

# APPENDIX 1—SUMMARY OF THE AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN REPORT

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Appendix 1 summarizes the process used for evaluating nominations for areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) considered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in developing the Richfield Resource Management Plan (RMP). Full documentation of the process is included in the *ACEC Evaluation Report, Richfield Resource Management Plan*, January 2005. This report can be viewed at the Richfield Field Office.

In brief, BLM staff and cooperators evaluated 26 nominations for ACECs, totaling 1.6 million acres within the Richfield Field Office (RFO) and portions of the Price Field Office. Of these, 16 areas totaling 886,800 acres within the Richfield Field Office—plus additional acreage within the Price Field Office—met the criteria for relevant and important values and were identified as potential ACECs to be considered further in this RMP.

## BACKGROUND

BLM is directed by law, regulation, and policy to consider designating and protecting areas of critical environmental concern when developing land use plans.

### The Law: Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976

In the development and revision of land use plans, the Secretary shall...give priority to the designation and protection of areas of critical environmental concern.

—*Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Title II, Sec 202(c) 3*

The term “areas of critical environmental concern” (often referred to as “ACECs”) means areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.”

—*FLPMA, Title I, Sec 103(a)*

### The Regulation: 43 CFR 1610.7-2

To be a potential ACEC, both of the following criteria shall be met:

*Relevance:* There shall be present a significant historic, cultural, or scenic value; a fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process; or a natural hazard.

*Importance:* The above described value, resource, system, process, or hazard shall have substantial significance and values. This generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern.

### The Policy: BLM Manual 1613

BLM Manual 1613 provides direction for identifying, analyzing, designating, monitoring, and managing ACECs. Key points are as follows:

- The ACEC designation indicates to the public that the BLM recognizes that an area has significant values and has established special management measures to protect those values.
- Designation of ACECs is only done through the resource management planning process, either in a resource management plan itself or in a plan amendment.
- To be designated as an ACEC, an area must require special management attention to protect the important and relevant values.
- Potential ACECs are identified as early as possible in the planning process.
- Existing ACECs are subject to reconsideration when plans are revised.
- Members of the public or other agencies may nominate an area for consideration as a potential ACEC. BLM personnel are encouraged to recommend areas for consideration as ACECs.
- No formal or special procedures are associated with nomination.
- An interdisciplinary team evaluates each resource or hazard to determine if it meets the relevance and importance criteria. The field manager approves the relevance and importance criteria.
- If an area is found not to meet the relevance and importance criteria, the analysis supporting that conclusion must be included in the RMP and associated environmental impact statement (EIS).

## EVALUATION PROCESS

### Existing ACECs

Four ACECs total 16,200 acres within the Richfield Field Office: Beaver Wash, North Caineville Mesa, and South Caineville Mesa ACECs, which were established in 1982, and the Gilbert Badlands ACEC, which was established in 1986 (see Table A1-1 below). As required by BLM policy, evaluations for the existing ACECs were reviewed in developing the new RMP. All were found to meet the criteria for relevance and importance.

**Table A1-1. Existing ACECs Within the Richfield Field Office**

	ACEC Name	Public Land Acres	County
1	Beaver Wash	3,400	Wayne
2	Gilbert Badlands	3,700	Wayne
3	North Caineville Mesa	3,800	Wayne
4	South Caineville Mesa	5,300	Wayne
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16,200</b>	

### ACEC Nominations

Thirty ACECs were nominated during scoping for the Richfield RMP. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), three Utah residents, and a BLM employee submitted nominations. Of these, 26 areas totaling 1.6 million acres (shown below in Table A1-2 and the Nominated ACEC Map) were evaluated by RFO staff. The remaining four—Antelope Valley/Sweetwater Reef, Cedar Mountain, Molen Reef, and Mussentuchit Badlands—are primarily within the Price Field Office with small acreages within the Richfield Field Office. They were evaluated by Price BLM staff during development of the Price RMP. Some nominations overlap other nominations, and some nominations overlap the existing ACECs. Nominations were evaluated in accordance with *BLM Manual 1613, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*. Values meeting the relevance and importance criteria were carried forward into the potential ACECs. See Nominated ACEC Map below. (Attachment 1 includes criteria used for the relevance and importance evaluation).

