

The draft West HiLine Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released for a 90-day comment period in May, 1987. Based on the public comments received during that period, the draft's preferred alternative has been modified and selected as the proposed Resource Management Plan.

This proposed final RMP/EIS provides BLM's responses to those comments on the draft which include 172 letters received by mail; and 6 formal statements with 89 summary questions received at 6 public meetings. These comments include eight letters received shortly after the closing date for public comment on the draft. An additional 120 form letters were received in late November, 1987, but were not reprinted in this document because they were received 2½ months after the public review period closed. Analysis of the comments identified 196 questions which have been addressed in Chapter 5 of this proposed final.

Most of the public comments addressed management of the Sweet Grass Hills and mining activity in this area. In general, the comments and concerns received expressed opposition to mineral exploration and development in the Sweet Grass Hills. The additional 120 form letters received in November, 1987, were from Chester area residents, requesting that BLM allow mining in the Sweet Grass Hills. Mineral interests also opposed a management zone around the Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills ACECs.

Other topics, in the descending order of comments received, include recreational management of the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River; managing the other emphasis areas (Kevin Rim and Cow Creek); the land tenure adjustment issue; ORV management; and ROW location. Miscellaneous comments regarding the Management Common to All Alternatives section, given in Chapter 2 were also received.

Revisions to the draft's preferred alternative are identified below, by issue, and have been inserted at the appropriate locations throughout this proposed RMP.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

ORVs would be restricted to designated roads and trails versus existing roads and trails in ACECs and riparian areas.

Right-of-Way Location

ROWS, both transmission and distribution, off the east side of the Kevin Rim would be dependent on the results of a raptor habitat inventory. Windows would be identified in the ACEC activity plan.

Location of communication sites would not be permitted on the Middle and West Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills.

Emphasis Areas

Middle Butte has been added to the Sweet Grass Hills ACEC. The management zones surrounding the Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills ACECs have been dropped. The Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines would be used to implement a special raptor stipulation to the raptor habitat areas in and around the two ACECs. The allocation of ROW locations off the east side of the Kevin Rim has been deferred until completion of the ACEC activity plan and will be based on a raptor habitat inventory.



Program specific guidance, especially as it relates to locatable mineral development has been added to the implementation section for the Sweet Grass Hills.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

The restriction limiting outfitting to 30% of the daily user capacity has been dropped.

This proposed West HiLine Resource Management Plan addresses future management options for 626,098 surface acres and 1,328,014 subsurface acres administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Most of this acreage is managed by the Havre and Great Falls Resource Areas. The remaining acreage is found in the Judith and Phillips Resource Areas, and is related to management of the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River. All of these resource areas are administered by the Lewistown BLM District in north-central Montana.

PLANNING ISSUES

Five issues were identified through public comment, resource monitoring and policy mandates during the scoping process. These issues reflect concerns or conflicts which could be partially or totally resolved through this RMP.

Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM manages a variety of public land in the West HiLine area, including land utilization project lands (lands which left federal ownership and were later acquired under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1934), public domain lands and mineral estate subsurface lands. Many of these lands are widely scattered and often pose multiple resource management problems. This RMP will identify public lands which should be retained, lands which may leave federal ownership and areas where BLM would like to acquire lands.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

Off-road vehicle use is increasing throughout the planning area and unauthorized roads and trails are extending into previously unroaded areas. Executive Order (EO) 11644, as amended by EO 11989, directs that all public lands be designated as open, limited, or closed to off-road vehicle (ORV) use. This plan will identify areas where there are resource conflicts, resource degradation or public safety concerns associated with ORV use and amend the designations if necessary.

Right-of-Way Location

This RMP will deal with ROW corridor planning by identifying avoidance areas, exclusion areas and windows for lineal rights-of-way. It will not identify corridors. The rationale for not designating corridors within the planning area is based on the landownership pattern, the existing facilities and the small amount of public land included in existing ROWs.

This RMP will also identify areas which are not suitable for communication site locations.

Emphasis Areas

Two areas in the Great Falls Resource Area and one in the Havre Resource Area need management emphasis to preserve particular resources.

