

INTRODUCTION

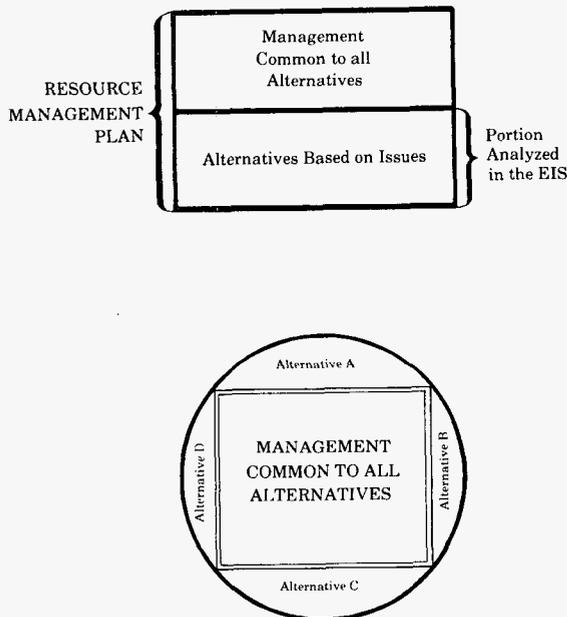
This chapter is presented in two major portions; the Management Common to All Alternatives section and the alternative descriptions.

The guidance given in the Management Common to All Alternatives section has been carried forward from existing laws, regulations and previous planning efforts. It is current, valid management guidance which will be followed no matter which alternative is selected and is a substantial portion of the resource management plan (RMP). This section combined with the selected alternative will form the RMP for the entire planning area. Figure 2.1 shows the relationship of this guidance and the alternatives.

The second portion of this chapter describes the four proposed alternatives (Alternatives A, No Action; Alternative B; Alternative C; and Alternative D, the Preferred Alternative) to resolve the issues discussed in Chapter 1.

All four alternatives comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act requirement that the public land be managed on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield.

Figure 2.1 Relationship of Alternatives to Management Common to All Alternatives.



ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

No alternatives proposing maximum resource production or protection of one resource at the expense of other resources were considered because this would violate the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) legal mandate to manage public land on a multiple use, sustained yield basis.

MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

The following guidance will continue regardless of which alternative is selected. It's the result of existing laws, regulations and previous planning efforts and will not be changed by any of the alternatives described later in this chapter. This guidance constitutes a part of each alternative analyzed and combined with the selected alternative will serve as the resource management plan.

This section is organized by ecological and human resource components. Two of the ecological components (vegetation and wildlife and fisheries) are subdivided to identify which BLM resource program is responsible for carrying out the guidance. Thus, the vegetation component is subdivided to include vegetation related guidance for soil and water, riparian, forestry, wildlife, grazing and fire programs in an effort to group similar information. In a similar effort, the wildlife component is subdivided to include related information from the recreation program.

Air Quality Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will comply with national and state air quality standards. The BLM will evaluate impacts to air quality, at the activity level plan, to ensure the continuation of the Class II airshed.

Implementation

Prior to approving any activity, the BLM will evaluate all actions and apply mitigating measures to ensure the air quality of the region is not degraded. These measures will generally require actions to be undertaken during specific wind conditions to either disperse smoke or prevent chemical spray drift.

Prescribed fires in the area require Montana Department of Health and Environmental Science, Air Quality Bureau approval. All such plans will be forwarded to the appropriate airshed zone coordinator.

Venting or flaring hydrocarbon gases associated with hydrogen sulfide (H₂S, sour gas) requires approval under the provisions of Notice to Lease-4A. The Montana State Air Quality Bureau monitors this activity for compliance.

Soils Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will maintain and improve soil productivity in the planning area by reducing erosion and increasing vegetative cover.

Implementation

Prior to authorizing any surface disturbing activity (including but not limited to range improvement, mineral development, right-of-way location, or livestock grazing) the BLM will evaluate the activity and if necessary apply mitigating measures; deny the authorization; or relocate the activity to a more suitable soil type. Specific measures will be developed for soils with high erosion susceptibility, steep slopes, sparse vegetation and shallow soil depth. Surface disturbing activities on floodplains will have riparian objectives and/or mitigation measures in the activity plans to protect ground cover and streambank stability and to reduce sediment yields. All surface disturbing activities will require an on-site evaluation to develop mitigation to reduce erosion and soil compaction and improve soil stability and salinity control. These mitigation measures will also prescribe revegetation programs.

All proposed reservoirs will be designed to minimize erosion, saline seeps, salt accumulations (i.e., selenium) and rapid sedimentation.

Roads and trails, when part of an approved transportation plan, will be built or upgraded with due regard for environmental considerations. Cut and fill slopes should be no steeper than 3:1. After access roads are no longer needed, they will be contoured to a natural appearance and seeded with native species.

Topsoil will be stockpiled for all surface disturbing activities and will be used to rehabilitate the area when the project is completed. Exceptions to this may be granted, based on a site specific evaluation.

Water Resource Management

Under all alternatives, surface and groundwater quality will be maintained to meet or exceed minimum state and federal water quality standards. The BLM will continue to obtain water rights for all projects and comply with Montana water laws. The BLM, in conjunction with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP), will recommend instream flows on the Missouri and Marias Rivers to protect stream morphology and biological and recreational uses. Information on the recommended instream flows for the Missouri River can be found in the Missouri River Instream Flow Report, available in the Lewistown District Office.

The BLM will improve or maintain vegetative cover, especially on highly erosive soils, to reduce runoff.

Implementation

The objectives for areas with riparian vegetation or the potential to support such vegetation, will be to maintain or improve riparian vegetation, water and groundwater quality and control streambank erosion.

All proposed reservoirs will require a soils survey and a hydrologic evaluation of the site. Reservoirs must be designed with a minimum 15-year life expectancy. All proposed reservoirs will be evaluated to determine the need for off-site water facilities.

All surface disturbing activities will require an on-site evaluation to mitigate impacts to water quality and quantity. Surface disturbing activities should not alter stream courses. Other measures to protect stream courses will be evaluated for environmental impacts prior to project approval.

Pumping facilities used to extract water from the Missouri River will be permitted in accordance with PL 94-486. An environmental assessment will be completed prior to permit issuance. Visual resources and surface disturbance impacts will be mitigated.

Small amounts of oil field produced water which do not meet water quality standards will be disposed of in accordance with Notice To Lease-2B and/or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines.

The BLM will participate in the development of instream flow recommendations for the Marias River.

Paleontological Resource Management

Major paleontological deposits within the planning area will be protected by current Bureau policy.

Implementation

Permits will continue to be issued by the Montana State BLM office to qualified paleontologists to conduct work on the public lands in the Lewistown District. These permits can be issued for the study of significant fossils that are vertebrate, invertebrate or plant remains.

Potential impacts to paleontological resources will be considered on a case by case basis. If paleontological resources are encountered during construction activities, the contractor must report these findings to BLM for evaluations and determinations concerning the disposition of such resources.

Management plans may be developed to protect paleontological resources of scientific interest.

Mineral Resource Management

Valid, existing mineral rights within the planning area will not be changed by any decision in this document.

Under all alternatives, the BLM will continue to provide for the exploration and development of coal, oil, gas, locatable minerals and mineral materials. Table 2.1 identifies by county, the acreage segregated from mineral entry. Table 2.2 identifies the acreage within the UMNWSR that is closed to mineral leasing and location. Appendix 2.1 contains a solicitor's opinion which explains BLM's mineral leasing program within the UMNWSR. No seismic exploration will be allowed in any section of the UMNWSR Corridor.

TABLE 2.1
ACREAGE SEGREGATED FROM
MINERAL ENTRY¹

County	Acres
Blaine	21,479.62
Hill	0
Chouteau	26,907.33
Liberty	540.00
Toole	0
Glacier	0
Fergus	20,326.20

TOTAL — 69,253.15

¹BLM, 1987

TABLE 2.2
ACREAGE MANAGED UNDER A
NO LEASE POLICY¹

All acreage is within the scenic and recreational sections of the UMNWSR Corridor and WSAs.

County	Acres
Blaine	19,448.73
Chouteau	5,343.66
Fergus	11,958.44
Phillips	4,634.40

TOTAL — 41,385.23

¹BLM, 1987

Implementation

The standard stipulations in Appendix 2.2 will be part of all oil and gas leases granted. These stipulations may be modified by the Rocky Mountain Front raptor criteria for management of the Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills areas only.

Coal licenses for exploration and small scale use will be granted after a complete environmental review by resource specialists and the development of environmental constraints.

Access across federal surface to mining claims will be allowed after an environmental review of the notice or plan. Access must be granted under the mining laws, but may be conditional to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation.

Surface management of locatable mineral development on public lands will be guided by the 43 CFR 3809 regulations and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Montana Department of State Lands (DSL) and BLM. The 43 CFR 3802 regulations will regulate locatable mineral development in wilderness study areas.

Disturbance exceeding the casual use level, (usually involving mechanized equipment) but less than 5 acres, may proceed 15 days after a notice is filed with the BLM District Office. Disturbance of greater than 5 acres requires filing a Plan of Operations. For operations covered by the MOU with the Montana's Department of State Lands, formal approval is granted by DSL with BLM concurrence.

A Plan of Operations must always be filed, regardless of disturbance acreage, and formal approval received from BLM prior to surface disturbance in wilderness study areas (WSA), areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC), and other areas listed in 43 CFR 3802 and 43 CFR 3809. In these areas the MOU with DSL does not apply and BLM will be responsible for developing mitigating measures and plan approval.

Once a Plan of Operations is filed with the BLM, the proposed action will be analyzed (with DSL, where appropriate) and the mitigating measures needed to prevent unnecessary and undue environmental degradation will become conditions of approval. In WSAs the nonimpairment of eligibility criteria for wilderness area designation will determine needed mitigating measures. The mitigation required will be consistent with provisions of the 43 CFR 3802/3809 regulations and with the guidance in this document to protect the public resources.

Vegetation Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will maintain the public lands that are in satisfactory ecological condition. On public lands with unsatisfactory ecological condition, BLM will manage according to multiple use objectives based on ecological site potential for specific uses. These objectives will be economically and biologically feasible. An example might be the need to maintain certain wildlife habitat for specific species in an ecological condition that is less than good or excellent.

Livestock is allocated 114,212 animal unit months (AUMs) each year from the public lands in the planning area; 7,958 AUMs in the Great Falls Resource Area, 83,294 AUMs in the Havre Resource Area and 22,960 AUMs along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (UMNWSR) Corridor. Established allocations will be monitored for actual use, utilization, and condition trends. The monitoring guidelines can be found in the Great Falls Monitoring Plan, the Judith Monitoring Plan, the Phillips Monitoring Plan and the Natural Resource Monitoring Plan for the Havre Resource Area. These plans are available at the respective offices. All allotments in the planning area have been assigned to a management category dependent on the resources and problems contained in the allotment. Appendix 2.3 lists the management category, AUMs allotted, range condition and season-of-use for allotments in the planning area.

All unallocated parcels will remain available for livestock grazing. Allocations and administration of livestock grazing will occur as provided for in 43 CFR 4100. An environmental assessment will be prepared for areas not previously grazed by livestock. Grazing allocations on acquired lands will be based on management needs and reasons for acquisition. The allocation may range from zero to full capacity and will be made on a yearly basis after completion of the activity plan.

Wildlife is currently allocated 79,260 AUMs within the planning area. However, populations will be allowed to expand into existing habitat, providing they do not reduce livestock grazing AUMs. The BLM will cooperate with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to determine habitat and population size.

All vegetation increases will be allocated to watershed, until soils are stabilized to a satisfactory condition as determined by an interdisciplinary team prior to increasing livestock or wildlife allocations.

Forest products are available for sale (commercial or personal use) outside of wilderness study areas and the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

The BLM will continue to take full suppression action on all fires occurring on public lands not covered by a Fire Management Plan. The resource areas will identify areas where resource management objectives can best be met by using prescribed fire or limited suppression plans. These areas will be detailed in a Fire Management Plan for each resource area and the UMNWSR Corridor. The use of fire and its impacts will be discussed in each plan.

Fire is a viable, economical tool and will be considered in a vegetation manipulation project. Each resource program will identify areas where prescribed fire can be used to achieve vegetation management objectives.

Soil and Water Implementation (Vegetation Related)

Allotments in predominately fair ecological range condition should have grazing methods which periodically defer early use (April 1—May 15). Grazing methods and land treatments (keyed to specific soil subgroups) in selected areas will be implemented to improve cover and reduce soil compaction.

Surface disturbance will be successfully revegetated to as near 90% predisturbance condition as possible. If revegetation is not expected to occur naturally within 3 years, the BLM will require the initiating party to rehabilitate the disturbance at the time the project is completed. Revegetation species will be determined during the site specific environmental analysis phase.

A minimum rest period of two growing seasons will be required after any major disturbance to vegetation communities. More rest may be required depending on the situation. Major disturbances are defined as mechanical manipulation of the range, i.e., seeding, chiseling and fire (wild or prescribed). Specific timing and the type of rest will be determined at the site specific environmental assessment phase for small disturbances.

Riparian Area Implementation (Vegetation Related)

All manageable riparian areas will have management plans implemented by the year 2001 to maintain, restore, or improve riparian areas to achieve a healthy and productive ecological condition for maximum long-term benefits and values. This goal is stated in the Montana Riparian Management Strategy.

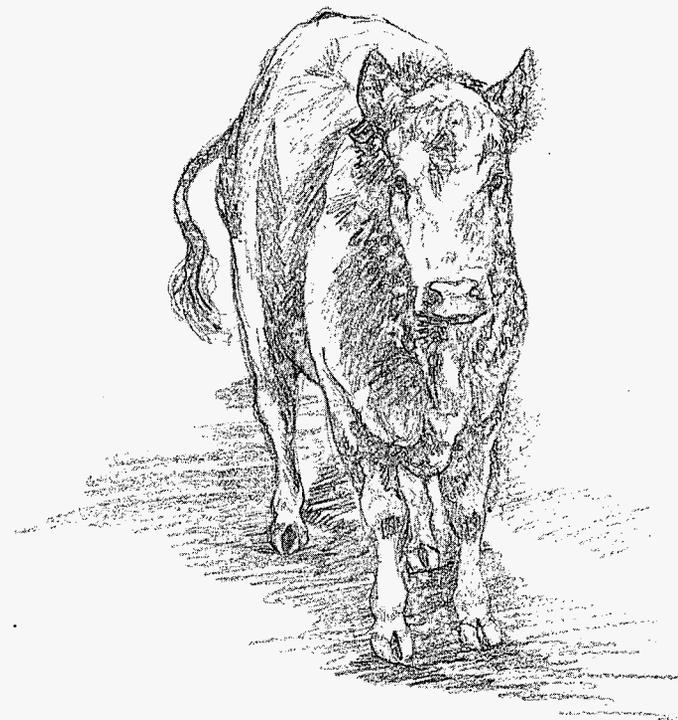
Management objectives will be applied to the riparian areas along the following streams and rivers: Lodge Creek, 30-mile Creek, Bullwhacker Creek, Woody Island Coulee, Corregan Coulee, Cow Creek area, East Fork of Battle Creek, Savoy Creek, Irvins Coulee, Sand Coulee, Lyons Coulee, the Missouri River, Marias River, Cut Bank Creek, and Battle Creek. Management will be implemented to obtain 90% of optimum streambank cover within 4-10 years. Management practices may include but are not limited to riparian pastures, specific grazing methods or enclosures.