**Table A1-2. Nominated ACECs**

	<b>Nominated Area</b>	<b>Public Land Acres</b>	<b>County(ies)</b>
1	Bull Creek Archaeological ACEC	67,809	Wayne and Garfield
2	Bullfrog Creek Drainage	149,370	Garfield
3	Caineville Wash	55,552	Wayne
4	Dirty Devil Drainage	371,257	Emery, Wayne, Garfield
5	Factory Butte	39,130	Wayne
6	Fish Creek Cove/Cockscomb	1,752	Wayne
7	Fremont Gorge/Miners Mountain	27,145	Wayne
8	Fremont Valley Gateway	34,314	Wayne
9	Gilbert Badlands	105,588	Garfield and Wayne
10	Granite Creek Drainage	29,639	Garfield and Wayne
11	Horseshoe Canyon Drainage	72,281	Emery and Wayne
12	Kingston Canyon	22,324	Piute
13	Little Rockies	60,515	Garfield
14	Lower Muddy Creek Drainage	82,703	Emery and Wayne
15	Mount Hillers	38,527	Garfield
16	No Man Mesa	315	Garfield
17	North Wash Drainage	50,865	Garfield
18	Notom-Bullfrog Scenic	53,783	Wayne and Garfield
19	Old Woman Front	326	Sevier
20	Parker Mountain	107,809	Wayne, Piute, and Garfield
21	Quitcupah Creek/Trough Hollow	26,888	Sevier and Emery
22	Ragged Mountain/Slate Creek Drainage	49,695	Garfield
23	Rainbow Hills	3,995	Sevier
24	Sevier Canyon	8,889	Piute and Sevier
25	Thousand Lake Bench	38,467	Sevier and Emery
26	Upper Sweetwater Drainage—Tarantula Mesa	63,162	Garfield and Wayne
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,562,100</b>	