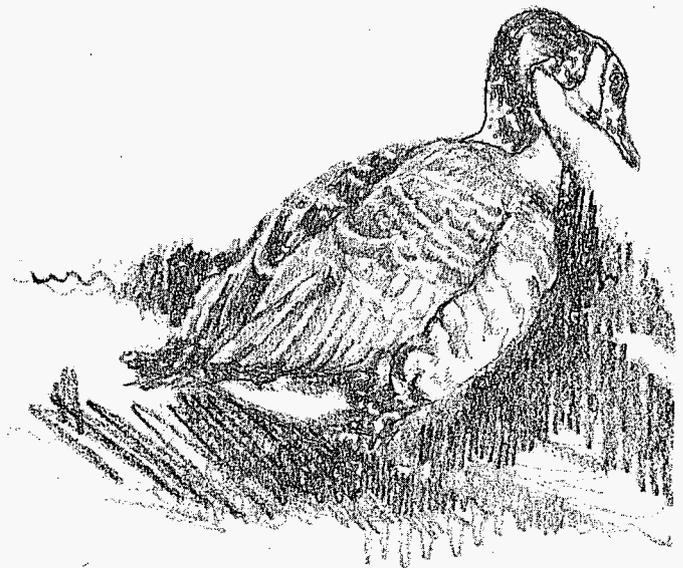
The Kevin Rim area is a high use area for a variety of raptors, is a potential peregrine falcon reintroduction area, and has significant cultural resources.

The Sweet Grass Hills are significant because: of their importance as a religious and cultural use area for Native Americans; they are an integral part of the peregrine falcon reintroduction effort; they contain high value recreational lands; and they support diverse wildlife populations.

The Cow Creek area contains a segment of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, the Cow Island Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. It also includes portions of the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (UMNWSR) and the Cow Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

The Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (UMNWSR) was designated in 1976, and since that time there have been significant increases in recreational use of the river. This RMP affords BLM the opportunity to analyze the issue of increasing recreational expectations.



THE ALTERNATIVES

The formulation and analysis of alternatives is required by the Council on Environmental Quality, which oversees the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA 40 CFR 1500.2(e)); and by the BLM to implement its resource planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-5). The goal of each alternative is to resolve the issues. Current management of non-issue resources and programs will continue under each alternative and is described in the Management Common to All Alternatives portion of Chapter 2. Each alternative, in conjunction with the Management Common to All Alternatives guidance, presents a complete and reasonable guide to future management of public lands and resources.

Several alternatives were considered during the formulation process, but were dropped from detailed study because they were unreasonable or did not adequately address the planning issues. These are described in Chapter 2.

Four alternatives were developed and analyzed in detail. The major management actions and environmental impacts of the four alternatives are discussed below. More information on the alternatives can be found in Chapter 2 and Tables 2.5 and 2.6 of this document.

Alternative D, as modified by public comments on the draft, has been selected as the proposed Resource Management Plan. It is the first alternative addressed in this summary.



Alternative D— The Proposed Alternative

Land Tenure Adjustment

BLM would consolidate land holdings in areas of high resource values. A total of 15,689 acres of public land would be identified for disposal through any means, with an emphasis on exchange. An additional 34,428 acres of land would be identified for disposal through exchange, however, if it is in the public interest and a parcel meets the specific criteria listed in Appendix 1.1, the parcel(s) may be disposed of through sale. This is a total of 50,117 acres identified for disposal through various means.

Retention and acquisition efforts would be concentrated in the Missouri and Marias River areas; the Cow Creek, Sweet Grass Hills, and Kevin Rim ACECs; and important wildlife habitat.

Impacts to vegetation would be moderate if a considerable amount of native range on disposed of tracts were plowed. Land disposal could impact 9,885 acres of crucial wildlife habitat if land uses change after disposal. The loss of this habitat could be offset by acquiring areas containing crucial wildlife habitat. Consolidation of public lands through exchange could enhance grazing management options however, these options would decrease if disposal was accomplished by sale. Recreation opportunities could significantly improve because of additional access and protection of recreational values resulting from land consolidation.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would provide for the public use of off-road vehicles while protecting the resource values and providing for public safety. The BLM would limit off-road vehicle use to designated roads and trails in the UMNWSR Corridor, the Sweet Grass Hills, Cow Creek and Kevin Rim ACECs and in important riparian areas. Travel in WSAs would be limited to existing roads and vehicular ways.