Livestock grazing in specialized, high use recreation sites along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River will be controlled through fencing and/or selective grazing. Allotment management plans (AMPs) will be developed or revised to include specific objectives for the improvement and maintenance of riparian areas. In some cases additional site specific data may be needed before development or revision of an AMP can begin. In most cases, though, site specific data is adequate to proceed with development of alternatives for protecting and managing these areas. The on-the-ground effects of livestock grazing will be determined through monitoring and evaluating these areas to determine if objectives are being met.

Measures to mitigate environmental impacts presented in the Missouri Breaks Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be observed. This will include the use of an interdisciplinary team to review the location of all proposed projects and an inventory of riparian habitats to determine appropriate protection measures.

All high value waterfowl and fisheries reservoirs will be evaluated to determine the need for fencing to promote riparian vegetation establishment. These areas will be monitored and when the riparian vegetation is well established, returned to management under a grazing method designed to protect the vegetation community. Other areas may need fencing to restore the riparian community.

Management plans would be written or revised to contain riparian objectives to improve existing riparian communities. These objectives will include management direction to develop potential riparian areas or maintain and improve existing riparian areas. Management prescriptions would be based on intensive grazing systems to achieve better livestock distribution and upland use. Livestock enclosures to protect riparian communities may be used until riparian conditions improve. Where feasible, riparian pastures will be established to allow rehabilitation of riparian areas while still allowing the proper use of grazing AUMs.



Pastures with riparian areas would not be grazed by livestock during the hot season more than 1 year out of 3 in order to maintain or improve riparian communities in satisfactory condition (i.e., narrow stream channel, raise the water table, or increase woody vegetation to maintain 90% canopy cover). If enclosures are used, they would be in place until riparian management objectives are attained. Within the UMNWSR, the major riparian areas, listed in Appendix 2.4, may receive priority for intensive management during the life of this plan. Riparian pastures outside the UMNWSR Corridor will be grazed in the cool season (May 15—June 30) to maintain or improve woody vegetation.

As new information on riparian grazing becomes available, these guidelines may be changed.

The following known saline seeps will be evaluated and fenced if necessary to reclaim the seep: BR-10, BR-14, BR-31, BR-42, BR-48, BR-52, BR-71, BR-115, Bend, Nathan, Honker, O.K. and Change Reservoirs. Other saline seeps will be evaluated to determine management needs.

All existing and future riparian enclosures will be maintained and monitored until monitoring data shows the enclosures are no longer necessary. At that time, AMPs will be revised to allow management to maintain the riparian community condition.

Potential riparian sites within the UMNWSR Corridor will be inventoried and an activity plan written. Five riparian sites may be developed over the life of the plan.

The BLM will continue to manage Two Calf, Dillon Island and Grand Island Natural Areas within the UMNWSR in cooperation with the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (CMR).

Forest Management Implementation (Vegetation Related)

All forest product sales will undergo an environmental analysis during the site specific evaluation phase.

Recreational use of forest products within the UMNWSR Corridor will be limited to dead and down material.

Wildlife & Fisheries Implementation (Vegetation Related)

The BLM will maintain a diversity of forbs, grasses and shrubs on antelope range through proper livestock stocking rates and grazing methods.

Grazing methods will be used to maintain good or excellent forage and cover among grasses, forbs and shrubs on 5,100 acres of crucial elk habitat in the Sweet Grass Hills to support approximately 150 elk.

The BLM will use grazing methods to enhance bighorn sheep habitat and allow their expansion in the Missouri Breaks.

Livestock grazing methods (which may include the termination of grazing by October 31) will be used to maintain sagebrush stands with 15-50% canopy cover and 15 inches in height within 2 miles of sage grouse leks.

Grazing Management Implementation (Vegetation Related)

Allotment management plans will be developed with multiple use objectives to enhance vegetation production, maintain and enhance wildlife habitat, protect watersheds, reduce bare ground to the target soil vegetation cover by soil subgroups (see Chapter 3 and Appendix 2.5) and to minimize livestock/recreation conflicts. Allotment management plans will implement some form of grazing method (i.e., rest rotation, deferred rotation, seasonal or other methods). Appendix 2.3 shows AMP status for the entire planning area. Grazing management methods will be implemented prior to mechanical treatments, unless it is clear that grazing practices alone will not reach management objectives.

Existing AMPs will be updated as dictated by monitoring results or changes in the livestock operation.

Monitoring data and analysis will be used to ensure grazing management is reaching its objectives. The monitoring data and analysis will be used to allow temporary increases or decreases in AUMs and to revise AMPs.

Allotments grazed between March 1 and May 31, will be evaluated in accordance with the Natural Resource Monitoring Plan for the Havre Resource Area and the Great Falls, and the Judith and Phillips Monitoring Plans. If problems (such as adverse impacts to watersheds and/or wildlife) are identified, the AMP will be revised to mitigate the impacts.

Section 15 leases will be monitored according to the schedule in the resource area monitoring plan. Livestock adjustments will be made depending on the results of monitoring and inventory.

Crested wheatgrass seedings will be maintained for maximum livestock forage production; 70% of the production may be allocated to livestock when soils are stabilized to a satisfactory condition. Existing seedings will be fenced and restored to maximum production to allow for manageable pastures. Additional crested wheatgrass seedings may be used to consolidate existing scattered stands of crested wheatgrass into a manageable unit. In addition, new seedings will be allowed on allotments where no other option is available to improve the vegetative condition.

Chemical, fire or mechanical manipulations of vegetative communities will be planned, developed and implemented to ensure that negative impacts to other resources (wildlife, soils, range, and watershed primarily) are identified and mitigated. Treatments will be applied if maintenance or improvement cannot be achieved with grazing management practices. Watershed parameters, topography, soil type, infiltration, and soil loss potential will also be considered and mitigated, as necessary, in vegetation manipulation projects.

Blue grama-clubmoss rangelands may be treated by mechanical means (i.e., chisel plowing or scalping) where improvement cannot be attained by using a grazing method.

The Ervin Ridge Wild Horse Herd Management Area would remain free of wild horses, as directed by the 1985 South Bearpaw Management Framework Plan (MFP) amendment.

The BLM will control, eradicate and/or contain noxious weed infestations on public lands under cooperative agreements with county weed boards. If weed problems occur in a checkerboard ownership pattern the BLM will initiate control measures in conjunction with the other landowners.

The containment/eradication of noxious weeds will proceed as analyzed in the programmatic environmental assessment on Containment/Eradication of Selected Noxious Plants in the BLM Lewistown District, May 1986.

Fire Management Implementation (Vegetation Related)

The North Fergus Modified Suppression Plan is the only fire management plan in the area. Information will be compiled to develop fire management activity plans/environmental assessments (EAs) for each resource area within the next 4 years. The following criteria will be used in identifying limited suppression areas; economics, low resource values and difficult suppression areas.

All wildfires within the UMNWSR Corridor will receive an initial attack unless a modified suppression plan is in effect.

Standard mitigation measures for maintaining the vegetation communities are found in Appendix 2.6.

Wildlife & Fisheries Management

The BLM will maintain and enhance habitat for all species of wildlife. The emphasis for habitat maintenance and development will be placed on present and potential habitat for sensitive, threatened and/or endangered species, nesting waterfowl, fisheries and crucial big game winter ranges.

General forage allocations and habitat decisions for wildlife can be found under the Vegetation Management section of this chapter. The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is responsible for population management; the BLM has made some general habitat decisions to support the populations identified by the MDFWP.

Implementation

The BLM will minimize or prevent road and trail development on crucial deer and sharptailed grouse habitat areas.

Habitat enhancements (islands, nesting platforms) will be constructed on new or existing reservoirs, ponds, potholes or river systems where feasible.

Easements on or across public land for the development of private water sources will carry stipulations to enhance waterfowl habitat.

Livestock water developments will not be built on the terminal portions of finger ridges in the Missouri Breaks in order to minimize deer/livestock competition in the UMNWSR Corridor.

Expansion of big game populations into existing but previously unoccupied habitat will be allowed as long as herd expansion does not reduce the allocations to watershed and livestock.

A cooperative agreement to transplant bighorn sheep into Little Bullwhacker, Cow Creek and Bull Creek will be pursued with the MDFWP. No changes in livestock class from cows to domestic sheep will be allowed in areas occupied by bighorn sheep.

Identified great blue heron and cormorant rookeries on public lands will be protected from roads, campsite developments, timber cutting and other intrusions. A buffer zone of 1,000 feet around rookeries from the start of nesting to the fledging of young birds is needed for protection against disturbance.

No action will be initiated on public lands which will jeopardize any federally listed threatened and endangered (T&E) plant or animal. Impacts to other sensitive species and state designated species of special interest will be evaluated and mitigated prior to the initiation of any action on public lands.

The BLM will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to recover threatened and endangered species including reintroduction efforts. The species of interest are the bald eagle, peregrine falcon and piping plover.

Underwater rights-of-way (ROWs) crossing the Missouri River will be constructed between June 15—August 15, to protect spawning paddlefish. Other mitigation to protect spawning paddlefish will be applied as necessary.

The BLM will consult with the USFWS when any action may affect a threatened or endangered species.

The prairie dog town located in T. 33 N., R. 22 E., Sec. 28 will be managed to provide habitat for associated species. It may also be managed to provide some recreational shooting. Should any control measures be considered in the future, threatened and endangered or special interest species will be given priority, and necessary mitigation will be developed prior to initiating any control measures. Prairie dog towns smaller than 10 acres will not be actively managed.

Recreation Management Implementation (Wildlife & Fisheries Related)

Consistent with the 10-year cooperative Fish Management Plan between the BLM and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the MDFWP will be requested to stock the following reservoirs with fish: South Cassidy, Reser, BR-12, Burns, Don, North Faber, Salmo, Butch, Glynda, F. R., Carol, Ridge, Zero, Gezob, and Diane. In the future, other reservoirs may be identified for fisheries management; priority consideration will be given to reservoirs near residential areas, particularly the Hogeland-Turner area. Consideration of fisheries potential will be given during the design phase of any new reservoirs.

Standard mitigation measures to protect the wildlife resources from disturbance are found in Appendix 2.6.

Cultural Resource Management and Protection of Traditional Cultural Values

All alternatives will provide for the enhancement and protection of cultural resources and the protection of traditional cultural values. Cultural resources are defined as those fragile and non-renewable remains of past human activities. For the purpose of this document, traditional cultural values are restricted to Native American religious activities.

Implementation

Cultural resources will be given full consideration in all land use planning and management decisions. The BLM will seek to ensure its undertakings avoid inadvertent damage to both federal and non-federal cultural resources.

The BLM will seek to preserve a representative sample of the full array of cultural resources for the benefit of scientific and socio-cultural use for present and future generations.

All BLM actions which may potentially affect cultural resources will comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended and as implemented by 36 CFR 800. This legislation and regulation (called Section 106 process) requires the following steps to be taken before initiation of BLM actions:

Prior to any federal undertaking, cultural resources eligible to be listed or listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) must be identified. Cultural resources identified within the project area and potentially affected by a BLM action are evaluated in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Agreement between the BLM and SHPO on eligibility constitutes consensus, permitting the compliance process to proceed.

Once consensus exists, the nature of the effect on historic properties is determined. One of the three following determinations are made: (1) No effect—the agency, in consultation with SHPO, determines the federal undertaking will not impact eligible cultural resources. (2) No adverse effect—the agency in consultation with the SHPO determines there will be an effect but the effect will not be adverse. The agency submits to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) a report which describes the nature of the undertaking and a justification for a determination of no adverse effect. The ACHP, may concur, object with conditions (project may proceed if conditions are met) or object (in this case a consultation process is initiated among ACHP, the agency and SHPO). (3) Adverse effect—when the agency determines the effect on cultural resources will be adverse, the agency, SHPO, and the ACHP will consider ways to avoid or mitigate the impact of the federal undertaking on cultural resources. Measures considered during consultation may include preservation of the cultural resource, restoration (restoring, repairing) of the cultural resource documentation (photographs, drawings, and histories of buildings and structures), reducing the magnitude of the undertaking, redesigning the project, and data recovery (refers to archaeological sites where data may be recovered through controlled excavation). Once the consulting parties agree on the measures to avoid or mitigate the impact to eligible cultural resources by the federal undertaking, and the conditions or stipulations have been met, the project may proceed.

The procedures outlined above have been modified in portions of the RMP area by agreement between the BLM and the Montana SHPO. These modifications have reduced the need for cultural resource surveys to identify sites possibly eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

BLM requires that all persons conducting cultural resource field work on public lands obtain a cultural resource use permit from the Montana State Office. The District Manager authorizes and is responsible for monitoring the field work proposed and actually conducted. This is accomplished through the field work authorization process.

Activity plans may be developed for significant cultural resources on public lands. These plans will be written for sites evaluated through the BLM cultural resource use evaluation system. The cultural resources use categories are described in Appendix 2.7. Sites assigned a use category will be managed to achieve that use.

BLM has a clear responsibility and mandate to manage the cultural resources along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River for both preservation and enhancement. This direction has been developed into a series of management plans, including a cultural resource management plan. All of these are due for reviews in the next 2 years (1987-1989).

Specific prescriptions for management of the cultural resources along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River will consider that:

1. Historic sites will be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on; their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

2. Prehistoric sites will be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they can add to knowledge and interpretation of the UMNWSR.

3. Historic and archaeological opportunities along the UMNWSR will be enhanced by developing interpretive potential at selected cultural sites. Resources will be selected based on access, information potential and the potential to provide important parts of river history or prehistory via interpretation. These enhancements would be subject to any constraints of the final RMP.

Standard mitigating measures to protect cultural resources are listed in Appendix 2.6. These measures will be applied as applicable to all federal actions.

Implementation for Traditional Cultural Values

As required, the Bureau will consult with Native American tribes when its actions have the potential to affect areas of concern to practitioners of traditional religions. In the RMP area, that consultation will require contact with the Blackfeet, Rocky Boys and Fort Belknap Reservations. The kinds of activities of concern might cause degradation to the visual or esthetic nature of an area. They might also cause loss of plant species or other resources important to Native Americans.

