

Chapter 3 — Management Alternatives

Introduction

The development of management alternatives was guided by the legal authorities and planning criteria listed in Appendix B. A range of five management alternatives was developed to address the issues, as required by the “National Environmental Policy Act” (NEPA).

Resource Management Plan Goals

The mission of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In order to accomplish that mission, BLM has developed a strategic plan (“BLM Strategic Plan 2000–2005”) containing a comprehensive set of broad goal statements and a subset of mission goals. Two goal statements and a subset of mission goals dealing with public land management are shown below. (The complete “BLM Strategic Plan 2000–2005” is available at the BLM web site: www.blm.gov/nhp/info/stratplan.)

- 1) Serve current and future publics.
 - Provide opportunities for environmentally responsible recreation.
 - Provide opportunities for environmentally responsible commercial activities.
 - Preserve natural and cultural heritage resources.
 - Reduce threats to public health, safety, and property.
 - Provide land, resource, and title information.
 - Provide economic and technical assistance.
- 2) Restore and maintain the health of the land.
 - Understand and plan for the condition and use of the public lands.
 - Restore at-risk resources and maintain functioning systems.

The Lakeview Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) also considers

the goals developed by the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 2000b, 2000c). Five goals were developed for the project; they are:

- 1) Sustain, and where necessary, restore the health of the forest, rangeland, aquatic, and riparian ecosystems.
- 2) Provide a predictable, sustained flow of economic benefits within the capability of the ecosystem.
- 3) Provide diverse recreational and educational opportunities within the capability of the ecosystem.
- 4) Contribute to recovery and delisting of threatened and endangered species.
- 5) Manage natural resources consistent with treaty and trust responsibilities to American Indian Tribes.

Based on the BLM strategic plan, the ICBEMP goals, and the specific issues identified for the Lakeview RMP/EIS planning area, the following goals were developed for the Lakeview RMP/EIS.

- 1) Manage for long-term sustainability and, where necessary, restore the health of the forest, rangeland, aquatic, and riparian ecosystems in the planning area.
- 2) Manage sensitive species and communities to ensure long-term viability, and promote delisting of threatened or endangered species.
- 3) Provide recreational, educational, and research opportunities within the capability of the planning area ecosystem.
- 4) Provide a predictable, sustained flow of economic benefits within the capability of the planning area ecosystem.
- 5) Manage resources on the planning area to meet treaty and trust responsibilities to local American Indian Tribes.

Ecosystem Management

As described by ICBEMP “Summary of Scientific Findings” (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 1996a): “Ecosystem management is scientifically-based land and resource management that integrates ecological capabilities with social values and economic relations to

produce, restore, or sustain ecosystem integrity and desired conditions, uses, products, values and services over the long term . . .” Ecosystem management “. . . concentrates on overall ecosystem health and productivity through an understanding of how different parts of the ecosystem functions with each other, rather than on achieving a set of outputs. Human activities, including social values regarding use of public lands and biophysical components, are part of the total picture.

A major part of the ICBEMP was the gathering, organizing, and understanding information at the basin or broad scale. In order to apply the findings of ICBEMP to the local level, they must be stepped down through site-specific analyses (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 2000b).

The ICBEMP describes four levels of analysis below the broad basin-level analysis that are intended to provide the context to appropriately implement these broad-level decisions on individual national forests or BLM districts:

- 1) *Subregional analysis*—programmatic or broad overview EIS such as a resource management plan.
- 2) *Mid-scale analysis*—subbasin review.
- 3) *Watershed-scale analysis*—ecosystem analysis at the watershed (or other appropriate landscape unit) scale.
- 4) *Site-specific NEPA analysis*—project environmental assessment or EIS.

The resource area staff conducted a subbasin review between August 1, 1999 and March 1, 2000. Subbasin review, the second layer of the step-down process, is an intergovernmental process comparing mid- and fine-scale information to ICBEMP findings. It also assesses ecosystem processes and functions at the subbasin level. Appendix A1 of the Draft RMP/EIS contains a summary of the subbasin review process as well as a summary of ICBEMP findings applicable to the resource area.

The “Summary of the Analysis of the Management Situation” (USDI-BLM 2000f) contains the subbasin review report. Findings and recommendations from the subbasin review are carried forward into the RMP/EIS in the issues and alternatives analyzed.

Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale

The watershed scale is the third layer in ecosystem analysis. Ecosystem analysis at the watershed scale may be used to evaluate existing conditions, capabilities, and limitations of specific watersheds. Information gained through analysis at this scale would be used to support development of ecologically sustainable programs and projects. Appendix F of the Draft RMP/EIS contains a description of the watershed analysis process. The RMP provides the general direction for ecosystem analysis to address, including the desired range of conditions.

During the subbasin review, the team identified several watersheds that are priorities for future restoration (see Water Resources/Watershed Health section, Common to All Alternatives subsection). The following is a description of the criteria used to prioritize watersheds and the process that would be used to change priorities, if necessary. Work would focus on higher priority areas; however, other areas may require attention to address site-specific needs.

- Legal mandates (“Clean Water Act” [CWA], “Endangered Species Act,” etc.);
- Resources at risk;
- Potential for recovery;
- Resource conflicts or controversy;
- Opportunity for interagency or partnership assessments;
- Field staff knowledge of the area;
- Current ongoing management; and
- Broad-scale priorities (identified in ICBEMP as a priority subbasin or key watershed for various reasons).

Completed watershed analyses would be reviewed periodically to determine if there have been any changes in resource issues, BLM policies and regulations, or other concerns that would warrant a change in priorities.

Rangeland Health and Health of the Land Strategy

The alternatives include management direction intended to complement the “Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management” (USDI-BLM 1997a) and “Standards for Land Health for Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington” (1998). These standards are discussed in Appendix E4 of the Draft RMP/EIS and Appendix B.

Desired Range of Conditions

Introduction

The desired range of conditions describes the land, resource, social, and economic conditions that are desired in the planning area as a result of plan implementation. The length of time needed to achieve the desired range of conditions would vary by alternative.

The following desired range of conditions are descriptions of what the physical and biological conditions would be moving towards during the life of the plan. However, certain conditions, goals, or objectives may take longer to achieve.

Description of Desired Range of Conditions

Rangelands

Rangeland vegetation (sagebrush steppe) includes a mosaic of multiple-aged shrubs, forbs, and native perennial grasses. Shrub overstories are present in a variety of spatial arrangements and scales across the landscape level, including disjunct islands and corridors. Shrub overstories are present in predominantly mature, late-structural status. Plant communities not meeting desired range of conditions show upward trends in condition and structural diversity. Desirable plants continue to improve in health and vigor. New infestations of noxious weeds are not common across the landscape, and existing large infestations are declining. Populations and habitat of rare plant species and their associated communities are stable or continue to improve in vigor and distribution.

Forest and Woodlands

Treated commercial (mostly pine) forests contain healthy stands of site-appropriate species. Stands are relatively open, with density within site capacity. Low-intensity fires can be accommodated without excessive loss of trees, and insect and disease occurrence is at endemic levels.

Western juniper dominance is restricted to rocky outcrops, ridges, and other historic (old growth) sites where wildland fire frequency is limited by lower site productivity and sparse fuels. Western juniper occurs in low densities in association with vigorous shrubs, grasses, and forbs (where site potential permits). Historic western juniper sites retain old growth characteristics. Quaking aspen groves occupy historic range and are in stable or improving condition.

Wild Horses

Rangeland vegetation and water sources support viable, healthy herds of wild horses through time. Individual herds have diverse age structures, good conformation, and are quality animals exhibiting the characteristics unique to each herd. Wild horse numbers are in balance with the rangelands that support them. Improvements in grass/shrubland steppe and riparian areas increase the health of the herd.

Wildlife

The amount and diversity of wildlife habitat are maintained or improved through time. Late-seral grass/shrublands exist in blocks of various sizes in well-distributed patterns across the landscape. Ongoing management of rangeland habitat components and conditions (such as vegetation cover and forage) and of key areas helps to maintain big game populations near State wildlife agency objectives. Hunting opportunities continue to be provided throughout the planning area. Improvement in the condition of grass/shrubland steppe and riparian areas benefits a variety of wildlife species by increasing the quality, quantity, and variety of habitat. Such species include upland game, raptors, and nongame species. Management has helped to create the long-term habitat changes that contribute toward restoring some sensitive species and toward recovery of listed species.

Recreation

The area provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities for a growing demand, as the population increases and urban dwellers seek to experience the open spaces commonly found on public land. Additional recreation facilities, restored and maintained recreation sites, and more intensive management are a few of the means used to meet the increased demand. Protection of the natural landscape is an important consideration when designing recreation facilities and planning for related activities. Certain areas are excluded from recreational development to preserve their natural character.

Special Management Areas

Special management areas (SMA's), such as wilderness, wild and scenic rivers (WSR's), and areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC's), preserve the integrity of special or unique values over the long term.

Soils

Large portions of the landscape have a protective soil cover of deep-rooted plants and litter which supports proper hydrologic function. In thin-soiled areas and other appropriate soils, microbiotic crusts are present which increase soil stability, contribute to nutrient cycles, and act as indicators of rangeland health. Upland soils have sufficient vegetation cover to minimize accelerated soil erosion. Physical and chemical soil properties are adequate for vegetation growth and hydrologic function appropriate to the specific soil type, landform, and climate.

Fire

Wildland and prescribed fire play an active role in defining the composition of vegetation and limit the dominance of woody species including shrubs and invasive juniper.

Riparian, Aquatic, and Watershed

Riparian areas and stream habitat conditions have improved as a result of protection and management. Watersheds are stable and provide for capture, storage, and safe release of water appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform. Most riparian/wetland areas are stable and include natural streamflow and sediment regimes related to contributing watersheds. Soil supports native riparian/wetland vegetation to allow water movement, filtration, and storage. Riparian/wetland vegetation structure and diversity are significantly progressing toward controlling erosion, stabilizing streambanks, healing incised channels, shading water areas, filtering sediment, aiding in floodplain development, dissipating energy, delaying floodwater, and increasing recharge of ground water appropriate to climate, geology, and landform. Stream channels are narrower, water depth and channel meanders are increasing, and floodplains are developing. Stream channels and floodplains are making significant progress in dissipating energy at high-water flows and transporting and depositing sediment as appropriate for geology, climate, and landform. Riparian/wetland vegetation is increasing in canopy volume (height and width) and in healthy uneven-aged stands of key woody plants, increasing in herbaceous ground cover, and shifting toward late succession. Surface disturbances inconsistent with the physical and biological processes described above have been reduced. Disturbances such as roads, dispersed recreation sites, and inappropriate livestock use are decreasing as vegetation and soils recover naturally. There is no downward trend in riparian condition and function.

Human use of natural resources is managed to enhance fisheries, improve water quality, and promote healthy riparian conditions. Water quality is managed so that most streams are providing cool, clear, and clean water. High-quality water is in greater demand from all users. Better regulation of runoff has improved the water supply from rangelands. There is increased infiltration on upland sites, increased ground water recharge, increased spring flow, reduced peak flow during floods, and increased stability of base flow during late summer and winter.

Management activities have been implemented on nearly all sites at risk to erosion to facilitate recovery of upland, riparian, aquatic, and water quality conditions. Improved aquatic habitat conditions allow populations of threatened or endangered aquatic species to stabilize and expand into appropriate, previously occupied habitat. Populations of native aquatic species are increasing.

Water quality is improved to provide stable and productive riparian and aquatic ecosystems. Water quality of perennial and fish-bearing streams is within State standards, and the remaining streams have made significant progress toward attaining those standards. Upland, riparian, and aquatic ecosystems are stable and productive to a degree that leads to acceptable water quality for identified beneficial uses. Improvement has occurred in stream channel integrity and channel processes, under which the riparian and aquatic systems developed. Hydrologic and sediment regimes (the characteristic behavior or orderly occurrence of a natural phenomenon or process) in streams, lakes, and wetlands are appropriate to the surrounding soils, climate, and landform. Instream flows are sufficient to support healthy riparian and aquatic habitats, and stream functions are stable and effective. Flooding streams discharge without significant damage to the watershed.

Riparian vegetation provides sufficient vegetation debris; provides adequate regulation of air and water temperatures during both summer and winter; and helps reduce surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration to levels characteristic of natural conditions. Riparian and aquatic habitats support populations of well-distributed native and desired nonnative plant, vertebrate, and invertebrate populations.

Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a procedure in which decisions and changes in management are made as part of an ongoing process. It is a continuous process of

planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and incorporating new information into strategies to meet the goals and objectives of the management described in the RMP. This process builds on current knowledge, observation, experimentation, and learning from experience. A continuous feedback loop allows for mid-course corrections in management to meet goals and objectives. It also provides a model for adjusting goals and objectives as new information develops and public desires change.

The complex interrelationships of physical, biological, and social components of the ecosystem and how they react to land management practices are often not fully understood when a land-use management plan is developed. To be successful, plans must have the flexibility to adapt and respond to new knowledge or conditions.

The following briefly describes the four parts of adaptive management:

- 1) *Planning/Decision*—plan development or revision is the process leading to decision-making. It starts with issue identification and goal development. The next step is to gather information necessary to develop alternatives for management direction that address the issues and goals. The final stage is to develop alternative management strategies to address issues and meet the management goals, analyze the consequences of the alternatives, and choose a preferred alternative for implementation.
- 2) *Implementation*—the process of putting a plan or decision into effect. Implementation includes short- and long-term actions. Although the plan covers 15 to 20 years, all management direction is assumed to be implemented within 10 years. Standards are defined addressing how to achieve management goals; and standards can include requirements to refrain from taking action in certain situations.
- 3) *Monitoring*—detects changes so management activities can be modified to achieve management goals. Monitoring data provide information on the condition and trend of the ecosystem. Monitoring data would be collected to determine if plan objectives are being met. This is discussed further in the following monitoring section and in Appendix R.
- 4) *Evaluation/Assessment*—the point where plans and monitoring data are reviewed. This phase of

adaptive management is used to judge the success of existing plans in meeting goals and objectives, and makes recommendations for corrections. The understanding gained through evaluations is critical to managing sustainable, healthy, and productive ecosystems. Evaluations are a key component of the adaptive management process. An evaluation may lead to a change in management actions.

Implementation of this RMP will be monitored to allow response to changing conditions. Activity plan decisions would be evaluated to ensure consistency with the RMP management goals. As part of the evaluation process, other government agencies would be asked to review the approved RMP/record of decision (ROD) and advise the BLM of consistency with their plans, programs, and policies. Upon completion of periodic evaluations, the Lakeview District Manager would determine what, if any, changes are necessary to ensure that management actions are consistent with management goals. It is possible a plan amendment or revision may be initiated because of a need to consider monitoring findings, new data, new or revised policy, or a proposed action that may result in a change in the terms, conditions, or decisions of the approved plan.

Minor changes, refinements, or clarifications in the plan, including incorporating new data, are called plan maintenance actions. Plan maintenance actions would not expand the scope of resource uses or restrictions or change the terms, conditions, or decisions of the approved Lakeview RMP/EIS. Maintenance actions are not considered plan amendments or revisions and do not require formal public involvement and interagency coordination. However, these types of actions will be reported in periodic planning updates.

In developing the Lakeview RMP/EIS, the BLM used the best science available, including the scientific assessment from the ICBEMP (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 1996a). The staff also collaborated with other Federal, state, local, and Tribal government agencies, and involved the public. However, the agency's knowledge would change as local environmental conditions change, as new management techniques are learned, and as advances in science and technology are better understood. As a result, it is inevitable that in the future some of the management direction in the RMP would be found to be inadequate or in need of update. To rectify such situations, implementation

of the Lakeview RMP/EIS decision would use an adaptive management approach in a continual process to modify management actions to incorporate new knowledge gained over time. New information could also cause a plan amendment or revision to be prepared.

Monitoring

The BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-9) call for the monitoring of resource management plans on a continual basis with a formal evaluation done at periodic intervals. The Lakeview RMP/EIS would be monitored on a continual basis. Plan evaluations would occur on about 5-year intervals. Management actions arising from activity plan decisions would be evaluated to ensure consistency with RMP/EIS objectives. This is described in more detail in Appendix R.

Overview of the Alternatives

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

No Management Alternative

During development of the alternatives, a no management alternative was discussed. This alternative is not the same as the no action alternative. This alternative would include no grazing, no gathering of wild horses, no suppressing of wildland fires, and no managing of recreation uses. The team determined that this alternative was not acceptable because “The Wild Horse and Burro Act” requires that wild horse herds be maintained in a thriving ecological balance with their environment. If horses were not gathered, they would eventually deplete their habitat. In addition, the “Taylor Grazing Act” requires the Secretary of the Interior “. . . to provide for the orderly use, improvement, and development of the range.” Some fire suppression would be necessary to protect private property and to protect human health and safety. Since the resource area would still be open to dispersed recreation use, a minimal amount of recreation management would be required to protect human health and safety.

This alternative is not considered further in the plan; however, some aspects of it, such as no livestock grazing, are incorporated into Alternative E.

Proposed High Desert Protection Act

A protection act for the High Desert has been proposed by various organizations for a number of years to protect the natural resources of the High Desert of eastern Oregon. The proposed legislation includes various actions including removing livestock grazing to protect resources.

Some components of this proposal were built into various alternatives of this document, particularly Alternatives C and E. The proposed legislation itself cannot be considered an alternative as it would require congressional approval and such approval is speculative. Should approval ever occur, it would likely require revision or amendment of the RMP and would be addressed at that time. Therefore, it is not considered further in this plan.

Designation of the Proposed Pronghorn ACEC

In 1998, the Oregon Natural Desert Association and 22 other cosponsoring organizations nominated 1.1 million acres of BLM-administered lands surrounding and connecting Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge as an ACEC (Oregon Natural Desert Association 1998). Major management actions of the proposal included removing livestock grazing and wild horses in the area.

The proposal was evaluated by biologists and other resource specialists from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and BLM offices of Burns and Lakeview Districts in Oregon, Winnemucca District in Nevada, and the Surprise Resource Area in California. The evaluation concluded that the entire proposed area as a whole did not meet ACEC criteria, and therefore is not considered further in this plan (USDI-BLM 1999b). However, portions of the area within the Lakeview Resource Area (LRA) were found to meet the ACEC criteria in other evaluations (USDI-BLM 2000a) and are being considered in the alternatives analyzed in detail. Refer to the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern section of Chapter 2 or Appendix I of the Draft RMP/EIS for more information. The proponent’s goals and objectives for the Pronghorn ACEC would be largely met under Alternative E.

Alkali Lake ACEC

A proposal was made internally that the BLM-administered land surrounding the Alkali Lake hazardous waste site should be designated an ACEC. The area does not meet the ACEC criteria, there is no immediate danger

to human health, and it represents a man-made rather than a natural hazard; therefore, the proposal is not considered further in this plan.

Wilderness Study Area Boundary Changes

The Lake County Commissioners have suggested an alternative to look at changing two wilderness study area (WSA) boundaries along State Highway 140. This highway runs from north of Lakeview, east and south to the Nevada state line. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is currently improving sections of the highway, and in the summer of 2000 completed a rerouting, widening, and resurfacing project on approximately 10 miles of the highway. The purpose of the project is to improve safety on the highway and allow its use by tractor-trailer trucks over 65-feet long. Similar work is planned within the next 5 years on other sections of the highway.

Two sections which are proposed for improvement in the future are on or near the boundaries of two WSA's—Fish Creek Rim and Spaulding. The highway right-of-way, not the highway itself, forms the boundary of the Spaulding WSA. In the case of the Fish Creek Rim WSA, the right-of-way for the 69 kilovolt powerline on the north side of the highway forms the boundary.

ODOT is free to work at their discretion within the designated highway right-of-way. Any work outside the right-of-way, such as realignment of the highway, would require modification of the right-of-way grant and preparation of an environmental analysis document. Since the Fish Creek Rim WSA boundary is set back to the powerline right-of-way (which varies from 100 to 1,000 feet from the highway), it is not known at this time if any realignment of the road could impact the WSA. Any potential impact can only be determined when an actual project is proposed, complete with detailed maps showing a proposed realignment. However, BLM cannot authorize any work that would impact the wilderness qualities of either of the areas, nor can BLM change the boundaries of the two WSA's to accommodate widening, straightening, or rerouting of the highway. Any changes to the existing boundaries of these or any other WSA's can only occur through congressional legislation. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of this plan to change the boundaries of any WSA's in the planning area. Hence, this alternative is not considered further in this plan.

Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

The following section is structured in such a way that

the reader can track the management goals, rationale, and management actions. The following material defines and expands upon these components.

Management goal—the desired result of management efforts. The goals must resolve or move toward resolving the management issues in Chapter 1.

Rationale—reasoning behind why it is important to pursue the stated management goal.

Management actions—measures that are to be taken to achieve the management goals and resolve the management issues in Chapter 1.

Five alternatives are analyzed in detail in the Lakeview RMP/FEIS. Each alternative consists of four general elements. The first element is the overall theme, ranging from emphasis on commodity production to emphasis on natural processes and natural systems. The second consists of each of the individual resources or resource programs (e.g., Air Quality, Water Resources/Watershed Health, Plant Communities, Livestock Grazing Management, etc.). The third consists of the individual management goals within each of the resource programs. The fourth is the collection of management actions necessary to achieve the individual management goals of each resource program. Each of the resource-specific management actions is considered in combination with all other goals and actions to arrive at a desired range of conditions. The overall themes thus determine the types of management actions that would be applied.

Most of the alternatives, with the exception of Alternative E, have been designed to meet the RMP management goals. However, they differ in how fast the management goal is met, the degree to which it is being met, the priorities within the program, the emphasis placed on different management activities, whether actions are active or passive, and what trade-offs society is willing to accept. Public input received throughout the planning process was considered in the development of alternatives.

The management goals associated with the alternatives may not be completely met over the life of the plan (up to 20 years). Funding and staffing levels would affect rates of implementation, and projected implementation rates may vary from alternative to alternative, depending on the costs.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Routine Operation and Maintenance Actions

Maintenance of existing facilities would continue; however, the level of maintenance could vary by the alternative selected and annual funding. Normally, routine operation and maintenance actions are categorically excluded from NEPA analysis (an exception would be such actions conducted within WSA's). Such activities could include, but are not limited to, routine maintenance of existing roads, ditches, culverts, water control structures, recreation facilities, reservoirs, wells, pipelines, waterholes, fences, cattleguards, fish and wildlife structures, signs, and other similar facilities. These types of actions are considered to be part of all alternatives analyzed in this document and should not require any further analysis to implement on the ground. Maintenance of existing facilities in WSA's would be addressed on a case-by-case basis (refer to the Wilderness section in this chapter for more detail).