ORV implementation plans will be developed and may include type of vehicle and seasonal restrictions, as well as road closures. The total acreage limited to ORV use would be 428,109 acres. Five acres along the lower Gist road would be closed to ORV use. The remainder of the planning area (197,984 acres), would be designated open to ORV use.

Positive benefits to soil and water resources may occur from restricting ORVs to roads and trails in areas of sedimentary breaks type soils (317,190 acres). Moderate positive impacts would be expected from the seasonal protection of essential wildlife habitat.

Right-of-Way Location

BLM would permit lineal rights-of-way, provided impacts can be mitigated in the majority of the planning area. Avoidance areas for lineal right-of-way location would total 141,718 acres and would include the scenic and recreational portions of the UMNWSR Corridor; WSAs; the Kevin Rim, Cow Creek and Sweet Grass Hills ACECs; riparian areas; and areas containing sedimentary breaks soils. Windows would be designated along existing facilities in the UMNWSR Corridor.

Following a raptor inventory and development of an activity plan, the Bureau would determine where ROW facilities (both transmission and distribution) could be located off the east side of Kevin Rim. The ACEC activity plan would

determine if any windows off the east rim should be designated, and if so, how many and where. Windows would not necessarily be established along existing facilities.

Lineal ROWs would be excluded on 63,357 acres in wild portions of the UMNWSR. Communication sites would not be permitted on the West and Middle Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills.

Locally significant impacts could occur to sedimentary breaks type soils from increased runoff, erosion and sedimentation in the ROW windows through the UMNWSR Corridor. Impacts would occur from increased runoff, erosion and sedimentation if a ROW must be located in the avoidance area for sedimentary breaks type soil.

A locally moderate negative impact to the mineral and utilities industries would result from the increased costs of routing ROWs around avoidance and exclusion areas.

Emphasis Areas

The BLM would designate the Kevin Rim, the Sweet Grass Hills (East, Middle and West Buttes) and Cow Creek areas as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

The Kevin Rim would be designated to protect, maintain and/or enhance its raptor and cultural resources.

The Sweet Grass Hills are significant because of their religious importance to Native American tribes, important raptor habitat, important wildlife habitat and public recreation.

The Cow Creek area contains a segment of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Cow Island Trail.

Activity plans would be developed for all areas to detail specific actions needed to implement the guidance.

Management direction for Kevin Rim would apply the Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines (see Appendix 2.2) to new federal mineral leases within the associated raptor habitat. BLM would not authorize new developments within 1/4-mile of the base of the Kevin Rim escarpment, unless impacts to cultural resources could be mitigated; and BLM would determine where ROW facilities off the Kevin Rim escarpment (east side) could be located after completing a raptor inventory and an activity plan.

Management direction for the Sweet Grass Hills would include: consultation with Native American tribes prior to surface disturbing activities; applying the Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines (see Appendix 2.2) to new mineral leases within the raptor habitat; not permitting communication sites on the West and Middle Buttes; maintaining and/or improving important wildlife habitat; recommending revocation of 529.67 acres of the Bureau of Reclamation (BR) withdrawal and reopening the area to mineral entry; and keeping the ACEC open to mineral entry under the mining laws.

Management direction for the Cow Creek area would include: preserving the scenic, interpretive, recreation and paleontological values; reevaluating the visual resource management ratings; and emphasizing riparian management.

Designation and management of the Kevin Rim as an ACEC may significantly increase the operation costs for oil and gas developers as a result of more stringent stipulations to protect raptor species and cultural resources. The

mineral and utility industries could be moderately impacted by the potential for restricting ROWs from the east side of the Kevin Rim. Management emphasis on the raptor and cultural resources would produce a significant positive impact for the raptor habitat and a moderately beneficial impact to cultural resources.

The additional workload of preparing a Plan of Operations for small mineral disturbances in the Sweet Grass Hills would create a moderate negative impact to the mineral industry. The opening of 529.67 acres to mineral entry would be a significant positive impact to the minerals industry. If mineral exploration led to the development of an open-pit mining operation, significant negative impacts would be experienced to vegetation and wildlife resources. Continued development in the Sweet Grass Hills would seriously alter the solitude necessary for Native American religious practices, a significant negative impact.