Recreation Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will maintain the recreational quality of public lands by providing opportunities for fishing, hunting, sightseeing, hiking, snow sports and other outdoor opportunities.

The BLM will maintain and enhance the recreational and visual quality of public lands along river systems in the planning area.

The wilderness values in three identified wilderness study areas (WSAs) Stafford, Ervin Ridge, Cow Creek will be maintained. The Secretary of the Interior is required to report his recommendations to the President by October 21, 1991, and the President is required to report his recommendations to Congress by October 21, 1993. Congress ultimately decides whether to designate areas as wilderness.

The quality of the scenic (visual) values on public lands throughout the RMP area will be maintained.

The Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River will be managed to protect and preserve the remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, and other values as directed by Congress in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-1968) and the amendment for the Upper Missouri (PL 94-486, 1976). The BLM will cooperate with the National Park Service's (NPS) Rocky Mountain Regional Office in managing the UMNWSR and with the NPS's Mid-west Regional Office in managing the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The BLM will manage the segment of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail within the planning area in a manner that is consistent with the purposes and provisions of Public Law 90-543 (the National Trail Act) as amended by Public Law 95-265.

Implementation

The BLM will provide recreation access maps and brochures for recreational use of the public lands and to promote better sportsman/landowner relations.

The BLM will strive to improve public access to rivers at road and highway intersections and to acquire lands to enhance recreational opportunities. Other developments may be allowed, based on public demand and BLM recreational studies. Management priority will be on the Missouri and Marias Rivers.

Roads, trails and public lands will be signed to aid people recreating on public lands. Priority will be given to intensive use areas.

Recreational use studies will be conducted on a continual basis to determine concentration areas and future access needs.

A pack in/pack out policy at recreation sites will be implemented.

All acquired lands will be evaluated for wilderness values as part of the lands review process.

Wilderness study areas will continue to be managed in compliance with the Interim Management Policy (IMP) until they are reviewed and acted upon by Congress. Acquired areas studied for wilderness will be managed to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the land, and when it does not conflict with valid and existing rights, they will be managed to meet the non-impairment standard as well. Any lands within WSAs in the UMNWSR Corridor will continue to be managed under the IMP.

The draft Missouri Breaks EIS recommended 21,590 acres of the 34,050 acre Cow Creek WSA as preliminarily suitable for wilderness designation. None of the 4,800 acre Stafford WSA or 10,200 acre Ervin Ridge were recommended as suitable. More information on these WSAs can be found in Appendix 2.8 and the draft Missouri Breaks Wilderness EIS.

Areas added to the National Wilderness Preservation System by Congress will be managed in compliance with the Wilderness Management Policy. Site-specific wilderness management plans will be developed for such areas.

Areas reviewed by Congress but not added to the National Wilderness Preservation System will be managed under the applicable guidelines in this resource management plan.

Surface developments will be designed or mitigated to complement and harmonize with the natural features and the Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class objectives. The visual contrast rating will be used as a guide for all major projects proposed on public lands that fall within VRM Classes I, II, and III areas which have high sensitivity levels.

Existing VRM data will be updated for the Missouri Breaks Range EIS area in the planning area.

Implementation Within the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (Recreation Related)

The BLM will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on bankside recreation use and management within the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge boundaries from river miles 139-149.

No impairment to the view shed will be allowed in Class I VRM areas in wild sections of the UMNWSR Corridor. The level of change to the natural landscape from management activities should be very low and must not attract attention.

In the scenic and recreational sections of the UMNWSR Corridor, Class II VRM areas will not allow evident changes in the view shed. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer.

Both motorized and non-motorized watercraft will be permitted in all river segments. There is a no-wake speed limitation during the primary recreation use season for the wild and scenic river segments. A no-wake speed is defined as the speed whereby there is no whitewater in the track or path of the vessel or in created waves immediate to the vessel.

Hazardous Waste Management

The BLM would not permit the establishment of a hazardous waste dump on public lands under any of the alternatives.

Implementation

Lands needed for the disposal of hazardous wastes will be identified and made available (through disposal) to the private sector for this purpose.

Land Resource Management

Under all alternatives, the BLM will continue to identify areas with legal access and those areas lacking legal access. Access will then be addressed in an activity plan that will identify specific tracts or routes for acquisition. Acquisition needs will be identified by individual program activities and public involvement. Access needs identified at this time, for administrative purposes, include the Kevin Rim area, the East and West Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills and the Marias River.

The BLM will continue withdrawal review as provided for under Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and Department Manual 603.

BLM will take aggressive action on any unauthorized agricultural use of public lands. Emphasis will be on detection/resolution and publication of the results of those activities. Inventories of unauthorized agricultural use will be initiated and completed where not already current. A plan for abatement will be a priority in the future budget developments. Emphasis will be given to immediate resolution of newly identified unauthorized uses; termination or authorization, as appropriate. Administrative processes will seek fair-market value land use compensation, damages and/or land restoration. Each district will develop standard stipulations for restoration of disturbed land.

Implementation

A transportation plan will be updated to identify existing legal access to public lands as well as areas where public access is lacking. Access will then be addressed in an activity plan that will identify specific tracts or routes for acquisition. Acquisition needs will be identified by individual program activities and through public involvement.

Access will be obtained to provide more recreation in the recreational and scenic portions of the UMNWSR Corridor. Priority will be given to: Evans Bend at river mile 6; launch/takeout sites; Black Bluff Rapids; and bankside use areas. Other access will be obtained as needed. The only new access allowed in the wild portions of the UMNWSR Corridor will be to provide required access to valid, existing leases.

The BLM recommends revoking the power site classification and power site reserve number 757. These power site classifications and reserves are within the UMNWSR where legislative actions preclude water power and water storage development. Other power site classifications and power site reserves will be reviewed to determine if the withdrawals are still valid.

If a withdrawal (including power site withdrawals) is terminated, the lands will be assessed for retention or disposal qualities. If these lands are retained, they will be managed under the guidance provided for the surrounding or nearby lands or for the specific values on the lands.

Distribution facilities (electrical systems, pipelines, roads, railroads, etc.) will be encouraged to parallel existing facilities.

BLM field personnel are encouraged to establish cooperative relationships with local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) or other agencies for the purpose of greater federal efficiency in federal program administration. Specifically, local offices of Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and Soil Conservation Service should be consulted/communicated with on a frequent basis. Shared land status, field and or photo use analysis, land use surveillance, coordinated inventory, and investigation will lead to greater program efficiency for BLM and the USDA organizations.

Land acquisition will be for lands of greater resource values than those lands disposed. Acquired lands will be placed under the guidance found in this resource management plan. Lands acquired through fee simple title or easement in a designated emphasis management area (i.e., the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Corridor, WSAs) will be managed under the specific management guidance for the area. Lands acquired to supplement and enhance emphasis management areas will come under the specific guidance for the area.

ALTERNATIVES

This section describes four different alternatives to resolve the issues described in Chapter 1; land tenure adjustment, off-road vehicle management, right-of-way location, emphasis areas, and Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River management. Alternative A represents the No Action or Continuing Current Management Alternative; Alternative B presents a combination of management guidance and actions that would favor the use of public land resources; Alternative C presents a combination of management guidance and actions which favors the protection and preservation of public land resources and; Alternative D presents a balance of management guidance and actions proposed in the previous three alternatives.

These alternatives were developed as a range of reasonable combinations of resource uses and management practices to respond to the planning issues. Each alternative combined with the Management Common to All Alternatives guidance will provide management direction for all resources.

Maps showing allocation differences between the alternatives for land tenure adjustment, ORV management and ROW location are located in the back of this document. Map 1 and the overlay to map 1 identify land status and constraints to minerals management. Map 2 shows the land tenure adjustment for Alternative A; and Map 3 shows the land tenure adjustment Alternative B, C and D. Map 4 shows the ORV management options and ROW locations for all the alternatives.

ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)

This alternative represents a continuation of present management direction. It would continue to implement policies, regulations, and decisions from five management framework plans, several grazing environmental impact statements (EISs), a wilderness EIS, various programmatic environmental assessments, activity level plans, and the State Director's Guidance for RMPs (83/84). This alternative serves as a baseline for the comparison of other alternatives. If selected, this alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common To All Alternatives section would form the RMP.

Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would continue to exchange lands under the State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment (see Appendix 1.1). The emphasis of this guidance is to attain a land pattern conducive to ease of management or optimum utilization of resources. This is generally achieved through managing large blocks of public surface lands. Land adjustment actions would generally dispose of lands outside the retention areas identified on Map 2 in the back of this document. Land exchanges may be considered within the retention areas. Land adjustment would be achieved through state or private exchange, Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) sale and mineral exchanges. Acquisition lands would meet the criteria found in Appendix 1.1.

Implementation

All land adjustments would be through exchange or the Recreation and Public Purposes Act and a land report would be completed for each exchange.

Acquisition tracts would generally be in areas of major federal holdings such as the Missouri River Corridor, Northern Blaine County, the Sweet Grass Hills and other areas within and outside of the planning area.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would continue to allow unrestricted off-road vehicle (ORV) use under an open designation for the majority of the planning area (477,763 acres). Map 4 in the back of this document defines this open area.

Travel would continue to be limited to existing roads and vehicular ways in the wilderness study areas. Under the limited designation, ORVs would be restricted to existing roads and trails in areas of sedimentary breaks soils with slopes greater than 30%. Combined, these areas total 148,335 acres.

ORV restrictions do not constrain administrative access to leases (grazing, mineral or other). However, such access would be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Implementation

An ORV implementation plan would be completed. This plan would contain detailed information on roads and trails open to travel, on signing the area and on monitoring use in the area. The BLM would publish and distribute a map of the limited areas which shows the roads and trails open for use. All limited areas would be signed with an explanation of use restrictions in the area.

Wilderness study areas designated as suitable for wilderness by Congress would be closed to all vehicular traffic at the time of designation. A portion of the Cow Creek WSA is currently recommended as preliminarily suitable for designation. WSAs which are not designated would be managed under the ORV constraints of adjacent lands, if any apply.

Permits would be issued for vehicular use in limited and closed areas for administrative purposes.

The BLM would acquire access to intensive use areas through exchange, easement or purchase.

Right-of-Way Location

The BLM would continue to grant lineal rights-of-way throughout the planning area, if an environmental review of each request indicates the impacts may be mitigated. The entire planning area would remain open to communication site location.

Implementation

An environmental analysis of the proposed project would identify any standard stipulations necessary to mitigate impacts to resources. Standard stipulations (see Appendix 2.6) would be used as a minimum.

Emphasis Areas

Current management practices and allocations would be continued in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas (see Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4). All three areas would be managed for the multiple use of all resources with no additional stipulations, unless needed on a site specific basis.

Figure 2.2 Kevin Rim Emphasis Area Land Ownership Map.

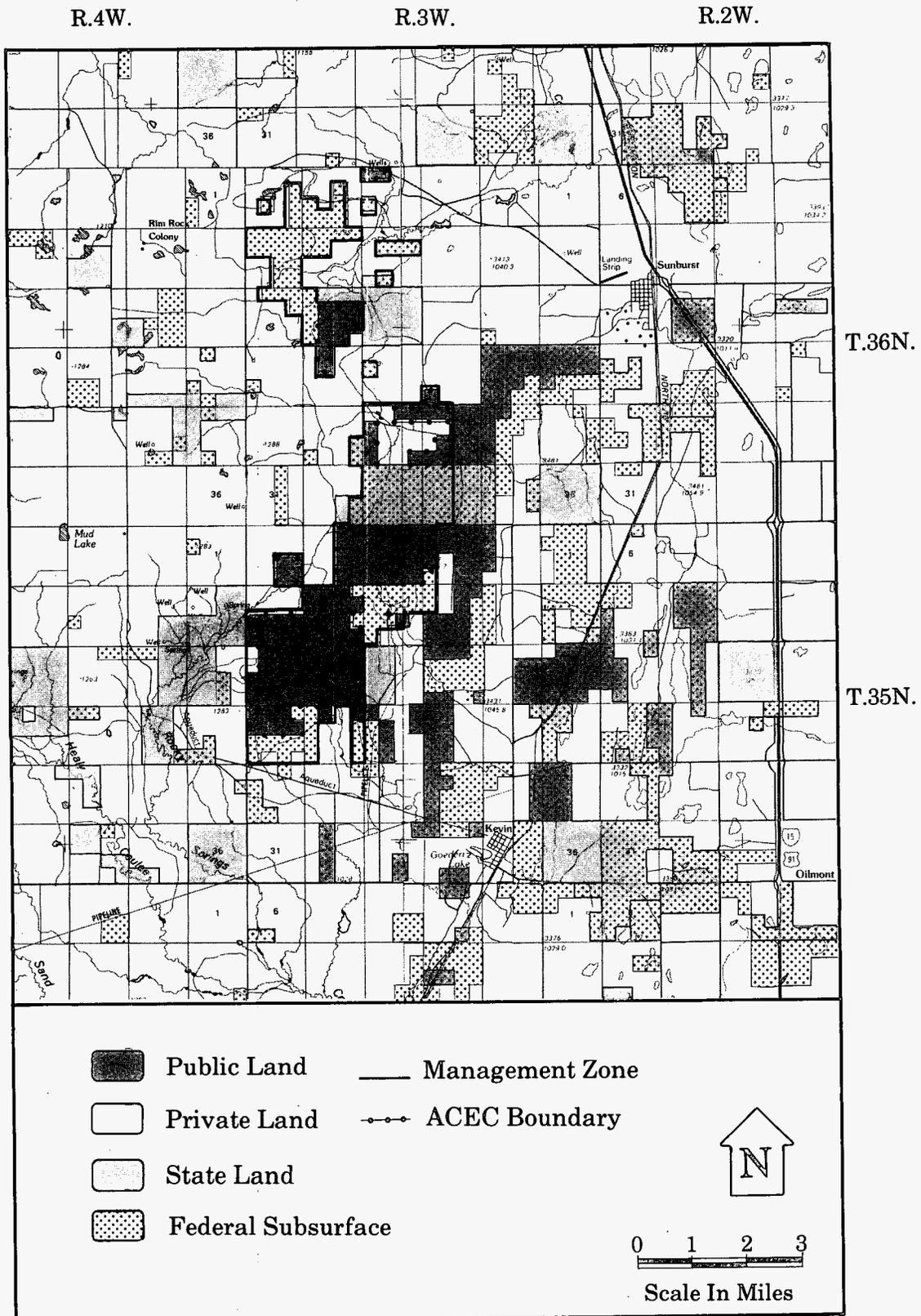
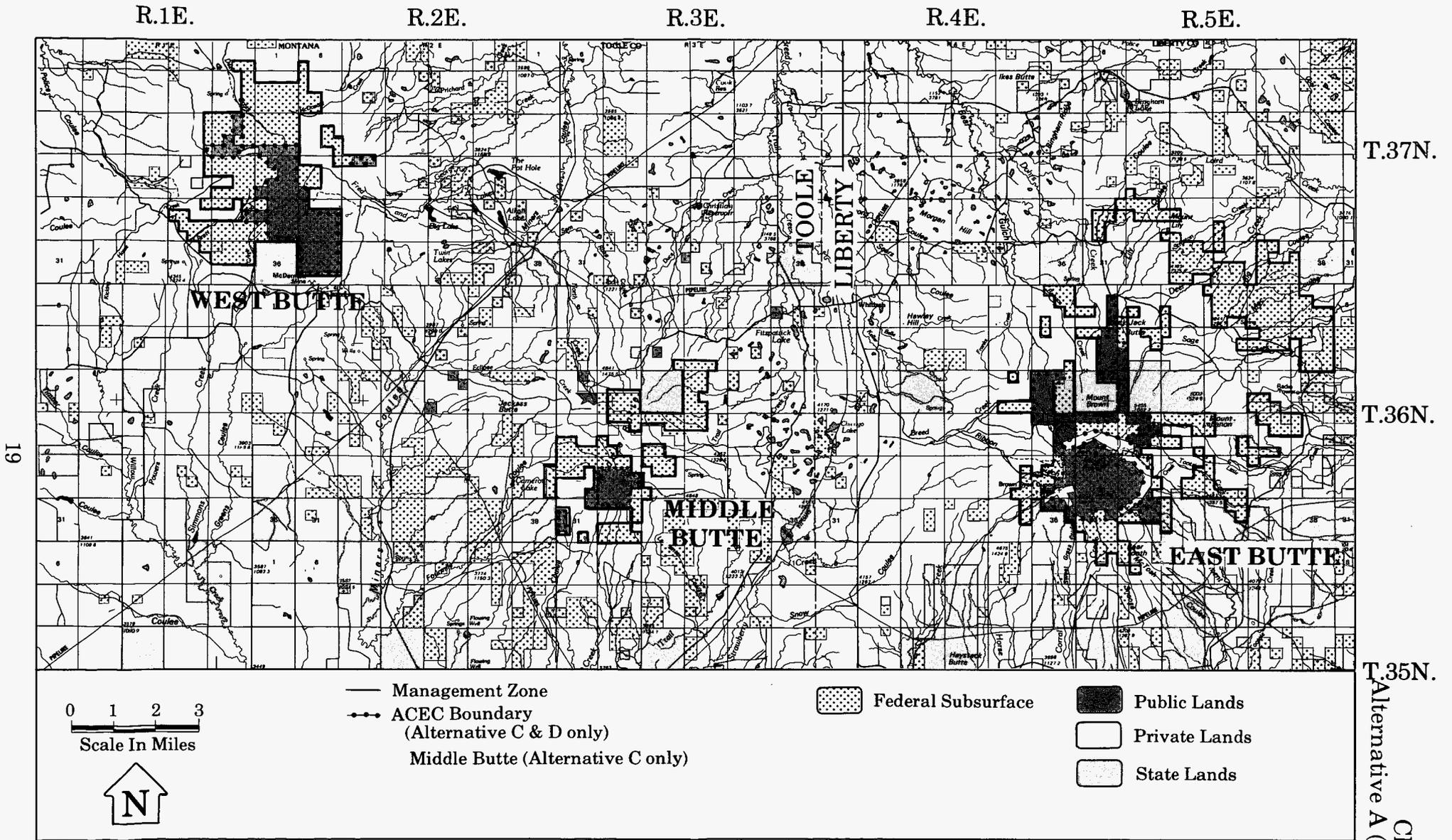