Other Management Direction

All alternatives incorporate or comply with the management direction and protections provided by the Warner sucker biological opinion agreements, the "Recovery Plan for the Threatened and Rare Fishes of the Warner Basin and Alkali Subbasin (USDI-USFWS 1998);" the "Standards for Land Health for Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington" (USDI-BLM 1997b); and the "Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review" (wilderness IMP) (USDI-BLM 1995b). Most alternatives incorporate the "Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystems Management Guidelines" (Sage-Grouse Planning Team 2000).

Tribal Consultation

Local Native American Tribes would be consulted during plan implementation for all actions which may affect their interests. Cultural resource surveys and sensitive species surveys would be conducted prior to any ground-disturbing activity or land disposal.

General Management Themes of the Alternatives

Following is a description of the general management theme for the five alternatives considered in detail.

Alternative A

Alternative A is the continuation of present management or no action. This alternative would continue management under the three existing management framework plans (USDI-BLM 1983a, 1983b, 1983c), the "Lakeview Grazing Management Final EIS and Record of Decision" (USDI-BLM 1982a, 1982b), and the three management framework plan amendments (USDI-BLM 1989b, 1989c, 1996c, 1996d; USDI-USFWS and USDI-BLM 1998a, 1998b) and various existing activity plans. It would also include the management direction and protections provided by the Warner sucker biological opinion/agreements, and any currently approved activity plans such as allotment management plans or habitat management plans. Resource values or sensitive habitats would receive management emphasis as at present levels. Emphasis would be on maintaining existing conditions. There would be no comprehensive plan for restoration of degraded systems. Restoration would be on a case-by-case basis and would utilize either active or passive methods.

Alternative B

Alternative B would emphasize commodity production and production of public goods and services (mining, grazing, commercial recreation, and commercial woodland products harvesting, etc.) would be emphasized. Under this alternative, constraints on commodity production for sensitive resources would be the least restrictive possible within the limits defined by law, regulation, and BLM policy, including compliance with the "Endangered Species Act," cultural resource protection laws, wetland preservation, etc. Potential impacts to sensitive resource values would be mitigated on a case-by-case basis. Emphasis would be on maintaining existing conditions. Restoration actions that would enhance commodity production would utilize primarily active methods. Other restoration actions would utilize passive methods.

Alternative C

Alternative C emphasizes the restoration of natural systems that are degraded and the maintenance of those that are functioning at a high level of condition. Commodity production would be constrained to protect natural values and ecological systems. Constraints to protect sensitive resources, such as cultural resources, would be the most restrictive. In some cases, commodity production could be excluded to protect sensitive resources. Both active and passive restoration methods would be utilized to achieve management goals.

Alternative D (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative D is the BLM's preferred alternative. This alternative emphasizes a high level of natural resource protection and improvement in ecological conditions while providing commodity production. This alternative would balance the need to protect, restore, and enhance natural values, with the need to provide for the production of food, fiber, minerals, and services on the public lands. This would be done within the limits of the ecosystem's ability to provide these on a sustainable basis and within the constraints of various laws and regulations. Constraints to protect sensitive resources would be implemented, but they would be less restrictive than under Alternative C. Restoration actions would utilize either active or passive methods to achieve management goals.

Alternative E

This alternative would exclude all permitted, discretionary uses of the public lands including livestock grazing, mineral sale or leasing, realty actions, recreation uses requiring permits, commercial rights-of-way, etc. The resource area would petition the Department of the Interior (DOI) to withdraw the entire planning area from locatable mineral entry. This alternative would allow no commodity production and would include only those management actions necessary to maintain or enhance natural values and protect life and property. Any management actions would utilize primarily passive methods. Some components of the alternative may not be possible to implement because of legal constraints, but the alternative is included for purposes of impact comparison.

Plant Communities

Shrub Steppe

Management Goal 1—Restore, protect, and enhance the diversity and distribution of desirable vegetation communities, including perennial native and desirable introduced plant species. Provide for their continued existence and normal function in nutrient, water, and energy cycles.

Rationale

With passage of the "Federal Land Policy and Management Act" (FLPMA) and the Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA) of 1978, objectives and priorities for the management of public land vegetation

resources were more clearly defined. Guidance contained in 43 CFR 4180 and "Standards for Land Health for Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington" (USDI-BLM 1997a, 1998) directs public land management toward the maintenance or restoration of the physical function and biological health of vegetative ecosystems. This objective would maintain and improve the condition and trend in plant communities that provide wildlife habitat, recreation, forage, scientific, scenic, ecological, and water and soil conservation benefits for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses. The long-term goal of vegetation management is to maintain or improve rangeland condition to the desired range of vegetative conditions, not specifically late or potential natural community ecological status.

Management actions authorized or implemented by BLM would influence future vegetation composition. These actions may include season, intensity, and duration of livestock grazing within diverse vegetation communities; the influence of fire and associated suppression actions; emergency fire rehabilitation and the reintroduction of grazing following fire; the use of natural and management-created firebreaks to protect early-seral communities from frequent fire intervals; rehabilitation and reclamation actions following soil-disturbing activities; management of noxious weeds; off-highway vehicle (OHV) use; wild horse management; recreational use; and mining.

Vegetation management has been based on existing inventories delineating the ecological status of vegetation communities. The basis for defining ecological status and potential is site descriptions that provide a summary of expected species composition and variability with vegetation communities, as well as anticipated responses with management. The delineation of ecological sites is based on soils and climate conditions. In most of the resource area, the ecological site inventory has been completed which will help provide information for future decisions. Vegetation communities in late-potential natural community seral stages express a mosaic of species composition and structure, consistent with site potential, and reflect a range of possible plant communities that should meet the objectives defining the desired range of conditions.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Upland shrub steppe communities would be managed to improve ecological status of those pastures currently in early- or mid-seral stage that are not meeting specific

management objectives. Within those pastures in late-seral to potential natural community stage, management would be implemented to maintain them. Prescribed fire would continue to be the preferred method to control the dominance of woody species such as invasive western juniper and decadent bitterbrush, but mechanical, chemical, and biological methods could also be used. Emphasis would be placed on providing for uses which are consistent with meeting ecological objectives, including increasing forage production through the development and implementation of economically feasible grazing systems and rangeland improvements. Nonnative seedings would be managed to improve or maintain their vegetation composition to ensure continued forage production. Vegetation communities that provide deer and pronghorn winter range would be managed to supply necessary cover, forage, and browse.

Management actions would be implemented to rehabilitate and/or vegetate plant communities in early- or mid-seral stages only where such communities do not meet specific management objectives. Vegetation manipulation projects would be implemented primarily to enhance forage production, and protect soil, water, and vegetation resources. The future composition of vegetation communities would be the result of continued aggressive wildfire suppression. Following wildland fire, priority would be placed on the rehabilitation of vegetation communities to protect soil, water, and vegetation resources, and to prevent unacceptable damage. Following fire, rehabilitated areas would be closed to grazing at least two growing seasons. The decision to resume grazing would be based on monitoring data. Exceptions may be justified on a case-by-case basis.

Seedings would be implemented with appropriate mixes of adapted perennial and annual plant species. Species mixes would be determined on a site-specific basis dependent on the probability of successful establishment and risks associated with seeding failure.

Alternative B

Upland native shrub steppe communities would be managed to attain a trend toward the desired range of conditions based on site potential. Management actions would maintain the condition of those native communities where vegetation composition and structure meets desired conditions. Nonnative seedings in poor or fair condition would be managed to restore production and vigor, while those seedings in good to excellent condition would be managed to maintain their vegetation composition to ensure continued forage

production. Forage production and other commodity values of native and nonnative vegetation resources would be optimized to minimize competition with herbaceous species. Upland shrub cover would be maintained at minimum to moderate levels of desired conditions in selected native vegetation communities and in nonnative seedings. The frequency, distribution, and ecological integrity of native stands of mountain shrubs would be restored and maintained.

Management actions would be implemented to rehabilitate and/or establish desirable vegetation communities in areas not meeting desired conditions due to dominance by annual, weedy, or woody species. Vegetation would be manipulated to direct the trend toward desired conditions, enhance commodity production, and protect soil, water, and vegetation resources. Emphasis would be placed on the use of prescribed fire and wildland fire use to reduce woody species dominance, optimize forage production, and direct vegetation composition toward desired conditions, but mechanical, chemical, and biological methods could also be used. Prescribed fire prescriptions would include consideration of short-term impacts to grazing management as well as long-term benefits of increased herbaceous production. Following wildland fire, priority would be placed on the rehabilitation of rangeland vegetation communities at risk of dominance by annual and woody species.

Seeding mixes would be determined on a site-specific basis dependent on the probability of successful establishment and risks associated with seeding failure. The selection of appropriate species would include the use of forage-producing species, and nonnative and native perennial species that support livestock production and other commodity values, as well as the function of upland vegetation communities. Treatment configuration of prescribed burns would emphasize commodity production as opposed to mosaics that benefit wildlife.

Areas burned by wildland fire, including those subsequently rehabilitated, would be deferred from grazing use through at least two growing seasons following fire or until monitoring data or professional judgment indicate that health and vigor of desired vegetation has recovered to levels adequate to support and protect upland function. Healthy nonnative perennial communities or communities dominated by annuals may be grazed prior to two growing seasons only if consistent with management objectives.

Alternative C

Upland native shrub steppe communities would be managed to attain trends toward a variety of desired range of conditions based on management objectives and site potential. Management actions would maintain the condition of those native communities where vegetation composition and structure meet desired conditions. Upland shrub cover would be maintained at moderate levels of potential for wildlife cover values and structural diversity in selected native vegetation communities. The frequency, distribution, and ecological integrity of native stands of mountain shrubs would be restored and maintained where site potential would support these species. Nonnative seedings, if used at all, would be evaluated in terms of wildlife connectivity, total ecological diversity, and other factors to meet desired range of conditions.

Management actions would be implemented to rehabilitate and/or vegetate plant communities that do not meet the desired range of conditions due to dominance by annual, weedy, introduced, or woody species such as invasive western juniper and decadent bitterbrush. Vegetation manipulation projects would be implemented primarily to direct trend toward the desired conditions, improve structural and species diversity, and microbotic crusts, and protect soil, water, and vegetation resources.

Emphasis would be placed on the use of prescribed and wildland fire use to regulate woody species dominance and direct vegetation composition toward the desired conditions, but mechanical, chemical, and biological methods could also be used. Priority would be placed on the restoration of shrub steppe vegetation communities at risk due to dominance by annual and woody (invasive western juniper) species. In appropriate locations, experimental inoculation of microbotic crusts would be attempted to reestablish desired microdiversity.

Seedings would be implemented with appropriate mixes of adapted perennial and annual native plant species. Species mixes would be determined on a site-specific basis dependent on the probability of successful establishment and risks associated with seeding failure. Preference would be toward the use of native plant species from local, wild seeds or seeds adapted to the resource area.

Areas burned by wildland fire, including those subsequently rehabilitated, would be rested from grazing a minimum for two full years or until monitoring data or professional judgment indicate that health and vigor of

desired vegetation has recovered to levels adequate to support and protect upland function.

Alternative D

Upland native shrub steppe communities would be managed to attain a trend toward the desired range of conditions based on management objectives and site potential. Management actions would maintain the condition of those native communities where vegetation composition and structure meet desired conditions. Nonnative seedings in poor or fair condition would be managed to restore production and vigor, as well as to improve structure and species diversity. Nonnative seedings in good or excellent condition would be managed to maintain seeding production, improve structural and species diversity, and maintain forage production. Upland shrub cover, at moderate levels of potential, would be maintained for natural values and wildlife cover in most native vegetation communities where potential exists, and in nonnative seedings as consistent with other resource management objectives. The frequency, distribution, and ecological integrity of native stands of mountain shrubs would be restored and maintained where site potential supports these species to meet the desired conditions and other management objectives.

Prescribed and wildland fire use would be implemented to rehabilitate or vegetate plant communities that do not meet desired conditions due to dominance by annual, weedy, or woody species such as invasive western juniper and decadent bitterbrush, but mechanical, chemical, and biological methods could also be used. Vegetation manipulation projects would be implemented primarily to direct the trend toward desired conditions, improve structural and species diversity, and protect soil, water, and vegetation resources. Priority would be placed on the rehabilitation of shrub steppe vegetation communities at risk due to dominance by annual species and invasive western juniper.

Seedings would be implemented with appropriate mixes of adapted native and nonnative perennial and annual plant species; although native species would be preferred for seedings. Species mixes would be determined on a site-specific basis dependent on the probability of successful establishment and risks associated with seeding failure. Use of competitive native species would be emphasized in seedings within sites moderately and highly susceptible to degradation.

Areas burned by wildland fire, including those subsequently rehabilitated, would be rested from grazing at

least two growing seasons following fire or until monitoring data indicate that health and vigor of desired vegetation has recovered to levels adequate to support and protect upland function.

Alternative E

Natural processes would define vegetation composition across the landscape. No vegetation rehabilitation would be implemented following wildland fire.

Management Goal 2—Protect healthy, functioning ecosystems consisting of native plant communities. Restore degraded high-potential landscapes and decadent shrublands.

Rationale

Beginning in the 1960s, an awareness began concerning the importance of public lands for the maintenance of biological diversity. The goals, objectives, and priorities for the fish/wildlife/botanical program were established in the national BLM “Fish and Wildlife 2000: A Plan for the Future” (USDI-BLM 1987c), and adopted as policy for implementation by all field offices. The scope and design of the plan was to provide for improved management of fish, wildlife, and botanical habitats on public lands for the social and economic well-being of all Americans. Prepared in concert with its national counterpart, Oregon-Washington’s plan was to carry out the goals, objectives, and priorities on the local field level. This vision incorporates cooperation with other organizations and user groups such as other Federal agencies, state agencies, conservation organizations and Challenge Cost Share/Volunteer Contribution programs.

Recent research shows that microbiotic crusts may be indicators (e.g., an early warning system) of rangeland health. Although no relationship between total vascular plant cover and crust cover has been found, there is a correlation between perennial bunchgrass cover and crust cover. Bare ground is often inversely related to crust cover, which could mean that a decline in crust cover produces an increase in bare soil, rather than an increase in vascular vegetation.

During heavy fire years in the West, desired seed species for rehabilitation or restoration are often limited or not available. A program is being explored to collect, plant, and grow native seed to produce a seed bank of locally genetic and adapted plant species that would facilitate future seed planning programs.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Restoration projects would be completed on a case-by-case basis, usually to resolve a crisis such as wildland fire rehabilitation, to mitigate another resource program such as rehabilitation of gravel pits or livestock grazing, or resolve a single issue. No resource area-wide plan would be created for rehabilitation of degraded landscapes or decadent shrublands.

Alternative B

The prioritization for vegetation restoration would be from a forage production standpoint. Restoration would be linked to increase of forage production and mitigating the development of salable minerals (rock, gravel, cinder, etc.) and commodity-driven activities.

Alternative C

Resource area-wide planning would drive protection of healthy functioning ecosystems consisting of native plant communities. High priority would be given to restoration of degraded landscapes and decadent shrublands through projects such as prescribed burns, seeding of desirable native species, development of seed banks for rehabilitation, and planting of shrubs/trees in riparian zones. The prioritization for restoration would be from a subbasin or watershed perspective (see Water Resources/Watershed Health section). This would maintain functioning native plant communities where they currently exist; improve plant community structure in priority areas that are currently ecologically degraded, change plant community structure where shrubs dominate grassland sites, and protect and restore microbiotic crusts. Locally grown native seeds or those adapted to the planning area would be preferred for rehabilitation and restoration of degraded or burned areas.

Specific projects would be developed by range, wildlife, hydrology, and botany for restoration of degraded areas. As an example: microbiotic crust inoculation to reintroduce crust species could be applied in degraded areas where crusts existed.

A priority for restoration would be the Sheeprack area, noted by the “Lakeview Grazing Management Final Environmental Impact Statement” (USDI-BLM 1982a) to have vast areas of poor condition rangeland. The area falls within a watershed which ICBEMP identified as having declined substantially since historic times.

Restoration methods could include prescribed burning or brush control and reseeding. Checkdams and other structures could be installed to control erosion.

Alternative D

Resource area-wide planning would drive protection of healthy functioning ecosystems consisting of native plant communities. High priority would be given to restoration of degraded landscapes and decadent shrublands through projects such as prescribed burns, seeding of desirable native and nonnative species, development of native plant seed banks for rehabilitation, and planting of shrubs/trees in riparian zones. The prioritization for restoration would be from a subbasin or watershed perspective (see Water Resources/Watershed Health section). This would maintain functioning native plant communities where they currently exist, improve plant community structure in priority areas that are currently ecologically degraded, change plant community structure where shrubs dominate grassland sites, and protect and restore microbiotic crusts. Locally grown native seeds or those adapted to the planning area would be preferred for rehabilitation and restoration of degraded or burned areas.

Specific projects would be developed by range, wildlife, hydrology, and botany for restoration of degraded areas. As an example: microbiotic crust inoculation to reintroduce crust species could be applied in degraded areas where crusts existed.

A priority for restoration would be the Sheeprock area, noted by the "Lakeview Grazing Management Final Environmental Impact Statement" (USDI-BLM 1982a) to have vast areas of poor condition rangeland. The area falls within a watershed which ICBEMP identified as having declined substantially since historic times. Restoration methods could include prescribed burning or brush control and reseeding. Checkdams and other structures could be installed to control erosion.

Alternative E

No active restoration projects would be done. Restoration, including recovery following wildland fire, would depend on natural processes.

Riparian and Wetland

Management Goal—*Restore, maintain, or improve riparian vegetation, habitat diversity, and associated watershed function to achieve healthy and productive riparian areas and wetlands.*

Rationale

FLPMA requires BLM to comply with state water quality standards and manage public land in a manner that would preserve and protect certain land in its natural condition. In addition to FLPMA, numerous laws, regulations, policies, Executive orders, and memorandums of understanding and agreements direct BLM to manage its riparian/wetland areas for biological diversity, productivity, and sustainability for the benefit of the Nation and its economy. These directives are listed in Appendix B. Specifically, FLPMA and PRIA direct BLM to ". . . manage public lands according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield . . ." and ". . . manage the public lands to prevent unnecessary degradation . . . so they become as productive as feasible." FLPMA, section 102, also requires that public land be managed for multiple use and sustained yield in a manner that would protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values.

Riparian areas in good condition are essential to water quality improvement, fish habitat, and water quality yield. Riparian zones are the focal point and best overall indicator of watershed health.

Attainment of proper functioning condition would be a first step to moving habitat conditions of entire watersheds and their components (uplands, streams, riparian/wetland areas, and lakes and ponds) toward achieving terrestrial and aquatic objectives. Management practices such as grazing, mining, recreation, forest harvesting, and other forms of vegetation management would be designed for healthy sustainable and functional rangeland ecosystems as described in the "Standards for Land Health for Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington" (USDI-BLM 1997a, 1998j).

The next step in the attainment of desired range of conditions would be to implement management actions that meet riparian management objectives (Appendix F2) within riparian/wetland areas and riparian conservation areas. Riparian conservation areas occupy that portion of watersheds where aquatic- and riparian-dependent resources receive primary emphasis for the maintenance, protection, and restoration of ecosystem processes and functions. Riparian management objectives are generally instream and riparian characteristics within the flood-prone area, expressed as values for stream channel conditions and provide criteria to help assess aquatic, water quality, and riparian/wetland goals and objective attainment of desired range of

conditions. The desired range of conditions of riparian/wetland areas usually fall between proper functioning condition and the biological (or site) potential (Appendix F2). Riparian management objectives for vegetation would be site specific based on riparian ecological site inventory assessment. Although attainment of proper functioning condition essentially assures that stream and riparian/wetland areas function and may be on an improving trend, it may not meet desired conditions. Management priorities in upland watershed areas and riparian conservation areas would focus prescriptions for the attainment of these desired conditions.

There are a number of BLM policies relating to riparian/wetland areas including:

- Focus management on entire watersheds using an ecosystem approach, involving all interested landowners and affected parties;
- Achieve riparian/wetland area objectives through the management of existing and future uses;
- Ensure that new plans and existing plans, when revised, recognize the importance of riparian/wetland values, and initiate management to maintain, restore, improve, or expand them;
- All sites are making significant progress towards meeting standards of rangeland health.
- Prescribe riparian/wetland management based on site-specific physical, biological, and chemical condition and potential; and
- Use interdisciplinary teams to inventory, monitor, and evaluate management of riparian/wetland areas and to revise management where objectives are not being met.

Monitoring

Monitoring for the attainment of desired range of conditions may include the following:

- Assessment of proper functioning condition (Technical References 1737-11/15; USDI-BLM 1993e, 1998i) and measurement of parameters identified in the riparian management objectives for ICBEMP (see Appendix F2). Attainment of proper functioning condition and riparian management objectives is considered a minimum step in the process of achieving desired range of conditions. Proper functioning condition and the riparian

objectives in most cases do not equate to the desired range of conditions. Determination of proper functioning condition and riparian management objectives is an interdisciplinary process.

- Most of the current information on riparian/wetland areas in the planning area has been based on assessments of riparian condition and trend. Although the BLM standard is to use proper functioning condition assessments, trend assessments can quickly provide initial information about progress toward desired conditions. Trend assessments include the following: Wildlife and aquatic monitoring, water quality monitoring, Rosgen channel typing, riparian site classification and assessment of change over time towards meeting desired range of conditions, low-level aerial photography and other remote-sensing technologies.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Implementation of existing riparian/wetland objectives, maintenance or improvement of existing riparian/wetland exclusions, and designation or identification of riparian pastures are described in existing plans and biological opinions. In addition, riparian/wetland areas would be managed for the attainment of proper functioning condition. Areas not in proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian/wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel. Uses in riparian/wetland areas would be adjusted if current management would not allow for the maintenance or measurable progress toward the attainment of proper functioning condition. Uses within the watershed would continue to occur as long as the physical and biological condition and degree of function necessary to sustain healthy rangeland ecosystems is maintained. Acquisition of riparian areas through exchange and with willing participants would be pursued. Western juniper or other vegetation management would be allowed only in a few specific areas.

Restoration projects would be implemented in those areas where conditions are not naturally recovering or are currently functioning, but are at risk of degradation. Grazing systems and exclusion on riparian/wetland areas would be determined on a case-by-case basis to promote or maintain proper functioning condition on a minimum of 75 percent of these areas.

