels. Provide additional developed recreation sites in association with SRMAs (campgrounds, boat launch, picnic sites).	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
MANAGEMENT OF THE YAMPA RIVER CORRIDOR			
No similar action.	No similar action.	Within the Yampa River corridor, monitor the quality of the following indicators of recreation experience, and regulate the use of sites and access points: • Site disturbance • User conflict • Public health and safety • Other resource impacts.	Same as Alternative C.
SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS			
Consider SRPs on a case-by-case basis depending on applications received.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Consider commercial outfitter camps on a case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Discourage commercial outfitter camps on BLM-administered land.
Authorize commercial use permits that provide recreational opportunities, enhance recreational experiences, and protect resources.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Current plans provide no guidance on competitive events.	Permit no competitive events in WSAs.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
	Authorize motorized and non-motorized competitive events consistent with OHV area and route designations.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
	No similar action.	Permitted commercial events in backcountry SRMAs (Serviceberry SRMA) will be limited to 50 participants and non-motorized events.	Permitted commercial events in backcountry SRMAs (Serviceberry SRMA, Fly Creek SRMA, Cold Springs Mountain SRMA, Dinosaur North SRMA) will be limited to 25 participants and non-motorized events.
	Permitted commercial events in the ERMA will be evaluated on a case-by-	Permitted commercial events in the ERMA and non-backcountry SRMAs	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	case basis.	(Cedar Mountain SRMA, south Sand Wash SRMA, Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, and Juniper Mountain SRMA) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.	
Current plans provide no guidance on vending.	Authorize vending in conjunction with organized events or when the vending is necessary to support protection of resources or recreation use.	Same as Alternative B.	Do not allow vending in conjunction with organized events.
Cooperative agreements with Colorado State Parks for management of the Yampa River. Coordination with local and regional recreation economic development organizations such as Moffat County Chamber of Commerce and the Yampa Valley Alliance.	Same as Alternative A, but in addition work proactively with local communities and governments to identify opportunities for— • Heritage tourism (scenic backcountry byways [e.g., Godiva Rim and Lookout Mountain]) • Watchable wildlife sites • Cultural resources tours.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
FORESTRY			
Goal: Management of forest and woodland communities that are resilient to disturbances from insects, disease, and wildfires.			
Objective: Provide forest and woodland products on a sustainable basis.			
Manage 6,330 acres of commercial forest lands to produce a variety of forest products on a sustained yield basis, and manage the remaining commercial forest lands using limited techniques such as natural revegetation and minimal cultural treatments.	Same as Alternative A.	Manage forest communities for forest health using fire and other treatments (see Vegetation section), and allowing product sales. Harvesting forest products killed by wildfires and bark beetle attacks may be warranted when consistent with resource goals/objectives.	Same as Alternative C.
Manage approximately 37,600 acres of woodland to produce a variety of woodland products on a sustained-yield basis and apply limited management to the remaining woodland acreage.	Same as Alternative A.	Manage woodland communities for woodland health using fire and other treatments (see Vegetation section) and allowing product sales. Authorization to harvest forest or woodland products would be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, areas meeting one or more	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		of the following criteria would be off-limits to harvest: • Areas with an NSO or NGD designation, as well as areas closed to oil and gas leasing • Areas with fragile soils or slopes of greater than 20% • Areas with specific wildlife concerns, such as habitats important to woodland-dependent species.	
LANDS AND REALTY			
Goal A: Consolidate BLM's land ownership pattern in Routt and Moffat Counties. **Goal B:** Increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of public land management. **Goal C:** Allow for appropriate ROW routes and development sites (e.g., renewable energy, communication, and other uses) while identifying areas that would not be compatible with such use.			
Goal A Objectives: 1. Identify all the lands for exchange, sale, or disposal within the LSFO by zone. 2. Through either exchange or sale, look for opportunities to consolidate BLM lands and/or acquire additional lands. **Goal B Objectives:** 1. Identify criteria for the disposal of public land through sale or exchange. **Goal C Objectives:** 1. Provide access for the development of renewable energy resources in an environmentally responsible manner. 2. Provide access for the development of transportation routes, utilities, transmission lines, communication sites, and other uses in an environmentally responsible manner. 3. 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. 4. Identify and establish major utility and transportation corridors within the planning area.			
LAND TENURE ADJUSTMENTS			
The BLM-administered lands in the RMPPA have been divided into general retention and disposal areas. The retention area is the existing land base to be managed under multiple use concepts. All land tenure	Disposal land tenure adjustment actions (both exchanges and sales) will be allowed on lands that meet the following criteria: • Lands suitable for public purposes adjacent to or of special importance	The BLM-administered lands in the RMPPA will be divided into three retention and disposal zones—the East, Central, and West Zones (Map 2-40). Disposal and exchange criteria specific to each zone are the same as under Alternative B, with the	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
adjustment actions (including recreation and public purposes [R&PP] actions and exchanges), except sales under Section 203 of FLPMA, will be considered on a case-by-case basis if the public interest would be served. Section 302 leases and permits will be allowed. Conveyance actions will be precluded in wilderness and other special management areas. Disposal land tenure adjustment actions will be allowed on approximately 6,670 acres of public land that meet the criteria for disposal under applicable authority. Section 302 leases and permits would also be allowed. Acquisition of land will be pursued based on identified resource values and needs (RMP/ROD pages 30–31).	to local communities, state, and 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 pre-date the RMP • Isolated lands with public access by foot or horseback only • Lands with irregular shapes, narrow parcels, small parcels, or any configuration that makes the land difficult to manage and increases trespass situations • Lands with public road accesses that are so small that they cannot be proactively managed for a variety of resource values • Lands that would be better suited in private or other agency ownership. Acquisition land tenure adjustment actions will be allowed on lands that meet the following criteria: • Lands that would help block up existing BLM land • Lands near communities that provide open space, preserve agriculture, protect wildlife and the environment, enhance recreational opportunities, and generally serve the public well • Lands that would provide public access to public lands or other public assets, including, but not limited to, river access • Retain lands that are blocked up, have public access and significant	additional criteria for each zone described as follows: East Zone: • Actively seek opportunities to 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 LSFO, as appropriate, and in the public interest. • Look for opportunities to exchange lands with the appropriate local, State, and federal agencies to facilitate one-agency management in particular areas, including Stagecoach State Park, Steamboat Lake State Park, Indian Run State Wildlife, Steamboat Springs Mountain Park, and the Jimmy Dun Gulch CDOW/SLB lease area. • Retain and seek acquisition of additional lands within identified acquisition areas, including Sleeping Giant, Emerald Mountain, 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 benefit of the public. Central Zone: • When the opportunity arises, exchange or sell lands (surface	

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	public value, and can be efficiently managed. • Other land tenure adjustments will be processed on a case-by-case basis.	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 LSFO, as appropriate, and in the public interest. • LU 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 habitat. • Look to exchange lands with the appropriate State agencies to facilitate one agency management in particular areas, including Little Snake State Wildlife area. • Retain and seek acquisition of additional lands within identified acquisition areas, including Thornburg Mountain, Yampa Canyon SRMA, Juniper Mountain SRMA, and Serviceberry Mountain areas. • Additional retention or acquisition areas can be identified during the life of the plan for the benefit of the public. West Zone: • In rare cases, 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 LSFO, as appropriate, and in the public interest. • Look for opportunities to exchange	