Management of the Cow Creek area as a designated ACEC would create a significant improvement in riparian vegetation, soils, streambank stability and water quality. The improvement in vegetation condition would be a significant positive impact to wildlife habitat in the area. The application of more stringent restrictions for surface development would enhance the preservation of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, a significant benefit. The emphasis on the visual and natural resource qualities of the area would be a moderately positive benefit.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

BLM would provide recreational opportunities and visitor services consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and amendments applicable to the UMNWSR. The following management guidance would be used to accomplish this goal: user capacity would be reassessed using the Limits of Acceptable Change (see Appendix 2.10 of the draft); visitor facilities would be maintained and operated as necessary from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving; areas would be developed for self-guided interpretive study; and recreational use of islands would be restricted during deer fawning and waterfowl broodrearing times.

Facility management guidelines would include: maintaining undeveloped campsites; maintaining semi-developed campsites, and developing new semi-developed sites based on need and criteria listed under the alternative; and providing developed sites in the recreational segments, based on demand and economic feasibility. Developments in the wild segments would only be allowed if they can be serviced by existing access and are consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

BLM would continue to manage Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) campgrounds under the Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Montana.

BLM would encourage private sector initiatives in the development of river management opportunities.

Provisions for search and rescue and law enforcement would continue as a cooperative effort with local and state agencies. BLM could expand its operations in these areas.

The potential loss of oil and gas reserves within the UMNWSR Corridor would continue, as the area would remain closed to leasing.

Alternative A—No Action

Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would attain a land pattern conducive to ease of management or optimum utilization of resources. To achieve this goal a total of 44,143 acres of public land have been identified for disposal with an emphasis on exchange. Retention and acquisition tracts would generally be in areas of major federal holdings such as the UMNWSR Corridor, northern Blaine County, and the Sweet Grass Hills.

If land adjustment is by sale, there could be a long-term reduction in native vegetation; a moderate impact to vegetation and wildlife. However, if land adjustment is through exchange, a moderate positive benefit could result from the acquisition of high-value wildlife habitat. Land adjustments which dispose of small, isolated tracts would be a moderate positive benefit for grazing management. The consolidation and acquisition of access would provide a multitude of significant benefits for recreation.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would continue to allow unrestricted ORV use in the majority of the planning area (477,763 acres). ORV use would be limited to existing roads, trails and ways on 148,335 acres of public land in areas of steep sedimentary breaks soil types with slopes greater than 30%, and in wilderness study areas.

Limiting ORV use on 148,335 acres to existing roads and trails would produce locally significant, but moderate overall benefits on the sedimentary breaks soils and associated watersheds through the lack of disturbance to fragile soils; which would reduce erosion. Locally significant negative impacts to soils and associated watersheds would occur on 168,855 acres of sedimentary soils and riparian areas open to ORV use from accelerated erosion and loss of productivity.

Locally significant damage to vegetation would continue in high use ORV areas. A locally moderate long-term impact to cultural resources could occur in areas open to ORV use.

Right-of-Way Location

The entire planning area would be open to right-of-way and communication site location.

Locally significant impacts in the form of increased erosion and sedimentation would occur from surface disturbance associated with ROW location in areas of sedimentary breaks soils. The minerals industry could select the most cost effective route for transmission facilities under this alternative; a moderate positive impact. ROW location in raptor habitat areas could cause locally significant negative impacts to raptors.

Mitigation would be developed through environmental analysis of each proposed project.

Emphasis Areas

Current management practices and allocations would continue in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, and Cow Creek areas.

In the Kevin Rim area, standard oil and gas stipulations would mitigate impacts to raptor and cultural resources. Cultural inventories would be completed prior to surface disturbance and transmission and distribution ROWs would continue to be permitted.

In the Sweet Grass Hills, the standard oil and gas stipulations would be used to mitigate impacts to raptors and cultural resources. The area would remain open to operation under the mining laws and the BLM would continue consultation with Native American tribes. The BLM would recommend the revocation of 529.67 acres of the BR withdrawal on East Butte and reopen these lands to the mineral entry.