Current spring developments would be maintained and new developments/waterholes, as identified in the existing plans, would be constructed only if they do not negatively impact special status species. This would include new water developments in intact playas and lakebeds.

Roads could be maintained to minimize impacts to riparian zones.

Alternative B

Riparian/wetland areas would be managed for uses that emphasize commodity production, while providing for the attainment of proper functioning condition, riparian management objectives, and the desired range of conditions of riparian conservation areas.

Areas not in proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian/wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel. Managed uses in riparian conservation areas would be allowed as long as there is progress toward attainment of State water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and riparian management objectives.

This alternative focuses specifically on the protection and maintenance of the area within the riparian conservation area and allows those commodity uses and activities in the remaining watershed to occur. Any use or activity within the riparian conservation area that would adversely affect water quality standards and/or riparian/wetland resources would be excluded from the riparian conservation area. Enforcement would be in the form of buffered exclusion areas or the use of temporary or permanent fencing. Management options for uses would require measurable progress toward the attainment of water quality, proper functioning condition, and riparian management objectives within riparian conservation areas at a positive annual rate. The desired range of conditions would be set at a lower level than other alternatives so long as objectives for water quality and proper functioning condition are met. Active restoration activities, such as intensive woody riparian vegetation plantings and the installation of instream structures, would be used in areas unable to attain proper functioning condition, riparian management objectives, and the desired range of conditions through changes in management alone.

Restoration projects would be implemented in those areas where conditions are not naturally recovering or are currently functioning, but are at risk of degradation. Grazing systems and exclusion on riparian/wetland

areas would be implemented to promote or maintain proper functioning condition on a minimum of 75 percent of these areas.

Current spring developments would be modified to allow riparian function while still allowing for livestock water availability. Water developments would be allowed in intact playas and lakebeds only if development would not negatively impact special status species.

Roads could be maintained to minimize impacts to riparian zones.

Alternative C

Riparian/wetland areas would be managed for uses that emphasize maintenance, improvement, and/or restoration of naturally-occurring values that provide for the attainment of water quality, proper functioning condition, riparian management objectives, and desired range of conditions. Active restoration activities, such as intensive woody riparian vegetation plantings, vegetation manipulation, and installation of instream structures, would be used.

Areas not in proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian/wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel. Uses within the riparian conservation area and contributing upland watersheds would be allowed as long as there is unimpeded progress toward attainment of State water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and riparian management objectives.

Riparian conservation areas would be identified and delineated. Management options focus on uses that allow for the protection, maintenance, and restoration of riparian conservation areas and upland watersheds and the unimpeded progress toward the attainment of water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and riparian management objectives within riparian conservation areas.

Spring sources would be protected, as needed, from trampling by livestock and wild horses. All BLM managed and maintained roads would be removed from riparian conservation areas.

No new playa lakebed development would be allowed in intact systems. Baseline data would be collected on all developed playa lakebeds to determine the feasibility of restoration or enhancement.

The acquisition of riparian areas from willing private landowners through exchange or purchase would be a priority.

Alternative D

Riparian/wetland areas would be managed for uses within the watershed that emphasize the maintenance or improvement of naturally-occurring values while providing for commodity production and the attainment of proper functioning condition, riparian management objectives, and desired range of conditions. Active restoration activities, such as intensive woody riparian vegetation plantings, vegetation manipulation, and installation of instream structures, would be used. Prior to structural work, management would be in place that would allow improvement in stream conditions.

Areas not in proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian/wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel. Uses within the riparian conservation area and contributing upland watersheds would be allowed as long as there is measurable progress towards attainment of State water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and riparian management objectives. Specifically, in fenced Federal range allotments, BLM riparian sites that are not in proper functioning condition and where it is determined that livestock are contributing to the condition, livestock would be excluded. Spring developments would be modified to promote natural function where possible, but still allow livestock and wildlife access to developed water.

No new playa lakebed development would be allowed in intact systems. Baseline data would be collected on all developed playa lakebeds to determine the feasibility of restoration or enhancement.

Riparian conservation areas would be identified and delineated. Management options focus on uses and activities that allow for the protection and maintenance of riparian conservation areas and upland watersheds and the measurable progress toward the attainment of water quality, proper functioning condition, and riparian management objectives (within riparian conservation areas) at a positive annual rate. All BLM managed and maintained roads would be removed or relocated from riparian conservation areas if they are impacting the functioning of the riparian area.

The acquisition of riparian areas from willing private landowners through exchange or purchase would be a priority.

Alternative E

Commodity production would be excluded from all public lands. Noncommodity and public uses and activities would be allowed along streams, around riparian/wetland areas, and in associated watersheds, if they would promote or have no effect on water quality, proper functioning condition, and riparian management objectives.

Streams, water bodies, and riparian conservation areas not meeting minimum State water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and riparian management objectives would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian/wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel. Noncommodity uses within the riparian conservation areas and contributing upland watershed areas that adversely affect water quality and/or lead to stream channel or riparian/wetland resource degradation would be adjusted, restricted, or limited where needed.

Spring or other water developments would no longer be maintained (including playa lakebeds) except those that are critically needed for wildlife use.

Forest and Woodlands

Management Goal 1—*In commercial (pine) forest stands, maintain or restore forest health and meet wildlife habitat needs.*

Rationale

ICBEMP has documented declines in forest health of the interior pine forests (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 1996a). Exclusion of natural fire has resulted in overstocked stands and a large increase in the western juniper and white fir components of these stands. They are less resilient and are more susceptible to disturbances such as insect attack, drought, and wildland fires. Wildlife dependent on these forests are also at risk.

BLM policy requires that forest lands be classified into management categories, and this classification has been shown in USDI-BLM (unpublished). Most commercial forest lands in the planning area have been classified into the category “Lands Where Forest Management is for the Enhancement of Other Uses.” These are areas where forest management activities are made for the benefit of other resource uses or values. These lands would not provide an assigned allowable sale quantity of commercial or noncommercial timber volume, due

to the relatively low volumes per acre, scattered location of the forest lands (making efficient management impractical), and the presence of other high resource values. However, forest products could be produced as a byproduct of management activities. Commercial forest lands not classified in this category include those within ACEC's whose management plans specifically exclude planned or sustained production of forest products. Other potential areas with such restrictions are Native American gathering areas for plant products and old growth western juniper areas.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternatives A–D

Due to the scattered locations of the commercial stands, harsh sites, and low volumes per acre, these lands are not suitable for intensive management for forest products. No allowable sale quantity would be declared. However, these forest stands can be managed in concert with surrounding lands to provide old growth wildlife habitat, hiding cover for mule deer, and watershed and scenic values. Management treatments to reduce overstocking, control competing vegetation, remove invasive western juniper or white fir, and reduce ground and understory ladder fuels, would be employed to improve forest health, increase resistance to insect and disease outbreaks, and reduce risk of catastrophic wildland fires.

Whenever adjacent lands are treated, whether private or national forest, treatment of the scattered BLM forest stands should be considered. Potential treatments include selective cuts focused on thinning, culturing around old growth trees in good condition, precommercial thinning, and prescribed fire to reduce ground fuels. Wildland fire use could be initiated once fuel loadings are reduced to more natural levels. Management of commercial forest land within ACEC's and other special areas would be guided by their specific management plans.

Alternative E

No stand treatments would be done. Suppression of wildland fire on commercial forest lands would be limited to the few areas where adjacent private property is located.

Management Goal 2—*Restore productivity and biodiversity in western juniper woodlands and quaking aspen groves.*

Rationale

Under presettlement conditions, periodic fires killed western juniper saplings. Western juniper distribution was generally limited to rocky areas with only light grasses and other low fuels to carry ground fires. These “natural” western juniper sites today are the old growth sites, containing trees hundreds of years old. Reduction and exclusion of natural fires by grazing of fine fuels and fire suppression has allowed western juniper to expand in area as well as density for the last 130 years. Western juniper is an aggressive competitor for water, and has replaced, or is in the process of replacing, native vegetation on many sites. Invasive western juniper are defined as those stands less than 130-years old. A loss of available forage for wildlife and domestic livestock, as well as increased soil erosion, has resulted. Quaking aspen stands have also been invaded by western juniper, and many are in decline from severe competition, as well as livestock browsing of sprouts.

The western juniper woodlands are considered non-commercial forest lands because the sites can only produce this noncommercial tree species. Most of these woodland stands are not naturally-occurring. In the absence of periodic natural fires, western juniper are spreading onto sites naturally occupied by other plant communities, notably mountain big sagebrush. BLM policy requires forest lands, even these unnatural stands, be classified into one of four forest management categories. The western juniper woodlands, both old growth and invasive, have been classified as “Lands Where Forest Management is for the Enhancement of Other Values.” In other words, production of wood products is not the main objective of managing these western juniper woodlands. No allowable sale quantity is assigned to these lands, but removal of wood products to meet other resource objectives is allowed.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Inventory information for the western juniper woodlands would be compiled on an ongoing basis. The ecological site inventory, which identifies old growth western juniper sites on rocky ridges and other fire-protected areas, as well as invasive western juniper, would be completed in 2002. Additional inventory work could show western juniper stands by age class and canopy closure. These future inventories would allow much more precise management of western juniper lands to maximize the mix of other resource values presently inhibited by the western juniper cover.

When western juniper treatments are planned, Native American values or use would be evaluated. For example, traditional plant-gathering areas would need special protection. Affected Tribes would be contacted at an early stage in project planning.

Management of western juniper woodlands within research natural areas (RNA's), ACEC's, or other SMA's, would be guided by the specific management plan for each area.

When evaluating areas for western juniper treatment (including areas for commercial and public wood cutting), priority areas would be those areas where the western juniper is most adversely affecting other resources. These include quaking aspen groves, riparian areas, greater sage-grouse leks and primary habitat, deer winter range, bighorn sheep range, and younger, invasive western juniper in old growth western juniper sites. Age class of the western juniper, soil type, aspect, understory vegetation, and presence of noxious weeds would also be considered. Western juniper areas would be considered high priority for treatment where canopy cover is under 15 percent (areas that still have a grass and brush understory). These stands are more economically treatable due to the smaller size of western juniper trees and the potential for use of prescribed fire for effective control. Sales and other disposals of firewood, posts, poles, boughs, and other western juniper products, would be allowed where compatible with maintenance of other resource values. Combinations of one or more treatment methods (mechanical, chemical, biological, or prescribed fire) could be made in a treatment area. Mechanical treatments would be preferred when trying to preserve the shrub component important to wildlife.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Western juniper woodlands are managed to meet public demand for timber and vegetative products, including firewood, posts, poles, boughs, and berries. No specific allowable cut or harvest goals are set. Some area-specific restrictions were required by the management framework plan. Recovery of biomass for generation of electrical energy is a recent development, and therefore was not addressed in the existing management framework plans. The only old growth western juniper management guideline, included in the present management framework plan, would prevent cutting of old trees for wildlife habitat purposes. However, protection of the old growth western juniper stands has been a management goal for several years. Quaking

aspen groves are managed to maintain stand health and to meet wildlife habitat needs.

Alternative B

Commercial and public harvest within existing and newly-created cutting areas would be maximized. Up to 75 percent of western juniper stands would be treated by fire or mechanical cutting over the life of the plan. Recovery of biomass for energy production would be allowed on western juniper treatment areas. This would involve machine skidding of material to landings and creation of temporary roads. Old growth western juniper stands would be maintained or enhanced. All quaking aspen stands in the planning area with invasive western juniper would be treated early in the life of the plan. Invasive western juniper would be treated using prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatment on 12,000 to 25,500 acres of bighorn sheep range in the Devils Garden, East Lava Field (Squaw Ridge), Fish Creek Rim (Lynch Rim), South Warner Rim, Coleman Rim, South Abert Rim, and Hadley Butte herd ranges (see Map V-2). Treatments would reduce invasive western juniper by 30 to 70 percent within each of these areas over the life of the plan. Treatments occurring within WSA's would be consistent with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM1995b).

Alternative C

Commercial and public wood cutting would be allowed on up to 10 percent of woodland stands over the life of the plan. Up to 75 percent of woodlands would be treated using prescribed fire or mechanical cutting over the life of the plan. Recovery of biomass for energy production would be allowed on treatment areas. This would involve machine skidding of material to landings and creation of temporary roads. Old growth western juniper stands would be maintained or enhanced. All quaking aspen stands in the planning area with invasive western juniper would be treated early in the life of the plan. Invasive western juniper would be treated using prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatment on 12,000 to 25,500 acres of bighorn sheep range in the Devils Garden, East Lava Field (Squaw Ridge), Fish Creek Rim (Lynch Rim), South Warner Rim, Coleman Rim, South Abert Rim, and Hadley Butte herd ranges (see Map V-2). Treatments would reduce invasive western juniper by 30 to 70 percent within each of these areas over the life of the plan. Treatments occurring within WSA's would be consistent with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Alternative D

Over the life of the plan, up to 50 percent of juniper woodlands would be treated by prescribed fire, commercial or public wood cutting, or mechanical treatment. Recovery of juniper for biomass and other products would be allowed in treatment areas where impacts to other resource values can be reduced to acceptable levels. This would involve machine skidding of material to landings and creation of temporary roads. Old growth western juniper stands would be maintained or enhanced. All quaking aspen stands in the planning area with invasive western juniper would be treated early in the life of the plan. Invasive western juniper would be treated using prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatment on 12,000 to 25,500 acres of bighorn sheep range in the Devils Garden, East Lava Field (Squaw Ridge), Fish Creek Rim (Lynch Rim), South Warner Rim, Coleman Rim, South Abert Rim, and Hadley Butte herd ranges (see Map V-2). Treatments would reduce invasive western juniper by 30 to 70 percent within each of these areas over the life of the plan. Treatments occurring within WSA's would be consistent with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Alternative E

No commercial or public wood cutting would be allowed. Natural processes, including wildland fire, would regulate western juniper woodlands. Since no commodity production would be allowed, no material would be available for biomass recovery. Old growth stands would not receive any active management treatment. No quaking aspen stands would be treated to eliminate invasive western juniper.

Special Status Plants

Management Goal 1—Manage public lands to maintain, restore, or enhance populations and habitats of special status plant species. Priority for the application of management actions would be: (1) Federal endangered or threatened species, (2) Federal proposed species, (3) Federal candidate species, (4) State listed species, (5) BLM sensitive species, (6) BLM assessment species, and (7) BLM tracking species.

Rationale

Section 102.8 of FLPMA requires that public land be managed to protect the quality of ecological and

environmental values, and where appropriate, to protect their natural condition.

The “Endangered Species Act” mandates management that leads to the conservation or recovery of federally listed threatened or endangered species. This Act, BLM policy, and Oregon State law also encourage management to protect special status species that are not currently listed as threatened or endangered.

Most plant species assigned to a special status category are limited in their distributions, populations, or habitats, and may be at risk over various geographic areas. It is in the public interest to prevent the need for Federal listing under the “Endangered Species Act” where evidence suggests that land uses are adversely affecting special status species not currently listed as threatened or endangered. There are both socio-economic and biological benefits associated with conserving species to avoid Federal listing.

Maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of populations or habitat may each represent appropriate BLM management depending on the habitat needs of specific species. Restoration or enhancement may not always be the only choice regarding special status species. One potential limitation that could delay restoration or enhancement actions is that the biological mechanisms adversely affecting a species may not be understood well enough to identify needed management changes. Maintenance may be a preferred course of action where resource conditions are already considered to be a high quality.

Conservation agreements with USFWS detail monitoring, inventory, and plans to conserve the plants and their habitat; through this type of agreement, Federal listing can be postponed or negated by increasing the possibility of protection.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Special status plant species habitats and populations would be managed so that BLM actions do not contribute to the need to list these species as federally threatened or endangered. Management for these species would emphasize maintenance rather than restoration and enhancement. Management would also be oriented toward providing habitat conditions that favor individual special status species. Conservation agreements would be written and implemented with the USFWS for selected species at highest risk.

Alternative B

All special status species habitats or populations would be managed so that BLM actions do not contribute to the need to list these species as federally threatened or endangered. Management would be oriented toward providing habitat conditions that meet individual species requirements.

Alternative C

This alternative would include aggressive measures for special status species management. Restoration or enhancement of habitats and populations would occur in areas where it would be biologically sound and reasonable to do so. Maintenance would occur where habitat or population conditions are considered to be at or near their potential.

Conservation and recovery of special status plant species would require:

- Acquiring basic information of distribution and habitat requirements.
- Determination of kind and degree of threats.
- Monitoring and inventory data for the development of sound plans and management actions.
- Development and implementation of species or habitat management plans such as conservation agreements written and conducted with the USFWS for all of the special status plant species that have the BLM ranking of Bureau sensitive or the former Class Two ranking of the USFWS.
- Studies of the genetics and other biological parameters to determine what makes the plant species rare and the survival conditions for the plant and its habitat.

These actions would also require:

- Analyzing existing data and identifying gaps in data/information.
- Organizing inventories, monitoring, and management information through a standardized data base.
- Identifying actions and funding necessary to conserve, recover, and maintain special status plant species.

- Scheduling surveys at the appropriate time of year to locate and identify special status plants and take appropriate management actions (which might require avoidance or mitigation) prior to project implementation.
- Ensuring that management actions necessary to protect, conserve, and recover special status plants species are implemented, monitored, and tracked.
- Seeking to acquire appropriate lands having populations of species currently not protected.

Alternative D

This alternative would include aggressive measures for special status species management. Restoration or enhancement of habitats and populations would occur in areas where it would be biologically sound and reasonable to do so. Maintenance would occur where habitat or population conditions are considered to be at or near their potential.

Conservation and recovery of special status plant species would require:

- Acquiring basic information of distribution and habitat requirements.
- Determination of kind and degree of threats.
- Monitoring and inventory data for the development of sound plans and management actions.
- Development and implementation of species or habitat management plans such as conservation agreements written and conducted with the USFWS for all of the special status plant species that have the BLM ranking of Bureau sensitive or the former Class Two ranking of the USFWS.
- Studies of the genetics and other biological parameters to determine what makes the plant species rare and the survival conditions for the plant and its habitat.

These actions would also require:

- Analyzing existing data and identifying gaps in data/information.
- Organizing inventories, monitoring, and management information through a standardized data base.

- Identifying actions and funding necessary to conserve, recover, and maintain special status plant species.
- Scheduling surveys at the appropriate time of year to locate and identify special status plants and take appropriate management actions (which might require avoidance or mitigation) prior to project implementation.
- Ensuring that management actions necessary to protect, conserve, and recover special status plants species are implemented, monitored, and tracked.
- Seeking to acquire appropriate lands having populations of species currently not protected.

Alternative E

Natural processes would determine future conditions, except for management specified in recovery plans developed by the USFWS for federally listed species.

Management Goal 2—Protect, restore, and enhance the variety of native plant species and communities in abundance and distribution that provides for their continued existence and normal functioning.

Rationale

The Oregon Natural Heritage Advisory Council (1998) designates special ecosystems as cells which represent unique ecosystems that make a significant contribution to biodiversity. The “Natural Heritage Act” of 1979, as revised, specifies that these cells represent Oregon’s natural heritage resources. As such, designation of these areas as RNA’s protects one or more plant community elements and may also protect special status plants. One of the goals for an RNA is to preserve gene pools of endangered plants; within the BLM, RNA’s are managed as ACEC’s. Creating an ACEC for a plant community or special status plant species helps facilitate protection, restoration, and enhancement of those plant species or communities.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

The Lost Forest RNA, which meets the Oregon Natural Heritage Program (ONHP) cell needs, would be retained. This disjunct forest represents a unique ecosystem and different gene pool than the “normal” ponderosa pine forests in Oregon. Researchers con-

tinue to work in the area. This existing ACEC/RNA and its associated values would be considered when allotments in the RNA are evaluated.

Alternative B

RNA management would be the same as under Alternative A, except one new area (Connley Hills) would be designated and managed as an ACEC/RNA.

Alternative C

Twelve new ACEC’s would be designated, one existing area would be expanded (Abert Rim), and four existing ACEC/RNA’s, would be retained. Of these, 11 areas would contain RNA’s with Oregon Natural Heritage Program cells. Nine of those 11 areas contain special status plant species. Management in these areas could require avoidance or mitigation measures that limit other land uses.

Alternative D

Twelve new ACEC’s would be designated, one existing area would be expanded (Abert Rim) and four existing ACEC/RNA’s would be retained. Of these, 11 areas would contain RNA’s with ONHP cells. Nine of those 11 areas contain special status plant species. Management in these areas could require avoidance or mitigation measures that limit other land uses.

Alternative E

No new ACEC’s would be designated and existing ones would be revoked. Natural processes would be allowed to operate with no inventories, monitoring, or designation of these special areas.

Noxious Weeds and Competing Undesirable Vegetation

Management Goal—Control the introduction and proliferation of noxious weeds and competing undesirable plant species, and reduce the extent and density of established populations to acceptable levels.

Rationale

FLPMA and PRIA direct BLM to “. . . manage public lands according to the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield . . .” and “. . . manage the public lands to prevent unnecessary degradation . . . so they become

as productive as feasible.” The introduction and spread of noxious weeds and undesirable plants within the planning area contributes to the loss of rangeland productivity, increased soil erosion, reduced species and structural diversity, loss of wildlife habitat, and in some instances may pose a threat to human health and welfare. The “Carlson-Foley Act” (Public Law 90-583) and the “Federal Noxious Weed Act” (Public Law 93-629) direct weed control on public land. Protection of natural resource values depends on educating people about the negative impacts of weeds and what actions agencies and individuals can take to prevent weeds from becoming established.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Noxious weed prevention and control would continue to be a priority. Under each of these alternatives, weeds would be controlled in an integrated weed management program which includes prevention education and cultural, physical, biological, and chemical treatments. Preventative measures such as public education and livestock and wildlife management would be employed to maintain or enhance desirable vegetation cover and reduce the distribution and introduction of noxious weed seed and plant parts. Mechanical and manual control methods and burning treatments would physically remove noxious weeds and unwanted vegetation; biological controls would introduce and cultivate agents such as insects and pathogens that naturally limit the spread of noxious weeds; and chemical treatments using approved herbicides would be applied where mechanical and/or biological controls are not feasible. Integrated weed management would be implemented in cooperation with the State of Oregon, Lake County, private interests, and neighboring counties and Federal jurisdictions.