## Potential ACECs

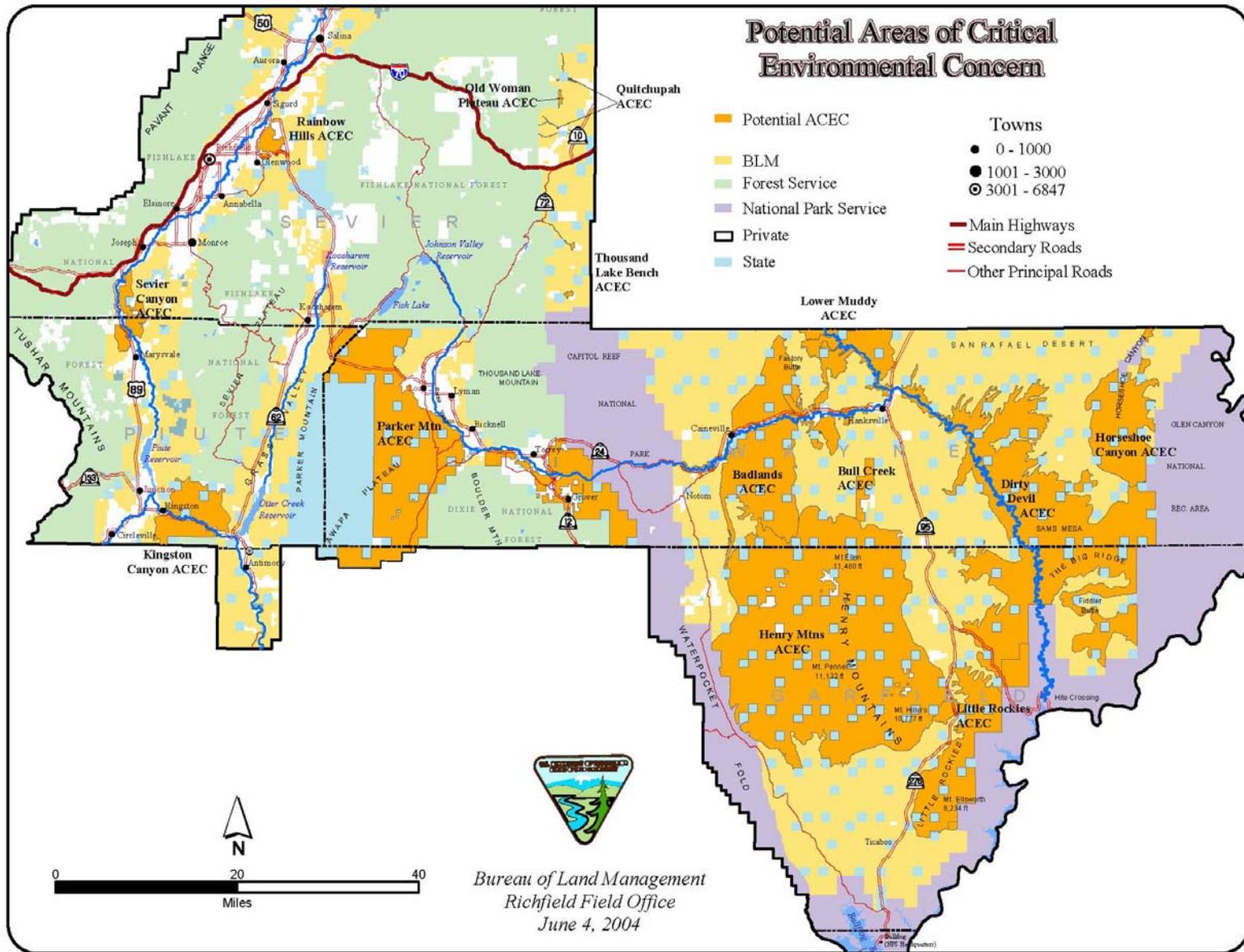
Following the evaluation of relevant and important values, 16 areas totaling 886,800 acres were identified as potential ACECs. (See Table A1-3 and Potential ACEC map below.) Potential ACECs were determined in three ways:

- The potential ACEC is the same as the nominated ACEC because some or all of the values determined relevant and important are found throughout the nominated area.
- The potential ACEC is smaller than the nominated ACEC because the values determined relevant and important are found in only parts of the nominated area.
- The potential ACEC is composed of all or parts of several nominated ACECs because values determined relevant and important were found in adjoining nominated areas.

**Table A1-3. Potential ACECs**

	<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>County(ies)</b>
1	Badlands Scenic and Natural Processes ACEC. Includes:  Gilbert Badlands ACEC, 3,680 acres North Caineville Mesa ACEC, 2,000 acres South Caineville Mesa ACEC, 4,100 acres	88,900	Wayne
2	Bull Creek Archaeological ACEC	4,800	Wayne
3	Dirty Devil Scenic Cultural and Wildlife ACEC. Includes:  Beaver Wash ACEC, 4,800 acres	205,300	Wayne and Garfield
4	Fremont Gorge/Cockscomb Cultural and Scenic ACEC.	34,300	Wayne
5	Henry Mountains Scenic and Wildlife ACEC. Includes:  No Man Mesa Potential ACEC, 315 acres	288,200	Wayne and Garfield
6	Horseshoe Canyon Scenic and Cultural ACEC	40,900	Wayne
7	Kingston Canyon Riparian and Mule Deer ACEC	22,100	Piute
8	Little Rockies Scenic and Wildlife ACEC	49,200	Garfield
9	Lower Muddy Creek Scenic and Plant ACEC	16,200	Wayne
10	Old Woman Front Relict Vegetation ACEC	330	Sevier
11	Parker Mountain Sagebrush-Steppe ACEC	107,900	Wayne
12	Quitcupah Archaeological ACEC	180	Sevier
13	Rainbow Hills Natural System ACEC	4,000	Sevier
14	Sevier Canyon Riparian and Mule Deer ACEC	8,900	Piute and Sevier
15	Thousand Lake Bench Vegetation ACEC	500	Wayne
16	Special Status Species ACEC	15,100	Wayne
	<b>Total</b>	<b>886,810</b>	

Descriptions of the potential ACECs and suggested management are included in Attachment 3.