Current uses would continue in Cow Creek. This would involve managing the Nez Perce National Historic Trail in cooperation with U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and applying standard stipulations to mineral developments and other surface disturbing activities.

Oil and gas activity in the Kevin Rim area would continue to be mitigated by a 1/4-mile restriction around active raptor nests. This protection is not adequate to prevent disturbance to breeding or nesting raptors; resulting in a significant negative impact. Oil and gas exploration and development would create a moderate negative impact to cultural resources.

Reopening 529.67 acres to mineral entry in the Sweet Grass Hills would produce a significant positive impact for the minerals industry. If mineral exploration led to the development of an open-pit mining operation, significant negative impacts to vegetation and wildlife resources would be experienced. Continued development in the Sweet Grass Hills would seriously alter the solitude necessary for Native American religious practices, a significant negative impact.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

BLM would continue to provide recreational opportunities consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as amended, and as outlined in the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Plan (BLM 1978). User capacity limits would remain in effect from Coal Banks Landing to the Fred Robinson Bridge and visitor contact facilities would be operated from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Interpretive facilities and sites would be self-guided and keyed to the Floater's Guide. Islands would be available for recreational use. Undeveloped and semi-developed sites would be maintained and additional sites could be developed. Developed sites would be allowed at major launch/take out sites in the recreational segments.

BLM would continue to manage the Montana FWP sites under the MOU with the State of Montana. Private sector initiatives, would be limited to outfitting, guiding and boat rentals. Associated development would be limited to the major launch/take out points in recreational segments. Local and state agencies, with BLM support, would provide for search and rescue and law enforcement.

The potential loss of oil and gas reserves within the UMNWSR Corridor would continue, as the area would remain closed to leasing.

Increased visitor use of the UMNWSR could result in a locally significant impact to vegetation because of increased soil compaction, erosion and trampling.

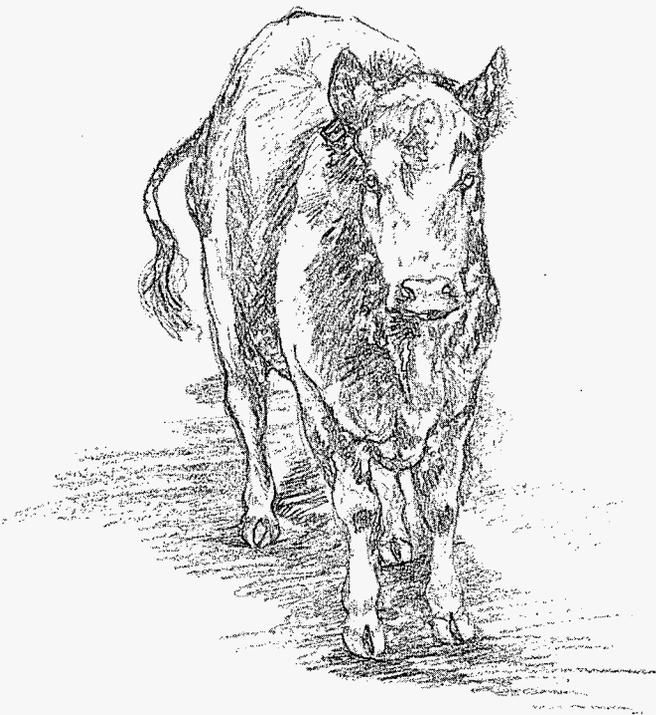
Alternative B

Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would attain an economical and manageable public land base.

A total of 50,117 acres of public land would be identified for disposal, with an emphasis on exchange. Retention and acquisition efforts would be keyed toward blocking up BLM land patterns in the Sweet Grass Hills, Kevin Rim and Cow Creek Areas; in the Marias River and Missouri River Corridors; and important wildlife areas and the Rocky Mountain Front.

Land disposal through sale would be a moderate negative impact due to the loss of native vegetation and 9,885 acres of crucial wildlife habitat. A moderate positive impact could occur through the acquisition of high-value wildlife habitat. Grazing management options would be enhanced by exchanges consolidating lands, or reduced if lands are disposed of through sale. Recreational values would benefit significantly from land adjustment increasing access and consolidation.