Currently there are individual weed management plans for two specific geographic areas—the “Warner Basin Weed Management Area Plan” (USDI-BLM 1999g) and the “Abert Rim Weed Management Area Plan” (USDI-BLM 1995e). A Greater Abert Weed Management Area would be proposed which would include the existing Abert Rim Weed Management Area and the rest of the Lake Abert Subbasin. The plan would be developed in consultation and cooperation with private landowners, ODFW, USFWS, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Tribal governments, and other stakeholders in the Lake Abert Basin. The plan would be patterned after the “Warner Basin Weed Management Area Plan.”

The LRA weed control program is designed to address the dynamic nature of noxious weeds such as increasing numbers of species, different plant physiology for

the various species, changing conditions of infestations, and changing technologies. Selection of the appropriate control method would be based on such factors as the growth characteristics of the target species, size of the infestation, location of the infestation, accessibility of equipment, potential impacts to nontarget species, use of the area by people, effectiveness of the treatment on target species, and cost. Depending on the plant’s characteristics, these methods may be used individually or in combination and may be utilized over several years. Due to the length of seed viability, annual germination of seed from previous years, and the characteristics of certain plants, treatments could occur annually for a period of 10 or more years. Because weed infestations vary annually due to new introductions, spread of existing infestations, and the results of prior year treatments, site-specific reviews of known locations would be conducted annually prior to initiating weed treatment activities.

Herbicide treatment: Herbicides that may be used are those approved in the “Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States EIS” (USDI-BLM 1991b), or any that are approved through an amendment or other agency approval process (see Appendix G of the Draft RMP/EIS for the current list of approved chemicals). Application would take place only in accordance with the manufacturer’s label and by qualified/certified applicators. Methods of application include wiping or wicking, backpack spraying, spraying from a vehicle with a hand gun or boom, aerial spraying, or other approved methods.

Special management areas:

WSA’s—Noxious weeds occurring in WSA’s would be treated with methods that are in accordance with the provisions of Chapter III.C.2 of the Bureau’s IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

ACEC’s—In the Warner Wetlands ACEC, weeds would be managed according to the “Warner Basin Weed Management Area Plan” (USDI-BLM 1995g). In the Lake Abert ACEC and the proposed Abert Rim addition, weeds would be managed according to the “Abert Rim Weed Management Area Plan” (USDI-BLM 1995e).

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Continue to apply approved weed control methods including mechanical, biological, and chemical treatments as identified in “Vegetation Treatment on BLM

Lands in Thirteen Western States FEIS and ROD” (USDI-BLM 1991b), “Supplement to the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program FEIS and ROD” (USDI-BLM 1987a), and the 1994 “Integrated Noxious Weed Control Program Environmental Assessment” (USDA-BLM 1994d). Emphasis is on detection of new invaders and inventory and control in proven hot spots such as roads, rights-of-way, waterholes, and recreation sites.

Alternative B

Given the increased commodity production and extraction under this alternative, the potential for the introduction of new noxious weed species and additional sites of existing noxious weed species is very high. Therefore, increased efforts in prevention education and inventory would be implemented to detect new sites and treat them before they spread. Weed control methods would be the same as those in Alternative A.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, the weed program would be aggressive. There would be a zero tolerance for noxious weeds in the resource area. Eradication attempts would occur on all existing sites. Increased efforts in inventory to detect and prevent the establishment of new invaders, and complete restoration of all weed sites to desirable plant species would be the goal. Education and outreach efforts would be increased and expanded to include areas outside of Lake County in an effort to “head-off” species that may spread into the resource area.

Alternative D

Continue to apply approved weed control methods including mechanical, biological, and chemical treatments as identified in “Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States FEIS and ROD” (USDI-BLM 1991b), “Supplement to the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program FEIS and ROD” (USDI-BLM 1987a), and the 1994 “Integrated Noxious Weed Control Program Environmental Assessment” (USDA-BLM 1994d). Emphasis is on detection of new invaders and inventory and control in proven hot spots such as roads, rights-of-way, waterholes, and recreation sites, but with an expanded program to inventory areas that are less disturbed, remote, or previously uninventoried. Weed sites would be restored to desirable species. Control efforts would be expanded to include any new sites detected. Education and outreach efforts would be expanded to include areas outside of

Lake County in an effort to “head-off” species that may spread into the resource area.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, natural processes would be the primary influence on noxious weed distribution. Only high priority noxious weed species and infested areas on BLM lands would be actively treated to protect adjacent private property.

Soils and Microbiotic Crusts

Management Goal—*Manage soil and microbiotic crusts on public lands to maintain, restore, or enhance soil erosion class and watershed improvement. Protect areas of fragile soil using best management practices (BMP’s).*

Rationale

Soils are the foundation for all vegetation growth. Without healthy, productive, intact soil, management goals for vegetation, watershed, wildlife, and livestock cannot be achieved. Soils in the planning area are semi-arid, young, and poorly developed. Chemical and biological soil development processes such as rock weathering, decomposition of plant materials, accumulation of organic matter, and nutrient cycling proceed slowly in this environment. Soil recovery processes are also slow; therefore, disruption of soil can lead to long-term changes in soil ecology and productivity.

Knowledge of local ecological sites such as soil characteristics and vegetation potential (available from ecological site inventory) is essential for evaluation of impacts and management. In general, ecological sites dominated by shrubs listed in Chapter 2 will have a well-developed biological crust. The main characteristics that will modify crust cover is soil surface texture and potential herbaceous plant density. The plant communities listed in Chapter 2 as having a high potential for crust cover are the dominant communities in the LRA. However, sites where vegetation structure has been modified due to introduction of invasive weeds or crested wheatgrass will have reduced potential for biological crusts (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 2000b).

According to research in the northern Great Basin by Ponzetti (2000), “Biotic soil crusts show promise as indicators of rangeland health, and are increasingly

being recognized as important components of arid and semi-arid communities. Rangeland health is defined as the degree to which the integrity of the soil, vegetation, water, air, and ecological processes of rangeland ecosystems are sustained. Biotic crusts improve the sustainability of rangeland ecosystems by increasing soil stability and contributing to nutrient cycles. They appear to limit germination of *Bromus tectorum*, an invasive exotic annual grass. Biotic crusts in the arid and semi-arid West do not appear to limit vascular plant cover; greater crust cover often accompanies greater plant cover, or is unrelated to plant cover. In this research, we found no relationship between total vascular plant cover and crust cover, but there was a positive correlation between crust cover and perennial bunchgrass cover. Bare ground is often inversely related to crust cover, suggesting that a decline in crust cover produces an increase in bare soil, rather than an increase in vascular vegetation. In addition, biotic crusts may serve as an early warning system, since they appear to be more sensitive to disturbance from livestock than vascular plant communities.”

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Soils protection and management would occur mainly as mitigation for soil-disturbing projects on a case-by-case basis. Current grazing practices and watershed management would be continued. Road maintenance and new road construction would continue at current rates.

Alternatives B-E

BMP's to protect and manage soil and microbiotic crusts would be implemented for all ground-disturbing activities including new projects, livestock grazing, and road maintenance and construction. See Appendix D for a complete description of BMP's.

Water Resources/Watershed Health

Management Goal 1—*Protect or restore watershed function and processes which determine the appropriate rates of precipitation capture, storage, and release.*

Rationale

All the land in the resource area is part of a watershed. These discrete areas process water as it comes into the system as precipitation. Watersheds receive precipitation and then lose it to the atmosphere by evaporation, evapotranspiration, and sublimation. Watersheds move water across the land surface through the shallow subsurface zone (soil mantle) and deeper groundwater aquifers. Watershed function is controlled by climate, geology, topography, vegetation, and soil characteristics.

Vegetation and soil conditions change naturally over time in response to climate, fire, and other natural ecological processes. The rate water is captured by the watershed, the amount of storage available, and the rate and location of water release depends on the amount and type of vegetation and type and condition of soil. These parameters are affected by land management activities.

Watersheds provide the environment to which species, populations, and communities have adapted. Watersheds provide the habitat formed by natural processes which support the distribution, diversity and complexity of animal and plant species.

Rangelands are managed according to the “Standards for Land Health for Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington” (USDI-BLM 1997b). These standards and guidelines provide a clear statement of agency policy and direction for those who use public lands and for those who manage and are accountable for public land conditions. The objectives are “. . . to promote healthy sustainable rangeland ecosystems; to accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning conditions . . . and to provide for the sustainability of the western livestock industry and communities that are dependent upon productive, healthy public rangelands.”

Healthy watersheds are the foundation of rangeland health objectives. To meet these objectives, the regulations on rangeland health identify fundamental principles providing direction in the management and use of rangeland ecosystems.

A hierarchy, or order, of ecological function and process exists within each ecosystem or watershed. Each system consists of four primary, interactive components: a physical component, a biological component, a social component, and an economic component. This perspective implies that the physical

function of an ecosystem supports the biological health, diversity, and productivity of that system. In turn, the interaction of the physical and biological components of the ecosystem provides the basic needs of society and supports economic use and potential.

The fundamentals of rangeland health (Appendix E4 of the Draft RMP/EIS) combine the basic precepts of physical function and biological health with elements of law relating to water quality, and plant and animal populations and communities. They provide direction in the development and implementation of the standards for rangeland health.

Common to All Alternatives

Watershed management would incorporate required state and Federal laws which protect the watershed health. BMP's are required by the CWA and developed during the NEPA process. Watersheds would be further protected by the evolution of watershed science and an increase of information and data for the resource area. This is incorporated into management through multi-scale analyses such as subbasin review, watershed analysis, and site-specific environmental assessment. The implementation of water quality management plans would improve the watershed condition of watersheds with water quality limited segments as defined by section 303(d) of the CWA. The criteria used to determine priority streams are presence of threatened or endangered species or habitat, water quality limited designation, an active watershed council, and willingness of other agencies to participate. High priority watersheds are:

- Deep Creek Watershed
- Honey Creek Watershed;
- Twentymile Watershed;
- Bridge Creek Subwatershed;
- Buck Creek Watershed;
- Guano Valley Watershed;
- Alkali Lake Watershed; and
- Sheeprock Basin Watershed

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Management activities and uses would continue on public land which allow healthy upland vegetation conditions. Uses and activities which address water resource-related objectives identified in existing planning documents, such as objectives relating to control of erosion and sedimentation, would be emphasized. Uses and activities would be managed to meet rangeland health standards (USDI-BLM 1997b).

Implementation of existing watershed health objectives to maintain or improve watershed condition would continue. Management activities and uses within a watershed would continue to occur as long as the physical and biological condition and degree of watershed function necessary to sustain watershed health is maintained.

On a case-by-case basis, close unnecessary roads or where resource damage is occurring. Construct and maintain roads to minimum standards. Continue existing upland grazing systems and enclosures.

Alternative B

Watersheds would be managed for uses and activities that emphasize commodity production, while providing for the attainment and maintenance of minimum watershed health criteria, proper functioning condition, and desired range of conditions. Public uses and activities would be allowed in watersheds with water quality limited stream segments as long as there is progression toward attainment of State water quality standards.

Management of watersheds with streams and water bodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards would focus on protection and maintenance of the area along the instream channels and within riparian conservation areas and allow those commodity uses and activities in the remaining watershed to occur. No activities would be allowed within the riparian conservation area that would adversely affect water quality, riparian habitat, or wetlands. Implementation would be in the form of buffered exclusion areas or the use of temporary and permanent fencing.

Management uses and activities would be the primary tool for maintenance and restoration of upland vegetation and soils condition. Close unnecessary roads or where resource damage is occurring. Construct and maintain roads to meet BMP's. Upland livestock

grazing would meet minimum standards.

Alternative C

Watersheds would be managed for uses and activities that emphasize restoration, protection, or improvement of watershed function and processes, and deemphasize commodity production. This alternative would strive to attain and maintain water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and desired range of conditions of the watersheds. Active restoration of native plant communities would be used in areas unable to attain the desired range of conditions through changes in management.

Watersheds with streams and water bodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of upland and riparian vegetation communities and desired soil conditions. Management activities and uses within the watershed that adversely affect infiltration rates, soil moisture storage, or safe release of water would be adjusted, restricted, or limited if desired vegetation and soil conditions could not be attained or maintained.

Management would focus on uses and activities which allow for the protection, maintenance, and restoration of upland watershed health and measurable progress toward the desired condition of vegetation and soils.

A priority for restoration would be the Sheeprock Allotment. This area was identified in ICBEMP as a watershed (habitat) that has declined substantially since historical times. Restoration methods could include prescribed burning or plowing and reseeded. Checkdams and other structures could be installed to control erosion.

Close and rehabilitate all roads on public lands causing resource damage. Do not increase the road density in any watershed with a low road density (less than 0.7 miles per square mile). Minimize new road construction and implement BMP's. Livestock grazing would be managed to promote healthy watershed which include productive soil, native vegetation, and biological crusts. Prohibit management activities and uses, except when mandated by law, in perennial and intermittent drainages where such activities would adversely impact watershed function or processes.

Alternative D

Watersheds would be managed for uses and activities that emphasize restoration, protection, or improvement

of watershed function and processes while providing for commodity production. This alternative would strive to attain and maintain water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and desired range of conditions of the watersheds. Active restoration of native plant communities would be used in areas unable to attain the desired range of conditions through changes in management.

Watersheds with streams and water bodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of upland and riparian vegetation communities and desired soil conditions. Management activities and uses within the watershed that adversely affect infiltration rates, soil moisture storage, or safe release of water would be adjusted, restricted, or limited if desired vegetation and soil conditions could not be attained or maintained.

Management uses and activities would be the primary tool for maintenance and restoration of upland vegetation and soils condition. However, enhancement and restoration projects would be implemented in those areas not recovering naturally. Management options would focus on uses and activities which allow for the protection, maintenance, and restoration of upland watershed health and measurable progress toward the desired condition of vegetation and soils.

A priority for restoration would be the Sheeprock Allotment. This area was identified in ICBEMP as a watershed (habitat) that has declined substantially since historical times. Restoration methods could include prescribed burning or plowing and reseeded. Checkdams and other structures could be installed to control erosion.

On a case-by-case basis, close and rehabilitate roads on public lands that are causing resource damage. Livestock grazing would achieve conditions of a healthy watershed which include mostly productive soils, native vegetation, and some biological crusts.

Alternative E

Commodity production would be excluded from all public lands. Watersheds would be managed for uses and activities that emphasize restoration, protection, or improvement of watershed function. Any attainment and maintenance of water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and desired range of conditions of the watersheds would be at a natural rate with no active restoration.

Maintain only those roads required by law or for health and safety. Allow no new roads except when required by law. No livestock grazing would be permitted. Remove existing exclosures.

Management Goal 2—Ensure that surface water and groundwater influenced by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) activities comply with or are making significant progress toward achieving State of Oregon water quality standards for beneficial uses, as established by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ).

Rationale

The “Federal Water Pollution Control Act” (commonly known as the “Clean Water Act” [CWA]) of 1977, as amended, requires the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters. BLM is responsible to meet the requirements of the Act on BLM-administered lands, but primacy in implementing the Act is retained by the State of Oregon. BLM is required to maintain water quality where it presently meets U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved Oregon State water quality standards and improve water quality on public lands where it does not meet standards. State developed total maximum daily loads and State approved water quality management plans are required for watersheds containing water quality limited segments (Table 2-17 and Appendix F3), as defined by section 303(d) of the CWA. In addition to the Act, numerous laws, regulations, policies, and Executive orders direct BLM to manage water quality for the benefit of the Nation and its economy (refer to Appendix B). A discussion of the LRA strategy for developing water quality restoration plans is in Appendix F3.

Water quality is important not only for human use, but also for proper ecological function. Management practices such as grazing, mining, recreation, forest harvesting, and ecological restoration would be designed for healthy, sustainable streams and good water quality.

Common to all Alternatives

Establishment of total maximum daily loads for CWA section 303(d) listed water bodies is the responsibility of the State of Oregon with approval of by the EPA. It is also the State of Oregon’s responsibility to develop a water quality management plan which details how the total maximum daily load would be implemented. It is BLM’s responsibility to provide them a water quality restoration plan for the land they manage within any

watershed containing a water quality limited segment. Each water quality restoration plan would identify adverse condition that BLM can improve within the watersheds which affect listed stream segments and specify management actions necessary to restore water quality and meet Oregon water quality standards.

Elements of a water quality restoration plan per USFS and BLM guidance are shown in Appendix F3. Water quality restoration plans would be developed for the watersheds with water quality limited stream segments. The State schedule would complete the Warner Valley Subbasin total maximum daily load in 2003, and the Summer Lake, Lake Abert, and Guano Subbasins in 2007. The water quality restoration plans would be done proactively and could be submitted to the State before the work is completed.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Management activities and uses would continue on public land. Uses and activities which address water resource-related objectives identified in existing planning documents, such as objectives relating to control of erosion and sedimentation, would be emphasized. Uses and activities would be managed to meet water quality standards on streams with water quality limited segments identified by the State of Oregon.

Implementation of existing water resource objectives and maintenance or improvement of existing water quality would continue. Streams and waterbodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards or riparian proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian or wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel and soils.

Uses and activities in these stream channels and riparian or wetland areas would be adjusted if current management would not allow for the maintenance or attainment of water quality standards and proper functioning condition.

Alternative B

Water resources would be managed for uses and activities that emphasize commodity production, while striving for the attainment and maintenance of minimum water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and desired range of conditions. Public uses and activities would be allowed along streams and

around other waterbodies, as long as there is progress toward attainment of State water quality standards.

For streams with water quality limited segments (impaired waters) as defined by 303 (d) of the CWA, management activities would be implemented to restore water quality to minimum levels that meet State water quality standards. For water quality limited segments, commodity production uses and activities would be permitted along streams and riparian and wetland areas only if they would allow progress toward attainment of water quality standards.

Streams and waterbodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards and/or proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in condition of key riparian and wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel and soils. This alternative focuses specifically on the protection and maintenance of the area along stream channels and within riparian conservation areas and allows those commodity uses and activities in the remaining watershed to occur. Any use or activity within the riparian conservation area that would adversely affect water quality and/or riparian or wetland resources would be excluded from the riparian conservation area. Implementation would be in the form of buffered exclusion areas or the use of temporary and permanent fencing.

Alternative C

Water resources would be managed for uses and activities that emphasize restoration, protection, or improvement of natural values and deemphasize commodity production. This alternative would strive for the attainment and maintenance of water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and desired range of conditions of the water resources. Active restoration, such as intensive woody riparian vegetation plantings and the installation of checkdams or rockbarbs, would be used in areas unable to attain proper functioning condition and the desired range of conditions through changes in management.

Public uses would be allowed along streams and around other waterbodies, as long as State water quality standards are either attained at the same or greater rate than if the use or activity were absent. For streams with water quality limited segments, uses and activities would be allowed in the watershed only if they would promote or have no effect on restoring water quality to State water quality standards. Management would be adjusted, as needed, for those uses and activities that are not leading to the attainment of State

water quality standards. Management activities and uses within the watershed that adversely affect infiltration rates, soil moisture storage, or safe release of water would be adjusted, restricted, or limited if desired vegetation and soil conditions cannot be attained or maintained. Streams and waterbodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards and or proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in condition of key riparian and wetlands vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel and soils. Uses and activities within the riparian conservation area and contributing upland watershed areas that adversely affect water quality and or lead to channel or riparian or wetland resource degradation would be adjusted, restricted, or limited if water quality and proper functioning condition cannot be attained or maintained with existing management.

Management options would focus on uses and activities which allow for the protection, maintenance, and restoration of riparian conservation areas and upland watersheds and measurable progress toward the attainment of water quality standards and proper functioning condition within streams and riparian conservation areas.

Alternative D

Water resources would be managed for uses and activities that emphasize maintenance or improvement of natural values while providing for commodity production. This alternative would strive for the attainment and maintenance of water quality standards, proper functioning condition, and desired range of conditions of the water resources. Public uses and activities would be allowed along streams and other waterbodies and associated watersheds, as long as there is measurable progress toward attainment of State water quality standards. For streams with water quality limited segments, management activities would be implemented with the intent to restore water quality to the minimum level.

Streams and waterbodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards and/or proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian and wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel and soils. Uses and activities within the riparian conservation area and contributing upland watershed areas that adversely affect water quality and or lead to channel or riparian or wetland resource degradation would be adjusted, restricted, or limited if water quality and proper functioning condi-

tion cannot be attained or maintained with existing management.

Management within streams and riparian conservation areas would focus on uses and activities which allow for the protection and maintenance of riparian conservation areas and upland watersheds, and measurable progress toward the attainment of water quality standards and desired range of conditions.

Alternative E

Commodity production would be excluded from all public lands. For streams with water quality limited segments, uses and activities would be allowed in the watershed only if they would promote or have no effect on restoring water quality to required State water quality standards while protecting and enhancing natural values.

Streams and waterbodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards and/or proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian and wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel and soils. Noncommodity uses and activities within the riparian conservation area and contributing uplands watershed areas that adversely affect water quality and/or lead to stream channel or riparian or wetland resource degradation would be adjusted, restricted, or limited if water quality and proper functioning condition cannot be attained or maintained with existing management.

Fish and Aquatic Habitat

Management Goal—*Restore, maintain, or improve habitat to provide for diverse and self-sustaining communities of wildlife, fishes, and other aquatic organisms.*

Rationale

FLPMA, six Executive orders, numerous legislative acts, and other regulations and policies direct the BLM to manage public land to provide habitat for fish and aquatic wildlife and to protect the quality of water resources. The following are examples:

FLPMA places fish and wildlife management on equal footing with other traditional land uses; requires that part of grazing fees be spent for “range betterment,” including aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat

enhancement, protection, and maintenance where livestock range; and requires consideration of fish and wildlife resources before approval of land exchanges.

The “Sikes Act” of 1974 is a congressional mandate for the BLM to “. . . plan, develop, maintain, and coordinate programs for the conservation and rehabilitation of wildlife, fish, and game.”

In addition, Executive orders for floodplain management and protection of wetlands provide further direction for protection and management of fisheries habitat.

Through a statewide memorandum of understanding between the BLM and ODEQ, the BLM implements the CWA by meeting State water quality standards. Hydrologic basins covered by this RMP “. . . shall be managed to protect the recognized beneficial uses [which include] salmonid fish (trout) rearing, salmonid fish spawning, [and] resident fish and aquatic life.”