## **Consideration of Potential ACECs in the DRMP/DEIS**

Potential ACECs are considered in the Draft Resource Management Plan (DRMP)/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), as follows:

- **No Action Alternative:** The four existing ACECs would continue to be designated and managed to protect their relevant and important values.
- **Alternative A:** No ACECs would be designated. No special management to protect relevant and important values would be identified or implemented. Lands identified as potential ACECs would be managed for other uses.
- **Alternative B:** Two ACECs would be designated: the existing North Caineville Mesa ACEC (3,800 acres) and the Old Woman Front ACEC (330 acres).
- **Alternative C:** All 16 potential ACECs would be designated and managed to protect identified relevant and important values.
- **Alternative D:** All 16 potential ACECs would be designated and managed to protect identified relevant and important values.

The environmental consequences of the proposals under each alternative, including threats of irreparable damage, are evaluated in Chapter 4 of the DRMP/DEIS.

# RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE CRITERIA AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN NOMINATIONS

## The Task

The task of evaluating the ACEC nominations was assigned to a sub-team of the land use planning interdisciplinary team. The sub-team's job was to:

- 1) Identify the potentially-relevant values in the nominations.
- 2) Evaluate the potentially-relevant values to determine which, if any, are truly relevant, based on criteria.
- 3) Evaluate the relevant values to determine if they are important, based on criteria.
- 4) Identify suggested special management needed to protect relevant and important values.
- 5) Map the area(s) of relevance and importance. These maps define the potential ACECs that will be considered in the draft environmental impact statement.
- 6) Evaluate existing ACECs to determine if they should be retained, dropped or modified in the new resource management plan.

The evaluation was conducted based on guidance in BLM Manual 1613, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

## 1) Identifying Potentially-relevant Values

The sub-team reviewed each of the 26 ACEC nominations to identify potentially relevant values. Only the values identified in the nominations were evaluated for relevance.

## 2) Determining Relevance

Potentially-relevant values were evaluated based on guidance in 43 CFR 1610.7-2 "Designation of areas of critical environmental concern" and BLM Manual 1613 "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern."

### ***Historical, cultural and scenic values***

An historic or cultural value was determined relevant if it was determined significant by the staff archaeologist.

A scenic value was determined relevant if it was:

- Inventoried as Class A Scenery by the BLM.
- Otherwise judged relevant by the staff visual resource specialist (rationale provided).

### ***Fish and wildlife values***

The nominated fish and wildlife resource was judged relevant if it or its habitat was documented as present within the nominated area.

Sources of information:

- Utah Natural Heritage Program Database, operated and maintained by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR).
- UDWR habitat maps for game species.

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) habitat data maps, recovery plans and other information.
- Staff specialist knowledge (rationale provided).

### **Natural processes or systems**

Nominated natural processes or systems (e.g., plants, riparian areas, geologic processes) were considered relevant if they were present within the nominated area and included, but were not limited to:

- Endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species (documented occurrences within nominated area).
- Rare, endemic or relict terrestrial, aquatic or riparian plants or plants communities (documented occurrences within nominated area).
- Rare geological features

Sources of information included:

- Utah Natural Heritage Program Database, operated and maintained by the UDWR.
- UDWR habitat maps for game species
- USFWS habitat data maps
- Riparian area inventory
- Existing management plans
- Wilderness inventory information
- National Natural Landmark Areas Survey (1980)
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) data
- Staff specialist knowledge (rationale provided).