Figure 2.3 Sweet Grass Hills Emphasis Area.



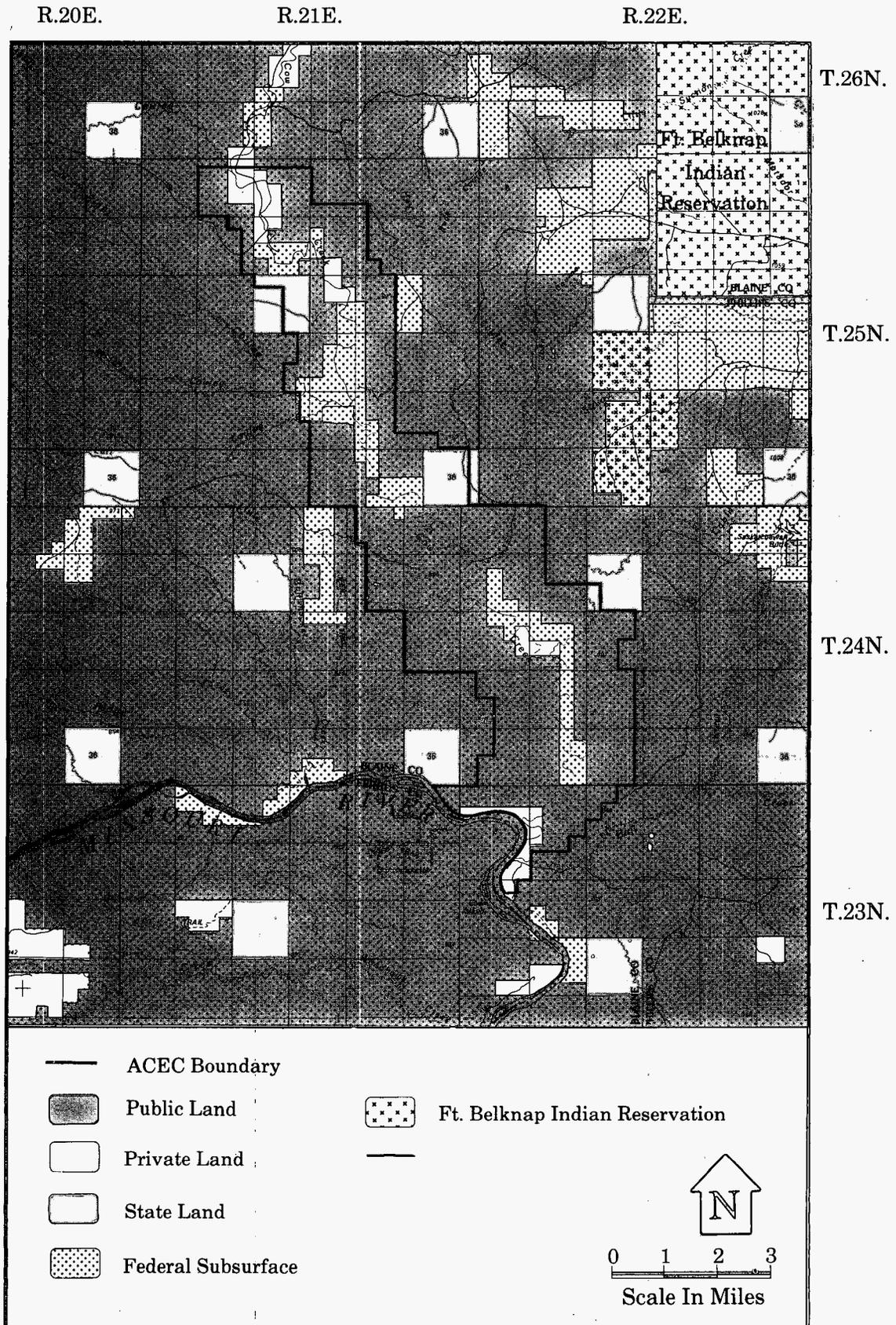
T.37N.

T.36N.

T.35N.

Chapter Two
Alternative A (No Action)

Figure 2.4 Cow Creek Emphasis Area — Land Ownership Map



Kevin Rim Implementation

Standard protective stipulations would continue to mitigate surface disturbing activities (primarily oil and gas) and impacts to the raptor and cultural resources. A 1/4 mile buffer zone would continue around surface disturbing activities to protect active raptor nests through the fledging of the young birds. Dates during which raptor nests are used can be found in Table 3 of Appendix 2.9 the Rocky Mountain Front raptor guidelines; only Table 3 applies to this alternative.

The BLM would continue to require a cultural resource inventory on all surface disturbing projects prior to approval. If cultural resources are discovered, the project would avoid them if possible, or the impacts would be mitigated. Mitigation may involve archaeological excavation.

The BLM would continue to permit rights-of-way in the area if an environmental analysis determines the project can be completed without significant impacts. This determination may be made after mitigation measures are developed to modify the impacts.

Sweet Grass Hills Implementation

The BLM would continue to lease and permit mineral exploration and development under the standard stipulations (see Appendix 2.2). The area would remain open to operation under existing mining laws. Standard protective stipulations would include the 1/4 mile buffer zone to protect active raptor nests, and seasonal no surface occupancy on crucial elk wintering and calving areas. Protective wildlife stipulations may be applied to locatable mineral development only where they are needed to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation. The standard cultural stipulations (see Appendix 2.6) would also apply to the area. The BLM would consult with Native American tribes on actions which might impact the area. The current grazing methods would continue, unless altered by the Great Falls Monitoring Plan.

The BLM has reviewed the East Butte, Bureau of Reclamation (BR) withdrawal and recommended that 40 acres of the withdrawal be retained and the remaining 529.67 acres returned to BLM administration. The withdrawal was originally granted as a riprap source for reclamation projects. The actual quarry is located on private land. The 40 acres still needed by BR is adjacent to the existing quarry and provides riprap reserves that may be needed in the future. The area revoked from the withdrawal would be opened to mineral entry and would be managed under the management guidance for the area. All other agency withdrawals in the area would be continued.

Cow Creek Implementation

Multiple use management would continue in the Cow Creek area. The BLM in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, would write an activity plan for the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Minor modifications of the current grazing methods would occur in order to incorporate the riparian guidelines necessary to maintain current riparian areas on Cow Creek.

Surface disturbing activities such as mineral development, right-of-way location and/or range improvements would be subject to the standard stipulations (see Appendices 2.2 and 2.6).

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

It is BLM policy to manage the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River and its related resources in a manner consistent with providing a meaningful recreational experience for recreational users, while maintaining or enhancing the existing unique quality environment of the management area.

Recreation use including, but not limited to boating, hiking, fishing, and hunting, will be permitted to the extent that the wild and scenic characteristics of the Missouri River are not degraded.

BLM management would be consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542 1968) and the amendment to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act which designated the Upper Missouri River (PL 94-486, 1976).

Implementation

Visitor Services

Floater user capacity is based on the amount of public land available for campsites and would remain the same. The use capacity is 210 individuals/day between Coal Banks and Judith Landing and is 234 individuals/day between Judith Landing and Fred Robinson Bridge. Minor adjustments would be made if additional, suitable land is acquired. Outfitters are limited to 30% of overall carrying capacity (133 individuals/day).

The visitor contact station in Fort Benton and the ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would be operated between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The visitor contact station would be managed under the Memorandum of Understanding with the National Park Service, to provide visitors with necessary permits and safety information for their float. In addition, the center would provide interpretive information on the natural and cultural history of the river. The ranger stations would provide visitor permits and information and serve as public health and safety contact sites.

All interpretive activities and sites within the river corridor will be self guided and keyed to the Floater's Guide. The Floater's Guide increases visitor understanding of regulations and resources on the river. It provides information on the natural, cultural, historical and geological features of the river. Information or interpretive signs, except hazard warnings visible from the Missouri River, will be prohibited on all federal lands.

Recreational use of islands would be discouraged through visitor contact and publications during the spring and early summer season to protect young wildlife.

Facility Management

Three categories of recreation sites exist along the river. Undeveloped sites are primitive camping areas used on a regular basis, but lacking capital improvements (i.e., pit toilets). Semi-developed campsites are areas with some capital improvements and camping use is fairly frequent. Developed sites are those areas with tent or trailer spaces, potable water, access roads, refuse containers, pit or chemical toilets and qualify for fee collection under the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965. These definitions are applicable to all alternatives.

The BLM would continue monitoring and maintenance (i.e., litter collection) on major undeveloped use sites. Those sites along the recreational segment to Coal Banks Landing would be signed to help alleviate trespass problems on private lands.

The existing semi-developed sites would be maintained by BLM. Additional sites may be developed based on the following criteria—

- (1) increasing use of the river or undeveloped campsites;
- (2) impacts to soil and vegetation becoming long term; (i.e., heavy use begins to compact soils and kill vegetation beyond acceptable limits) as determined by monitoring;
- (3) sanitation becomes a health problem;
- (4) more or different sites are needed in order to rest existing sites (to reclaim soils and vegetation at existing sites); and/or
- (5) better distribution of use is desired in the more popular areas. Development at these sites will be limited to pit or chemical toilets and potable water sources. Sites will be developed and maintained to provide a primitive recreational experience.

Developed campsites as defined above, would only be allowed at major launch/take out sites in the recreational segments.

The BLM would continue to manage the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department campgrounds as provided under agreement with the State of Montana. This includes facilities at Coal Banks Landing, Hole-In-The-Wall, Slaughter River, Judith Landing and Cow Island Landing.

Concession Management

Concessionaire services would be limited to outfitting, guiding and boat rentals.

Health and Safety

The BLM would continue visitor services to provide for public health and safety. All law enforcement and search and rescue operations would continue as a cooperative effort. Local and state agencies will have lead responsibility, BLM may provide personnel and equipment.



ALTERNATIVE B

This alternative emphasizes the availability of public land for consumptive uses with minimum restrictions. The non-consumptive resources (cultural, soil, water, air, threatened and endangered species, vegetation, etc.) would be provided the minimum protection required by law. This alternative would generally provide the opportunity for the maximum allowable levels for resource exploration, development and production. If selected, this alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common To All Alternatives section would form the RMP.

Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would attain an economical and manageable public land base. Isolated, uneconomical, or marginally important resource lands would be available for disposal. Acquisition of private and state lands would be pursued to consolidate public lands into large blocks. A total of 50,092 acres of public lands could be available for disposal through FLPMA exchange, sale or Recreation and Public Purposes Act. The remainder of the surface lands would remain in federal ownership, these lands represent high value resource lands. Federal subsurface could be exchanged or sold for fair market value.

The State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment (USDI-BLM 1984) is being revised by this alternative for the planning unit only. The criteria presented in the State Director's Guidance has been refined and applied to the lands in the RAs. The criteria applicable to each resource area can be found in Appendix 1.1. As a result of evaluating the lands in the planning area against the criteria, the map presented in the State Director's Guidance no longer applies to the planning area; it is replaced by Map 3 of this document.