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

Proper functioning condition (see Plant Communities, Riparian/Wetland Vegetation section of this chapter) alone may not meet certain desired range of conditions known to be important for wildlife. For example, quaking aspen-dependent bird species may require a minimum stand size before they can become self-sustaining as a breeding population. The grazing system necessary to reach this goal may require specific periods of rest or other measures which would exceed that necessary to attain proper functioning condition.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Current management objectives for fish and other aquatic resources would be followed. Management emphasis would be on improving and expanding existing fisheries habitat in streams and reservoirs, especially for redband trout, Warner sucker, and other native fish, and the Columbia spotted frog. Existing riparian exclosures and pastures would be maintained

or improved. Strategies identified in previous planning documents for fish habitat restoration and improvement (e.g., grazing reductions, new reservoir construction, riparian fencing, instream structures, etc.) would be implemented. Cooperation would continue with ODFW on trout stocking in isolated reservoirs.

Alternative B

Management would emphasize habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms important to commodity uses, such as recreational fishing, but not at the risk of causing extinction of native species. This includes stocking of additional sites with trout in cooperation with ODFW.

Management would protect, maintain, or restore instream processes, habitat diversity, and riparian condition to sustain aquatic organisms important for commodity use. In addition, management would maintain a distribution of native species that would promote natural dispersal and recolonization among populations.

Although management of entire watersheds is considered important for the health and function of aquatic ecosystems, this alternative would focus specifically on the protection of riparian/wetland areas where land uses or activities could have the most direct and immediate effect on aquatic habitat. Uses or activities allowed in riparian/wetland areas must ensure progress toward (1) maintenance, protection, or restoration of instream processes and habitat diversity; (2) water quality that meets State standards for aquatic beneficial use; and (3) attainment of proper functioning condition and riparian management objectives.

Where habitat conditions are determined to be lacking and the goal cannot be reached with management, instream improvements may be initiated.

Alternative C

Management emphasis provides fish and other aquatic organism habitat that maintains the distribution of native species among subwatersheds and supports all native species needed for self-sustaining aquatic communities.

Management would protect, maintain, or restore riparian condition, instream processes, and habitat diversity so that all native aquatic species can persist in natural assemblages within their present or historic subwatersheds. Where nonnative species already occur, habitat objectives would be based on the requirements

of the native species. The purpose would be to maintain a distribution of native species that would promote natural dispersal and recolonization among populations and allow species interactions that are part of ecosystem processes.

Because management throughout a watershed is vital for the health and function of aquatic ecosystems, this alternative focuses on entire watersheds where uses or activities may have direct or indirect effects on riparian/wetland areas. Uses or activities would be allowed in the watershed as long as they promote (1) maintenance, protection, or restoration of instream processes and habitat diversity; (2) water quality that meets State standards for aquatic beneficial use; and (3) attainment of proper functioning condition and riparian management objectives.

Livestock grazing and related activities would be removed from those stream segments where proper functioning condition assessment ratings are functioning-at-risk with no apparent trend, downward trend, or nonfunctioning and where grazing is determined to be a factor in the current condition. This is especially critical in the BLM riparian sites in fenced Federal range allotments. Exclusion of livestock would continue in these areas until systems are determined able to support reintroduction of grazing with proper management to improve riparian conditions.

Where habitat conditions are determined to be lacking and the goal cannot be reached with management, instream improvements may be initiated, such as installing instream structures to modify stream flow, and planting vegetation, etc.

Roads would be removed from riparian conservation areas.

Acquisition of habitat or water rights with willing owners would be pursued. Water rights would be converted to instream or habitat rights.

Cooperate with ODFW in maintaining existing and developing new recreational fishing opportunities.

Alternative D

Management emphasis would provide habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms to maintain the distribution of native species among subwatersheds while providing opportunities for commodity uses. Nonnative species would receive less emphasis and would be supported only where they do not interfere with native species. Habitat would also be provided for the native

species needed for self-sustaining aquatic communities.

Management would protect, maintain, or restore riparian condition, instream processes, and habitat diversity so that all native aquatic species can live in predominantly natural assemblages within their present or historic subwatersheds. Where nonnative species already occur, habitat objectives would be based on the requirements of the native species. The purpose is to maintain a distribution of native species that would promote natural dispersal and recolonization among populations and allow species interactions that are part of ecosystem processes.

Because management throughout a watershed is considered important for the health and function of aquatic ecosystems, this alternative focuses on entire watersheds where uses or activities may have direct or indirect effects on riparian/wetland areas. Uses or activities would be allowed in the watershed as long as they ensure progress toward (1) maintenance, protection, or restoration of instream processes and habitat diversity; (2) water quality that meets State standards for aquatic beneficial use; and (3) attainment of proper functioning condition, desired range of conditions, and riparian management objectives.

Livestock grazing and related activities would be removed from those stream segments where proper functioning condition assessment ratings are functioning-at-risk with no apparent trend, downward trend, or nonfunctioning and where grazing is determined to be a factor in the current condition. This is especially critical in the BLM riparian sites in fenced Federal range allotments. Exclusion of livestock would continue in these areas until systems are determined able to support reintroduction of grazing with proper management to improve riparian conditions.

Where habitat conditions are determined to be lacking and the goal cannot be reached with management, instream improvements may be initiated, such as installing instream structures to modify stream flow, and planting vegetation, etc.

Roads would be managed in riparian conservation areas to improve conditions. Roads would be removed and/or relocated where it is determined that they are contributing to less than desirable conditions. Road construction and maintenance would follow BMP's to minimize sediment input and channel effects.

Acquisition of habitat or water rights with willing owners would be pursued. Water rights would be converted to instream or habitat rights.

Alternative E

Commodity production would be excluded from all public lands. Aquatic habitat conditions would be determined primarily by natural processes. However, where needed, management would protect, maintain, or restore riparian condition, instream processes, and habitat diversity so that all native aquatic species can persist in natural assemblages within their present or historic subwatersheds. Streams and waterbodies not meeting minimum State water quality standards and/or proper functioning condition would be managed to attain an upward trend in the composition and structure of key riparian/wetland vegetation and desired physical characteristics of the stream channel. Noncommodity uses and activities within the riparian conservation area and contributing upland watershed areas that adversely affect water quality and/or lead to stream channel or riparian/wetland habitat degradation would be adjusted, restricted, or eliminated.

Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Introduction

Riparian/wetland wildlife habitat management and impacts are included in the Riparian/Wetland Vegetation sections of Chapters 3 and 4 and are not addressed under this section. To reduce redundancy in the following section, Management Goals 1 and 4, and 2 and 3, from the Draft RMP/EIS have been combined into two management goals in this final document.

Management Goal 1—Facilitate the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of big game (mule deer, elk, pronghorn, and bighorn sheep) populations and habitat on public land. Pursue management in accordance with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) big game species management plans in a manner consistent with the principles of multiple use management.

Rationale

Section 102.8 of FLPMA states that it is policy of the United States to manage the public land in a manner that will protect the quality of multiple resources and will provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals. PRIA directs BLM to improve rangeland conditions with due consideration given the needs of wildlife and their habitats.

BLM has a policy and responsibility to cooperate with

state agencies to accommodate species management goals to the extent they are consistent with the principles of multiple use management. The ODFW manages wildlife species populations through management objectives set up in their respective management plans and the BLM manages adequate habitat to support these numbers. Table 2-26 shows existing wildlife forage allocations which are based on the dietary preferences of cattle and do not necessarily reflect the food resources actually available to wildlife. The original wildlife allocations were set up over 20 years ago. Since that time, big game populations have expanded their range and increased in numbers.

Elk populations have greatly expanded in central Oregon as well as other portions of the State. Habitat use has shifted to areas that are not considered traditional elk habitats. Management objectives for these areas have been set by ODFW and the BLM is making an attempt to manage for these numbers. Mule deer and pronghorn populations have fluctuated due to habitat changes, winter conditions, and ODFW harvest management. Bighorn sheep have been reintroduced into the planning area. ODFW has been pursuing a statewide effort to restore bighorn sheep into suitable unoccupied habitat and enhance populations in currently occupied areas. Although the ODFW has successfully released and managed bighorn sheep on public land since the mid-1960s, current populations and distributions are still considered to be below their potential. Bighorn sheep are native to eastern Oregon and their presence contributes to the overall biological diversity and productivity of public land.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Bighorn sheep maintenance, restoration, and enhancement would be emphasized within existing and proposed land as identified in current land use plans, wildlife habitat management plans, and ODFW's most current bighorn sheep management plan. Bighorn sheep pioneering outside of the range would only be allowed where there are no disease transmission conflicts. A 9-mile buffer, as recommended in "Mountain Sheep Ecosystem Management Strategy in the 11 Western States and Alaska" (USDI-BLM 1995h), is required between new domestic sheep and goat permitted use areas and bighorn sheep use areas, based on local conditions, as a mechanism to further avoid disease transmission.

Continue current management of mule deer, elk, and pronghorn ranges as stated in existing management

plans. Variable desired conditions of big sagebrush cover would be determined on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with the ODFW to provide mosaics of sagebrush cover on portions of big game habitat.

Big game winter habitat would be protected from large-scale vegetation treatment projects or wildland fires. Improvement of big game winter habitat, as identified in the Fort Rock/Silver Lake, Paisley, North and South Warner Lakes habitat management plans, would continue (includes overlapping habitat for elk, pronghorn, mule deer, and bighorn sheep [Map W-2]). Big game habitat within the planning area is currently managed to attain desired wildlife habitat conditions over the long term. Achievement of desired wildlife habitat conditions would include a variety of methods to increase or decrease the big sagebrush overstory.

Livestock grazing use within mule deer and pronghorn winter range allotments would continue to be managed for late spring and summer use on an allotment-by-allotment basis. Forage allocations are made based on the dietary preferences of cattle and do not necessarily reflect the food resources available for wildlife consumption. The existing allocations were completed 20 years ago and no longer represent the current needs of wildlife within the planning area. Despite these changes, the existing wildlife forage allocation of 13,691 animal unit months (AUM's) would be continued. (Forage allocation changes are addressed under Alternatives B-D.)

The present public land base within big game winter ranges would be retained in Federal ownership, unless an exchange could be made that would be more beneficial to wildlife. Any proposed changes would be reviewed by ODFW.

The Cabin Lake/Silver Lake Mule Deer Winter Range Cooperative Road Closure with USFS and ODFW would continue. Vehicle use in the area would be limited to designated roads and trails from December 1 to March 31 (see Map SMA-23 of the Draft RMP/EIS). New closures could be initiated where necessary.

Alternative B

Management would be the same as for Alternative A, except restoration of bighorn sheep range and mule deer winter range would occur through reduction of western juniper encroachment on 18,000 to 30,000 acres of bighorn sheep range in the Devils Garden, East Lava Field (Squaw Ridge), Fish Creek Rim (Lynch Rim), South Warner Rim, Coleman Rim, South Abert Rim, and Hadley Butte herd ranges (see Map V-2).

This would also occur on 10,000 to 25,000 acres of mule deer winter range. These treatments would be accomplished through the use of prescribed fire or other methods. Treatments would reduce invasive western juniper by 30 to 70 percent within each treatment area. Any treatments occurring within the WSA would be consistent with BLM's wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

The existing wildlife forage allocations (Alternative A) were completed 20 years ago and no longer represent the current distribution of wildlife within the planning area. Mule deer and pronghorn use has changed and elk and bighorn sheep have expanded into new ranges. Approximately 22,829 AUM's of forage would be allocated to wildlife to provide for expanding elk and bighorn sheep populations and readjust AUM's in mule deer and pronghorn winter range allotments to reflect ODFW management population changes. This is an increase of 9,138 AUM's over current the allocation, and would have no affect on livestock allocations. Current and proposed wildlife forage allocations by allotment and wildlife species are shown in Table 2-26 and Appendix E1. (The Other Wildlife category on Table 2-26 reflects the forage needs of raptors, small mammals, birds, and important shrub-steppe species such as greater sage-grouse). Livestock grazing use within mule deer and pronghorn winter range allotments would not be allowed to exceed an average of 15 percent of the current year's growth of browse 2 out of 3 years.

Alternative C

Management would be the same as for Alternative A, except domestic sheep grazing would not be allowed on BLM lands within the planning area unless it can be demonstrated that domestic sheep grazing would not negatively impact existing populations of bighorn sheep or future augmentation sites proposed by ODFW. Restoration of bighorn sheep range and mule deer winter range would occur through reduction of western juniper encroachment on 18,000 to 30,000 acres of bighorn sheep range in the Devils Garden, East Lava Field (Squaw Ridge), Fish Creek Rim (Lynch Rim), South Warner Rim, Coleman Rim, South Abert Rim, and Hadley Butte herd ranges (see Map V-2) and on 10,000 to 25,000 acres of mule deer winter range. These treatments would be accomplished through the use of prescribed fire or other methods. Treatments would reduce invasive western juniper by 30 to 70 percent within each of the treatment areas. Any treatments occurring within the WSA would be consistent with BLM's wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Wildlife forage allocation would be similar to Alternative B. Livestock grazing use within mule deer and pronghorn winter range allotments would not be allowed to exceed an average of 15 percent of the current year's growth of browse 2 out of 3 years.

In deer winter range (Map W-2), new rights-of-way would be avoided and OHV use throughout the resource area would be limited to existing roads and trails (Maps L-7 and R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The Cabin Lake/Silver Lake Mule Deer Winter Range Cooperative Road Closure area would be expanded (Map SMA-23 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails in this area from December 1 to March 31.

Alternative D

Bighorn sheep habitat maintenance, restoration, and enhancement would be emphasized as identified in existing land use and wildlife habitat management plans, and ODFW's current bighorn sheep management plan. Bighorn sheep expanding outside of the current range would only be allowed where there are no disease transmission conflicts. A 9-mile buffer, as recommended in "Mountain Sheep Ecosystem Management Strategy in the 11 Western States and Alaska" (USDI-BLM 1995h), is required between new domestic sheep and goat permitted use areas and bighorn sheep use areas, as a mechanism to further avoid disease transmission. Domestic sheep grazing would not be allowed on BLM lands within the planning area unless it can be demonstrated that it would not negatively impact existing populations of bighorn sheep or future augmentation sites proposed by ODFW.

Restoration of bighorn sheep range and mule deer winter range would occur through reduction of western juniper encroachment on 18,000 to 30,000 acres of bighorn sheep range in the Devils Garden, East Lava Field (Squaw Ridge), Fish Creek Rim (Lynch Rim), South Warner Rim, Coleman Rim, South Abert Rim, and Hadley Butte herd ranges (see Map V-2) and on 10,000 to 25,000 acres of mule deer winter range. These treatments would be accomplished through the use of prescribed fire or other methods. Treatments would reduce invasive western juniper by 30 to 70 percent within each of the treatment areas. Any treatments occurring within the WSA would be consistent with BLM's wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Improvement of big game winter habitat, as identified in the Fort Rock/Silver Lake, Paisley, North and South Warner Lakes Habitat Management Plans would continue (includes overlapping habitat for elk, prong-

horn, mule deer, and bighorn sheep [Map W-2]). Big game habitat within the planning area would be managed to attain desired wildlife habitat conditions over the long term. Achievement of desired wildlife habitat conditions would include a variety of methods to increase or decrease the big sagebrush overstory.

Approximately 22,829 AUM's of forage would be allocated to wildlife to provide for expanding elk and bighorn sheep populations and readjust AUM's in mule deer and pronghorn antelope winter range allotments to reflect ODFW management population changes. This is an increase of 9,138 AUM's over current the allocation, and would have no affect on livestock allocations. Current and proposed wildlife forage allocations by allotment and wildlife species are shown in Table 2-26 and Appendix E1. (The Other Wildlife category on Table 2-26 reflects the forage needs of raptors, small mammals, birds, and important shrub-steppe species such as greater sage-grouse). Livestock grazing use within mule deer and pronghorn winter range allotments would not be allowed to exceed an average of 15 percent of the current year's growth of browse 2 out of 3 years.

The present public land base within big game winter ranges would be retained in Federal ownership, unless an exchange could be made that would be more beneficial to wildlife. Any proposed changes would be reviewed by the ODFW.

Alternative E

Natural processes would drive big game habitat conditions and use. Livestock grazing, including domestic sheep and goats, would not be authorized; therefore, a buffer would not be required to minimize disease transmission for bighorn sheep. No special management adjustments would be required; however, site-specific projects may need to be implemented to provide adequate forage for big game species.

Management Goal 2—Manage upland habitats, including shrub steppe, forest, and woodlands, so that the forage, water, cover, structure, and security necessary for wildlife are available on public land.

Rationale

Section 102.8 of FLPMA states that it is the policy of the United States to manage public land in a manner that would protect the quality of multiple resources and provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals. The PRIA directs BLM to improve rangeland conditions with due consideration given the needs

of wildlife and their habitats. Rangeland health regulations identify the need to foster productive and diverse populations and communities of plants and animals.

The character of upland vegetation types (arrangements, densities, age classes, etc.) greatly influences wildlife habitat quality and productivity. Because the character of upland vegetation can vary in response to Federal land use authorizations, BLM needs to consider the consequences of various land uses (such as grazing and mining) and vegetation treatments (such as burning and seeding) to the health of wildlife habitat. The outcomes of what may be considered proper range or forest management may not result in high quality wildlife habitat. Wildlife must have a reasonable amount of protection from the adverse impacts associated with human disturbances. This is especially true during breeding periods and on winter ranges.

Numerous wildlife species depend on native upland sagebrush steppe habitats to meet life history needs. In managing uplands, the BLM needs to consider the consequences and relationships of management to the life history needs of wildlife, consistent with guidelines addressed in the "Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystems Interim Management Plan" (Sage-Grouse Planning Team 2000).

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Single-species management would continue to be emphasized in most habitat types. Pine forest, western juniper woodland, quaking aspen, and mountain shrub habitat types would be managed as described under the Shrub Steppe and Forest and Woodlands sections of this chapter.

The variable desired conditions of big sagebrush cover would be determined on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with ODFW to provide mosaics of sagebrush cover. Limited emphasis would be placed on specifically providing habitat for nongame wildlife species. Greater sage-grouse habitat would be protected from large-scale vegetation treatment projects or wildland fires.

Management of shrub steppe for migratory landbirds would be on a case-by-case basis. Fragmentation of habitats would improve slowly over time. Restoration projects could be undertaken on a case-by-case basis. Conservation of habitats would not be done on a landscape scale.

Disturbances to nesting raptors during mating, nesting, and fledging season would be avoided.

Wildlife water developments (2,000–3,000-gallon guzzlers) would be installed where wildlife water is deficient.

Alternative B

Management would generally be the same as for Alternative A, except restoration projects would not occur unless they promoted or did not negatively affect commodity uses and, big sagebrush habitat would be reestablished on native rangeland or seedings where economically important wildlife are present.

Alternative C

Equal emphasis would be placed on game and nongame wildlife habitat needs in sagebrush steppe, forest, and woodland habitats. Pine forest, western juniper woodland, quaking aspen, and mountain shrub habitat types would be managed as described under the Shrub Steppe and Forest and Woodlands sections of this chapter. To the extent possible, wildlife community connectivity and interrelationships would be emphasized. This approach would stress landscape or ecosystem management and be distinctly different from single-species management emphasis.

Big sagebrush habitat would be managed for shrub cover, structure, and forage values for the benefit of game and nongame wildlife. The desired range of conditions would include shrub cover values that meet or exceed the requirements described in “Wildlife Habitats in Managed Rangelands” (Thomas and Maser 1986) and big sagebrush distribution over a large enough area to avoid the adverse impacts of habitat fragmentation. The desired range of conditions would strive for big sagebrush overstories that emphasize the presence of mature, light- to moderately-stocked shrub canopies capable of supporting diverse herbaceous understories and that are present in a variety of spatial arrangements important to wildlife. This would apply to all native range or seeded areas in big sagebrush habitats throughout the planning area.

Management of large blocks of sagebrush steppe would also be done with migratory landbirds in mind. Management would focus on existing shrub steppe in high ecological condition on a no-net-loss basis and improve degraded habitats. Fragmentation would be reduced through restoration of degraded rangelands by active restoration projects and changes in management activities.

Disturbance to nesting raptors during mating, nesting, and fledging season would be avoided.

Wildlife water developments (2,000–3,000-gallon guzzlers) would be installed where wildlife water is deficient.

In crucial wildlife habitat such as greater sage-grouse habitat (Maps W-1), new rights-of-way would be avoided and OHV use throughout the resource area would be limited to existing roads and trails (Maps L-7 and R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative D

Equal emphasis would be placed on game and nongame wildlife habitat needs in sagebrush steppe, forest, and woodland habitats. To the extent possible and practical, wildlife community connectivity and interrelationships would be emphasized in most habitats. This approach would stress landscape or ecosystem management and be distinctly different from single-species management emphasis. Pine forest, western juniper woodland, quaking aspen, and mountain shrub habitat types would be managed as described under the Shrub Steppe and Forest and Woodlands sections of this chapter.

Big sagebrush habitat would be managed for shrub cover, structure, and forage values for the benefit of game and nongame wildlife. The desired range of conditions would include shrub cover values that meet or exceed the requirements described in “Wildlife Habitats in Managed Rangelands” (Thomas and Maser 1986) and big sagebrush distribution over a large enough area to avoid the adverse impacts of habitat fragmentation. The desired range of conditions would strive for big sagebrush overstories that emphasize the presence of mature, light- to moderately-stocked shrub canopies, capable of supporting diverse herbaceous understories, and that are present in a variety of spatial arrangements important to wildlife. This would apply to all native range or seeded areas in big sagebrush habitats throughout the planning area.

Management of large blocks of sagebrush steppe would also be done with migratory landbirds in mind. Management would focus on existing shrub steppe in high ecological condition on a no-net-loss basis and improve degraded habitats. Fragmentation would be reduced through restoration of degraded rangelands by active restoration projects and changes in management activities.

Disturbance to nesting raptors during mating, nesting,

and fledging season would be avoided.

Wildlife water developments (2,000–3,000-gallon guzzlers) would be installed where wildlife water is deficient.

New rights-of-way would be avoided in greater sage-grouse breeding habitat (Map L-8). Most of north Lake County would be designated as limited to existing roads and trails year-round to protect wildlife habitat (see Map R-7 and SMA-24).

Alternative E

Future upland habitat conditions would be determined by natural processes.

Special Status Animal Species

Management Goal—*Manage public land to maintain, restore, or enhance populations and habitats of special status animal species. Priority for the application of management actions would be: (1) Federal endangered species, (2) Federal threatened species, (3) Federal proposed species, (4) Federal candidate species, (5) State listed species, (6) BLM sensitive species, (7) BLM assessment species, and (8) BLM tracking species. Manage in order to conserve or lead to the recovery of threatened or endangered species.*

Rationale

Section 102.8 of FLPMA requires that public land be managed to protect the quality of multiple resources and to provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals.