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		lands with the appropriate State agencies to facilitate one-agency management in particular areas, including the Sand Wash Basin and Vermillion Basin areas. • Additional retention or acquisition areas can be identified during the life of the plan for the benefit of the public.	
RIGHTS-OF-WAY			
No ROW corridors are formally designated. The existing and potential corridors identified as suitable on page 29 of the RMP/ROD and shown on pages 32 and 33 of the RMP/ROD are considered open and are preferred routes. Minor ROWs will be processed on a case-by-case basis, generally guided by the criteria identified for major ROWs. ROWs will be allowed in all areas, if needed, to develop valid existing rights.	ROWs allowed on a case-by-case basis.	Encourage ROW in the following existing corridors: • Major roads, including county roads (e.g., CR 20, 4, 7, 57) • Power transmission lines • Oil and gas pipelines.	Same as Alternative C.
Specific areas unsuitable for major ROWs are— • WSAs • Limestone Ridge ACEC/RNA • Lookout Mountain ACEC • Irish Canyon ACEC • Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA (lower unit).	ROW Exclusion Areas include— • WSAs • VRM Class I areas.	ROW Exclusion Areas include— • WSAs • VRM Class I areas • Portions of Vermillion Basin Zone 2 • Limestone Ridge area • Irish Canyon ACEC.	ROW Exclusion Areas include— • WSAs • VRM Classes I and II • Lookout Mountain ACEC • Limestone Ridge ACEC • Irish Canyon ACEC • Cross Mountain Canyon ACEC • White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC • If released by Congress, WSAs recommended as non-suitable (Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, Vale of Tears)

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
			• Vermillion Basin • Dinosaur North SRMA • Cold Springs Mountain SRMA • Cedar Mountain SRMA • Cross Mountain backcountry area • Diamond Breaks backcountry area • Pinyon Ridge Backcountry area.
Specific areas that are sensitive for siting major ROWs include— • Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA (upper unit) • Horse Draw • Vermillion Creek • Ace-in-the-Hole • Vermillion Bluffs • G Gap • Hells Canyon • Portions of Vermillion Creek Drainage • Sand Wash Drainage • Buffalo Gulch/Twelvemile Mesa • Little Snake River • Sand Creek • Conway Draw • Deception Creek • Occupied black-footed ferret habitat.	ROW Avoidance Areas include— • VRM Class II areas • Occupied black-footed ferret habitat • Vermillion Bluffs • Fragile soil areas of Vermillion Basin.	ROW Avoidance Areas include— • VRM II areas • West Cold Springs WSA • If released by Congress, WSAs recommended as non-suitable (Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, Vale of Tears) • Cold Springs Mountain • Cedar Mountain SRMA • Dinosaur North • Vermillion Bluffs in Vermillion Basin Zone 1 • Fragile soil areas of Vermillion Basin • Portions of Vermillion Basin Zone 2 • Occupied black-footed ferret habitat.	ROW Avoidance Areas include— • Natural Systems ACECs (Cold Desert Shrublands ACEC, Gibben's Beardtongue ACEC, Bull Canyon ACEC, G Gap ACEC, Little Juniper Canyon ACEC, Bassett Spring ACEC, No Name Spring ACEC, Pot Creek ACEC, Whiskey Springs ACEC, Willow Spring ACEC, Deception Creek ACEC) • Occupied black-footed ferret habitat.
EASEMENTS			
Pursue easements for access to public lands on a case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative A.	Actively pursue easements through specific parcels to improve access to public lands for recreation use, such as hunting and fishing areas. Actively pursue easements for access to develop identified transportation and utility corridors.	Same as Alternative C.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
COMMUNICATION SITES			
Review communication site proposals on a case-by-case basis.	All sites open except in ROW exclusion areas. Priority goes to collocation of facilities and use of existing sites to minimize total number of sites. Where possible, use best available technologies (e.g., tower guy wires) to reduce migratory bird mortality.	Same as Alternative B.	All new facilities would be located on existing sites. Require best available technologies (e.g., tower guy wires) to reduce migratory bird mortality
RENEWABLE ENERGY			
Wind energy development is processed on a case-by-case basis as a ROW action generally guided by the criteria identified for major ROWs.	No access restrictions. Encourage wind energy development in areas rated Excellent and above (Map 3-36). Where possible, use best available technologies to reduce migratory bird mortality.	See ROW actions. Encourage wind energy development in areas rated Excellent and above (Map3-36) as long as it is consistent with resource objectives. Where possible, use best available technologies to reduce migratory bird mortality.	See ROW actions. Same as Alternative C.
Solar energy development is processed on a case-by-case basis as a ROW action generally guided by the criteria identified for major ROW.	No access restrictions. Encourage solar energy development in the RMPPA.	See ROW actions. Encourage solar energy development in the RMPPA as long as it is consistent with resource objectives.	See ROW actions. Same as Alternative C.
TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS, AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT			
Access and Transportation **Goal A:** Provide a transportation system that is manageable and maintainable, meets management needs, and minimizes impacts on resources and habitats. **Goal B:** Provide a mix of motorized, non-motorized, and non-mechanized legal public access to public lands. **Goal A Objectives:** 1. Use a collaborative transportation planning process to identify and designate transportation routes, and manage the amount of road construction and habitat fragmentation. 2. County and local governments and affected interests will be invited to participate in transportation planning. 3. Identify criteria to determine when detailed transportation planning should occur. 4. The transportation plan will identify road construction and specify maintenance standards needed to protect resources and accommodate anticipated traffic types and levels of use. **Goal B Objectives:**			

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
1. Work with county and local governments and affected interests to identify priority access needs.			
Travel Management **Goal:** Provide for types or modes of access and travel that will balance resource protection with use. **Objectives:** 1. County and local governments and affected interests will be invited to participate in travel management. 2. Develop criteria that will be used to guide travel management implementation actions. 3. Design a managed road, route, and trail system within the planning area. 4. Reduce amount of unmanaged roads and trails.			
ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION			
An access and transportation plan will be prepared that lists areas needing attention, types of access to be acquired, preferred and alternate routes, roads and trails to be closed or constructed, survey and support needs, and construction or maintenance guidelines. This plan will be based on other resource program needs to meet their program objectives.	Transportation planning will be conducted on a case-by-case basis.	Develop an access and transportation plan that accomplishes the following: • Enables access where needed • Limits points of access to reduce the amount of redundant roads and trails • Reroutes, rehabilitates, or eliminates existing roads and trails causing resource damage • Reroutes roads and trails where landlocked by private parcels • Restricts access to meet resource objectives (e.g., seasonal road closures and gating) • Concentrates stream and riparian crossings • Reduces habitat fragmentation • Considers new construction and reconstruction of roads and trails.	Same as Alternative C.
Access to public lands will be acquired as funding and time permit in the areas identified.	Pursue access on a case-by-case basis (see Lands and Realty section).	Actively pursue access to specific parcels to improve access to public lands for land management purposes (see Lands and Realty section).	Same as Alternative C.
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT			
Areas have been designated as open, limited, or closed to vehicle use	Areas have been designated as open, limited, or closed to vehicle use as	Areas have been designated as open, limited, or closed to vehicle use as	Areas have been designated as limited or closed to vehicle use as