Implementation

The BLM would pursue land adjustment through exchange. However, the lands (50,092 acres) identified as available for disposal appear to meet the criteria in FLPMA for sale and could be disposed through exchange, sale and/or R&PP sale. At the time a proposal for acquisition or disposal is made, the specific tract would be thoroughly evaluated against the FLPMA criteria in addition to the criteria in Appendix 1.1.

The BLM would acquire lands of higher value to block up BLM land patterns. Acquisition areas would be pursued in the Sweet Grass Hills, Kevin Rim, Marias River, Missouri River, Cow Creek, the Rocky Mountain Front, and important wildlife habitat areas. The order of these areas has no bearing on priority of acquisition; that is generally dependent on the timing of private/state offerings.

A land report would be completed for each exchange.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would maximize opportunities to use off-road vehicles within the planning area. Travel in wilderness study areas (32,000 acres) would be limited to existing roads and trails. The BLM may issue permits for cross country travel for administrative vehicular use in these restricted areas. The remainder of the planning area (594,098 acres) would be open to off-road travel. The BLM would designate about 640 acres of this open designation area for intensive off-road vehicle use.

Implementation

The BLM would prepare an ORV implementation plan for the planning area. The plan would contain detailed information on open and limited areas, the intensive use area, and on signing and monitoring of ORV use.

Travel would be limited to existing roads and vehicular ways in WSAs. The wilderness study areas and the intensive use area would be signed with an explanation of allowed uses.

Wilderness study areas designated as suitable for wilderness by Congress would be closed to all vehicular traffic at the time of designation. A portion of the Cow Creek WSA is currently recommended as preliminarily suitable for designation. WSAs which are not designated as suitable for wilderness would be open for ORV use.

Any intensive ORV use area must meet the following criteria prior to designation—

- (1) the area would be at least 5 miles from an emphasis area;
- (2) the area would be located in a Class IV VRM area;
- (3) the area would be considered a low quality hunting region;
- (4) the area would be located on public land with a buffer of public land to reduce conflicts with private landowners;
- (5) the area would have good public access or the capability for such access;
- (6) areas with open mine shafts and other hazards would not be considered for ORV use;
- (7) the area should avoid reservoirs, watersheds, floodplains, stream channels, wetlands and riparian zones;
- (8) the area would contain suitable topography and soil conditions to maximize ORV user's enjoyment and reduce health and safety risks (i.e., steep, but not too steep, few surface rocks, non-flooding areas);
- (9) the area would be located 1/4 mile from raptor nest sites; 1/2 miles from known grouse leks; 1/2 mile from known bald eagle nests, and 1 mile away from known peregrine falcon nests;
- (10) the area would be located outside of crucial big game winter ranges;
- (11) the area would be located in an undesirable area for livestock grazing, i.e., steep slopes far from water.

The BLM would acquire access to intensive use areas through exchange, easement or purchase.

Right-of-Way Location

The BLM would consider and permit lineal rights-of-way throughout the planning area, except in nationally designated special management areas. The planning area would remain open to communication site location.

Implementation

Lineal rights-of-way would be permitted in the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Corridor at the following locations: mile 0-1, mile 20.5-21.5, mile 38.5-39.5, mile 88-89, mile 101-103, mile 131.5-132.5 and mile 148.5-149.5. The remainder of the corridor would be an avoidance area.

ROWs proposed through WSAs would have to meet the non-impairment criteria. WSAs designated as suitable for wilderness by Congress, would become exclusion areas for ROW location. If other areas are designated by Congress, they would become ROW exclusion areas or if possible, corridors would be designated through them.

BLM would evaluate each ROW request through an environmental assessment and develop the mitigation required by law to protect various resources (i.e., threatened and endangered species, cultural artifacts).

Emphasis Areas

Current management practices and allocations would be continued in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas (see Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4). All three areas would be managed for the multiple use of all resources with no additional stipulations.

The BLM would recommend revoking 529.67 acres of the Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal on East Butte. This land would be opened to mineral entry and managed under the current guidance for the area.

Implementation

Please refer to the implementation section for Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, and Cow Creek in the No Action Alternative.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

The BLM would maximize the full range of land and water based recreation opportunities in all segments of the river corridor, consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542, 1968) and the amendment for the Upper Missouri (PL 94-486, 1976). Visitor center contact services would be provided consistent with the MOU with National Park Service. This may be accomplished through the use of private sector initiatives to provide a full range of visitor services.

Implementation

Visitor Services

The BLM would not set floater capacity limits. Outfitters would not be limited on either the number of people or boats.

The visitor contact station at Fort Benton and the ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would be operated for a 6 month season beginning the weekend before Memorial Day. This visitor contact station would provide visitors with the necessary permits and safety information for their float. In addition, the center would provide information on the natural and cultural history of the river. The ranger stations would provide visitor permits and information and serve as public health and safety contact sites.

Interpretive trails and sites would be developed at significant geological, historical, archaeological, paleontological and natural area sites. These developments may include interpretive signs or displays. Significant sites currently identified include the Stafford Ferry, Cow Creek, Evans Bend, Steamboat Point, Little Sandy, and Hole-In-The-Wall. Other sites may be developed if there is substantial public use, the BLM acquires important new lands, or major new resource discoveries are made.

Islands would be used for livestock forage and could be used for developed recreational sites.

Facility Management

The BLM would clear brush (1/4 acre) for pathways and tenting areas on all undeveloped campsites. All such areas would be signed in the recreational and scenic sections of the river. All sites including those in the wild portions would be shown on the river maps. These sites would be upgraded to semi-developed sites through the life of the plan (10-15 years).

Semi-developed sites would be maintained. Additional sites may be developed in all sections of the river based on the following criteria—

- (1) increasing use of the river or of undeveloped campsites;
- (2) impacts to soil and vegetation becoming long term; i.e., heavy use begins to compact soils and kill vegetation as determined by monitoring;
- (3) sanitation becoming a health problem;
- (4) additional sites are needed to rest existing campsites; and/or
- (5) better distribution of campsites is needed.

Development at these sites would be constrained only by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. If access is required for capital improvements, the following restrictions would apply. In wild sections of the UMNWSR, roads not needed for administrative purposes would be closed, contoured to a natural appearance and seeded with a native species. In scenic sections, use would be limited to administrative purposes. Standard stipulations (see Appendix 2.6) would be applied to developments in the recreational segments.

The BLM would allow private sector initiatives to establish and manage developed visitor facility sites when economically feasible. These developments would be allowed in the recreational and scenic sections of the river corridor and would be subject to restrictions in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These developments may include marinas, boat rentals, lodging facilities, interpretive services, eating facilities etc.

The BLM would not acquire or manage existing state camping facilities (six sites).

Concession Management

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives to help achieve the objective of maximizing recreation on the river. These ventures would range from operating campgrounds to full scale developments offering boat rentals, lodging and eating facilities.

Concession services would be managed within the constraints of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and under the guidance in this RMP. Failure to comply would cause a revocation of the operators permit.

Health and Safety

Concessionaires would be held accountable under the terms of their permit for visitor health and safety associated with their operations.

Law enforcement would be contracted to the local sheriff's department.

Search and rescue operations would be coordinated and provided by local authorities.

ALTERNATIVE C

The management guidance in this alternative emphasizes the protection of natural and cultural resources. Other public land uses would be constrained by stipulations and/or mitigation developed to provide protection and enhancement of non-consumptive resources (recreation, soil, water and air), the natural resources (wildlife, vegetation, etc.) and cultural resources. If selected, this alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common To All Alternatives section would form the RMP.

Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would emphasize the retention of public lands. Only those lands which meet the FLPMA criteria for sale would be available for disposal. Public lands which appear to meet this criteria (15,664 acres) are identified on Map 3 in the back of this document and listed in Appendix 1.1. These lands may be exchanged, sold or disposed of through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

The State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment (USDI-BLM 1984) is being revised by this alternative for the planning unit only. The criteria presented in the State Director's Guidance has been refined and applied to the lands in the RAs. The criteria applicable to each resource area can be found in Appendix 1.1. As a result of evaluating the lands in the planning area against the criteria, the map presented in the State Director's Guidance no longer applies to the planning area; it is replaced by Map 3 in the back of this document.

Implementation

The BLM would attempt to acquire lands in any specially managed area (i.e., UMNWSR, WSA, ACECs, national historic trail areas, etc.) and in high value resource areas (i.e., crucial big game wintering and calving/fawning areas, threatened or endangered species habitat, important cultural sites etc.). Current areas of interest are (no priority intended) along the Missouri and Marias Rivers, along Cow Creek, North Blaine County and the Sweet Grass Hills. All acquisitions would meet the criteria listed in Appendix 1.1. The BLM would pursue land adjustment through state and private exchanges. However, the BLM could chose to sell lands under certain circumstances.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

The BLM would provide maximum protection to the physical and biological environment to eliminate the negative impacts from off-road vehicles.

Vehicles would be limited yearlong in the following areas: WSAs, the UMNWSR Corridor, the Cow Creek ACEC, the Kevin Rim ACEC, the Sweet Grass Hills ACEC, areas of sedimentary breaks type soils and riparian areas (a total of 329,636 acres). There would be no travel on roads and trails in sedimentary breaks type soils when they are wet. Seasonal restrictions requiring vehicles to use existing roads and trails would be placed on important wildlife habitat areas (99,000 acres). The Gist Road between the cabins and the Missouri River would be closed to vehicular use (5 acres).

Implementation

The BLM would conduct an intensive road and trail inventory in the areas mentioned above. An ORV implementation plan would be written to identify designated roads and trails and plan the closure of unnecessary roads in limited areas. In areas limited to existing roads and trails (including seasonally restricted areas) the implementation plan would identify existing roads and trails. All implementation plans would contain details for signing and monitoring designated areas. Table 2.3 identifies seasonal restrictions which would apply to important wildlife areas.

TABLE 2.3
SEASONAL ORV RESTRICTIONS¹

Deer/elk winter range	December 1 - March 15
Deer/elk fawning and calving areas	May 1 - June 30
Antelope winter range	December 1 - February 28
Raptor nesting areas	February 1 - August 15
Grouse nesting areas	April 1 - June 30

¹BLM, 1987

Wilderness study areas designated as suitable for wilderness by Congress would be closed to all vehicular traffic at the time of designation. A portion of the Cow Creek WSA is currently recommended as preliminarily suitable for designation. WSAs which are not designated would be managed under adjoining ORV constraints.

Permits would be issued for vehicular use in limited and closed areas for administrative purposes.

The BLM would acquire access to intensive use areas through exchange easement or purchase.

The BLM would publish maps of the restricted areas. In addition, the BLM would erect signs posting the restrictions in all areas and on designated roads. The BLM would monitor and enforce all designations.

Right-of-Way Location

The BLM would protect important natural and cultural resources and special management areas by designating those areas as avoidance or exclusion areas for the location of rights-of-way. The remainder of the planning area would remain open to ROWs, however, location of new lineal ROWs would be encouraged within a 1 mile corridor of existing facilities. New requests for communication site location would be encouraged to locate with existing facilities if possible. The BLM would not permit communication sites on the Middle and West Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills.

Implementation

The BLM would only allow ROW location in the UMNWSR Corridor in the areas identified in Table 2.4. In the Kevin Rim area, ROW location would be limited to four ROW corridors (see Map 4 in the back of this document and Fig. 2.2). The BLM would avoid location of ROWs in all WSAs; the Cow Creek ACEC; the Sweet Grass Hills ACEC; riparian areas; and sedimentary breaks type soils, unless the disturbed area would be restored to its predisturbance condition within 2 years. These areas coincide closely with the restricted ORV use areas shown on Map 4 in the back of this document.

The Sweet Grass Hills would be designated to protect and maintain the area for Native American religious and cultural practices, public recreation and wildlife habitat. A protective mineral withdrawal would be pursued for this ACEC. The Cow Creek area would be designated to protect, maintain and/or enhance the Nez Perce Trail, Cow Island Trail, and other resources in the Cow Creek area.

TABLE 2.4

EXISTING RIGHT-OF-WAY CORRIDORS IN THE UPPER MISSOURI NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER CORRIDOR¹

River Mile 0	to River Mile 1
River Mile 20	to River Mile 21
River Mile 38.5	to River Mile 39.5
River Mile 88	to River Mile 89
River Mile 101	to River Mile 103
River Mile 131.5	to River Mile 132.5
River Mile 148.5	to River Mile 149.5

¹BLM, 1987

² River miles are identified on map 4 in the back of this document. River mile 0 is located at Ft. Benton. River mile 149.5 is marked by the Fred Robinson Bridge.

Any area designated as suitable for wilderness by Congress would be a ROW exclusion area. Areas not designated would be open to ROW location, unless they fall into the avoidance category because of soils, riparian areas or they become another type of specially managed area.

Every ROW grant request would be subject to environmental review and stipulations and mitigation measures would be developed to ensure complete rehabilitation of the area.

Emphasis Areas

The BLM would provide maximum protection of the significant and relevant resources in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, and Cow Creek areas (see Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4). Under this alternative the East, West and Middle Buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills would be designated as ACECs and managed by the following guidance. A management zone would be designated around the Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills to ensure that development of federal minerals under private and state surface would be regulated by the same guidelines implemented on the ACEC. The Kevin Rim would be designated to provide protection, maintenance and/or enhancement to the peregrine falcon habitat, other sensitive raptor habitat, and cultural resources while providing for continued oil and gas development.

Kevin Rim Implementation

Using the following guidance, the BLM would prepare an activity plan detailing specific management for the area. The Rocky Mountain Front raptor guidelines in Appendix 2.9 would be used to determine buffer zones and timing windows for activities in the area. These guidelines would be applied if any activity threatens to disrupt the nesting and rearing cycles of state or federal sensitive raptor species using the rim. These guidelines would be issued as standard stipulations for all new oil and gas leases in the area. In addition, BLM would use the guidelines to develop stipulations for new development on existing oil and gas leases. These guidelines would also be applied to federal mineral development within the management zone.

The BLM would inventory the Kevin Rim area for cultural resources. Based upon this survey and/or additional surveys the BLM would not authorize projects within 1/4 mile of the escarpment, unless impacts to the cultural resources could be mitigated.

The BLM would encourage ROW location off the west side of the Kevin Rim. The BLM would only authorize new ROWs off the escarpment (east side) along the existing ROWs (see Figure 2.2). The BLM would establish a ROW corridor 1/2 mile on either side of the four existing ROWs.

Sweet Grass Hills Implementation

The BLM would prepare an activity plan detailing the specific management of the area. The objectives of this plan would be to preserve the local values for Native American religious uses, wildlife and recreation. The BLM would pursue a protective withdrawal for the ACEC. This protective withdrawal would segregate the ACEC from all mineral entry. This would eliminate all future mining claim location, mineral leasing and mineral sales. Valid and existing rights would remain intact. The BLM would consult with Native American tribes prior to authorizing developments in the area. The BLM would apply the Rocky Mountain Front raptor guidelines in Appendix 2.9 to all new development on existing mineral leases within the management zone to protect state and federal sensitive species. These guidelines would also be used to mitigate impacts caused by new developments on valid, existing claims in the ACEC and management zone to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation. Allotment management plans in the ACEC would be revised to emphasize the maintenance and/or improvement of elk winter habitat. This may be accomplished through season-of-use modification, pasture modification, or temporary exclosures, etc.