The “Endangered Species Act” mandates management that leads to the conservation or recovery of federally listed threatened or endangered species. This Act, as well as BLM policy, encourages management to protect special status species not currently listed as threatened or endangered, to prevent Federal listing.

Most fish and wildlife assigned to a special status category are limited in their distributions, populations, or habitats and may be at risk over various geographic areas. Where evidence suggests land uses are adversely affecting special status species not currently listed as threatened or endangered, it is in the public interest to prevent the need for Federal listing under the “Endangered Species Act.” Listing of a species as threatened or endangered may lead to restrictions on land uses, and under some circumstances may cause

adverse socioeconomic impacts to commodity users. In most cases, there are both socioeconomic and biological benefits associated with conserving species to avoid Federal listing.

Maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of populations or habitat, as defined in the Glossary of this document, may represent appropriate BLM management depending on the habitat needs or specific circumstances of a species. Restoration or enhancement may not always be the only clear choice for BLM action regarding special status species. One potential limitation that could delay restoration or enhancement is that the biological mechanisms adversely affecting a species may not be well enough understood to identify needed management. Maintenance may also be a preferred course of action where resource conditions are exceptional.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Management of Warner sucker, Foskett speckled dace, Hutton tui chub, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon would be in accordance with recovery plans and consultation with the USFWS. Management of greater sage-grouse would be in accordance with current BLM management strategies as outlined in the “Greater Sage-grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystems Management Guidelines” (Sage-Grouse Planning Team 2000). The BLM is currently part of a working group developing a long-term conservation strategy plan for Oregon and Washington which would be completed in the next 12–18 months. All BLM actions in “The Recovery Plan for the Threatened and Rare Native Fishes of the Warner Basin and Alkali Subbasin” (USDI-USFWS 1998) would be implemented (see Appendix H). Special status species management actions would be adjusted to accommodate additions or deletions in official listings of special status species.

Management Direction by Alternatives

Alternative A

Management would emphasize achieving desired range of conditions that maintain, enhance, or restore habitats or populations of any special status species regardless of economic importance. All special status species habitats or populations would be managed so that BLM actions do not contribute toward the need to list these species as federally threatened or endangered.

Management would provide habitat conditions that meet individual species requirements. Fish and wildlife community goals would generally be secondary to

goals for individual species.

A variety of projects or other land use adjustments might be required to manage for special status species. Some management for maintenance could require avoidance or mitigation measures. Some restoration or enhancement measures could involve very specific remedies with the potential to lead to substantial adjustments in customary land use practices. Because of the variability in habitat use by special status species, management actions could be required within any of the habitat types described in this plan.

Alternative B

Management would emphasize achieving desired range of conditions that maintain, enhance, or restore habitats and populations of economically important special status species listed in Table 2-24. All other special status species habitats or populations would be managed so that BLM actions do not contribute toward the need to list these species as federally threatened or endangered. Management for these other species would emphasize maintenance rather than restoration and enhancement.

Management would provide habitat conditions that favor individual special status species. Fish and wildlife community goals would be secondary to goals for individual species.

Management that might be required for special status species could include avoidance or mitigation measures. Some restoration or enhancement measures could involve very specific remedies leading to substantial adjustments in customary land use practices. Because of the variability in habitat use by special status species, management actions could be required within any of the habitat types described in this plan.

Alternative C

This alternative would include the most aggressively proactive measures for special status species management. Habitats and populations would be restored or enhanced in all areas where biologically sound and reasonable. Maintenance would only be considered where habitat or population conditions are considered to be at or near their potential.

Management would develop habitats that support healthy, biologically diverse communities of wildlife at the fine scale while meeting special status species needs. Individual species requirements would be included in management prescriptions, but not to an

extent that overemphasizes the value of any one habitat type. This community approach to management is different from the single-species-driven management indicated in Alternatives A and B.

A variety of projects or other land use adjustments could be required to manage for special status species. Some management for maintenance could require avoidance or mitigation measures. Restoration or enhancement measures could involve remedies that lead to substantial adjustments in customary land use practices. Because of the variability in habitat use by special status species, management actions could be required within any of the habitat types described in this plan.

Alternative D

Management would emphasize achieving desired range of conditions that maintain, enhance, or restore habitats or populations of special status species regardless of their economic status. All special status species habitats or populations would be managed so that BLM actions would not contribute toward the need to list the species as federally threatened or endangered.

Management would be oriented toward the development of habitats that support healthy, biologically diverse communities of wildlife at mid and fine scales while meeting special status species needs. Individual species requirements would be included in management prescriptions, but not to an extent that overemphasizes that value of any one habitat type. This community approach to management is different from the single-species-driven management indicated in Alternatives A and B.

A variety of projects or other land use adjustments could be required to manage for special status species. Some management for maintenance could require avoidance or mitigation measures. Some restoration or enhancement measures could involve very specific remedies leading to substantial adjustments in customary land use practices. Because of the variability in habitat use by special status species, management actions could be required within any of the habitat types described in this plan.

Alternative E

Only those actions legally required to manage and protect federally listed species would be carried out. Management for other special status species would be minimal. Natural processes would primarily determine future conditions for special status species.

Livestock Grazing Management

Management Goal—*Provide for a sustainable level of livestock grazing consistent with other resource objectives and public land-use allocations.*

Rationale

The “Taylor Grazing Act” of 1934 is the legislative authority providing for livestock grazing on and protection of public land. FLPMA, PRIA, and other acts direct the management of public land for multiple use and sustained yield. Rangeland management strategies would provide for the maintenance or restoration of watershed function, nutrient cycling and energy flow, water quality, habitat for special status species, and habitat quality for populations and communities of native plants and animals. These management strategies have been supported by development of regional “Standards for Land Health for Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington” (USDI-BLM 1997b). The five standards are described in Appendix E4.

Management Common to Alternatives A and D

Where livestock grazing is found to be limiting achievement of multiple use objectives, actions to control intensity, duration, and timing of grazing and/or provide for periodic deferment and/or rest would be required to meet physiological requirements of key plant species and to meet other resource objectives. Upon determining that existing grazing management practices on public land are contributing to the nonattainment of resource objectives, appropriate actions would be implemented. The intent of grazing management is to leave sufficient herbaceous material on the ground to provide soil and watershed protection, to provide forage and cover for wildlife and wild horses, and to meet other resource objectives. Generally, problems pertaining to livestock grazing are not related to existing forage allocations, but are related to needed changes in management, such as permitted use, season of use, and livestock distribution. This is addressed in each of the alternatives and in Appendix E1, Allotment Management Summaries, which also notes problem areas and gives recommendations.

The current licensed grazing levels (Appendix E1, Allotment Management Summaries) would be maintained until analysis or evaluation of monitoring data or

rangeland health assessments identify a need for adjustments to meet objectives. Applicable activity plans (including existing allotment management plans, agreements, decisions and/or terms and conditions of grazing use authorizations) would be revised and implemented to ensure that resource objectives are being met. The level of AUM’s of permitted use in the alternatives is based on the average authorized AUM’s in the resource area from 1991 to 2000 at light to moderate levels. The average authorized AUM’s identified in each alternative is for analysis purposes only. The full permitted use level for each allotment has been and continues to be analyzed through individual allotment assessments, such as rangeland health and livestock grazing management guidelines, allotment evaluations, allotment management plans, watershed analyses, and implementation of biological opinions. It is through these assessments that any changes in forage allocation would be made where needed on an allotment-by-allotment basis. However, livestock permittees have the option to license up to their full active preference for any given year. Currently, the total permitted use for the resource area is 164,128 AUM’s. However, permittees seldom use their full active preference for a variety of reasons, including previous agreements with BLM, management prescriptions in allotment management plans, economic factors, and forage and water availability.

Areas burned by wildland fire or prescribed fire would be rested a minimum of two growing seasons before they are reopened to livestock grazing. Decisions to resume livestock grazing would be based on monitoring data. Additional rest for a minimum of 2 years would occur in Alternative C. Rest for less than two growing seasons may be justified on a case-by-case basis.

In areas where livestock grazing is presently not compatible with other uses, no grazing would be permitted. Public land which is found not to be suitable for livestock grazing or containing resource values which cannot be adequately protected from livestock impacts through mitigating measures is not allocated to livestock grazing. Table 2-28 and Map G-1 (of the Draft RMP/EIS) show areas that are currently not allotted or are excluded from livestock grazing due to conflicts with other uses.

Further, livestock grazing would be managed during and following drought in accordance with “Oregon and Washington Drought Policy” to maintain soil and vegetation health and productivity following procedures outlined in Appendix E6.

Management Direction by Alternative**Alternative A**

Continue authorization of 108,234 AUM's of averaged licensed use, with acknowledgment that the full permitted use level of 164,128 AUM's could be authorized.

Adjustments to terms and conditions of livestock grazing authorizations, based on monitoring and periodic evaluation of allotments, would be implemented to progress toward meeting objectives of existing land use plans. Administrative solutions, including reductions in levels of authorized livestock, changes in season of use, and installation of range improvement projects, would be considered as necessary to meet management objectives.

Herbaceous forage utilization levels would not exceed moderate levels.

Rangeland improvement projects would be implemented to minimize unacceptable livestock grazing impacts by accessing available, but underutilized forage and improving livestock distribution. Vegetative treatments would be implemented as identified in the vegetative management alternatives of this document. Best management practices for construction of rangeland improvements are presented in Appendix D.

Existing range improvements that support livestock grazing use would be maintained. Projects which do not function to meet management framework plan and rangeland program summary objectives would be abandoned and sites rehabilitated. Currently, about 155,734 acres are unallotted and another 84,801 acres are excluded from grazing for various reasons (Table 2-28).

Additional forage produced on a temporary basis would be made available to qualified applicants through temporary nonrenewable grazing authorization, when consistent with existing management framework plan and rangeland program summary objectives (USDI-BLM 1989e).

Implement enforcement of unauthorized use.

Alternative B

Emphasize livestock grazing on public land. Authorize up to 180,541 AUM's of permitted use, a 10 percent increase above the current permitted use level of 164,128 AUM's.

Adjustments to terms and conditions of livestock grazing authorizations, based on monitoring and periodic evaluation of allotments, would be implemented to progress toward meeting objectives. Administrative solutions, including reductions in levels of authorized livestock, changes in season of use, and installation of range improvement projects, would be considered as necessary to meet management objectives. The priority, on a case-by-case basis, would be to maintain or enhance authorized use levels for livestock.

Herbaceous forage utilization levels would not exceed 60 percent on uplands and seedings.

Rangeland improvement projects would be implemented to minimize unacceptable livestock grazing impacts by accessing available, but underutilized forage and improving livestock distribution. Temporary or permanent range improvements would be constructed to protect resource values while retaining optimum quantity of forage resources available for livestock (see Table E3-1 for proposed projects by allotment).

Vegetative treatments would be implemented as identified in the vegetative management alternatives of this document. Standard implementation procedures for construction of rangeland improvements would follow BLM Manual Handbook H-1741-1 and -2, and USDI-BLM and USDA-FS (1988).

Existing range improvements that support livestock grazing use would be maintained. Projects which do not function to meet management objectives would be abandoned and sites rehabilitated. Areas where grazing would be unallotted or excluded would be similar to Alternative A.

Additional forage produced on a temporary basis would be authorized to qualified applicants through temporary nonrenewable grazing, when consistent with maintaining other resource values (USDI-BLM 1989e).

Alternative C

Emphasize protection of natural values by authorization of only 86,587 AUM's of permitted use each year, a 48 percent decrease from current permitted use, and a 20 percent decrease from the 10-year average authorized use level.

Herbaceous forage utilization levels would not exceed light. Browse utilization levels would not exceed 30 percent in critical deer and antelope winter range.

Within LRA, the Devils Garden Allotment (907) (which has been available for livestock grazing on an emergency basis only and not allotted to a specific livestock operator) would be closed to grazing. In addition, six of the proposed ACEC's and one existing ACEC, totaling 50,497 acres, would be closed to grazing to provide protection botanical, cultural, and research natural area values. In total, 131,751 acres would be unallotted and 187,263 acres would be excluded from grazing (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Rangeland improvement projects would be implemented only to meet resource objectives. Administrative solutions (season of use revision, stocking level adjustment, and pasture exclusion) would be the preferred solution to meet resource management objectives. Range improvement projects that do not enhance resource values and meet management objectives would be abandoned and the sites rehabilitated. Vegetative treatments would be implemented only to return rangelands to proper functioning communities. Standard implementation procedures for construction of rangeland improvements would follow BLM Manual Handbook H-1741-1 and -2, and USDI-BLM and USDA-FS (1988).

Temporary nonrenewable grazing would not be authorized. Additional herbaceous production would not be allocated to livestock grazing, but would be retained onsite for values other than forage production.

Alternative D

Protect and improve natural values through the average authorized use level of 108,234 AUM's of permitted use, with acknowledgment that the full permitted use level of 164,128 AUM's could be authorized.

Herbaceous forage utilization levels would not exceed moderate.

Rangeland improvement projects would be implemented only to meet resource objectives. Administrative solutions (i.e., season of use revision, stocking level adjustment, and pasture exclusion) would be the preferred solution to meet resource management objectives. Range improvement projects that do not function to enhance resource values and meet management objectives would be abandoned and rehabilitated.

Vegetative treatments would be implemented only to return rangelands to proper functioning communities. Standard implementation procedures for construction of rangeland improvements would follow BLM Manual

Handbook H-1741-1 and -2, and USDI-BLM and USDA-FS (1988).

Areas where grazing would be unallotted or excluded are shown on Map G-3.

Temporary nonrenewable grazing would be authorized only if such use would not conflict with other resource management outlined in this plan.

Alternative E

Commodity production would be excluded, eliminating livestock grazing. Other uses would be limited and natural values maximized.

No grazing use would be authorized. No rangeland projects would be planned or implemented in support of livestock grazing. All projects that support livestock grazing would be abandoned and rehabilitated that do not contribute to meeting other resource management objectives. Remaining rangeland projects would be maintained to design standards necessary to meet management objectives. All cooperative agreements with livestock operators would be vacated.

Wild Horses

Management Goal—Maintain and manage wild horse herds in established herd management areas at appropriate management levels to ensure a thriving natural ecological balance between wild horse populations, wildlife, livestock, vegetation resources, and other resource values.

Rationale

The "Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act" of 1971 requires the BLM to protect and manage wild horses in areas where they were found at the time of the Act, in a manner designed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in keeping with the multiple use management concept of public lands.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Management of both the Paisley and Beaty Butte Herd Management Areas are guided by herd management area plans (USDI-BLM 1977a, 1977b, 1995c; USDI-BLM and USDI-USFWS 1998b) which identify specific management objectives for each herd management area. These plans would continue and be revised by management direction contained in this RMP. Wild

horse population levels would be adjusted in accordance with the results of monitoring studies, allotment evaluations, and rangeland health assessments, when needed, in order to achieve and maintain objectives for a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationships in each herd management area. Gathering of wild horses would continue as necessary to adjust wild horse populations. During gathers, horses would normally be reduced to the low end of the appropriate management level range, then allowed to increase to the top end of appropriate management level before another gather would occur. If emergency situations arise, horses could be gathered for their survival. Horses straying outside the herd management areas would be removed. The current memorandum of understanding with Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, whereby the BLM agrees to remove stray horses within the refuge boundaries, would be followed.

Horses released back into herd management areas after gathers would be animals exhibiting the special and unique characteristics of that herd as described in Table 2-32. In some instances, these horses may be from other wild horse herds. Horses would be selected to maintain herd characteristics and to diversify genetic variability, especially in the Paisley Desert Herd Management Area which has a lower appropriate management level. Research on fertility control may be implemented on a case-by-case basis as necessary to continue the research in developing a safe, effective vaccine. The fertility control vaccine (if approved for general use by the Food and Drug Administration) may be considered an option in management used to reduce the frequency of gathers and benefit the health of wild horses and rangelands.

Range improvements would be installed to encourage horses to stay within herd management area boundaries. Improvements would be consistent with other resource objectives of each alternative.

Management Common to Alternatives A–C

Herd management areas would initially be managed for the established appropriate management levels of 60–110 horses in the Paisley Desert Herd Management Area and 100–250 horses in the Beaty Butte Herd Management Area. Adjustments to appropriate management levels would be made as described in each alternative. Forage allocations would be 1,320 AUM's in Paisley Desert and 3,000 AUM's in Beaty Butte.

Management Common to Alternatives B–D

Forage for wild horses would be allocated to all horses in the herd management area regardless of age. Forage allocations for wild horses would be reduced to zero in Allotments 400 and 426 because these allotments are outside the herd management area boundaries. The calculation for allocating forage for wild horses would vary from Alternative A, but would be consistent with other resource management plans in the State (the calculation is: the number of horses at the top appropriate management level x 12 months).

The boundary in the Paisley Desert Herd Management Area would be modified. A total of 31,859 acres in the northwest corner would be designated as an unoccupied herd area. A herd would not be reestablished or managed in the herd area. See Map SMA-4 for location of the herd area and herd management area.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Wild horses would be allocated forage based on the original number of horses established in each herd management area, which is approximately (but not exactly) the median of the current appropriate management level. The original number of horses was 85 in the Paisley Herd Management Area and 200 in the Beaty Butte Herd Management Area. A total of 1,020 AUM's would be allocated in Paisley Desert Herd Management Area and 2,400 in Beaty Butte Herd Management Area as described in the "Lakeview Grazing Management Final EIS" (USDI-BLM 1982b).

Established water developments used by horses would be maintained. Additional water developments, as identified in existing land use plans, would be constructed. Fencing and other structures identified in land use plans would be maintained and new ones developed.

Approximately 9,000 acres (2 percent) of the Beaty Butte Herd Management Area is recommended for prescribed burning to improve ecological condition. No burning is recommended in the Paisley Desert Herd Management Area due to risk of weeds and nonnative species such as cheatgrass invading the area.

Alternative B

When monitoring data support a downward adjustment in the allocation of forage resources within herd management areas, livestock production would be

considered a higher value use of the forage, and would be emphasized on a case-by-case basis to optimize commodity production from the public land. When analysis of the monitoring data identifies a need to reduce grazing impacts, reductions in wild horse appropriate management levels would be emphasized. Increases in livestock use would be given first priority when analysis of monitoring data identifies additional forage available on a sustained-yield basis.

Established water developments used by horses would be maintained. Additional identified water developments and range improvements would be constructed. Existing fencing and other structures would be maintained and new projects developed. Boundary fencing of herd management areas would be improved to assist in managing the horses inside the herd management areas.

Alternative C

When monitoring data support a downward adjustment in the allocation of forage resources within herd management areas, proportionate decreases in wild horse appropriate management levels and authorized active use by livestock would be implemented. This would be done through the adaptive management process, based on each species' contribution to the failure to meet management objectives or failure to maintain an ecological balance. When monitoring data identify additional available forage on a sustained basis, proportionate increases between wild horse appropriate management levels and livestock authorized active use would be emphasized, as consistent with meeting other management objectives of Alternative C.

Established water developments and other projects supporting wild horse populations would be maintained, as consistent with other management objectives. Projects designed to facilitate wild horse management that do not emphasize natural values would be abandoned and sites would be rehabilitated. Construction of water developments and other projects which would minimize impacts to other resources and emphasize natural values would be considered.

Alternative D

When monitoring data support a downward adjustment in the allocation of forage resources within herd management areas, proportionate decreases in wild horse appropriate management levels and authorized active use by livestock would be implemented. This would be done through the adaptive management

process, based on each species' contribution to the failure to meet management objectives or failure to maintain an ecological balance. When monitoring data identify additional available forage on a sustained basis, proportionate increases between wild horse appropriate management levels and livestock authorized active use would be emphasized, as consistent with meeting other management objectives of Alternative D.

Established water developments and other projects supporting wild horse populations would be maintained, as consistent with other management objectives. Projects designed to facilitate wild horse management that do not emphasize natural values would be abandoned and sites would be rehabilitated. Construction of water developments and other projects which would minimize impacts to other resources and emphasize natural values would be considered.

The initial appropriate management level would be increased in the Paisley Desert Herd Management Area to 60–150 horses. This represents an increase of 40 horses at maximum appropriate management level, which is supported by monitoring data. The increase reflects extending the timeframe between gathers to 5 years, consistent with the gathering cycle in Beaty Butte. Forage allocations for Paisley Desert would be 1,800 AUM's; the Beaty Butte allocation would remain at 3,000 AUM's.

Alternative E

Initial forage allocations and appropriate management levels for wild horses would be the same as Alternative D.

Interior fencing in herd management areas would be removed. Appropriate management levels would be adjusted as the need is identified in monitoring data. Appropriate management levels would reflect a range of horse numbers in balance with available forage and resources. Horses would be gathered when appropriate management levels are exceeded or if horses stray outside the boundaries of the herd management areas. Forage allocations as such would not be made since there would be no domestic livestock grazing under this alternative. Restoration of unhealthy plant communities of the Great Basin Ecosystem found in the Paisley Desert Herd Management Area would not be done with intensive vegetation projects. Restoration would occur through natural processes over a longer period of time. Water developments would be maintained or new ones established only as needed for survival of the horses.

Special Management Areas

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Research Natural Areas

Management Goal—*Retain existing and designate new areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC's) and research natural areas (RNA's) where relevance and importance criteria are met and special management is required to protect the identified values.*

Rationale

Section 202(c)(3) of FLPMA mandates that priority be given to the designation and protection of ACEC's. These areas are defined in section 103(a) as areas where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important values, resources, systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards. To accomplish this, the following decisions are described for each alternative:

- 1) Which existing areas should be retained as ACEC's or RNA's and which proposed areas should be designated as ACEC's and/or RNA's?
- 2) If designated, how much area should be included in the designation?
- 3) If designated, what special management should be implemented to protect relevant and important values?

Appendix I contains a detailed description of each existing and proposed ACEC/RNA.

Actions Common to Alternatives A–D

The following narrative describes management direction that would apply to more than one ACEC or to more than one alternative. Table 3-3 summarizes the management direction for each existing and proposed ACEC/RNA.

ACEC designation: Under Alternative A, no new ACEC's would be designated. Four existing ones would be retained. Under Alternative B, existing ACEC's would be retained and only one new area, Connley Hills, would be designated.