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
(RMP/ROD page 28). Map 2-45 shows the areas listed in Table 2-36. A vehicle use implementation plan will be completed within 1 year of the RMP approval.	detailed below (Map 2-46).	detailed below (Map 2-47).	detailed below (Map 2-48).
Closed			
The following areas would be managed as closed to OHV use: • Diamond Breaks WSA • Limestone ACEC • Cross Mountain WSA • Serviceberry area • Fly Creek area • Maybell Uranium pit.	The following areas would be managed as closed to OHV use: • Diamond Breaks WSA • Cross Mountain WSA • Maybell Uranium pit.	The following areas would be managed as closed to OHV use: • Diamond Breaks WSA • Limestone Ridge area • Cross Mountain WSA (including WSR segment) • Water impoundments within the Sand Wash Basin HMA (year-round) and within the high-water mark when dry, except where a designated road crosses impoundment.	The following areas would be managed as closed to OHV use: • All WSAs • Limestone Ridge ACEC • Serviceberry SRMA • Fly Creek SRMA • Dinosaur North SRMA • Maybell Uranium pit • Water impoundments within the Sand Wash Basin HMA (year-round) and within the high-water mark when dry, except where a designated road crosses impoundment.
Limited to Designated Roads and Trails			
The following areas would be managed as limited to designated roads and trails: • Lookout Mountain ACEC • Irish Canyon ACEC • Sections of Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA • Cottonwood Creek area • Cedar Mountain • Browns Park cellular site • Wild Mountain area • Hoy Mountain area.	The following area would be managed as limited to designated roads and trails: • Vermillion Basin.	Designate routes determined through adaptive management and travel management planning. The following areas would be immediately managed as limited to designated routes for OHV use: • Little Yampa Canyon SRMA • Cedar Mountain SRMA • Cottonwood Creek area • Irish Canyon ACEC • Lookout Mountain area • Browns Park cellular site • Wild Mountain area • Hoy Mountain area • Zones within south Sand Wash	All areas not managed as open or closed would be managed as limited to designated roads and trails. Transportation planning would occur for the entire field office by 5 years after the signing of the ROD. Criteria in Appendix F would be used to prioritize areas for transportation planning.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		SRMA.	
Limited to Existing Roads and Trails			
The following areas would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails: • Areas that meet fragile soil criteria • WSAs (all except Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain) • Lands adjacent to Cross Mountain WSA • Sections of Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon SRMA • Pole Gulch area • Big Hole Gulch area • Cold Springs Mountain • Sections of Axial Basin • Willow Creek area • South Nipple area.	The following areas would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails: • WSAs (all except Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain) • Areas that meet fragile soil criteria	All areas not managed as open, closed, or limited to designated roads and trails would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails until route designation is initiated through the adaptive OHV designation process. Areas limited to existing roads and trails would be prioritized for transportation planning, eventually leading to designation of routes across the entire field office. See adaptive OHV designation process explained below.	No areas would be managed as limited to existing roads and trails.
Seasonal Closure			
No similar action.	No similar action.	No similar action.	The Wild Horse HMA would be closed seasonally from March 1 to June 30.
Open			
Approximately 78% of the LSFO would be managed as open to OHV use.	All areas of the LSFO that would not be managed as limited or closed to OHV use would be open to OHV use.	The following areas would be managed as open to OHV use: • Zones 1 and 2 of the south Sand Wash SRMA (play area south edge and Clay Buttes area).	No areas would be managed as open to OHV use.
ADAPTIVE OHV DESIGNATIONS			
No similar action.	No similar action.	Transportation planning would be initiated progressively consistent with the prioritization process identified in Appendix F. Through application of the criteria in Appendix F, Sand Wash Basin will be the first area to undergo	No similar action.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
		transportation planning.	
All areas within the LSFO, except Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain WSAs, would be open to over-the-snow vehicles.	Same as Alternative A.	Diamond Breaks and Cross Mountain WSAs, crucial winter range, and other seasonally limited wildlife habitat areas would be closed to over-the-snow vehicles unless there is an exception through adaptive management criteria outlined in Appendix E.	All WSAs, crucial winter range and other seasonally limited wildlife habitat areas would be closed to over-the-snow vehicles.
No similar action.	No similar action.	Consider seasonal OHV closures in big game crucial winter range and production areas based on site-specific transportation planning results (see above).	Big game crucial winter range and production areas would be closed to OHV use from December 1 to April 30
No similar action.	No similar action.	Consider seasonal OHV closures of wild horse foaling areas based on site-specific transportation planning results (see above).	The entire wild horse HMA would be closed to OHV use from March 1 to June 30 (foaling season).
No similar action.	Consider temporarily opening closed areas to enhance big game harvest.	Consider temporarily opening closed areas to enhance big game harvest, in coordination with CDOW.	No similar action.
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUES			
Goal: Manage public lands to provide social and economic benefits to residents, businesses, visitors, and future generations.			
Objectives: 1. 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. 2. Maintain and promote the cultural, economic, ecological, and social health of the northwest Colorado area.			
No similar action.	• Provide for predictable and sustainable levels of commodity outputs • Provide natural resource amenities on public lands that promote local communities as places to live, work, or visit • Protect natural and cultural values for the enjoyment of future	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE D
	generations • Target local economies for BLM business activities and contracts associated with public land management to the extent permitted by the existing authorities		

2.9 COMPARISON OF IMPACTS

Table 2-47 presents a comparison of impacts that would result from implementing the alternatives as described in Chapter 2. Further details associated with the impacts analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

Table 2-47. Impacts Summary Table

Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
Air Quality— Ambient Air Quality	Emissions of pollutants would increase over the baseline, but not to the extent that standards would be exceeded.	The amount of emissions increase expected would be equivalent to Alternative A; however, the emission increase would not cause standards to be exceeded.	The amount of emissions expected would be equivalent to Alternative A; however, the emission increase would not cause standards to be exceeded.	Among the alternatives, the lowest amount of emissions increase would be expected. The emission increase would not cause standards to be exceeded.
Air Quality— Visibility Levels of Concern (LOC)	Emissions of pollutants that degrade visibility would increase from the baseline, but not to the extent that LOCs would be exceeded.	Emissions of pollutants that degrade visibility would increase from the baseline, but not to the extent that LOCs would be exceeded.	Emissions of pollutants that degrade visibility would increase from the baseline, but not to the extent that LOCs would be exceeded.	Emissions of pollutants that degrade visibility would increase from the baseline, but not to the extent that LOCs would be exceeded.
Soils— Cross-Country Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use	991,920 acres would be open to cross-country OHV use, which would maintain the potential for significant erosion over natural erosion rates. No acres of fragile soils would be open to cross-country OHV use.	1,172,950 acres would be open to cross-country OHV use, which would increase the potential for significant erosion over Alternative A. No acres of fragile soils would be open to cross-country OHV use.	21,940 acres would be open to cross-country OHV use, which would decrease the potential for significant erosion under Alternative A. No acres of fragile soils would be open to cross-country OHV use.	No acres would be open to cross-country OHV use, which would decrease the potential for significant erosion under all other alternatives. No acres of fragile soils would be open to cross-country OHV use.
Soils— Vegetation Treatments	Vegetation treatments and wildland fires would result in short-term erosion. In the long term, vegetation condition would improve and decrease erosion. Treatments, however, would be on a case-by-case basis.	Vegetation treatments and wildland fires would result in short-term erosion. In the long term, vegetation condition would improve and decrease erosion. Treatments, however, would be on a case-by-case basis.	Wildland fires and specific acres of vegetation treatments would result in short-term erosion. In the long term, vegetation condition would improve and would decrease erosion.	Wildland fires and specific acres of vegetation treatments would result in short-term erosion. In the long term, vegetation condition would improve and would decrease erosion. More acres would be treated than under Alternative C.
Soils— Mineral Development	Mineral development would result in localized site-specific surface disturbance on 49,216	Mineral development would result in localized site-specific surface disturbance on 49,216	Mineral development would result in localized site-specific surface disturbance on 49,216	Mineral development would result in localized site-specific surface disturbance on 36,915

Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
	acres, of which 23,030 acres would experience long-term erosion from wind and water, resulting in soil loss greater than natural levels.	acres, of which 23,030 acres would experience long-term erosion from wind and water, resulting in soil loss greater than natural levels.	acres, of which 23,030 acres would experience long-term erosion from wind and water, resulting in soil loss greater than natural levels.	acres, of which 17,272 acres would experience long-term erosion from wind and water, resulting in soil loss greater than natural levels.
Water Resources	Fire suppression could result in uncharacteristically large or intense wildfire resulting in significant impacts if water quality degrades beyond the designated use of the stream.	Compared with the other alternatives, management actions to limit surface disturbing activities are the least restrictive, which would provide the least amount of protection to water resources. Fewer surface disturbance restrictions could increase localized erosion and sediment loading, and decrease water quality.	Management actions that restrict surface disturbance and implement performance measures in areas with fragile soils reduce impacts on water resources. Managing fire would result in the same impacts as under Alternative B.	Increasing restrictions to surface disturbing activities could reduce impacts on water quality by increasing the area where erosion would remain at natural rates. Managing fire would result in the same impacts as under Alternative B.
Vegetation	Surface disturbance from energy and mineral exploration and development, and open OHV use could increase the amount of vegetation in early seral succession, which could increase opportunities for noxious weeds and invasive species to become established.	Increasing the areas where surface disturbance from energy and mineral exploration and development, and open OHV use could increase the amount of vegetation in early seral succession. Not implementing BMPs could significantly increase opportunities for noxious weeds and invasive species to become established.	Restrictions on surface disturbing activities and implementing BMPs for surface disturbing activities could decrease impacts on vegetation, and reduce opportunities for noxious weeds and invasive species to become established. Preserving seed banks and mycorrhizal species would increase vegetation diversity.	Increasing restrictions on surface disturbing activities and implementing BMPs for surface disturbing activities could decrease impacts on vegetation, and reduce opportunities for noxious weeds and invasive species to become established. Preserving seed banks and mycorrhizal species would increase vegetation diversity.
Ecological Health of Rangelands and Forest and Woodlands	Monitoring rangelands and vegetation, as staffing and funding permit, could decrease the ability to detect changes in vegetation, which could reduce the ecological health of rangelands, forest, and woodlands.	Managing vegetation to increase forage production could decrease vegetation diversity and the ecological health of rangelands, forest, and woodlands.	Managing vegetation for a variety of habitats would increase vegetation diversity and the ecological health of rangelands, forest, and woodlands.	Managing to improve other resources and implementing vegetation treatments would increase vegetation diversity and the ecological health of rangelands, forest, and woodlands.
Riparian/Wetland Areas	Significant impacts could occur on riparian/wetland	Significant impacts could occur on riparian/wetland	Impacts could occur on riparian/wetland areas from	Managing OHV use in riparian/wetland areas as

Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
	areas from open OHV use and surface disturbing activities. These management actions could increase erosion and alter physical characteristics of riparian/wetland areas.	areas from open OHV use and surface disturbing activities. These management actions could increase erosion and alter physical characteristics of riparian/wetland areas.	open OHV use and surface disturbing activities. These management actions could increase erosion and alter physical characteristics of riparian/wetland areas.	limited to designated or existing roads and trails would reduce the potential for decreasing functioning conditions.
Fish and Wildlife Habitat—Energy and Mineral Leasing and Development	Surface disturbing activities from oil and gas development could disturb 49,216 acres of wildlife habitat during the planning period. Big game, raptors, grouse, mountain plover, prairie dogs, and other sagebrush-obligate species are the principal wildlife species affected; however, impacts occur primarily in sagebrush and saltbush habitats that are common in the RMPPA.	Increasing the areas open to oil and gas development would result in more severe impacts on fish and wildlife. Not protecting raptor nesting sites, waterfowl, and shorebird significant production areas from the potential removal of nest sites and/or disturbance during nesting could reduce breeding sites and vital habitat components and could be a significant impact on raptors, waterfowl, and shorebirds.	Decreasing the areas open to oil and gas development would reduce impacts on fish and wildlife. Providing more intensive management of oil and gas development and other surface disturbing activities through the use of closures, NSO, CSU, NGD, and SSR stipulations would result in maintaining or preserving fish and wildlife habitat characteristics and migratory corridors throughout the RMPPA.	Surface disturbing activities from oil and gas development could disturb 39,913 acres of surface disturbance during the planning period, reducing impacts on wildlife habitat.
Fish and Wildlife Habitat—OHV Use	The majority (991,920 acres, 74%) of the RMPPA and big game habitat would be open to OHV use. Impacts on big game species would be moderate if activity occurs during critical time periods. Areas closed to OHV use or limited to designated roads and trails would avoid impacts associated with the disruption of wintering big game, and preserve habitat characteristics.	Increasing the area managed as open OHV use by 181,030 acres could result in decreased effects on wildlife from habitat degradation, species displacement, and increased stress, if activity in these areas occurs during critical time periods.	Impacts of OHV use would be reduced as a result of managing 1,242,600 acres as limited to existing roads and trails or designated routes. Travel management planning on a site-specific basis would allow BLM to concentrate management in those areas needing special attention to ensure resource damage from OHV use has minimal effect on fish and wildlife habitat.	Impacts of OHV use would be less as a result of managing the RMPPA as limited to designated routes or closed under this alternative. Limiting the majority of the RMPPA OHV use to designated routes would reduce surface disturbances and minimize disturbance to wildlife from human presence.
Special Status Species—Changes from Casual Use	Potential for slight to significant changes to habitat in areas that receive frequent and/or intense recreation use, including critical habitat for the	Impacts from recreation and OHV use would be the same as under Alternative A; however, implementing the statewide programmatic RMP	Impacts from recreation and OHV use would be the same as under Alternative A; however, implementing the statewide programmatic RMP	Impacts would be similar to those under Alternative C, except management of SRMAs would provide additional measures to