Off-Road Vehicle Management

BLM would maximize opportunities for ORV use within the planning area; 594,098 acres would be open for use. In the open area, BLM would designate a 640 acre tract as an area for intensive ORV use. ORV use would be limited to existing roads and vehicular ways on 32,000 acres within WSAs.

ORV limitations on 32,000 acres would reduce further vehicular disturbance to fragile soils; a locally significant, but moderate overall, positive impact. In areas open to

ORV use, there is a potential for locally significant impacts to soils in watersheds and riparian zones as streambank stability is reduced, and to 285,190 acres of sedimentary breaks type soils from accelerated erosion and loss of productivity. Vegetation would be eliminated from about 20 acres in the intensive use area. Wildlife would experience habitat destruction and harassment, a moderate negative impact. Potential destruction of cultural sites in areas open to ORV use would be a moderate negative impact.

Right-of-Way Location

The majority of the planning area would be available for lineal rights-of-way location. Nationally designated areas (i.e., UMNWSR) would be avoidance areas. Seven windows are identified in the recreational and scenic segments of the UMNWSR Corridor.

The planning area would remain open to communication site location.

ROW location in sedimentary breaks type soils would create locally significant impacts due to runoff, erosion and sedimentation. ROW location within raptor habitat areas would cause disturbance and possible nest abandonment, a locally significant negative impact.

Emphasis Areas

Current management practices and allocations (described under Alternative A) would continue in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas.

The impacts to resources in the three emphasis areas would be the same as those identified in Alternative A.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

The BLM would maximize the full range of land and water based recreation opportunities consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended. Management direction would include: not setting user capacity limits; operating visitor facilities from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving; developing interpretive sites; and allowing recreational use of islands. BLM would maintain and upgrade undeveloped sites to semi-developed sites. Semi-developed sites would be maintained and additional sites would be developed. Developed sites would be allowed in the recreational and scenic segments, based on need and economic feasibility.

BLM would not manage or acquire existing Montana FWP campsites.

Private sector initiatives would be encouraged to help achieve a full range of visitor services. Search and rescue and law enforcement would be coordinated by or contracted to local authorities.

The potential loss of oil and gas reserves within the UMNWSR Corridor would continue, as the area would remain closed to leasing.

Locally moderate negative impacts to soils and vegetation would occur in the UMNWSR Corridor due to increased development and human traffic.

Alternative C

Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would emphasize the retention of public lands.

A total of 15,689 acres of public land would be identified for disposal with an emphasis on exchange. Retention and acquisition efforts would be keyed toward blocking up BLM land patterns in the Sweet Grass Hills, Marias River, Missouri River, north Blaine County, Cow Creek, Kevin Rim, and important wildlife habitat areas.

A locally significant negative impact to mineral development would occur if lands are acquired in the Sweet Grass Hills, due to the proposed protective withdrawal. Impacts to native vegetation and wildlife could occur if lands are disposed of through sale and those lands were plowed. Land adjustment through exchange would be a moderate positive impact due to the acquisition of high value wildlife habitat. Grazing management options would be enhanced by exchanges consolidating lands, or reduced if lands would be disposed of through sale. Recreational values would benefit significantly from land adjustments increasing access and consolidation.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would provide maximum protection to the physical and biological environment and reduce to the fullest extent possible the negative impacts from off-road vehicles. To accomplish this, ORV use in the UMNWSR Corridor; the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek ACECs; WSAs; areas of sedimentary breaks type soils; and riparian areas (329,794 acres) would be limited yearlong to designated roads and trails. Seasonal restrictions would be applied to important wildlife habitat (99,000 acres). A total of 428,794 acres would be limited to ORV use. The Gist Road between the cabins and the river would be closed (5 acres).

ORV limitations on 317,190 acres of sedimentary breaks soils and riparian areas would reduce further vehicular disturbance to fragile soils; a locally significant, but moderate overall positive impact to the area. ORV limitations would create moderate positive impacts by reducing vehicular disturbance to vegetation and harassment of wildlife.

Right-of-Way Location

The BLM would protect important natural and cultural resources and special management areas. The Kevin Rim and the UMNWSR would be designated exclusion areas for lineal ROWs. Windows would be provided through the recreational and scenic segments of the UMNWSR. WSAs, the Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek ACECs, areas of sedimentary breaks type soils and riparian areas would be designated avoidance areas. The BLM would not permit communication site location on West and Middle Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills.