Under Alternatives C and D, 4 existing ACEC's would be retained and 12 new ACEC's would be designated. One existing area would be expanded. The size and

management direction would vary.

Under Alternative E, all existing ACEC designations would be revoked and no new ACEC's would be designated. Management in these areas would be the same as that applied across the planning area.

Research natural area designations: One existing RNA would be retained under Alternatives A and B. One existing RNA would be retained and nine new RNA's would be designated under Alternatives C and D. All fall within existing or proposed ACEC's. RNA's would be managed to preserve natural features and ecosystems in as natural a condition as can be found for research and educational purposes. The BLM designates and manages RNA's under the management guidance for ACEC's. More detailed management plans may be developed in the future, if needed. These plans would tier to the management direction contained in this RMP.

Special status and Bureau sensitive animals: Disturbance to nesting raptors would be avoided (January–August, depending on species), especially in Lost Forest, Lake Abert, Abert Rim, Black Hills, Connley Hills, Fish Creek, Hawksie-Walksie, and Table Rock.

Special status and Bureau sensitive plants: Disturbances to all special status plant populations would be avoided in all ACEC/RNA's where they occur. General inventories, monitoring, and research would continue for special status plants. Conservation agreements would be written for all Bureau sensitive plant species (former Federal Candidate Category 2).

Fire management: Under Alternatives A, B, C, and D, in all ACEC's and RNA's, wildland fires would be managed according to appropriate management response; however, some ACEC's would be analyzed for possible wildland fire use. Use of heavy equipment in ACEC's, WSA's, and RNA's would be avoided and would require line officer approval. Use of retardant would be allowed within these areas for initial attack. Retardant use during extended attack would be considered as a part of the wildland fire situation analysis, considering the resource values at risk. If used, heavy equipment would be restricted to existing roads and trails. Prescribed fires could be used in ACEC's where it can be shown to preserve the desired characteristics of the SMA and to meet management objectives.

Weed management: Noxious weeds could be aggressively controlled in all ACEC/RNA's using integrated weed management methods, such as biological control, site-specific spraying, and grubbing by hand, consistent

Table 3-3.—Management summary for existing and proposed ACEC's/RNA's

ACEC/RNA	Alternative	Acres ^{1,9}	ROW's ²	Tenure zone	OHV ³	VRM ⁴	Grazing ⁵	Personal wood/plant collecting ⁶	Minerals ⁷		
									Locatable	Leasable	Salable
Existing ACEC's											
Devils Garden ACEC	A	28,241	EX	1	LE	I (IV)	O	<u>O/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	B	28,241	EX	1	LE	I (IV)	O	<u>O/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	C	28,241	EX	1	LD	I (II)	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
	D	28,241	EX	1	LD	I (II)	O ⁸	<u>O/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	I (IV)	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
Lake Abert ACEC	A	<u>50,165</u>	AV	1, 2	LE	I/II	O/C	<u>C/C</u>	C, O	C, NSO	C, O
	B	<u>50,165</u>	AV	1, 2	LE	I/II	O/C	<u>C/C</u>	C, O	C, NSO	C, O
	C	<u>50,165</u>	EX	1, 2	LD	I/II	O ⁸ /C	<u>C/C</u>	C, O	C, NSO	C, O
	D	<u>50,165</u>	AV	1, 2	LE	I/II	O ⁸ /C	<u>C/C</u>	C, O	C, NSO	C, O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	I/II	C	<u>C/C</u>	C	C	C
Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC											
Lost Forest RNA	A	9,047	EX	1	LD	I (III)	O	<u>C/O</u>	C	C	C
	B	8,883	EX	1	LD	I (III)	O	<u>C/O</u>	C	C	C
	C	8,883	EX	1	C	I (III)	C	<u>C/O</u>	C	C	C
	D	8,883	EX	1	LD	I (III)	O ⁸	<u>C/O</u>	C	C	C
	E	ND	EX	2	LD	I (III)	C	<u>C/O</u>	C	C	C
Sand Dunes	A	11,453	EX	1	O	I (III)	O	<u>C/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	B	11,453	EX	1	O	I (III)	O	<u>C/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	C	11,453	EX	1	C	I (III)	C	<u>C/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	D	<u>9,125</u>	EX	1	O	I (III)	O ⁸	<u>C/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	E	ND	EX	2	C	I (III)	C	<u>C/O</u>	C	C	C

ACEC/RNA	Alternative	Acres ^{1,9}	ROW's ²	Tenure zone	OHV ³	VRM ⁴	Grazing ⁵	Personal wood/plant collecting ⁶	Minerals ⁷		
									Locatable	Leasable	Salable
Fossil Lake	A	6,660	EX	2	C	III	C	<u>C/O</u>	O	NSO	O
	B	6,660	AV	1	C	III	C	<u>C/O</u>	O	NSO	O
	C	6,660	EX	1	C	III	C	<u>C/O</u>	O	C	C
	D	<u>8,988</u>	AV	1	C	III	C	<u>C/O</u>	O	NSO	C
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	III	C	<u>C/O</u>	C	C	C
Remainder of ACEC	A	8,960	EX	2	O	III	O	<u>C/O</u>	O	O	O
	B	<u>8,500</u>	AV	1	O	III	O	<u>C/O</u>	O	O	O
	C	<u>8,500</u>	EX	1	C	III	C	<u>C/O</u>	O	C	C
	D	<u>8,500</u>	AV	1	LD	III	O ⁸	<u>C/O</u>	O	O	O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	III	C	<u>C/O</u>	C	C	C
Warner Wetlands ACEC	A	<u>52,033</u>	AV	2	LD	III	L	<u>O/O</u>	O	O, NSO	C, O
	B	<u>52,033</u>	AV	1	LD	III	L	<u>O/O</u>	O	O, NSO	C, O
	C	<u>52,033</u>	EX	1	LD	III	L	<u>O/O</u>	O	O, NSO	C, O
	D	<u>52,033</u>	AV	1	LD	III	L	<u>O/O</u>	O	O, NSO	C, O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	III	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
Proposed ACEC's											
Abert Rim ACEC	A	ND	EX	1	LE	I (IV)	L	<u>O/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	B	ND	EX	1	LE	I (IV)	L	<u>O/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	C	<u>18,049</u>	EX	1	LD	I (IV)	L	<u>O/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	D	<u>18,049</u>	EX	1	LD	I (IV)	L	<u>O/O</u>	NREC	C	C
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	I (IV)	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
Black Hills ACEC/RNA	A	ND	EX	2	LD	IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	B	ND	EX	2	LD	IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	C	<u>3,048</u>	EX	1	C	II	C	<u>C/C</u>	O	C	C
	D	<u>3,048</u>	AV	1	LD	III	O ⁸	<u>C/C</u>	O	O-NSO	O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	IV	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C

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ACEC/RNA	Alternative	Acres ^{1,9}	ROW's ²	Tenure zone	OHV ³	VRM ⁴	Grazing ⁵	Personal wood/plant collecting ⁶	Minerals ⁷		
									Locatable	Leasable	Salable
Connley Hills ACEC/RNA	A	ND	EX/O	2	O	III (IV)	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	B	3,599	AV	1	LE	III, IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O-NSO	O
	C	3,599	EX	1	LD	II	C	<u>C/C</u>	O	C	C
	D	3,599	AV	1	LD	III	O ⁸	<u>C/C</u>	O	O-NSO	O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE		C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
Fish Creek Rim ACEC/RNA	A	ND	EX	1, 2	LE	I (II)	O	<u>O/C</u>	O, NREC	C, O	C, O
	B	ND	EX	1, 2	LE	I (II)	O	<u>O/C</u>	O, NREC	C, O	C, O
	C	8,725	EX	1	LD	I (II)	O ⁸	<u>O/C</u>	O, NREC	C, O	C, O
	D	8,725	AV	1	LD	I (II)	O ⁸	<u>O/C</u>	O, NREC	C, O	C, O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	I (II)	C	<u>C</u>	C	C	C
Foley Lake ACEC/RNA	A	ND	O	2	O	IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	B	ND	O	2	O	IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	C	2,747	EX	1	LD	II	C	<u>O/C</u>	O	C	C
	D	2,230	AV	1	LD	III	O ⁸	<u>O/C</u>	O	O	O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	IV	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
Guano Creek/Sink Lakes ACEC/RNA	A	ND	EX	1	LE	I (III)	C	<u>O/C</u>	NREC	C	C
	B	ND	EX	1	LE	I (III)	C	<u>O/C</u>	NREC	C	C
	C	4,936	EX	1	LD	I (II)	C	<u>O/C</u>	NREC	C	C
	D	<u>11,199</u>	AV	1	LD	I (III)	C	<u>O/C</u>	NREC	C	C
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	I (III)	C	<u>O/C</u>	C	C	C

ACEC/RNA	Alternative	Acres ^{1,9}	ROW's ²	Tenure zone	OHV ³	VRM ⁴	Grazing ⁵	Personal wood/plant collecting ⁶	Minerals ⁷		
									Locatable	Leasable	Salable
Hawksie-Walksie ACEC/RNA	A	ND	EX	1	LE	I (III)	O	<u>O/C</u>	NREC	C	C
	B	ND	EX	1	LE	I (III)	O	<u>O/C</u>	NREC	C	C
	C	17,339	EX	1	LD	I (III)	L	<u>O/C</u>	NREC	C	C
	D	17,339	AV	1	LD	I (III)	O ⁸	<u>O/C</u>	NREC	C	C
	E	ND	EX	<u>2</u>	LE	I (III)	C	<u>O/C</u>	C	C	C
High Lakes ACEC	A	ND	O	2	O	IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	B	ND	O	2	O	IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	C	40,095	EX	1	LD	III	O ⁸	<u>O/O</u>	O, NREC	C	C
	D	<u>38,985</u>	AV	1	LD	III	O ⁸	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	III	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
Juniper Mountain ACEC/RNA	A	ND	O	2	LE	IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	B	ND	O	2	LE	IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	C	6,335	EX	1	LD	II	O ⁸	<u>C/O</u>	O	C	C
	D	6,335	AV	1	LD	IV	O ⁸	<u>O/O</u>	O	NSO	O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	IV	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
Rahilly-Gravelly ACEC/RNA	A	ND	O	2	O	III, IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	B	ND	O	2	O	III, IV	O	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	C	20,127	EX	1	LD	III	O ⁸	<u>O/O</u>	O	NSO	C
	D	19,648	AV	1	LE	III	O ⁸	<u>O/O</u>	O	NSO	O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	III, IV	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
Red Knoll ACEC	A	ND	O	2	O	III, IV	L	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	B	ND	O	2	O	III, IV	L	<u>O/O</u>	O	O	O
	C	11,588	EX	1	LD	II	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C
	D	11,127	AV	1	LD	II	L ⁸	<u>O/O</u>	C, O	C, O	C, O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	III, IV	C	<u>O/O</u>	C	C	C

ACEC/RNA	Alternative	Acres ^{1,9}	ROW's ²	Tenure zone	OHV ³	VRM ⁴	Grazing ⁵	Personal wood/plant collecting ⁶	Minerals ⁷		
									Locatable	Leasable	Salable
Spanish Lake ACEC/RNA	A	ND	O	2	O	IV	O	O/O	O	O	O
	B	ND	O	2	O	IV	O	O/O	O	O	O
	C	4,699	EX	1	LD	III	O ⁸	O/O	O	C	C
	D	4,699	AV	1	LD	IV	O ⁸	O/O	O	O	O
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	IV	C	O/O	C	C	C
Table Rock ACEC	A	ND	EX	2	O, C	IV	L	O/O	O	O	O
	B	ND	EX	2	O, C	IV	L	O/O	O	O	O
	C	5,891	EX	1	LD	II	C	C/O	O	C	C
	D	<u>5,139</u>	AV	1	LD	II	L ⁸	O/O	O	NSO	C
	E	ND	EX	2	LE	IV	C	O/O	C	C	C

¹ Acreage values are based on geographic information system calculations.

² ROW's = rights-of-way; EX = exclusion ~ no new rights-of-way would be allowed; AV = avoid ~ new rights-of-way would be allowed if there were no other options; O = open to new rights-of-ways.

³ OHV = off-highway vehicle; C = closed to OHV's; O = open to OHV's; LD = limited to designated roads and trails; LE = limited to existing roads and trails.

⁴ VRM = visual resource management; class in parentheses is how the area would be managed if released from wilderness study.

⁵ C = closed to grazing; O = open to grazing; L = some portions of the area are open and some are closed to grazing.

⁶ Plant collecting applies only to collection of plants or plant material for personal use or onsite firewood collection (dead and down) for camping; commercial firewood, post, or pole cutting would not be allowed in any of the ACEC's.

⁷ Minerals; O = open for exploration, development, extraction of minerals; C = closed to all mineral activity; NSO = no surface occupancy allowed during exploration, development or extraction of oil, gas, or geothermal resources. In those ACEC's which overlap with WSA's, the WSA portion would be open to locatable minerals; however, no actions requiring reclamation are allowed (NREC). WSA's are closed to the sale or lease of minerals in all alternatives. If these WSA's are not designated wilderness, they would continue to be open to locatable minerals and could be open to sale or lease of minerals, depending on the alternative.

⁸ Would continue to be open to grazing unless conflicts are identified in the future that would require modification to current grazing management.

⁹ ND = no designation.

with protection or enhancement of relevant and important values and the existing weed control environmental assessment (USDI-BLM 1994d). Some areas such as Lake Abert and Warner Wetlands are covered by specific weed management plans (USDI-BLM 1995e, 1999g). Any weed control measures proposed in WSA's within ACEC's would be consistent with wilderness IMP direction (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Road management: In all ACEC/RNA's designated closed to OHV's, or where OHV's are limited to designated roads and trails, all roads not designated open would be signed closed, physically blocked, and/or rehabilitated. Existing road data sources include one or more of the following: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) digital line graph and digital orthophotography data, global positioning system data, and field mapping. Additional, non-inventoried roads or trails may

be present on the ground. Any new roads or trails discovered in the future within SMA's in the existing roads and trails category would remain open unless determined in a subsequent analysis that they are not needed or are causing resource damage. Any new roads or trails discovered in the future in SMA's under the designated roads and trails category would be closed. See Table 4-4 for a comparison of the miles of roads proposed for closure in SMA's for each alternative.

WSA management in areas of overlap with ACEC/RNA's: Management prescriptions were developed for Alternatives B, C, and D independently of WSA considerations. All management actions for those portions of ACEC's within an instant study area (ISA) or WSA would be governed by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes

a determination regarding wilderness designation for the area. Any WSA's, or portions thereof, designated an ACEC and later released from wilderness study would be managed according to the applicable management direction for that ACEC. Under some alternatives, the proposed ACEC management may be more restrictive than the wilderness IMP, such as closing an area to livestock grazing or limiting vehicle use to designated roads and trails rather than existing roads and trails. Should WSA's be designated as wilderness in the future, they would be managed in accordance with the direction contained in the authorizing legislation. Based on recent road inventory, it has been discovered that a number of roads within WSA's which do not appear on wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed under all alternatives to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as "historically closed" on the SMA maps. Seven proposed or existing ACEC's overlap with existing WSA's and an ISA (see Table 3-4).

Commercial or personal uses: Firewood, post, or pole cutting, for both commercial and domestic use, would not allowed in any of the existing or proposed ACEC/RNA's under any of the alternatives. Domestic firewood cutting, and bough cutting with offsite removal is prohibited under the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). This generally does not preclude collection of small amounts of dead or downed, woody material for firewood for onsite camping use, unless specifically prohibited in the following alternative description.

Plant or plant material (living or dead) collection for commercial purposes, including juniper berries or boughs, is generally allowed under permit under Alternatives A and B, within the proposed ACEC/RNA's, unless specifically prohibited in the following alternative description. It would not be allowed in any of the existing or proposed ACEC/RNA's under Alternatives C or D. Personal or Tribal collection of plants or plant materials would be allowed in most ACEC/RNA's, unless specifically prohibited in the following alternative description.

Nondestructive research: Nondestructive research would be encouraged in all of the proposed and existing ACEC's, and is not limited only to those areas that have RNA's. This could include collection of small quantities of plants or plant materials. Any research would need to be authorized by the BLM in writing and where necessary, permitted. The resulting data and information would be used by the BLM to help guide management of these areas.

Recreation: Commercial recreational use or use

requiring a special permit proposed within ACEC's would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and would be permitted, modified, or prohibited, as needed to protect the ACEC/RNA values. Dispersed or primitive camping use would be allowed in most existing or proposed ACEC/RNA's unless specifically prohibited in the following alternative description. Under Alternatives A and B, unrestricted rock and boulder climbing would be allowed within most existing or proposed ACEC/RNA's. Under Alternatives C, D, and E, rock and boulder climbing would be prohibited in Table Rock, High Lakes, and Black Hills ACEC's. The use of bolts or other permanent safety devices for rock or boulder climbing would require a permit within the remainder of the ACEC/RNA's. The use of bolts or other permanent safety devices would be prohibited under all alternatives within all WSA's (including areas of overlap with ACEC/RNA's) and significant caves.

Minerals: According to 43 CFR 3809.11, an approved plan of operation is required prior to commencing any operation, except casual use, involving locatable minerals in a designated ACEC. Other restrictions may be applied for leasable or salable minerals, depending on the type of other resource values present. Proposed mineral activities in those ACEC/RNA's that overlap with WSA's would be further limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Lands and Realty: Any inholdings acquired would be managed in accordance with the management direction for the surrounding ACEC/RNA.

Tribal Consultation: Native American traditional uses and concerns would continue to be identified and protected through consultation with Tribal governments and individual Native Americans for management actions within existing and proposed ACEC/RNA's.

Management Direction by Alternative—Devils Garden ACEC

Alternative A

The existing ACEC designation and boundaries (28,241 acres) would be retained. The ACEC and WSA boundary are the same (Maps SMA-1, SMA-5, and R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

New rights-of-way would be excluded from the area except to access non-Federal property (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Table 3-4.—Overlap of existing and proposed ACEC's and WSA's (in acres) ¹

Area of critical environmental concern	Alternative C	Alternative D	Wilderness study area	Alternative C overlap	Alternative D overlap	WSA recommendation
Abert Rim Addition (P)	18,049	18,049	Abert Rim	18,049	18,019	Suitable
Devils Garden (E)	28,241	28,241	Devils Garden Lava Bed	28,241	28,241	Suitable
Fish Creek Rim (P)	8,725	8,725	Fish Creek Rim	6,876	6,876	Suitable
Guano Creek/Sink Lakes (P)	4,936	11,199	Guano Creek	4,936	11,199	Suitable
Hawksie-Walksie (P)	17,339	17,339	Sage Hen Hills, Hawk Mtn.	963	963	Suitable
High Lakes (P)	40,095	39,985	Guano Creek	1,240	0	Suitable
Lake Abert (E)	50,117	50,117	Abert Rim	7,110	7,110	Suitable
Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake (E)	35,575		Sand Dunes, Lost Forest ISA ²	24,516	24,516	Nonsuitable

¹ Acreage currently designated for existing (E) ACEC's and proposed (P) for Alternatives C and D. Proposed ACEC's would not be designated under Alternatives A, B, and E.

² ISA = instant study area.

OHV's would be limited to existing roads and trails. Based on a recent road inventory, it has been discovered that about 11.4 miles of roads (Table 4-4) not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as "historically closed" on Map SMA-5. These roads would remain closed, even if the area is released from wilderness study. All other roads would remain open year-round.

Due to the WSA status, the area is managed as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If the area is not designated wilderness, it would be managed as VRM Class IV.

Five allotments are located in the area. Livestock grazing on a temporary nonrenewable basis would continue in Allotment 907. Grazing in Allotments 900, 905, 906, 908, and 910 would continue as at present.

Though locatable mineral entry is allowed under the wilderness IMP, actions that require reclamation are not currently allowed (USDI-BLM 1995b). This effectively closes the area to mineral location. The area is also closed to the sale or lease of minerals. If the area is not designated wilderness, the ACEC would be opened to all mineral uses. Oil, gas, or geothermal activity would be subject to no-surface-occupancy stipulations, while locatable mineral exploration and development would require a plan of operation.

Alternative B

Under this alternative, the existing Devils Garden ACEC would be retained (Map SMA-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Management would be the same as under Alternative A (Maps L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

The ACEC would be retained under this alternative (Maps SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

New rights-of-way would be excluded except to provide access to non-Federal land (Map L-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails as shown on Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS. Most of the roads in the garden would be permanently closed, including the spur road from Road 6179 to

Derrick Cave, even if released from wilderness study.

The ACEC would continue to be managed as VRM Class I (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS), but would revert to VRM Class II if it is not designated wilderness.

The entire ACEC would be closed to livestock grazing (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be closed to sale or lease of minerals, even if released from wilderness study. Mineral location would continue to be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) and the area would be recommended for withdrawal, even if released from wilderness study.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, the existing Devils Garden ACEC would be retained (Maps SMA-4 and -5).

New rights-of-way would be excluded except to provide access to non-Federal land (Map L-8). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

The Cabin Lake/Silver Lake Deer Winter Range Cooperative Vehicle Closure would be included into this area (Maps R-7 and SMA-24). Those roads closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) would remain closed (shown as "historically closed" on Map SMA-5), even if released from wilderness study. The road to Derrick Cave would be closed. The remainder of the roads would be closed to motorized travel from December 1 through March 31, annually. Motorized travel would be limited to designated roads and trails for the remainder of the year.

The ACEC would continue to be managed as VRM Class I (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS), but would revert to VRM Class II if it is not designated wilderness.

Livestock grazing would be managed according to existing permit stipulations (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important resources and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed projects would be evaluated for impacts and

permitted where relevant and important ACEC or WSA values would be maintained or enhanced.

Though locatable mineral entry is allowed under the wilderness IMP, actions that require reclamation are not currently allowed (USDI-BLM 1995b). This effectively closes the area to mineral location. The area is also closed to the sale or lease of minerals (Map M-8, -9, and -10). If the area is not designated wilderness, the ACEC would be opened to all mineral uses, but activity would be managed to minimize impacts to bighorn sheep and other BLM special status species. Oil, gas, or geothermal activity would be subject to no-surface-occupancy stipulations, while locatable mineral exploration and development would require a plan of operation.

Alternative E

Under this alternative the ACEC designation would be revoked. The area would continue to be managed according to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation or consistent with management direction for the rest of the planning area (such as closed to grazing).