Topic	Alternative A (No Action Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative D
	federally endangered Colorado pikeminnow. Depending on the extent and timing of OHV use, the resulting degradation to vegetation communities could cause slight to significant changes to habitats that might be occupied by Special Status Species or provide necessary habitat components.	conservation measures, monitoring resource conditions, and educating users on resource protection could minimize the potential for impacts from casual use.	conservation measures and recommendations, monitoring resource conditions, and educating users on resource protection could minimize the potential for impacts from casual use. In addition, taking measures to ensure protection of Special Status Species when impacts meet the criteria outlined in Appendix F would reduce the extent of potential habitat damage and minimize the potential for impacts.	minimize effects on Special Status Species.
Special Status Species—Changes from Permitted Activity	Population function for some Special Status Species, including greater sage-grouse, might decline over time as development increases that could become significant. Stipulations to protect Special Status Species would apply to oil and gas activities, but not to other types of ground disturbing activity.	Removal of NSO stipulations specific to protect Special Status Species during sensitive periods and habitats could lead to segmented management of Special Status Species and to isolated instances of nest abandonment and disturbance during breeding. However, applying NGD and SSR to all permitted activities and COAs to oil and gas leases would protect any habitat that may benefit Special Status Species.	Stipulations would be similar to those identified in Alternative A. In addition, stipulations to restrict ground disturbing activity and require SSR in prairie dog complexes and sage-grouse nesting and early brood–rearing habitat would protect habitat integrity and provide greater protection to these species that have expansive habitat requirements. In addition, applying NGD and SSR to all permitted activities and COAs to oil and gas leases would protect any habitat that may benefit Special Status Species.	Stipulations would be similar to those identified in Alternative C; however, there would be increased protections for raptor nest sites and sage-grouse leks and crucial winter range.
Special Status Species—Changes to Habitat Condition	Continuing to address vegetation treatments only as needed would not yield as many benefits to Special Status Species that may be necessary as recreation and permitted activity increase.	Managing vegetation to increase forage would likely convert habitats to early seral stages, resulting in habitat that is less desirable to Special Status Species, including sage-grouse.	Managing vegetation to emphasize wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, watershed, and biodiversity values while maintaining or enhancing habitat for Special Status Species could achieve a healthy mosaic of communities	Impacts from vegetation management would be the same as under Alternative C, but would be applied to a greater area.

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			beneficial to a variety of species, including necessary habitat components for Special Status Species.	
Wild Horses— Impacts from OHV Use	96% of the HMA would be open to cross-county OHV use, resulting in losses of forage and in spatial displacement. Spring OHV closure in foaling areas would eliminate displacement during the critical season.	Same as under Alternative A, except removal of the spring OHV closure would result in displacement of wild horses at the end of winter, when energy levels are low and while foaling is occurring.	OHV use would be limited to designated or existing routes on 89% of the HMA, maintaining forage and reducing disturbance, when compared with Alternatives A and B. Spring OHV closure in foaling areas would eliminate displacement during the critical season. Considering other seasonal OHV closures in wild horse foaling areas through adaptive management could provide protection similar to that under Alternative A.	Same as Alternative C, except OHV use would be limited to designated routes in the entire HMA. In addition, there would be a seasonal closure to OHV use during foaling period.
Wild Horses— Impacts from Oil and Gas Development	No areas of the HMA would be open to oil and gas leasing with standard stipulations.	97% of the HMA would be open to oil and gas leasing, with standard stipulations. The main impact from mineral development would be physical and spatial disturbance, which removes forage and decreases the wild and free-roaming nature of wild horses.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A. In addition, closing the HMA to all permitted activities during foaling period and closing mineral development at critical wild horse water sources would protect critical areas and seasons, maintaining wild horse health; however, the extent of NSO stipulations could restrict new water developments.
Fire	Recreational activities, development of mineral resources, general use of the RMPPA, and other land management practices would introduce additional ignition sources into the RMPPA and alter the composition and	Impacts would be the same as under Alternative A, except the emphasis on forage production could result in vegetation communities that are more susceptible to fire and more likely to fuel high-intensity fires; however, this	Impacts would be the same as under Alternative A, except increased vegetation treatments designed to enhance vegetation health and wildlife habitat, increased restrictions on surface disturbing activities, and	Impacts would be the same as under Alternative C, except additional increases in vegetation treatments, restrictions on surface disturbing activities, and not allowing cross-country OHV use would further reduce

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	structure of vegetation communities in some areas, which would increase the probability of wildland fire occurrence and increase the potential for high-intensity wildland fires. Efforts to enhance vegetation cover and wildlife habitat through vegetation treatments and surface disturbance restrictions would help mitigate these effects.	would likely represent a minor change in the overall impacts on fire management.	substantial limitations on cross-country OHV use would decrease the probability of wildland fire occurrence and the potential for high-intensity wildland fires. However, greater emphasis on dispersed recreational opportunities could increase use of the RMPPA, thereby increasing the number of potential ignition sources.	related effects on fire management. In addition, a greater emphasis on dispersed recreational opportunities could further increase the number of potential ignition sources in the RMPPA.
Cultural Resources—Impacts from Cultural Resource Management	Regulatory compliance eliminates impacts from surface disturbing activities on a site-by-site basis. Cultural resource management would provide programmatic guidance at the implementation level.	Regulatory compliance eliminates impacts from surface disturbing activities. Proactive cultural site management through site use allocations provides management before discovery. Expanding interpretive program increases public knowledge and decreases inadvertent vandalism. Prioritized non-compliance field inventories would improve information and management in the Sand Wash and Vermillion Basins.	Regulatory compliance eliminates impacts from surface disturbing activities. Proactive cultural site management through site use allocations provides management before discovery. Expanding interpretive program increases public knowledge and decreases inadvertent vandalism. Prioritized non-compliance field inventories would improve information and management in the Sand Wash and Vermillion Basins.	Regulatory compliance eliminates impacts from surface disturbing activities. Proactive cultural site management through site use allocations provides management before discovery. Emphasizing conservation and scientific study would protect scientific values from potentially damaging uses. Prioritized non-compliance field inventories would improve information and management in the Sand Wash and Vermillion Basins. Cultural would provide programmatic guidance at the implementation level.
Cultural Resources—Impacts from OHV Management	Cross-country OHV travel on 991,920 acres could result in significant impacts on up to 7,904 sites eligible for NRHP listing. Significant impacts would	The increase in acres open to OHV use, especially open to cross-country OHV use, could result in damage to or destruction of up to 9,347 cultural resource sites eligible for NRHP listing, which would	Managing 21,940 acres as open to OHV use could result in damage or destruction of up to 175 cultural resource sites eligible for the NRHP, which would be a significant impact.	No areas would be open to cross-country OHV use and potential impacts would be eliminated. Damage to uninventoried cultural sites adjacent to