The BLM would review and recommend revoking the Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal on the East Butte. A 529.67 acre parcel would be recommended for revocation and managed under the guidance for the ACEC. This parcel would be included in the protective withdrawal.

Cow Creek Implementation

The BLM would prepare an activity plan for the area. The plan would provide guidance to preserve scenic, interpretive, recreation and paleontological values in the Cow Creek area associated with the Nez Perce National Historic Trail. The BLM would coordinate this plan with the USFS since that agency has the lead responsibility for the management of the Nez Perce Trail. The BLM would reevaluate and adjust the visual management ratings in the area. These ratings would be used to determine whether any projects would impact the scenic quality and if so, what mitigating measures would be necessary prior to authorizing the project. The BLM would manage the area with a strong emphasis on riparian management. Existing allotment management plans would be revised to incorporate grazing management practices to improve riparian community conditions. Special emphasis would be given to measures to discourage or prevent livestock congregation along the bottoms. The BLM would protect paleontological sites within the ACEC from surface disturbance by other management activities while still allowing scientific use of this resource. Any future ROW grant would be based on valid, existing rights within the area. All such developments would be subject to strict visual and reclamation stipulations.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

Bureau recreation management would emphasize the maximum preservation of the natural environment and cultural values of the UMNWSR Corridor. This management may be accomplished through public and private sector initiatives.

Implementation

Visitor Services

The BLM would redetermine user capacity based on the limits of acceptable change (see Appendix 2.10). This process would, with public input, identify how much environmental change would be acceptable. Management would keep the character and rate of change due to human factors within acceptable levels emphasizing the protection of the natural and cultural environment. Parameters considered during the review process would include but would not be limited to, vegetation change; the amount of bare ground near a campsite; bankside trails; sanitation problems; litter; and available firewood.

The Fort Benton Visitor Contact Station would be maintained and operated to provide visitors with permits and information on the river. The center would also provide interpretive information on the cultural and natural history of the area under the provisions of the MOU with the National Park Service (NPS). The ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would provide permits and health and safety information to river users. All of these visitor service centers would be operated from the weekend before Memorial Day through Thanksgiving weekend.

Interpretive activities in the corridor would be in conjunction with the current Floater's Guide. No physical improvements or facilities would be provided for interpretation except at launch/take out points on the river. Information or interpretive signs, except hazard warnings visible from the river would be prohibited on all federal lands.

Islands would be closed to all uses. The islands would be set aside for wildlife habitat.

Facility Management

The BLM would continue to maintain the undeveloped campsites by clearing brush, a maximum of 1/4 acre, for campsite location and removing trash left at these areas.

The existing semi-developed sites would be maintained, unless use is impacting natural and cultural resources. If impacts cannot be mitigated the BLM would close those sites. Additional site development would occur only if impacts can be mitigated, old areas can be reclaimed and no crucial habitat or cultural resources are impacted. New capital improvements would only be allowed along major roads within the recreational sections and when a clear public need is identified. Developed sites would be restricted to the existing launch/take out sites in the recreational and scenic sections of the corridor. Development would be dependent on demonstrated need, economic feasibility and whether impacts can be mitigated.

The BLM would acquire the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks campsites. These areas would be managed under the constraints listed above.

Concession Management

The BLM would not allow the development of major concession complexes on public land. The BLM would allow private sector initiatives in campground maintenance and development under the constraints discussed above in Facility Management. The BLM would permit outfitters, guides and boat rental within/upon the river. Outfitters would be restricted to 30% of the daily user capacity.

Health and Safety

The BLM would continue and may expand visitor services which provide for public health and safety. BLM would assume responsibility for law enforcement. The BLM would continue cooperative efforts for search and rescue.

ALTERNATIVE D **(The Preferred Alternative)**

This alternative is a balance of the preceding alternatives. It balances the demands of resource development and the protection of sensitive areas and important resources. If selected, this alternative plus the guidance given in the Management Common To All Alternatives section would form the RMP.

Land Tenure Adjustment

The BLM would achieve a public land base which consolidates public holdings in areas containing high value resources. Under this alternative 15,664 acres would meet the disposal criteria given in FLPMA. These lands could be considered for disposal through FLPMA exchange or sale and/or the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. An additional 34,428 acres would be determined available for exchange only. These lands do not appear to meet FLPMA sale criteria but have resource values which may be managed in private ownership or moderate resource values which might be exchanged for higher resource values in the area. The BLM would pursue land acquisitions in areas under special management (UMNWSR, WSAs, ACECs, etc.) and in concentrated public land areas with high resource values. All land adjustment would be in compliance with the criteria listed in Appendix 1.1. The tracts available for disposal and exchange are listed in Appendix 1.1.

The State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment (USDI-BLM 1984) is being revised by this alternative for the planning unit only. The criteria presented in the State Director's Guidance has been refined and applied to the lands in the RAs. The criteria applicable to each resource area can be found in Appendix 1.1. As a result of evaluating the lands in the planning area against the criteria, the map presented in the State Director's Guidance no longer applies to the planning area; it is replaced by Map 3 in the back of this document.

Implementation

The BLM would use exchange as the primary means of achieving land adjustment. However, isolated lands that meet FLPMA sale criteria may be sold. Other circumstances might dictate the use of sale to achieve land adjustment.

The BLM would concentrate acquisition in (no priority intended) the Missouri and Marias River areas, Cow Creek, Sweet Grass Hills and Kevin Rim ACECs, the North Blaine antelope winter range and important wildlife habitat (including areas outside the planning area such as the Rocky Mountain Front). All acquisitions would depend on a willing seller.

A land report would be completed for each exchange.

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. Travel in WSAs would be limited to existing roads and vehicular ways. Travel would be limited to existing roads

and trails in the Cow Creek, Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills ACECs and in important riparian areas (129,912 acres). The BLM would limit off-road vehicles seasonally in the following areas: elk and deer crucial winter areas and calving/fawning areas; antelope crucial winter range; raptor nesting areas, grouse nesting areas and sedimentary breaks type soils (298,039 acres). Travel would be restricted to existing roads and trails during the wet period (April 1—November 1). These areas can be seen on Map 4 in the back of this document. The BLM may issue permits on a case-by-case basis for administrative vehicular use in these areas. The Gist Road between the cabins and the Missouri River would be closed to vehicular use (5 acres).

Implementation

The BLM would conduct an intensive road and trail inventory in the areas mentioned above. An ORV implementation plan would be written identifying designated roads and trails and planning for closure of unnecessary roads in limited areas of the UMNWSR Corridor. All implementation plans would contain details for signing and monitoring designated areas. Table 2.3 identifies seasonal restrictions which would apply to important wildlife areas.

The BLM would publish maps showing designated areas and the applicable restrictions. An area for intensive ORV use would be designated if the need arises based on the following criteria—

- (1) the area would be at least 5 miles from an emphasis area;
- (2) the area would be located in a Class IV VRM area. A Class IV area would allow a major modification of the landscape;
- (3) the area would be considered a low quality hunting region;
- (4) the area would be located on public land with a buffer of public land to reduce conflicts with private landowners;
- (5) the area would have good public access or the capability for such access;
- (6) the area would be located where mineral discovery and development are not likely;
- (7) the area would avoid reservoirs, watersheds of important reservoirs, floodplains, stream channels, wetlands and riparian zones;
- (8) the area would contain suitable topography and soil conditions to maximize ORV users enjoyment and reduce health and safety risks (i.e., steep, but not too steep, few surface rocks, non-flooding areas);
- (9) these areas would be located 1/4 mile from raptor nest sites 1/2 miles from known grouse leks; 1/2 mile from known bald eagle nests and 1 mile away from known peregrine falcon nests.
- (10) these areas would be located outside of crucial big game winter ranges.
- (11) these areas would be located in an undesirable area for livestock grazing i.e., steep slopes far from water.
- (12) use of an area containing crucial wildlife range would be closed May 1—June 30.

Wilderness study areas designated as suitable for wilderness by Congress would be closed to all vehicular traffic at the time of designation. A portion of the Cow Creek WSA is currently recommended as preliminarily suitable for designation. WSAs which are not designated would be managed under adjoining ORV constraints, if any, applied to the area.

Permits could be issued for vehicular use in limited and closed areas for administrative purposes.

The BLM would acquire access to intensive use areas through exchange, easement or purchase.

Right-of-Way Location

The BLM would permit rights-of-way, provided the impacts can be mitigated. Areas under specific management prescriptions (ACECs, WSAs, etc.) or having important, sensitive resources would be avoidance areas. Nationally designated areas for natural or cultural resources (Wilderness Areas, etc.) would be exclusion areas. Corridors would be established 1/2 mile either side of existing major facilities. These corridors would be the preferred location for new rights-of-way (see Map 4 in the back of this document). Communication sites would be excluded from the West Butte of the Sweet Grass Hills.

Implementation

The Wild sections of the UMNWSR would be exclusion areas for ROW siting.

The Scenic and Recreational sections of the UMNWSR would be avoidance areas. Table 2.4 lists the windows for ROW siting through these sections. New facilities would only be permitted in these segments if the natural, physical and cultural qualities of the corridor could be maintained.

The Kevin Rim ACEC would be an avoidance area for ROWs. Four windows for ROW siting would be established (see Map Figure 2.2). No future ROWs could be sited outside these corridors unless the raptor habitat can be maintained or restored.

Cow Creek and the Sweet Grass Hills ACECs, WSAs, riparian and wetland areas which meet the definition of wetland and areas of sedimentary breaks soils would be avoidance areas. Future ROW siting would only be permitted if impacts in these areas could be completely mitigated.

Communication site location would be encouraged at existing sites but may be permitted elsewhere in the planning area, provided impacts are mitigated. No communication sites would be permitted on the West Butte in the Sweet Grass Hills.

Emphasis Areas

The BLM would provide maximum protection of the significant and relevant resources in the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, and Cow Creek areas (see Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4). These three areas would be designated ACECs and managed under the following direction. A management zone would be designated around the Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills to ensure that development of federal minerals under private and state surface will be regulated, where authority exists, to follow the same guidelines implemented on the ACEC. The Kevin Rim would be designated and managed

to protect, maintain and/or enhance the peregrine falcon habitat, other sensitive raptor habitat, cultural resources and provide for the continued oil and gas development. The Sweet Grass Hills would be designated to provide for Native American religious and cultural practices, public recreation and wildlife habitat. The Cow Creek area would be designated to protect, maintain and/or enhance the Nez Perce Trail, Cow Island Trail, and other resources.

Kevin Rim Implementation

The BLM would use the following guidance to prepare an activity plan detailing specific management of the area. The Rocky Mountain Front raptor guidelines in Appendix 2.9 would be used to determine buffer zones and timing windows for activities in the area. These guidelines would be applied to any new activity which threatens to disrupt the nesting and rearing cycles of state or federal sensitive raptor species using the rim. These guidelines would be issued as standard stipulations to all new oil and gas leases in the area. In addition, BLM would use the guidelines to develop stipulations for new development on existing oil and gas leases. These guidelines would also be applied to federal mineral development within the management zone.

The BLM would inventory the Kevin Rim area for cultural resources. Based upon this survey and/or additional surveys the BLM would not authorize projects within 1/4 mile of the escarpment unless impacts to the cultural resources could be mitigated.

BLM would encourage ROW off the west side of Kevin Rim. The BLM would authorize new ROWs off the escarpment (east side) along the four established ROW corridors (see Figure 2.2). The BLM would establish a ROW corridor 1/2 mile on either side of existing ROWs.

Sweet Grass Hills Implementation

The BLM would use the following guidance to prepare an activity plan detailing the specific management of the area. The area would remain open to mineral entry. Guidelines would be developed in the activity plan to attempt to resolve future conflicts between Native American religious concerns. The BLM would consult with Native American tribes prior to authorizing disturbance in the area. The BLM would apply the raptor guidelines in Appendix 2.9 to all new mineral leases and to new development on existing mineral leases within the ACEC and management zone to protect state and federal sensitive species. Allotment management plans in the ACEC would be revised to emphasize the maintenance and/or improvement of elk winter habitat. This may be accomplished through season of use modification, pasture modification, temporary enclosures, etc.

The BLM would review and recommend revoking the Bureau of Reclamation withdrawal on 529.67 acres on the East Butte. This parcel would then be managed under the guidance for the ACEC.

Cow Creek Implementation

The BLM would use the following guidance to prepare an activity plan for the area. The plan would provide guidance to preserve scenic, interpretive, recreation and paleontological values in the Cow Creek area associated with the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

The BLM would coordinate this plan with the USFS since that agency has the lead responsibility for the management of the Nez Perce Trail.

The BLM would reevaluate and adjust the visual management ratings in the area. These ratings would be used to determine whether any projects would impact the scenic quality and if so, what mitigating measures would be necessary prior to authorizing the project. The BLM would manage the area with a strong emphasis on riparian management. Existing allotment management plans would be revised to incorporate grazing management practices to improve riparian community conditions. Special emphasis would be given to measures to discourage or prevent livestock congregation along the bottoms. The BLM would protect paleontological sites within the ACEC from surface disturbance by other management activities. Scientific use of the resource would be allowed. Any future ROW grant would be based on valid, existing rights within the corridor. All such developments would be subject to strict visual and reclamation stipulations.

Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management

The BLM would provide recreational opportunities and visitor services consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Future developments would also mitigate impacts to natural and cultural resources. Mitigation measures would be determined after a site specific evaluation. Impacts not mitigated would not necessarily curtail development which is consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Implementation

Visitor Services

The BLM would redetermine user capacity based on the limits of acceptable change (see Appendix 2.10). This process would, with public input, identify how much environmental change would be acceptable. Management would keep the character and rate of change due to human factors within acceptable levels. Parameters to be considered during the review process would include but would not be limited to, vegetation change; amount of bare ground near a campsite; bankside trails; sanitation problems; litter; and available firewood.

The Fort Benton Visitor Contact Station would be maintained and operated to provide visitors with permits and information on the river. The center would also provide interpretive information on the cultural and natural history of the area under the provisions of the MOU with the NPS. The ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would provide permits and health and safety information to river users. All of these visitor service centers would be operated from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving weekend.

Areas would be developed for self guided interpretive study. These sites would be significant areas of geological, historical, cultural, paleontological value or natural areas. These developments may include interpretive signs and displays. Current sites which would be developed are Stafford Ferry, Cow Creek, Evans Bend, Steamboat Point, Little Sandy, and Hole-In-The-Wall. Other sites may be developed if there is substantial public use or where BLM

acquires important new lands or major new resource discoveries are made.