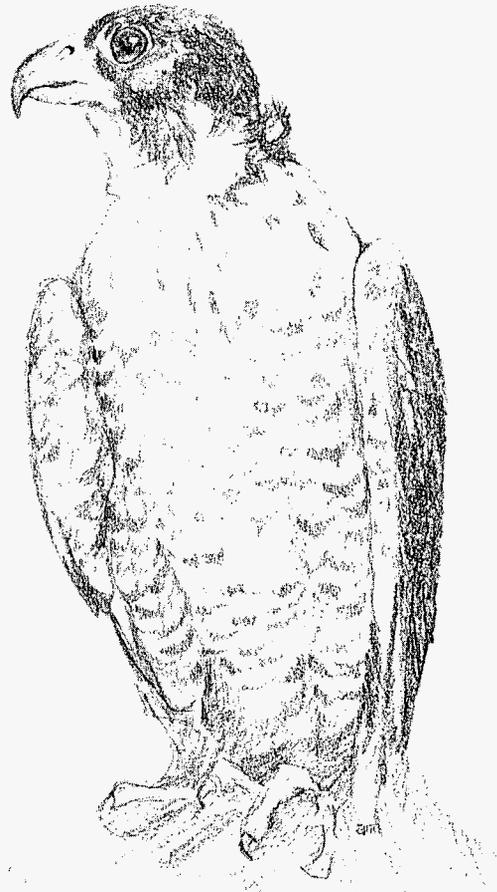
Locally significant impacts would be associated with lineal ROW location through the windows in the UMNWSR due to increased runoff, erosion and sedimentation associated with the sedimentary breaks soils. Routing ROWs

around avoidance and exclusion areas would increase costs and create a locally moderate impact to mineral and utility companies. Exclusion and avoidance of ROW location in the area would be a moderate positive impact to vegetation.

Emphasis Areas

The BLM would provide maximum protection of the significant resources in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas. These areas would be designated ACECs and the following management goals and guidance applied.

The Kevin Rim would be designated to provide protection, maintenance and enhancement to raptor habitat and cultural resources while providing for continued oil and gas development. The Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines would be used to develop mitigation. New projects within 1/4-mile of the base of the Kevin Rim escarpment would be authorized, only if impacts to cultural resources could be mitigated. No new ROWs would be permitted on the east side of Kevin Rim.



The East, Middle, and West Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills would be designated an ACEC to protect and maintain the area for Native American religious and cultural practices, public recreation and wildlife habitat. The BLM would pursue a protective withdrawal for the area, the Rocky Mountain Front Raptor Guidelines would be used to develop site specific mitigation for activities in occupied raptor habitat, and allotment management plans would be revised to emphasize the maintenance and enhancement of elk habitat. BLM would recommend revocation of 529.67 acres of the BR withdrawal and these lands would be included in the protective withdrawal.

The Cow Creek area would be designated to protect, maintain and/or enhance the Nez Perce Historic Trail, Cow Island Trail and other resources in the area. The BLM would preserve the scenic, interpretive, recreation and paleontological values associated with the Nez Perce National Historic Trail, reevaluate the visual resource management ratings and emphasize riparian management in the ACEC.

Management of the Kevin Rim area as an ACEC would create a significant negative impact to oil and gas developers by increasing operation costs. A locally significant positive impact to raptors would result from implementing the raptor stipulations and the proposed management of cultural resources would eliminate impacts to cultural resources at the base of the escarpment, a moderately beneficial impact.

Management of the Sweet Grass Hills as an ACEC would create a significant negative impact to oil and gas development because leasing would not be allowed under a protective withdrawal. A moderate negative impact to valid existing claim holders would occur due to the requirement that mining operations would need formal approval from BLM and the Montana Department of State Lands. The 529.67 acres currently withdrawn to BR would be included in the protective withdrawal; a significant negative impact to the mineral industry. An open pit mine on a valid existing claim would have a significant negative impact on wildlife.

Management direction for raptor protection and elk habitat maintenance and enhancement would create locally significant positive impacts to those resources. This management direction would also create a moderately positive impact to cultural resources and Native American religious use.