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	occur as a result of OHV use in uninventoried areas of current cultural high-sensitivity areas open to cross-country OHV use: Historic (83%) Prehistoric (79%) Damage to uninventoried cultural sites adjacent to existing or designated routes in current cultural high-sensitivity areas: Historic (13%) Prehistoric (18%)	be a significant impact. Significant impacts would occur as a result of OHV use in uninventoried areas of current cultural high-sensitivity areas open to cross-country OHV use: Historic (85%) Prehistoric (91%) Damage would occur to uninventoried cultural sites adjacent to existing or designated routes in current cultural high-sensitivity areas: Historic (14%) Prehistoric (9%)	Significant impacts would occur as a result of OHV use in uninventoried areas of current cultural high-sensitivity areas open to cross-country OHV use: Historic (12%) Prehistoric (15%) Damage would occur to uninventoried cultural sites adjacent to existing or designated routes in current cultural high-sensitivity areas: Historic (84%) Prehistoric (82%)	existing or designated routes in current cultural high-sensitivity areas: Historic (90%) Prehistoric (92%)
Paleontological Resources	Surface disturbing activities could result in identification of paleontological resources. The significance of this impact would depend on the significance of the fossil. Unmitigated impacts from cross-country OHV use could occur on 991,920 acres.	Surface disturbing activities could result in identification of paleontological resources. The significance of this impact would depend on the significance of the fossil. Unmitigated impacts from cross-country OHV use could occur on 1,172,950 acres.	Surface disturbing activities could result in identification of paleontological resources. The significance of this impact would depend on the significance of the fossil. Unmitigated impacts from cross-country OHV use could occur on 21,940 acres.	Surface disturbing activities could result in identification of paleontological resources. The significance of this impact would depend on the significance of the fossil. No areas would be open to cross-country OHV use and potential impacts would be eliminated.
Wilderness Study Areas	Minor impacts would occur on the wilderness characteristics in the West Cold Springs, Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and/or Vale of Tears WSAs by allowing OHV use on existing roads and trails. If released from wilderness study, impacts on these WSAs would increase because there is no special management. If released, the Diamond Breaks and Cross	Impacts would be similar to those identified in Alternative A; however, these impacts would likely become significant because there is a lack of restriction on surface disturbance, and lack of protections, if any, for the WSAs that were released from wilderness study.	Impacts would be similar to those identified in Alternative A, except that if any of the WSAs were released form wilderness study, protective management actions would reduce impacts on the wilderness characteristics in these areas.	All WSAs would be closed to OHV use, even if released from wilderness study. Surface disturbance would be restricted and would not result in impacts on these areas.

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	Mountain WSAs would receive minimal protection, and impacts on the wilderness characteristics would likely occur from surface disturbance and OHV use.			
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Outside Existing WSAs	Significant impacts would occur on the wilderness characteristics in the Vermillion Basin, Dinosaur North, Cold Springs Mountain, and Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon areas because of surface disturbance and OHV use that would be allowed in these areas.	Impacts on the wilderness characteristics in the Dinosaur North, Cold Springs Mountain, and Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon areas would be the same as under Alternative A. Portions of the Vermillion Basin would receive special management protection for wilderness characteristics; however, impacts would be the same as under Alternative A in the majority of the area.	Impacts would be reduced in the Vermillion Basin, Dinosaur North, Cold Springs Mountain, and Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon when compared with those under Alternative A because of mineral leasing stipulations, surface disturbance restrictions, and OHV limitations. Significant impacts would still occur on the wilderness characteristics in the Vermillion Basin from mineral development and surface disturbance.	Restrictions on surface disturbance and OHV limitations would protect wilderness characteristics in the Vermillion Basin, Dinosaur North, Cold Springs Mountain, and Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon areas.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	Relevant and important values would be protected in the four existing ACECs through protections afforded through special management; however, the relevant and important values in the proposed White-tailed Prairie Dog and Natural Systems ACECs could occur from management actions that would impair prairie dog habitat and surface disturbance that would result in impacts on sensitive and remnant plants and plant associations.	All existing ACEC designations would be removed and none of the proposed ACECs would be designated. The scenic relevant and important values in the Limestone Ridge and Lookout Mountain areas could be significantly affected if development were to occur, because of surface disturbance that would be allowed in this area. The geologic, cultural, and scenic relevant and important values in the Irish Canyon area could be significantly affected if	ACEC designation would be removed from the Limestone Ridge, Lookout Mountain, and Cross Mountain Canyon areas, and no new ACECs would be designated; however, relevant and important values would be protected through adaptive management that would restrict activities that could potentially impair these values in the Limestone Ridge, Lookout Mountain, Cross Mountain Canyon, White-tailed Prairie Dog, and sensitive plant (Natural Systems ACEC) areas.	ACEC designation for all four existing ACECs would be retained, and the White-tailed Prairie Dog and Natural Systems ACECs would be designated. Special management that would restrict surface disturbance would protect relevant and important values in all of these areas.

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		development were to occur because of surface disturbance that would be allowed in this area. Special Status Plant Species would be protected through conservation measures. The Cross Mountain ACEC would be protected through WSA management; however, if the WSA were released, these impacts would also occur in this area. Impacts on the potential White-tailed Prairie Dog ACEC could occur as a result of the removal of surface disturbance restrictions and protections for black-footed ferret habitat. Impacts on the potential Natural Systems ACEC would be the same as those under Alternative A.	The Irish Canyon ACEC would be retained, and relevant and important values would be protected.	
Wild and Scenic Rivers	The Beaver Creek, Vermillion Creek, and Yampa River segments 1, 2, and 3 would be managed as eligible for inclusion into the NWSRS, which would protect the free-flowing nature, associated outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs), and tentative classifications as wild, scenic, or recreational until suitability is determined.	No eligible WSR segments would be managed as suitable under this alternative. Scenic ORVs would be affected by surface disturbing activities. WSA management would protect ORVs in Yampa River segment 3 (Cross Mountain WSA), and part of the Beaver Creek segment (West Cold Springs). If these WSAs were released from wilderness study, these ORVs would not receive any protection and would likely be affected. Fish ORVs in the Beaver Creek segment and Yampa	Yampa River segments 1, 2, and 3 would be managed as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, which would protect all ORVs associated with these segments. ORVs in the Beaver Creek and Vermillion Creek segments would receive some protection through special management areas (WSA and ACEC designations, respectively) and conservation measures for sensitive species. Scenic ORVs could be affected if surface disturbance occurred in these	The Beaver Creek, Vermillion Creek, and Yampa River segments 1, 2, and 3 would be managed as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, and ORVs would be protected through special management. In addition, most of these areas would fall within other special management areas and the surrounding area would also be protected from surface disturbance and OHV use, which would increase the protection of the suitability of these segments.

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		River segments 1, 2, and 3 would receive some protection through conservation measures.	areas.	
Visual Resources—VRM Categories	In accordance with BLM Policy (IM 2000-096), WSAs would be managed as VRM Class I, which would preserve the existing character of the landscape on 78,250 acres under all alternatives.			
	Visual resources outside of WSAs would have the following designations— Class II: 0 acres Class III: 0 acres Class IV: 1,273,000 acres VRM Class IV designation applied to 94% of the RMPPA would not protect characteristic viewsheds from visual obstructions.	Impacts would be similar to those under Alternative A, with some additional visual protection provided by Class II and III areas as follows— Class II: 590 acres Class III: 48,800 acres Class IV: 1,223,610 acres Class II areas would retain visual characteristics of the landscape, allowing only a low level of change to the characteristic landscape. Class III would partially retain visual characteristics of the landscape, allowing a moderate level of change to the characteristic landscape.	Impacts would be similar to those under Alternative B, except that most of the RMPPA would become VRM Class III— Class II: 96,490 acres Class III: 991,460 acres Class IV: 184,890 acres	Impacts would be similar to those under Alternative C, except for a greater focus on VRM Class II— Class II: 184,600 acres Class III: 905,130 acres Class IV: 183,280 acres
Visual Resources—Minerals Extraction	Open oil and gas leasing on 549,800 acres could allow visible surface disturbance and structures, which would contrast with the existing character of the landscape. NSO stipulations on 192,190 acres would reduce most impacts of minor temporary changes to visual characteristics. CSU stipulations, such as screening, color matching, burying powerlines, and	The impact on visual resources from oil and gas leasing under Alternative B would be greater than under Alternative A because Alternative B allows more open leasing and has less area with NSO stipulations— Open: 1,509,090 acres NSO: 32,770 acres CSU: 153,890 acres	The impact on visual resources from oil and gas leasing under Alternative C would be less than under Alternative A because Alternative C allows less open leasing area and has more area with NSO stipulations— Open: 417,790 acres NSO: 216,040 acres CSU: 160,870 acres	Alternative D would have the least impact on visual resources from oil and gas leasing of any alternative— Open: 364,880 acres NSO: 459,940 acres CSU: 94,210 acres