Recreational and livestock use of islands would not be permitted during deer fawning and waterfowl brood rearing times. Islands would be closed to use from April 1—May 15.

Facility Management

The BLM would continue to maintain the undeveloped campsites by clearing brush (maximum 1/4 acre) for campsite location and removing the trash left at these areas. All undeveloped sites in the recreational and scenic sections of the river would be signed. All sites would be shown on user maps. Undeveloped sites may be upgraded to semi-developed sites in scenic and recreational sections if the following criteria are met—

- (1) increasing use of the river or of undeveloped campsites;
- (2) impacts to soil and vegetation become long term; i.e., heavy use begin to compact soils and kill vegetation as determined by monitoring;
- (3) sanitation becomes a health problem;
- (4) additional sites are needed to rest existing campsites;
- (5) better distribution of campsites is needed.

The BLM would maintain all semi-developed sites. New sites would be developed when the above criteria are met. New capital improvements would be allowed if impacts could be mitigated. Improvements in the wild section would be allowed if the developments can be serviced by existing roads or by river. All improvements would comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The BLM would restrict developed sites to the recreation segments of the river. Such sites would only be established after a need and economic feasibility report has been concluded the site is in the best interest of the public.

The BLM would continue to manage state campsites under the Memorandum of Understanding with State of Montana. These sites would be managed under BLM management guidance for the river as presented in this RMP.

Concession Management

Major concession developments would be restricted to the recreational segments of the river and would be subject to the constraints addressed in the Facility Management discussion above.

The BLM would allow private sector initiatives in campground maintenance and development under the constraints listed above. The BLM would permit outfitters, guides and boat rental within/upon the river. Outfitters would be restricted to 30% of the daily user capacity.

Health and Safety

The BLM would continue and may expand visitor services operations to provide for public health, safety and law enforcement. Search and rescue operations and law enforcement would continue as a cooperative effort with local and state agencies.

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The decisions outlined in the RMP will be implemented over a period of 10 to 15 years, depending on budget and staff availability. The current funding level would be adequate to implement the No Action Alternative. Alternative B would require a 3 to 5% increase and Alternatives C and D would require increases between 5 and 10%.

However, the existing funding levels will probably decrease over the life of the plan. This is based on the trend over the last 3 years when funding levels declined an average of 6% a year. The difference between the required funding level and the probable decline in the budget would affect time and implementation of management actions and project proposals but would not affect resource allocations made under this RMP.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The decisions outlined in the RMP will be implemented over a period of 10 years or more, depending on budget and staff availability. The effects of implementation as seen through resource monitoring will be evaluated on a periodic basis over the life of the plan. The general purposes of this resource monitoring and plan evaluation will be—

- (1) to determine if an action is fulfilling the purpose and need for which it was designed, or if there is a need for modification or termination of an action;
- (2) to discover unanticipated and/or unpredictable effects;
- (3) to determine if mitigative measures are effective as prescribed;
- (4) to ensure that decisions are being implemented as scheduled;
- (5) to provide continuing evaluation of consistency with state and local plans and programs; and
- (6) to provide for continuing comparison of plan benefits versus costs including social, economic, and environmental.

A specific monitoring plan was prepared (1984) for the wildlife, watershed and grazing management programs in each of the four resource areas included in the RMP area. These monitoring plans will be used to monitor the implementation of specific management guidance and actions which effect wildlife, watershed and grazing management.

Wildlife Resources

Monitoring is directed at the biotic resource components using both temporary and permanent studies. The results of these studies can be used to determine responses in habitat condition and trend; food availability, composition, and vigor; changes in cover and habitat effectiveness; and habitat management objectives.

Some of the methodologies available include: canopy cover transects, browse transects, woody riparian survey and photo plots, habitat condition ratings, color infrared aerial photography, fish, bird and mammal species composition and population surveys, waterfowl population dynamics, raptor use and mortality of powerlines, and selected threatened and endangered species inventories.

Watershed Resources

Monitoring the impacts of management activities on watershed condition is done in the following ways; ground cover will be measured to assess erosion and sedimentation potential; runoff, sediment production, water quality and water quantity will be measured at stream gauging stations, runoff plots at selected reservoirs; streambank stability and riparian communities will be monitored at selected sites and demonstration units will be established to exhibit the affects of management on riparian communities; and observation wells will be monitored for groundwater level and quality. Climatic data (precipitation, air temperature, soil moisture and soil temperature) will be collected and used in evaluation along with other monitoring data.

Grazing Management

The grazing management plans provide a framework for choosing the study methods that will provide the information needed to issue and implement specific management decisions which effect watershed, wildlife and grazing management. Monitoring efforts will focus on allotments in the I category. Methodologies are available for monitoring vegetative trend, forage utilization, actual use (livestock numbers and periods of grazing) and climate. The data collected from these studies will be used to evaluate current stocking rates, to schedule livestock moves from pasture to pasture, to determine levels of forage competition, to detect changes in plant communities and to identify patterns of forage use. Some of the methodologies to be used include Daubenmire canopy transects, photo plots, key forage plant utilization transects, aerial and ground reconnaissance of animal numbers and grazing patterns, actual use questionnaires and low altitude aerial photography transects.

Priorities for monitoring grazing allotments are established in these plans. The methodology and intensity of study chosen for a particular allotment will be determined by the nature and severity of the resource conflicts present in that allotment.

COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Table 2.5 presents a summary of resource allocations and management actions to resolve the issues as they would occur under each alternative. Table 2.6 summarizes the moderate and significant environmental consequences by issue for each alternative. For additional information on environmental consequences refer to Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences.

TABLE 2.5 WEST HILINE ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY TABLE

ALTERNATIVES

A (No Action)

B

C

D (Preferred)

LAND TENURE

BLM would attain a land pattern conducive to ease of management. Land adjustment would be by land exchange or purchase under the State Director's Guidance on Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustment. 44,143 acres would be available for land adjustment by exchange or R&PP. Acquisitions would be concentrated in retention areas.

A more manageable land pattern would be attained through disposal by exchange, R&PP sale, or sale. 50,092 acres appear to meet FLPMA criteria for land adjustment through exchange, sale and R&PP sale. Acquisitions would be concentrated in areas with large federal holdings.

BLM would retain the majority of the public lands. 15,664 acres would be available for land adjustment through exchange, R&PP sale or sale. Acquisitions would be concentrated in special management and high value resource areas.

BLM land adjustment actions would consolidate high value resource lands. 15,664 acres appear to meet FLPMA criteria for land adjustment through exchange, R&PP sale or sale; 34,428 acres meet criteria for land adjustment by exchange for lands with higher resource values. Acquisition would be concentrated in special management and high value resource areas.

IMPLEMENTATION

Land adjustment would be by exchange. Acquisitions will be concentrated in UMNWSR Corridor, North Blaine County, and the Sweet Grass Hills.

Land adjustment would be achieved primarily by exchange for lands of equal or better values. Acquisition would be concentrated in the Sweet Grass Hills, Kevin Rim, Marias River, UMNWSR Corridor and Cow Creek.

Exchange would be the preferred method to achieve land adjustment for lands of equal or greater resource values. Acquisitions would be concentrated in UMNWSR, Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, Cow Creek, Marias River, North Blaine County and important wildlife habitat areas.

Exchange would be the preferred method of achieving land adjustment. Acquisitions would be concentrated in UMNWSR, Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills, Cow Creek, Marias River, North Blaine County, important wildlife habitat and other areas within or outside the planning area.

ACREAGE AVAILABLE

Land Adjustment (exchange preferred)

50,092 acres

15,664 acres

15,664 acres

Exchange Only 44,143 acres

34,428 acres

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

Wilderness Study Areas and sedimentary breaks soils with greater than 30% slopes would be designated "limited" for ORV use.

The BLM would maximize ORV use. WSAs would be designated "limited" areas.

Limited yearlong restrictions would apply to WSAs, ACECs, UMNWSR, sedimentary break soil areas and riparian areas; seasonal restrictions would apply in important wildlife areas. The Gist Road would be designated "closed" from the cabins to the river.

Limited yearlong restrictions would apply to WSAs, ACECs, UMNWSR, and riparian areas. Seasonal restrictions would apply in sedimentary breaks soil areas and important wildlife areas. The Gist Road would be designated "closed" from the cabins to the river.

IMPLEMENTATION

Publish ORV map and sign area.

Publish ORV map and sign WSAs.

Inventory road trails in above areas, publish map of road restrictions for each area. Sign areas.

Inventory road trails in above areas, publish map of road restrictions for each area. Sign areas.

Designate and manage an intensive ORV use area of about 640 acres using criteria in the document.

An intensive ORV use area of about 640 acres may be designated based on public demand.

ACREAGE DESIGNATED

Open	477,763	594,098	197,462	198,142
Limited				
Yearlong	148,335	32,000	329,636	129,912
Seasonal	0	0	99,000	298,039
Closed	0	0	5	5

TABLE 2.5 WEST HILINE ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY TABLE (Cont.)

ALTERNATIVES

A (No Action)

B

C

D (Preferred)

RIGHT-OF-WAY LOCATION

The planning area would remain open to lineal ROW and communication site location.

The BLM would permit lineal ROWs outside the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Corridor. Windows would be provided through the UMNWSR corridor.

The BLM would protect important natural and cultural resources by designating WSAs, ACECs, riparian areas and areas of sedimentary soils as avoidance areas. The UMNWSR and the Kevin Rim would be exclusion areas. Windows would be provided through these areas. Communication sites would be excluded from West and Middle Butte of the Sweet Grass Hills.

The BLM would permit ROWs if impacts could be mitigated. Corridors would be established along existing major facilities. The following areas would be avoidance areas for ROWs: scenic and recreational segments UMNWSR; ACECs; WSAs; riparian areas and sedimentary breaks areas. The wild sections of UMNWSR would be exclusion areas. No communication sites would be located on West Butte.

BLM would perform environmental review and stipulate necessary mitigating measures prior to authorization.

BLM would perform environmental review of ROW location projects. Projects must be able to be mitigated prior to permit.

BLM would attempt to route ROWs along existing corridors, if a location is in an avoidance area the environmental analysis must show the disturbance can be fully mitigated.

BLM would attempt to route ROWs along existing corridors. If a ROW must be located in an avoidance area the environmental analysis must show the disturbance can be mitigated.

ACREAGE DESIGNATED

Open	626,098	537,945	420,501	421,181
Avoidance	0	88,153	112,629	141,560
Exclusion	0	0	92,968	63,357

EMPHASIS AREAS

BLM would continue to manage the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas under current guidance.

BLM would continue to manage the Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek areas under current guidance.

BLM would provide maximum protection to resources in Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek. The three areas would be designated ACECs. Federal minerals under private and state surface surrounding Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills would be designated as a management zone.

BLM would provide maximum protection to resources in Kevin Rim, Sweet Grass Hills and Cow Creek. The three areas would be designated ACECs. Federal minerals under private and state surface surrounding Kevin Rim and Sweet Grass Hills would be designated as a management zone.

IMPLEMENTATION
KEVIN RIM

Kevin Rim would not be designated as an ACEC. Standard oil and gas stipulations would be applied to exploration and development activities.

Kevin Rim would not be designated as an ACEC. Standard oil and gas stipulations would be applied to exploration and development activities.

Public surface would be designated as an ACEC. A management zone (private surface/federal minerals) would be designated, surrounding the ACEC. Raptor guidelines included in Appendix 2.8 would be applied as stipulations within the ACEC and the management zone. BLM would not authorize unmitigated surface disturbance activities within 1/4 mile of the rim to protect cultural resources. ROWs would be restricted to corridors.

Public surface would be designated as an ACEC. A management zone (private surface/federal minerals) would be designated, surrounding the ACEC. Raptor guidelines included in Appendix 2.8 would be applied as stipulations within the ACEC and the management zone. BLM would not authorize unmitigated surface disturbance activities within 1/4 mile of the rim to protect cultural resources. ROWs would be restricted to corridors.

ACEC Acreage			4,815 acres	4,815 acres
Management Zone Acreage			4,361 acres	4,361 acres

TABLE 2.5 WEST HILINE ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY TABLE (Cont.)

EMPHASIS AREAS (Cont.)

ALTERNATIVES

A (No Action)

B

C

D (Preferred)

SWEET GRASS HILLS

The Sweet Grass Hills would not be designated as an ACEC. Current uses would continue under present guidance.

The Sweet Grass Hills would not be designated as an ACEC. Current uses would continue under present guidance.

The public lands on all three buttes (East, West and Middle) of the Sweet Grass Hills would be designated as ACECs. A management zone, surrounding the ACEC (private surface/federal minerals) would be designated.

The public lands on East and West Butte of the Sweet Grass Hills would be designated as ACECs. A management zone, surrounding the ACEC (private surface/federal minerals), would be designated.

A 1/4 mile buffer zone would be established around active raptor nests (standard stipulation).

A 1/4 mile buffer zone would be established around active raptor nests (standard stipulation).

Raptor guidelines included in Appendix 2.8 would be applied as stipulations within the ACEC and the management zone.

Raptor guidelines included in Appendix 2.8 would be applied as stipulations within the ACEC and the management zone.

Existing allotment management plans (AMPs) would continue to be implemented.

Existing allotment management plans (AMPs) would continue to be implemented.

An activity plan would be developed to attempt to resolve conflicts Native American religious concerns and future developments and to emphasize the maintenance of elk winter habitat.

An activity plan would be developed to attempt to resolve conflicts Native American religious concerns and future developments and to emphasize the maintenance of elk winter habitat.

The area would remain open to mineral entry.

The area would remain open to mineral entry.

The ACEC would be segregated from mineral entry by a protective withdrawal.

The area would remain open to mineral entry.

ACEC Acreage

7,636

6,957

Management Zone Acreage

18,179

17,499

COW CREEK

A management plan would be written in cooperation with USFS to manage the Nez Perce Historic Trail. Allotment management plans may be modified to incorporate riparian objectives.

A management plan would be written in cooperation with USFS to manage the Nez Perce Historic Trail. Allotment management plans may be modified to incorporate riparian objectives.

The BLM would prepare a coordinated activity plan with an emphasis on managing the Nez Perce Trail, the riparian areas and the visual resources. The plan would be coordinated with USFS on the management of the Nez Perce Trail.

The BLM would prepare a coordinated activity plan with an emphasis on managing the Nez Perce Trail, the riparian areas and the visual resources. The plan would be coordinated with USFS on the management of the Nez Perce Trail.

ACEC Acreage

14,000 acres

14,000 acres

TABLE 2.5 WEST HILINE ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY TABLE (Cont.)