### **Natural Hazards**

Nominations were considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **3) Determining Importance**

Only values determined relevant were evaluated for importance. Generally, the value, resource, system, process, or hazard described as relevant had to have substantial significance and values in order to meet the importance criteria.

### **Significant Qualities**

For a relevant resource (or value, system, process or hazard) to be judged important, it had to have more than locally significant qualities which gave it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.

Historic and cultural—A relevant historic or cultural resource was determined more than locally significant if it was:

- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Otherwise judged more locally significant due to Federal laws, regulations and national BLM policies that mandate consideration and protection of cultural resources.

Scenic—A relevant scenic resource was determined more than locally significant if it was:

- A National, state or local scenic designation such as state scenic highways, Federal scenic highways and All-American Roads and BLM backcountry byways.
- Otherwise judged more locally significant by the staff recreation specialist (rationale provided).

Fish, wildlife and plant resources—A relevant fish, wildlife or plant resource was determined more than locally significant if it was a species protected under Federal law, regulation and BLM national policy that mandate the consideration and protection of species:

- Special status species, including:
  - Federally-listed threatened or endangered species.
  - BLM sensitive species.
  - State of Utah species of concern.
- Endemic to nominated area.
- Otherwise judged more than locally significant by staff wildlife biologist (rationale provided).

Riparian resources—All riparian areas were judged more than locally significant by National BLM policy.

Natural hazard—A relevant natural hazard was more than locally significant if so determined by staff specialists (rationale provided).

### ***Special values and threats***

The relevant resource (value, system, process or hazard) was important if it had qualities or circumstances in the nominated area that made it:

- Fragile
- Sensitive
- Rare
- Irreplaceable
- Exemplary
- Unique
- Endangered
- Threatened, or
- Vulnerable to adverse change.

Determinations of special values, threats and vulnerability to adverse change were made by staff specialists, case-by-case, based on professional knowledge and supporting documentation.

### ***National Priority***

The relevant resource (or value, system, process or hazard) was determined important if it warranted special protection in order to:

- satisfy national priority concerns or
- to carry out the mandates of FLMPA

Historic and cultural—Protection of cultural resources is a national priority; therefore any cultural resource identified as relevant was also determined to be important.

Scenic—A relevant scenic resource that also carried national designations such as Federal scenic highways and All-American Roads and BLM backcountry byways was determined important.

Fish, wildlife and plants— A relevant Federally-listed threatened or endangered species was also determined important (because of the Endangered Species Act).

Riparian resources—All riparian areas are considered more than locally significant by BLM policy, hence they meet the importance criteria

### ***Safety and Public Welfare***

A relevant resource (or value, system, process or hazard) was considered important if it had qualities that warranted highlighting it in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.

### ***Threat to Life and Property***

The resource (or value, system, process or hazard) poses a significant threat to human life and safety or property.

## **4) Special Management**

Suggested special management was developed to address, mitigate or prevent identified threats.

## **5) Mapping Potential ACECs**

Values identified as both relevant and important provided the basis for the potential ACECs. In some cases, the potential ACEC's boundary was the same as the nominated area. In other cases, the boundary of the potential area was somewhat smaller than the nominated area. In yet other cases, an identified relevant and important value (e.g. Class A Scenery or crucial bison or mule deer habitat) crossed the boundaries of several nominated ACECs and the potential ACEC then took a new shape and a new name. The potential ACECs will be carried into Alternative C in the draft environmental impact statement of the resource management plan. Other alternatives will consider lesser or no acreages for ACEC protection. All will be evaluated in the DEIS.

## **6) Evaluation of Existing ACECS**

Evaluations of the four existing ACECs—Beaver Wash Canyon, Gilbert Badlands, North Caineville Mesa and South Caineville Mesa—were reconsidered. The relevance and importance values of all were determined to still be valid.