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	reclamation, on 116,210 acres could reduce some impacts from oil and gas development.			
	Mineral entry, mineral material sales, coal leasing, and oil shale development could disturb ground surfaces, or have surface structures that would change the visual character of the landscape.	More area would be available for mineral entry, mineral material sales, coal leasing, and oil shale development than under Alternative A.	Less area would be available for mineral entry, mineral material sales, coal leasing, and oil shale development than under Alternative A.	Less area would be available for mineral entry, mineral material sales, coal leasing, and oil shale development than under Alternative C.
Visual Resources—OHV Use	Designating open OHV use could cause road proliferation and vegetation loss through cross-country OHV travel, which would alter existing visual characteristics of the landscape. Limited OHV areas would eliminate cross-country travel, which would limit visual impacts on existing or designated routes. Closing areas to OHV use would eliminate all impacts on visual resources. The following acreages illustrate the area impacted by the above descriptions— Open: 991,920 acres Limited: 286,860 acres Closed: 72,480 acres	Alternative B allows more open and fewer closed areas; thus, impacts would be greater than under Alternative A— Open: 1,172,950 acres Limited: 131,930 acres Closed: 46,370 acres	Alternative C allows fewer open and more closed areas, and most of the area would limit OHV use to existing or designated routes; thus, impacts would be less than those under Alternative A— Open: 21,940 acres Limited: 1,242,600 acres Closed: 86,710 acres	Alternative D allows no open areas and has more closed areas; thus, impacts would be less than under Alternative C and the least of all alternatives— Open: 0 acres Limited: 1,079,440 acres Closed: 289,650 acres
Visual Resources—Vegetation Management	Fire and vegetation treatments, fire-suppression activities, and harvesting of commercial forest and woodland products alter the existing visual character of the landscape through removal, thinning, burning, or onsite	Impacts would be the same as those under Alternative A, except that vegetation treatments would be applied only to increase forage production and the use of appropriate management response and lack of fire	Impacts from vegetation treatments described under Alternative A would occur on an average of 4,110 acres per year. Harvesting of commercial forest and woodland products would not affect visual resources as	Impacts from vegetation treatments would occur on an average of 8,750 acres per year. Harvesting of commercial forest and woodland products would have the same impacts as Alternative C. Impacts from

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	alteration of vegetation. These impacts would be most noticeable in the short term, decreasing over the long term as vegetation grows back.	suppression in areas where fire is desired would likely decrease short-term impacts.	under Alternatives A and B. Impacts from fire management activities would be the same as under Alternative B.	fire management activities would be the same as those under Alternative B.
Oil and Gas Resources	Approximately 549,800 acres would be open to oil and gas leasing, with standard stipulations. Restrictions and stipulations on oil and gas leasing could limit oil and gas leasing.	Approximately 1,509,090 acres would be open to oil and gas leasing, with standard stipulations. Alternative B would have the fewest restrictions and stipulations on oil and gas leasing.	Approximately 417,790 acres would be open to oil and gas leasing, with standard stipulations. Restrictions and stipulations on oil and gas leasing could limit oil and gas leasing. There would be more restrictions and stipulations than under Alternative A.	Approximately 364,880 acres would be open to oil and gas leasing, with standard stipulations. Alternative D would have the most restrictions and stipulations on oil and gas leasing.
Locatable Minerals	Approximately 79,190 acres would be recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry, which could preclude locatable mineral development in these areas.	Approximately 153,310 acres would be recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry, which could preclude locatable mineral development in these areas.	Approximately 194,400 acres would be recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry, which could preclude locatable mineral development in these areas.	Approximately 587,220 acres would be recommended for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry, which could preclude locatable mineral development in these areas.
Mineral Materials	Approximately 97,790 acres would be closed to mineral material sales, which would preclude development of mineral materials in these areas.	Impacts would be the same as under Alternative A.	Approximately 157,910 acres would be closed to mineral material sales, which would preclude development of mineral materials in these areas.	Approximately 540,510 acres would be closed to mineral material sales, which would preclude development of mineral materials in these areas.
Renewable Energy	ROW exclusion areas (108,540 acres) and avoidance areas (535,390 acres) could restrict the placement of renewable energy facilities.	No ground disturbance (89,240 acres), site-specific relocation (158,950 acres), or seasonal limitations (71,220 acres) and ROW exclusion areas (78,250 acres) and ROW avoidance areas (555,440 acres) could restrict the placement of renewable energy facilities.	No ground disturbance (273,100 acres), site-specific relocation (137,780 acres), or seasonal limitations (810,680 acres) and ROW exclusion areas (91,560 acres) and ROW avoidance areas (141,260 acres) could restrict the placement of renewable energy facilities.	No ground disturbance (632,940 acres), site-specific relocation (297,000 acres), or seasonal limitations (421,310 acres) and ROW exclusion areas (499,700 acres) and ROW avoidance areas (15,190 acres) could restrict the placement of renewable energy facilities.
Livestock Grazing	Forage production would decrease by 8,344 AUMs as a result of oil and gas	Same as under Alternative A, except that forage production would increase by 44,087	Same as under Alternative A, except that forage production would increase by 7,454	Same as under Alternative A, except that forage production would increase by 21,814

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	development activities. Because it is estimated that half of the forage in the RMPPA is allocated for livestock, this would result in a 4,172-AUM net decrease of actual livestock use. Given that current actual livestock use is estimated at 78,963 AUMs, the loss of 4,172 AUMs is relatively minor.	AUMs as a result of vegetation treatments. Assuming that all of this forage would be available for livestock, and oil and gas activities would decrease livestock forage by 4,172 AUMs, there would be a net gain of 39,925 AUMs.	AUMs as a result of vegetation treatments. Assuming that all of this forage would be available for livestock, and oil and gas activities would decrease livestock forage by 4,172 AUMs, there would be a net gain of 3,282 AUMs.	AUMs as a result of vegetation treatments. Assuming that all of this forage would be available for livestock, and oil and gas activities would decrease livestock forage by 3,129 AUMs, there would be a net gain of 18,685 AUMs.
Recreation	Recreation opportunities in the Vermillion Basin area would be affected because of user and resource conflicts from mineral development potential and OHV designations. User conflicts between motorized users and recreation users seeking primitive/unconfined recreation opportunities would occur from managing approximately 74% of the RMPPA as open to OHV use. These impacts would increase if any of the existing WSAs were released from wilderness study. These conflicts could be greater in the south Sand Wash and Cedar Mountain areas because of a lack of special recreation management to address the intense recreation use in these areas. The potential for surface disturbance from mineral exploration and development under this alternative could affect recreation opportunities	Similar to Alternative A, except that impacts on recreation opportunities in the Vermillion Basin would be reduced by limiting OHV use to designated routes; however, impacts would remain significant because of the degradation to the natural character from the high potential of new mineral leasing. User conflicts between motorized users and recreational users seeking primitive/unconfined recreation opportunities would be increased from managing approximately 87% of the LSFO as open to OHV use. These impacts would further increase if any of the existing WSAs were released from wilderness study. No areas would be identified as SRMAs, and the lack of special recreation management would not meet the anticipated increase in	Restrictions on surface disturbing activities and adaptive management of many resources would reduce impacts on recreation and provide opportunities for motorized, developed, and primitive/unconfined recreation opportunities; however, significant impacts would still occur on non-motorized recreation and recreational users seeking solitude and primitive/unconfined recreation opportunities because of degradation to the natural character from the high potential of new mineral leasing and user conflicts from allowing OHV use on designated routes and trails in the Vermilion Basin area. User conflicts between motorized users and recreational users seeking primitive/unconfined recreation opportunities would be reduced from considerably reducing open areas, and managing OHV use on the	Alternative D would provide the greatest protection for primitive and dispersed recreation as a result of restrictions on surface disturbing activities, limiting the majority of OHV use to designated routes, restrictions on mineral development, and intensive recreation management through identification of eight SRMAs and SMA management. However, cross-country motorized recreation experiences would be eliminated under this alternative, which would be a loss of opportunity to this user group.