UPPER MISSOURI NATIONAL WILD & SCENIC RIVER MANAGEMENT

ALTERNATIVES

A (No Action)

B

C

D (Preferred)

BLM would continue to provide recreation opportunities consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542) and amendment (PI. 94-486).

Recreation opportunities in all segments within the corridor would be maximized through an emphasis on private sector initiative. Management would be consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542) and amendment (PL 94-486).

BLM management and private sector initiatives would emphasize the maximum preservation of the natural and cultural values of the corridor. Management would be consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542) and amendment (PL 94-486).

BLM would provide recreation opportunities and visitor services consistent with the Wild and Scenic River Act (PL 90-542) and amendment (PL 94-486) with an emphasis on mitigating impacts to natural and cultural resources disturbed by future development.

IMPLEMENTATION

VISITOR SERVICES

Floater use capacity would remain the same.

Floater capacity limits would be eliminated.

Floater use capacity would be redetermined based on "limits of acceptable change" given in Appendix 2.9.

Floater use capacity would be redetermined based on "limits of acceptable change" given in Appendix 2.9.

The visitor contact center at Fort Benton and ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would operate from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

The visitor contact center at Fort Benton and ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would operate from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving.

The visitor contact center at Fort Benton and ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would operate from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving.

The visitor contact center at Fort Benton and ranger stations at Coal Banks and Judith Landing would operate from Memorial Day through Thanksgiving.

Interpretive facilities and sites would be self-guided and keyed to the Floater's Guide.

Interpretive trails and sites would be developed historical, archaeological, paleontological and natural areas.

Interpretive activities would be keyed to the "Floater's Guide". restricted to launch/takeout points.

Areas would be developed for self-guided interpretive study. Interpretive sites may include signs and displays.

Recreational use of islands would be discouraged.

Islands would be available for recreational uses.

Islands would be closed to all uses.

Islands would be closed to recreational uses April 1 - May 15.

FACILITY MANAGEMENT

BLM would maintain undeveloped sites. Additional semi-developed sites would be allowed based on specific criteria in the document. Developed sites would be allowed at major launch and takeout in the recreational sections.

Undeveloped sites would be maintained and upgraded to semi-developed sites over the life of the plan. Additional semi-developed sites may be developed in all sections of the river in accordance with criteria listed. Developed sites would be allowed in the scenic and recreational segments of the river corridor.

BLM would maintain or relocate existing undeveloped and semi-developed sites. Additional sites may be developed only if impacts can be mitigated. Capital improvements would be restricted to the recreational sections. Developed sites would be restricted to launch and take-out sites in the recreational and scenic sections.

BLM would maintain undeveloped sites and may upgrade these sites if they meet criteria in the document. New semi-developed sites may be allowed if they meet the criteria and impacts can be mitigated. Developed sites would be restricted to the recreational sections of the river.

BLM would continue management of state recreation sites under MOU with MDFWP.

BLM would not manage state recreation sites.

BLM would acquire the state recreation sites.

BLM would continue management of state recreation sites under MOU with MDFWP.

CONCESSION MANAGEMENT

Concession services would be limited to outfitting and boat rental.

A full range of concession services would be encouraged, ranging from campgrounds to marinas.

Major concession services would not be allowed on public lands. Concession services such as outfitting, boat rental, and campground/maintenance would be allowed.

Major concession services would be allowed in recreational segments on public lands. Other concession services such as outfitting, boat rental, and campground/maintenance would be allowed.

All concession services would be managed under the guidance in the RMP.

All concession services would be managed under the guidance in the RMP.

All concession services would be managed under the guidance in the RMP.

All concession services would be managed under the guidance in the RMP.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

BLM would continue to cooperate with state and local authorities responsible for search and rescue and law enforcement operations.

Law enforcement would be contracted to local sheriffs departments. Search and rescue operations would be the responsibility of local authorities.

BLM would assume responsibility for law enforcement. BLM would continue coordination with local authorities responsible for search and rescue.

BLM would continue the cooperative efforts and may expand its role in law enforcement and search and rescue operations.

TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY IMPACTS TABLE

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
LAND TENURE ADJUSTMENT				
Minerals	<p>Locally significant impacts, negative or positive, to development of locatable and salable minerals could result from specific land tenure adjustment proposals.</p> <p>If land adjustments result in a net gain of federal minerals managed under surface constraints more stringent than standard stipulations, it could result in locally moderate negative impacts to the minerals industry.</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p> <p>Same as "A"</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p> <p>Same as "A"</p> <p>If lands with both surface and subsurface rights are obtained, in the Sweet Grass Hills, a protective withdrawal would be pursued. This would be a locally significant, long-term negative impact to mineral development in the area.</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p> <p>Same as "A"</p>
Vegetation	<p>Disposal of 44,143 acres could result in a moderate negative impact if these lands were farmed, thereby destroying native vegetation.</p>	<p>Disposal of 50,092 acres could result in a moderate negative impact if these lands were farmed, thereby destroying native vegetation.</p>	<p>Disposal of 15,664 acres could result in a moderate negative impact if these lands were farmed, thereby destroying native vegetation.</p>	<p>Same as "B"</p>
Wildlife and Fisheries	<p>The loss of 5,740 acres of crucial big game and upland game habitat would be a moderate negative impact.</p> <p>Acquisitions of crucial value wildlife areas would produce moderate positive impacts.</p>	<p>The loss of 9,885 acres of crucial big game and upland game habitat would be a moderate negative impact.</p> <p>Same as "A"</p>	<p>The loss of 625 acres of crucial big game and upland game habitat would be a moderate negative impact.</p> <p>Same as "A"</p>	<p>Same as "B"</p> <p>Same as "A"</p>
Grazing	<p>There could be a moderate positive impact to management opportunities if private land is acquired in areas of predominately public land. A total of 44,143 acres could be exchanged.</p>	<p>There could be a moderate positive impact to management opportunities if private land is acquired in areas of predominately public land. A total of 50,092 acres could be exchanged.</p> <p>If these 50,092 acres were sold there would be a moderate decrease in grazing management opportunities.</p>	<p>There could be a moderate positive impact to management opportunities if private land is acquired in areas of predominately public land. A total of 15,664 acres could be exchanged.</p> <p>If 15,664 acres were sold there would be a moderate decrease in grazing management opportunities.</p>	<p>Same as "B"</p> <p>Same as "C"</p>
Recreation	<p>Land adjustments could provide significant positive impacts because of increased public access and consolidated public lands.</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p>

TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY IMPACTS TABLE (Continued)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE MANAGEMENT				
Soils	<p>Erosion from vehicle use of roads and trails on 148,335 acres within the limited ORV use area would produce locally significant negative impacts.</p> <p>Erosion and soil compaction on 168,855 acres of sedimentary soils open to ORV use would produce locally significant negative impacts.</p>	<p>Erosion from vehicle use of roads and trails on 32,000 acres within the limited ORV use area would produce locally significant negative impacts.</p> <p>Erosion and soil compaction on 285,190 acres of sedimentary soils open to ORV use would produce locally significant negative impacts.</p>	<p>Erosion from vehicle use of roads and trails on 317,190 acres within the limited ORV use area would produce locally significant negative impacts.</p>	<p>Same as "C"</p> <p>There could be locally significant impacts from ORV use on 199,034 acres when seasonal restrictions don't apply.</p>
Water	<p>Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 148,335 acres where ORV use is limited.</p> <p>Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 168,855 acres of sedimentary breaks soils open to ORV use.</p>	<p>Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 32,000 acres where ORV use is limited.</p> <p>Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 285,190 acres of sedimentary breaks soils open to ORV use.</p>	<p>Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 317,190 acres where ORV use is limited.</p>	<p>Same as "C"</p> <p>There could be locally significant impacts from ORV use on 199,034 acres when seasonal restrictions don't apply.</p>
Vegetation	<p>ORV impacts to vegetation could be locally significant in areas receiving concentrated ORV use.</p>		<p>Moderate benefits would result because of greater restrictions on ORV use would protect vegetation.</p>	<p>Same as "C"</p>
Wildlife and Fisheries		<p>Moderate impacts to wildlife would result from habitat deterioration and stress from social intolerance in the sedimentary breaks soil areas (Missouri Breaks).</p>		<p>Moderate positive benefits would occur from seasonal protection of crucial wildlife habitat.</p>
Cultural	<p>The potential exists for locally moderate long-term impacts through the loss of cultural sites.</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p>

TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY IMPACTS TABLE (Continued)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
RIGHT-OF-WAY LOCATION				
Soil	Locally significant negative erosion impacts would occur on 100,000 acres of sedimentary soils with slopes greater than 25%.	Locally significant negative erosion impacts would occur on 72,000 acres of sedimentary soils with slopes greater than 25%.	Locally significant impacts could occur with ROW location through the windows in the UMNWSR and associated disturbance in sedimentary breaks soil types.	Same as "C"
Water	Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 100,000 acres of sedimentary soils with slopes greater than 25%.	Locally significant negative impacts to water quality could result from the runoff from 72,000 acres of sedimentary soils with slopes greater than 25%.	Locally significant impacts could occur with ROW location through the windows in the UMNWSR and associated disturbance in sedimentary breaks soil types.	Same as "C"
Minerals	Leaving the planning area open to ROW location would result in a moderate positive impact to the minerals industry by allowing mineral companies to select the most cost effective route.		Requiring the minerals industry to locate pipelines around designated ROW avoidance areas would be a moderate negative impact.	Same as "C"
Vegetation			Moderate beneficial impacts would occur because ROWs would be excluded in several areas and avoided in several others.	
EMPHASIS AREAS				
Soil	ALL AREAS - Locally significant long-term impacts would continue around oil and gas exploration and development sites. Soil compaction, soil excavation and drilling pollutants reduce soil productivity and increase soil erosion.	Same as "A"	COW CREEK - Intensive management of riparian areas would produce locally significant positive impacts to the soils in those areas.	Same as "C"
Water	KEVIN RIM, SWEET GRASS HILLS - Locally significant impacts would continue around oil and gas exploration and development sites. The runoff from excavation work, roads, pipelines and drilling pollutants would decrease water quality.	Same as "A"	COW CREEK - Intensive management of riparian areas would produce locally moderate positive impacts to streambank stability and water quality.	Same as "C"
Minerals		Same as "A"	KEVIN RIM - The Kevin Rim protection stipulations would result in significant negative impacts to the minerals industry by increasing costs due to delays. SWEET GRASS HILLS - The protective withdrawal on the Sweet Grass Hills could result in a significant negative impact due to drainage of federal oil and gas by producing fee and state wells on adjacent lands.	Same as "C"

TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY IMPACTS TABLE (Continued)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
	SWEET GRASS HILLS - Opening the BR withdrawal on East Butte to mineral entry would produce a significant positive impact for the minerals industry.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS - Placing the BR lands under protective withdrawal would be significant negative impact to the minerals industry. Exploration to assess mineral development potential and mining to extract economic deposits would not be allowed since there are no valid existing rights in the BR withdrawal.	Same as "A"
	SWEET GRASS HILLS - A moderate negative impact to exploration and development of locatable minerals in Sweet Grass Hills could occur from conflicts with Native American religious practices.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS - Withdrawal of the Sweetgrass Hills ACEC would be a moderate negative impact to the minerals industry. While valid existing rights could continue there are unclaimed areas, potentially valuable, that would be eliminated from future exploration or development.	Same as "A"
Vegetation	SWEET GRASS HILLS - Major hardrock mining development could produce locally significant negative impacts to vegetation communities.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS - Major hardrock mining developments on valid, existing claims could produce locally significant negative impacts to vegetation communities. COW CREEK - Intensive management of riparian areas would produce locally significant positive impacts to vegetation.	Same as "A" Same as "C"
Wildlife and Fisheries	KEVIN RIM - Surface disturbing activities could significantly disrupt raptor breeding and nesting activities, which may end in nest or territory abandonment.	Same as "A"	KEVIN RIM - Restrictions on mineral leases and land use authorizations would produce locally significant positive impacts to raptors.	Same as "C"
	SWEET GRASS HILLS - A large open pit hardrock mining operation could significantly reduce big game habitat.	Same as "A"	SWEET GRASS HILLS - Modifications in grazing management and raptor stipulations would produce locally significant positive impacts for elk and raptors. COW CREEK - Intensive management of riparian areas would produce locally significant wildlife habitat improvements.	Same as "C" Same as "C"
			SWEET GRASS HILLS - Large open pit hardrock mining operations on valid, existing claims could significantly reduce big game habitat.	Same as "A"

TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY IMPACTS TABLE (Continued)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
EMPHASIS AREAS				
Cultural	<p>A moderate negative impact could occur to cultural resources from unmitigatable oil and gas development.</p> <p>SWEET GRASS HILLS - Moderate impacts to Native American religious sites would occur from mineral and other developments in the Sweet Grass Hills.</p>	<p>Same as "A"</p> <p>Same as "A"</p>	<p>KEVIN RIM - The stipulations along the Kevin Rim escarpment would produce a moderate positive impact for cultural resources.</p> <p>SWEET GRASS HILLS - The reduction of mining activity and greater emphasis on resource management could produce a moderate positive impact for cultural resources.</p> <p>COW CREEK - More stringent development standards would produce significant positive impacts for cultural resources.</p>	<p>KEVIN RIM - The stipulations along the Kevin Rim escarpment would produce a moderate positive impact for cultural resources.</p> <p>SWEET GRASS HILLS - Continued mining would produce significant negative impacts to cultural resources.</p> <p>Same as "C"</p>
Recreation			<p>COW CREEK - A moderate positive impact would occur because visual and natural qualities would be enhanced and protected.</p>	Same as "C"
Social and Economics	<p>SWEET GRASS HILLS - This alternative could cause a significant change in the solitude and undisturbed environment of the area for Native Americans who use it for religious purposes.</p>	Same as "A"	<p>SWEET GRASS HILLS - This alternative could cause a moderate change in the solitude and undisturbed environment in the area of valid, existing mining claims. This would impact Native Americans using the area for religious purposes.</p>	Same as "C"
UPPER MISSOURI NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER				
Soil		<p>Increased human traffic at recreation facilities along the UMNWSR would reduce streambank stability and cause soil compaction. This would be a localized moderate impact.</p>		
Minerals	<p>Drainage of federal minerals by future private and state wells adjacent to BLM lands could be a significant negative impact.</p>	Same as "A"	Same as "A"	Same as "A"
Vegetation	<p>Locally significant impacts could occur because of increased soil compaction, erosion, and trampling with a large increase in visitor use.</p>	Same as "A"		
Cultural			<p>Moderate positive impacts would occur due to increased public awareness of cultural values through increased development of interpretive sites.</p> <p>Moderate positive impacts would result because facility development would be foregone if cultural resources impairment could not be mitigated.</p>	Same as "C"