Management of the Cow Creek area with a strong emphasis on riparian management would produce locally significant positive impacts by improving vegetation and streambank stability and decreasing erosion and sedimentation. The improvements in the riparian habitat would be a significant positive impact to wildlife in the area. The use of stringent surface development standards in the area would be a long-term significant impact to cultural resources. The emphasis to manage the area for preservation and interpretation of the historical resources and the protection and enhancement of the visual and natural qualities would be a moderate positive impact.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

The BLM would emphasize the maximum preservation of the natural environment and cultural values of the UMNWSR Corridor. This would be accomplished by redefining the user capacity based on the Limits of Acceptable Change; maintaining and operating visitor facilities from Memorial Day to Thanksgiving; limiting interpretive developments to major launch/take out points; keying other interpretive efforts to the Floater's Guide; and closing islands to recreational use.

The BLM would continue to maintain existing undeveloped and semi-developed sites. Additional site development could occur if impacts could be mitigated and no crucial wildlife habitat and cultural resources would be impacted. Developed sites would be restricted to existing launch/take out sites in the recreational and scenic sections of the Corridor. The BLM would acquire and manage the Montana FWP campsites. The BLM would allow private sector initiatives in campground maintenance and development; outfitting services and boat liveries.

BLM would assume the responsibility for law enforcement on the river and continue the cooperative efforts on search and rescue operations.

The potential loss of oil and gas reserves within the UMNWSR Corridor would continue, as the area would remain closed to leasing. Increased interpretation and the emphasis on protection of cultural resources would be a moderate positive impact.

CONCLUSION

The impacts of the four alternatives tend to be similar in quality but different in the numbers of acres affected by given management actions. Alternative D, as modified, has been selected as the proposed Resource Management Plan because it presents a reasonable balance between commodity production and protection of amenity resources.

USING THIS DOCUMENT

Portions of the draft West HiLine RMP/EIS required revisions and corrections to respond to the concerns voiced during the public comment period. For the reader's convenience Chapters 1, 2 and 5 have been reprinted, with the revised text set in italic type.

Other portions of the draft required only minor corrections and those corrections are given in the Errata section of this final RMP/EIS.

The questions and concerns from the public hearings and comment period on the draft are numbered and shown in the Chapter 5 portion of this document. Chapter 5 also contains BLM's responses to those questions and concerns.

New or revised tables, figures, appendices and glossary and reference items can be found according to the following table.

This table should help the reader understand the relationship between the various segments of the draft and this final document. Only those portions of the draft requiring revision or correction are shown on this table and addressed in this document. The remaining portions of the draft were accurate as printed.

LOCATION IN DRAFT	AMOUNT OF REVISION	LOCATION IN FINAL
Summary	Revised and Reprinted	Summary
Chapter 1	Revised and Reprinted	Chapter 1
Chapter 2	Revised and Reprinted	Chapter 2
Chapter 3	Revised	Errata
Chapter 4	Revised	Errata
Chapter 5	Revised and Reprinted	Chapter 5
Table 3.15	Revised and Reprinted	Errata
Table 4.1	Revised and Reprinted	Errata
Table 4.2	Revised and Reprinted	Errata
Table 4.3	Revised and Reprinted	Errata
Table 4.4	Revised and Reprinted	Errata
Figure 3.5	Revised and Reprinted	Errata
Figure 3.6	Revised and Reprinted	Errata
Figure 3.10	New	Errata
Figure 3.11	New	Errata
Glossary	Revised and Reprinted	Glossary
References	Revised and Reprinted	References
Appendix 1.1	Revised and Reprinted	Appendix 1.1
Appendix 1.2	New	Appendix 1.2
Appendix 1.3	New	Appendix 1.3
Appendix 2.2	Revised and Reprinted	Appendix 2.2
Appendix 2.3	Revised and Reprinted	Appendix 2.3
Appendix 2.6B	Revised and Reprinted	Appendix 2.6B
Appendix 2.9	Combined with Appendix 2.2	Appendix 2.2
Appendix 3.1	Revised and Reprinted	Appendix 3.1
Appendix 3.2	Revised and Reprinted	Appendix 3.2
Appendix 3.4	New	Appendix 3.4
Appendix 4.2	New	Appendix 4.2