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	and experiences because of health and safety issues and displacement of recreational users.	recreation demand and use throughout the RMPPA. The potential for surface disturbance from mineral exploration and development would increase and could result in increased impacts on recreation opportunities and experiences as compared with the impacts Alternative A because of fewer restrictions on surface disturbing activities. Alternative B would have the greatest level of impact on recreation.	majority of the RMPPA as limited to designated routes. These actions would continue to provide motorized recreation opportunities, and closing other areas to preserve primitive recreational opportunities. Identification of five SRMAs would provide for focused recreation management and protect recreation opportunities and experiences in these areas. Impacts on recreation would be reduced by managing high-value recreation areas with NSO stipulations; however, impacts would still occur from surface disturbance because of mineral development activities that could reduce the quality of recreational experiences, displace recreational users to other, less developed areas, or eliminate some recreation opportunities. These impacts would be less than those under Alternatives A or B.	
Forest and Woodlands	Management actions to limit surface disturbing activities could decrease the areas where forest and woodland harvest could occur.	Management actions to limit surface disturbing activities are the least restrictive of all the alternatives, which could increase the areas where forest and woodland harvest occurs, when compared with the other alternatives.	Management actions to limit surface disturbing activities are more protective than under Alternative A, and could increase the areas where forest and woodland harvest occurs.	Management actions to limit surface disturbing activities are the most restrictive of all the alternatives, and thus could decrease the areas where forest and woodland harvest occur.
Lands and Realty	Areas Open to ROWs: 705,540 acres (52% of	Areas Open to ROWs: 715,710 acres (53% of	Areas Open to ROWs: 1,116,580 acres (83% of	Many of the areas previously designated as Avoidance

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	RMPPA) Avoidance Areas: 535,390 acres (40% of RMPPA) Exclusion Areas: 108,470 acres (8% of RMPPA) NGD: Not designated Seasonal Limitations: Not designated	RMPPA) Avoidance Areas: 555,440 acres (41% of RMPPA) Exclusion Areas: 78,250 acres (6% of RMPPA) NGD: 89,240 acres (7% of RMPPA) Seasonal Limitations: 71,220 acres (5% of RMPPA)	RMPPA) Avoidance Areas: 141,260 acres (11% of RMPPA) Exclusion Areas: 91,560 acres (7% of RMPPA) NGD: 273,100 acres (20% of RMPPA) Seasonal Limitations: 810,680 acres (60% of RMPPA)	Areas would become Exclusion Areas under Alternative D. Such restrictions could hinder the ability to meet future demand as existing sites reach capacity, which could become significant. Restricting communication site authorizations to existing sites could impose greater standards for development at existing sites, potentially resulting in requests for new or amended ROWs at existing sites to be denied over time. Such restrictions could hinder the ability to meet future demand as existing sites reach capacity, which could become significant. Areas Open to ROWs: 834,510 acres (62% of RMPPA) Avoidance Areas: 15,190 acres (1% of RMPPA) Exclusion Areas: 499,700 acres (37% of RMPPA) NGD: 632,940 acres (47% of RMPPA) Seasonal Limitations: 825,690 acres (61% of RMPPA)
Transportation and Access— **OHV Categories**	Closed OHV designations eliminate any opportunity for public motorized travel. Limited designations eliminate cross-country OHV travel. Open designations provide the most opportunities for OHV	Impacts would be similar to those under Alternative A, except there would be fewer closed and limited areas and more open areas, as follows: Open: 1,172,950 acres Limited: 131,930 acres	Impacts would be similar to those under Alternative A, except there would be more closed and limited areas and fewer open areas, as follows: Open: 21,940 acres Limited: 1,242,600 acres	Impacts would be similar to those under Alternative A, except that Alternative D has more closed areas and fewer open areas than any of the alternatives, as follows: Open: 0 acres

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	use: Open: 991,920 acres Limited: 286,860 acres Closed: 72,480 acres	Closed: 46,370 acres	Closed: 86,710 acres	Limited: 1,079,440 acres Closed: 289,650 acres
Transportation and Access— Over-the-Snow Vehicles	Over-the-snow vehicles would be allowed on 97% of the RMPPA.	Same as Alternative A.	Over-the-snow vehicles would be allowed on 38% of the RMPPA.	Over-the-snow vehicles would be allowed on 36% of the RMPPA.
Transportation and Access— Non-Motorized Transportation and Access	The Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area would enhance river access opportunities by providing access control, development, and management of river access areas.	The Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon would not benefit from the extended protection and planning of SRMA designation.	Impacts would be the same as those under Alternative A for river transportation opportunities on the Little Yampa River. Additionally, the Cedar Mountain SRMA would enhance non-motorized hiking opportunities near the city of Craig.	Impacts on river transportation on the Little Yampa, and hiking opportunities in the Cedar Mountain SRMAs would be the same as those under Alternative C.
Transportation and Access— Transportation Planning	Transportation planning would provide better management of transportation systems, which would contribute to better road maintenance and access, and which could alleviate access issues and user conflicts.	Transportation planning, on a case-by-case basis, would become reactionary in dealing with road maintenance, access issues, and user conflicts, which may not be responsive enough to meet the diverse needs of the transportation and access system.	An access and transportation plan that restricts access to meet resource objectives, reduces habitat fragmentation, and limits access points and stream crossings would provide better management of transportation systems, which would contribute to better road maintenance and could alleviate access issues and user conflicts.	Transportation planning would have the same impacts as Alternative C.
Social and Economic Conditions	Total forecasted industry income and employment by 2025: Moffat County: $620,815,000 and 8,578 employees Routt County: $1,568,722,000 and 30,833 employees	Total forecasted industry income and employment by 2025: Moffat County: $625,640,000 and 8,648 employees Routt County: $1,569,187,000 and 30,841 employees	Total forecasted industry income and employment by 2025: Moffat County: $609,283,000 and 8,488 employees Routt County: $1,567,973,000 and 30,828 employees	Total forecasted industry income and employment by 2025: Moffat County: $597,754,000 and 8,381 employees Routt County: $1,567,097,000 and 30,818 employees