

APPENDIX 16—MOUNTAIN PLOVER MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES: OCCUPIED HABITAT PROTECTION MEASURES

To provide further protection of the mountain plover and to prevent the species from becoming listed as “threatened” or “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act, one or more of the following management guidelines will apply to occupied habitat (occupied habitat is defined as areas in which broods and/or adults have been found in the current year or documented in at least 2 of the past 5 years).

It should be noted that this list was developed in coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Specific protection measures from the list are identified on a case-by-case basis by the BLM as they apply to each proposed project. Some protection measures are used much more often than others. For example, the protection measure that involves moving a proposed facility ½ mile from identified occupied mountain plover habitat would rarely be implemented and would include only those projects that contribute to a large increase in both noise and human activities which would disturb birds during their breeding and nesting seasons. Protection measures that include seasonal restrictions, the use of car-pools, and timing management are implemented more frequently to reduce visual and audible disturbances during the bird’s sensitive time periods, such as breeding and nesting.

The management guidelines are as follows:

- To protect the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, the proposed activity will not be allowed as proposed. An alternative, such as moving the facility, directional drilling, piping and storing condensate off the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat to a centralized facility, or other techniques that minimize ground disturbance and habitat degradation, will be required.
- To protect the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, the proposed facility will be moved ½ mile from the identified occupied habitat.
- The access road will be realigned to avoid the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat.
- Within ½ mile of the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, speed limits will be posted at 25 miles per hour (mph) on resources roads and 35 mph on local roads during the brood-rearing period (June 1–July 10).
- To protect the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, power lines will be buried or poles will include a perch-inhibitor in their design. This will be required within ½ mile of the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat.
- To protect the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, fences, storage tanks, and other elevated structures will be constructed as low as possible and/or will incorporate perch inhibitors into their design.
- Road-killed animals will be promptly removed from areas within ½ mile of the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat.
- To protect the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, seed mixes and application rates for reclamation will be designed to produce stands of sparse, low-growing vegetation suitable for plover nesting.

- To minimize destruction of nests and disturbance to breeding mountain plovers, no reclamation activities or other ground-disturbing activities will occur from April 10–July 10, unless surveys consistent with the Plover Guidelines or other methods approved by the USFWS find that no plovers are nesting in the area.
- A plugged and abandoned well within ½ mile of the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat will have the casing cut off at the base of the cellar or 3 feet below the final restored ground level (whichever is deeper). The well bore shall then be covered with a metal plate at least ¼-inch thick and welded in place.
- To protect the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, and because mountain plover adults and broods may forage along roads during the night, traffic speed and traffic volume will be limited during nighttime hours from April 10–July 10.
- To protect the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, work schedules and shift changes will be modified from June 1–July 10 to avoid the periods of activity from one-half hour before sunrise to 10:00 a.m. and from 5:00 p.m. to one-half hour after sunset.
- To protect the identified mountain plover-occupied habitat, traffic will be minimized from June 1–July 10 by carpooling and organizing work activities to minimize trips on roads within ½ mile of the mountain plover-occupied habitat area.