Management Direction by Alternative—Lake Abert ACEC

Alternatives A–D

Under Alternatives A–D, the Lake Abert ACEC (50,117 acres) would be retained (Maps SMA-1, -2, -3, -6 of the Draft RMP/EIS, and Maps SMA-4 and -7). Management of the ACEC would be according to the existing management plan amendment (USDI-BLM 1996d) and the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b), as summarized below and in Table 3-3.

New rights-of-way locations would be avoided in the Lake Abert area (Map L-2, -6, and -8 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The Abert Rim WSA portion of the ACEC would continue to be managed as an exclusion area. The Abert Rim WSA portion of the area would continue to be managed as tenure Zone 1 (retention). Abert Lake would be managed as Zone 2 under Alternative A and as Zone 1 (retention) under Alternative B–D (Maps L-1, -3, -4, and -5 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV use would be restricted throughout the ACEC to existing roads and trails (Maps R-2 and R-5 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Seasonal closures would be placed on the playa at the north end of the lake, in deer/bighorn sheep critical winter range, and near raptor

nest sites, if needed. An existing two-track road at the mouth of Juniper Creek, east of Highway 395, would be converted to a foot trail. During the wet season, vehicle traffic may be restricted on those roads lacking subgrade reinforcement where critical erosion is known to occur. Several miles of roads and trails within the Abert Rim WSA (Table 4-4) have been closed. These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-7.

The Abert Rim corridor will remain in its existing VRM Class I category. The remainder of the ACEC would be managed as VRM Class II (Maps VRM-1, -2, and -3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing management would continue as described in the management plan amendment (USDI-BLM 1996d). Grazing would continue to be excluded from most of the western shoreline and from the eastern shoreline up to the top of Abert Rim (Maps G-1, -2, and -3). Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and approved grazing systems. Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The existing ACEC, including the western portion of Abert Rim WSA, would be closed to the collection of all plant materials.

Within the WSA portion of the ACEC, mineral leasing or mineral disposal is currently not allowed under the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). Locatable mineral activity requiring reclamation would not be allowed; which essentially precludes locatable mineral activity (Maps M-8, -9, and -10). If Congress decides to release Abert Rim WSA from WSA study, that portion of the WSA within the ACEC would remain closed to salable and leasable mineral activities while locatable mineral activity would be allowed, but subject to preparation of a plan of operations.

The northern portion of the ACEC area (Map M-9) would be closed to sodium leasing. The rest of the ACEC is open to mining, but subject to special stipulations related to lake levels, total dissolved solids, and visual quality. Geothermal, oil, and gas leasing could occur throughout the remainder of the ACEC, but no

surface occupancy would be allowed within the ACEC boundary. Locatable mineral activity would be allowed throughout the remainder of the ACEC, but would require preparation of a plan of operations. Mineral material disposal would continue from the two existing pits only.

Noxious weeds would be managed according to direction in the management plan amendment (USDI-BLM 1996b, the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b), and the “Abert Rim Weed Management Area Plan” (USDI-BLM 1995e).

Other management direction as specified in the management plan amendment (USDI-BLM 1996b) for air quality, fire, water resources, special status species, and cultural resources and would be continued under all alternatives.

The following changes to the existing management described above would be made under each alternative.

Alternative B

Under Alternative B, the total dissolved solids and lake-level restrictions on mining would be removed.

Alternative C

Under Alternative C, new rights-of-way would be excluded except to provide access to non-Federal land (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). All roads on the west side of the lake would be closed. An additional total of about 15.9 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4). In the rest of the ACEC, all existing roads would be designated open with possible seasonal closures.

Alternative D

Under Alternative D, OHV use east of Highway 395 and up to the top of the rim would be restricted to designated roads and trails. The remainder of the area (west of Highway 395) would remain in the existing roads and trails category (Map R-7). About 3.3 additional miles of roads and trails (Table 4-4) would be closed (Map SMA-7).

Alternative E

Under this alternative, the ACEC designation would be revoked. Management of the area would be the same as that prescribed for the rest of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

The existing 36,120-acre ACEC, including the Lost Forest RNA/ISA, would be retained and managed according to the “High Desert Management Framework Plan” (Maps SMA-1 and -8 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The Lost Forest RNA/ISA and the Sand Dunes WSA (Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS) would be managed according to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes a determination regarding wilderness designation for the two areas.

This area would be excluded from location of new rights-of-way, except that new rights-of-way could be placed in the existing corridor through Fossil Lake (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Lost Forest RNA/ISA and Sand Dunes WSA would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention). The remainder of the ACEC/RNA would continue to be managed as Zone 2 (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The existing 6,660-acre vehicle closure on Fossil Lake would be retained (Maps R-2 and SMA-9 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The unfenced closure boundary would be signed. Vehicle use in the Lost Forest RNA/ISA would continue to be limited to designated roads and trails. Most of the Sand Dunes WSA would remain open to OHV use. Those roads shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-9 would remain closed, even if the Lost Forest and Sand Dunes areas are removed from wilderness study.

The Lost Forest RNA and Sand Dunes WSA would continue to be managed as VRM Class I (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If Congress removes these areas from wilderness consideration they would revert to VRM Class III. Fossil Lake and the remainder of the ACEC would continue to be managed as VRM Class III.

The present grazing management in the ACEC would continue: Fossil Lake is excluded from grazing; the remainder of the area falls in several pastures of Allotment 10103 (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Cutting or collecting firewood for camping use would continue to be prohibited. Means to provide firewood for campers on high-use weekends would be investigated, including permitting a concessionaire to sell firewood from an offsite source.

The existing mineral withdrawal on Lost Forest RNA/ISA would be retained. The Sand Dunes WSA and Lost Forest RNA would be closed to sale or lease of minerals. Any locatable mineral activity in the Sand Dunes WSA is currently subject to the no reclamation stipulation. Should Congress remove the Sand Dunes WSA from wilderness study, mineral activity would be restricted similar to the rest of the ACEC area. The Fossil Lake area would be open to all mineral activity, subject to no-surface-occupancy restrictions for leaseable minerals. The remainder of the ACEC would require preparation of a plan of operations for locatable mineral activity.

Alternative B

The existing ACEC and RNA would be retained. The boundary of the ACEC would be amended to exclude the Department of Defense withdrawal along the south boundary of the ACEC (Map SMA-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). In addition, the northern boundary of the ACEC and the Lost Forest RNA would be made consistent and relocated to the southern edge of BLM Road 6141. These two changes would reduce the size of the area to about 35,575 acres. The Lost Forest mineral withdrawal and ISA boundary would remain as it is at present (Map SMA-8 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The existing electrical transmission line corridor through Fossil Lake would be expanded in width up to 2,000 feet for locating future utility lines or rights-of-way. Stipulations and tower spacing would be used to protect relevant and important resources. New rights-of-ways would be excluded from the Sand Dunes WSA and Lost Forest ISA/RNA except for those necessary to access private lands (Map L-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Routing rights-of-way through the remainder of the ACEC would be avoided unless there were no other options. The entire ACEC/RNA would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV use would be managed as described under Alternative A. BLM Road 6179 through the Lost Forest would be upgraded to a single-lane road with turnouts and parking pulloffs and surface similar to the Access Road 6151 to the west.

VRM class (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS), livestock grazing (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS), firewood collecting, and minerals activities would be managed as described under Alternative A.

To better accommodate recreation use, private individual(s) would be encouraged to develop a com-

mercial campground on private land adjacent to or near the sand dunes. If the Sand Dunes WSA is not designated wilderness, BLM would consider developing a campground on adjacent Federal land and charge fees for use, if no private campground is developed.

Alternative C

The existing ACEC/RNA would be retained. The boundary of the ACEC would be amended to exclude the Department of Defense withdrawal along the south boundary of the ACEC. In addition, the northern boundary of the ACEC and the Lost Forest RNA would be made consistent and relocated to the southern edge of BLM Road 6141 (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The Lost Forest ISA and the Sand Dunes WSA would be managed according to the wilderness IMP until such time as Congress makes a determination regarding wilderness designation for the two areas.

A corridor 300-feet wide would be identified for the existing electrical transmission line across Fossil Lake. Any new rights-of-way would be placed within this corridor. The rest of the ACEC would be excluded from all new rights-of-way except for any necessary to access non-Federal land (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The entire ACEC/RNA would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The entire ACEC, including the Sand Dunes, would be closed to OHV's (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). All roads in the ACEC, except the Access Road 6151 would be closed. Road 6151 would be closed at the Lost Forest RNA western boundary.

The ACEC/RNA would be closed to overnight camping and would be open to day use only.

Visual resource management would be the same as described under Alternative A (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The entire ACEC would be closed to livestock grazing to protect relevant and important resources (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Fences would be installed as needed to keep livestock out. Any fence construction in the WSA or ISA would be subject to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Open fires and the collecting of firewood would be prohibited in the ACEC.

The mineral withdrawal on the Lost Forest ISA would be retained (Map M-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The

Sand Dunes WSA, Lost Forest RNA, and Fossil Lake areas would be closed to the sale and lease of minerals. Fossil Lake would be open to locatable mineral activity, subject to access restrictions and plan of operation requirements. Any locatable mineral activity in the Sand Dunes WSA would be subject to the no reclamation stipulation. Should Congress remove the Sand Dunes WSA from wilderness study, the area would be open to locatable mineral development. Locatable mineral activity within the remainder of the ACEC (except Lost Forest RNA/ISA) would be subject to access restrictions and require a plan of operation.

Alternative D

The existing ACEC/RNA would be retained. The boundary of the ACEC would be amended to exclude the Department of Defense withdrawal along the south boundary of the ACEC. Should the Department of Defense decide that they no longer need this site and the BLM revoke the withdrawal in the future, the southern boundary would revert to its current location (Map SMA-8 of the Draft RMP/EIS). In addition, the northern boundary of the ACEC and the Lost Forest RNA would be made consistent and relocated to the southern edge of BLM Road 6141 (Maps SMA-4 and -9). The Lost Forest RNA/ISA and the Sand Dunes WSA would be managed according to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes a determination regarding wilderness designation for the two areas.

The Sand Dunes WSA and Lost Forest RNA/ISA would be excluded from location of new rights-of-way. The existing electrical transmission line through the Fossil Lake would be identified as a right-of-way corridor up to 1000-foot wide for future utility lines or other rights-of-way. New rights-of-way in the remainder of the ACEC would be avoided unless there are no other options (Map L-8). The entire ACEC/RNA would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

The existing vehicle closure on Fossil Lake would be expanded to 8,988 acres (Maps R-7 and SMA-9a). The closure boundary shown on Map SMA-9a has been located using the global positioning system and leaves as much of the large, contiguous dunes in the open area as possible. The closure boundary would be fenced or signed on the ground. Vehicle use in the Lost Forest RNA/ISA would continue to be limited to designated roads and trails. Additional area west of Lost Forest and north of the Fossil Lake closure would be added to the designated roads and trails class (Maps R-7 and SMA-9a). Most of the Sand Dunes WSA would remain

open to OHV use. Road 6151 through the Lost Forest RNA/ISA would be minimally upgraded to prevent widening and braiding of the road and resulting damage to relevant and important resources. Those roads shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-9 would remain closed.

The Lost Forest RNA and Sand Dunes WSA would continue to be managed as VRM Class I (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If Congress removes these areas from wilderness consideration they would revert to VRM Class III. Fossil Lake and the remainder of the ACEC would continue to be managed as VRM Class III.

Primitive camping areas would be designated in the Lost Forest RNA and Sand Dunes WSA, with camping allowed only in these sites (Map SMA-9). Parking areas along the main road 6151 through the Lost Forest would be provided for day use. Camping areas within the Sand Dunes WSA would be managed on a rotational basis (for example, two of the camping/staging areas would be open and available to use and the other area would be closed for an indeterminate amount of time [2–6 years] to allow natural rehabilitation to occur). The length of the closure would be based on the following criteria: (1) success of natural revegetation, (2) obliteration of human activities by the natural movement of sand, and (3) the public’s adherence to the closures. Specific travel routes from the camping/staging areas to the barren dunes which are open to OHV use would be established. Adaptive management activities which would allow the continued use of each of these camping/staging areas while protecting the natural values of the area would be adopted as necessary to ensure their long-term use and protection. The establishment of a campground on private lands within the sand dunes area would be encouraged.

The grazing closure on Fossil Lake would be expanded to 8,988 acres (Map G-3). This would require construction of a fence within a WSA. Livestock use in the rest of the ACEC would continue based on existing permit stipulations. Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

Collecting of firewood for camping use would be prohibited.

The mineral withdrawal on the Lost Forest RNA/ISA would be retained (Map M-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The Sand Dunes WSA and Lost Forest RNA/ISA areas would be closed to the sale and lease of minerals. Any locatable mineral activity in the Sand Dunes WSA would be subject to the no reclamation restriction of the wilderness IMP. Should Congress remove the Sand Dunes WSA from wilderness study, locatable mineral development would be allowed. Fossil Lake would be open to locatable mineral activity subject to seasonal restrictions and preparation of a plan of operations. It would be open to mineral leasing subject to no-surface-occupancy restrictions. Fossil Lake would be closed to mineral material disposal. Mineral activity within the remainder of the ACEC would be allowed, but subject to seasonal restrictions and locatable mineral development would require a plan of operation (Maps M-8, -9, and -10).

Alternative E

The Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC designation and the Lost Forest RNA designation would be revoked. The former ACEC would be managed in the same manner as surrounding lands. The Lost Forest ISA and Sand Dunes WSA designations would continue and be managed according to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes a decision regarding their designation as wilderness, or consistent with management direction for the rest of the planning area (i.e., closed to grazing). The sand dunes would be closed to OHV use.

Management Direction by Alternative—Warner Wetlands ACEC

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Under Alternatives A–D, the existing Warner Wetlands ACEC (53,087 acres) would be retained. Management of the ACEC would be according to the existing “Warner Wetlands Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Management Plan” (USDI-BLM 1990b, 1990c, 1990d, 1990e, 1990f, 1990g, 1990h, 1990i, 1990j), except as highlighted in the alternative descriptions below (Maps SMA-1, -2, -3, and -10 of the Draft RMP/EIS, along with Maps SMA-4 and SMA-10).

Vehicles would be restricted to designated roads and trails (Maps R-2, R-5, R-6, and SMA-10 of the Draft

RMP/EIS and R-7 and SMA-10). Roads shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-10 would remain closed.

The area would be managed as VRM Class III (Maps VRM-I, -II, and -III of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Mineral management would be the same under these four alternatives. The eastern half of the ACEC would be closed to mineral disposal, open to leasing with no-surface-occupancy restrictions, and open to mineral location subject to seasonal restrictions along with the need to prepare a plan of operations. The western half is open to mineral disposal, open to mineral leasing, and open to mineral locations subject to preparation of a plan of operation (Maps M-8, -9, and -10).

Weed management in the ACEC would be conducted according to the “Warner Basin Weed Management Area Plan” (USDI-BLM 1999g).

Alternatives A and B

The ACEC would be open to new rights-of-way under Alternatives A and B (Maps L-2 and -6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The entire ACEC would be managed as land tenure Zone 2 under Alternative A and as Zone 1 (retention) under Alternative B (Maps L-1 and -3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The core wetland area (potholes and acquired lands) (Map SMA-10 of the Draft RMP/EIS) is currently closed to livestock grazing. The remainder of the ACEC is grazed in accordance with an approved allotment management plan (USDI-BLM 1990g). This would continue under both alternatives.

Alternative C

The ACEC would be considered a right-of-way exclusion area (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The entire ACEC would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The 400-acre meadow management area at Hart Bar and the core wetland area (potholes and acquired lands) would be closed to grazing (Map SMA-10 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The remainder of the ACEC would be grazed in accordance with an approved allotment management plan (USDI-BLM 1990g).

Alternative D

The ACEC would be considered a right-of-way avoidance area (Map L-8). The entire ACEC would be

managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

Most of the core wetland area (potholes and acquired lands) would remain closed to livestock grazing. The remainder of the ACEC would be grazed in accordance with an approved allotment management plan (USDI-BLM 1990g). However, management of the 400-acre meadow management area at Hart Bar would be changed to manage for tallgrass nesting bird species rather than shortgrass nesting species. This would involve incorporating the meadow management area into the southern portion of the core wetland acquired lands portion of the ACEC (e.g., that portion south of Anderson Lake within the ditch and dike system [Map SMA-10]). This area would be divided by fencing or natural barriers. The southern portion would utilize fire, mowing, and livestock grazing (authorized on a temporary nonrenewable grazing basis) to meet specific management objectives or as a pretreatment prior to planned prescribed fire to facilitate/enhance fuel breaks. This would expand the meadow management area by approximately 1,500 acres.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, the Warner Wetlands ACEC designation would be revoked. Management of the area would be the same as that prescribed for the rest of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Abert Rim Addition to Lake Abert ACEC

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Noxious weeds would be managed according to the direction set forth in the “Abert Rim Weed Management Area Plan” (USDI-BLM 1995e). The area would continue to be managed according to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) (Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative A

Under this alternative, this proposed addition would not be added to the Lake Abert ACEC (Map SMA-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area is managed as a right-of-way exclusion area due to the WSA status (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study, it would be open to new right-of-way location. The entire ACEC would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention).

OHV’s would be limited to existing roads and trails (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Based on a recent road inventory, it has been discovered that about 6 miles of roads (Table 4-4) not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-7. If the WSA is not designated wilderness, it would be opened to OHV use, including “historically closed” roads.

The area would be managed as VRM Class I due to the WSA status (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study, it would be managed as VRM Class IV.

Livestock grazing would continue as it is currently managed based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The majority of this area is in Allotment 517, which is grazed from April through October. The south end of the proposed add-on is within Allotments 400 and 518. Allotment 518 is grazed in summer. This portion of Allotment 400 is excluded from grazing use.

Mineral management of this area is restricted by WSA status. The area is closed to mineral leasing and material disposal. Locatable mineral activity is limited by the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). Should the area be removed from WSA status, the area would become open to leasable, saleable, and locatable development.

Alternative B

The proposed addition would not be added to the existing Lake Abert ACEC. It would be managed the same as under Alternative A (Maps SMA-2, G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, VRM-1, and L-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

A total of 18,019 acres would be added to the existing Lake Abert ACEC under this alternative (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The add-on area lies completely within the Abert Rim WSA (Map R-8 of the Draft RMP/EIS) and would be managed according to the “Lake Abert ACEC Management Plan” (USDI-BLM 1996d) and the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

New rights-of-ways would be excluded from the area (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The ACEC would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Based on a recent road inventory, it has been discovered that about 6 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as "historically closed" on Map SMA-7. About 15.9 additional miles of roads and trails would be closed under this alternative (Table 4-4). If the WSA is not designated wilderness, these road restrictions would remain in effect.

The area would be managed as VRM Class I due to the WSA status (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study, it would be managed as VRM Class IV.

The area would be open to grazing similar to Alternative A (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important resources and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The area would be closed to mineral leasing and disposal. Locatable mineral activity would be limited by the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). Should the area be removed from WSA status, it would become open mineral leasing and disposal. It would also be open to locatable mineral development subject to the development of a plan of operations.

Alternative D

A total of 18,019 acres would be added to the existing Lake Abert ACEC under this alternative (Maps SMA-4 and -7). The add-on area lies completely within the Abert Rim WSA (Map R-9) and would be managed according to the "Lake Abert ACEC Management Plan" (USDI-BLM 1996d) and the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

New rights-of-ways would be excluded from the area (Map L-8). The ACEC would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails

(Map R-7). Based on a recent road inventory, it has been discovered that about 6 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as "historically closed" on Map SMA-7. About 3.3 additional miles of roads and trails would be closed under this alternative (Table 4-4). If the WSA is not designated wilderness, these road restrictions would remain in effect.

The area would be managed as VRM Class I due to the WSA status (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study, it would be managed as VRM Class IV.

Livestock grazing would continue as it is currently managed based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The majority of this area is in Allotment 517, which is grazed from April through October. The south end of the proposed add-on is within Allotments 400 and 518. Allotment 518 is grazed in summer. This portion of Allotment 400 is excluded from grazing use. Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important resources and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The area would be closed to mineral leasing and disposal. Locatable mineral activity would be limited by the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). Should the area be removed from WSA status, it would become open mineral leasing and disposal. It would also be open to locatable mineral development subject to the development of a plan of operations (Maps M-8, -9, and -10).

Alternative E

Under this alternative, no additional area would be added to the existing Lake Abert ACEC. The area is entirely within the Abert Rim WSA (Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would be managed according to the wilderness IMP, until such time as a decision is made by Congress regarding wilderness designation (USDI-BLM 1995b) or consistent with management direction for the rest of the planning area (i.e., closed to

grazing).

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Black Hills ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management of the area would continue as at present.

Rights-of-way for utility lines or other uses would be excluded (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 2 (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Approximately 1.9 miles of road closed in the past would remain closed (Table 4-4). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-11.

The area would continue to be managed as VRM Class IV (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be retained as part of the Paisley Herd Management Area (Map SMA-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Livestock grazing would continue as presently managed (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area is in Allotment 418 which is grazed from March through May.

The area would be open to all mineral uses including locatable, salable, and leasable minerals subject to approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

The conservation agreement with USFWS for the management and protection of Cusick’s buckwheat and snowline cymopterus would be completed and signed. The existing habitat management plan for the two species would continue in force, as would monitoring and research of the plants.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated. Management under this alternative would be the same as under Alternative A, except that new rights-of-way would be allowed (Maps G-1, SMA-2, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 3,049 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Map SMA-3 of the Draft

RMP/EIS).

The ACEC/RNA would be excluded from new rights-of-way location except to provide access to non-Federal land (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Legal access across adjacent private land would be acquired, if necessary, to maintain administrative access. The entire ACEC/RNA would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be closed to OHV’s (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). A parking area outside the ACEC would be designated for public and administrative use. Approximately 1.9 miles of road closed in the past would remain closed (Table 4-4). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-11. An additional 4.9 miles of roads would be closed.

The area would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would also be closed to livestock grazing and to wild horse use to protect sensitive plant species. Fences would be installed, if needed, to exclude livestock and wild horses. The area would then become an inactive part of the Paisley Herd Management Area (Map G-2 and SMA-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The ACEC/RNA would be open to locatable minerals, subject to preparation of a plan of operations. It would be closed to salable or leaseable minerals.

Collecting plant or plant material (living or dead) for personal use would be prohibited.

Camping and collection of dead or downed woody material for campfire use would be prohibited. Day-use only would be allowed.

The conservation agreement with USFWS for Cusick’s buckwheat would be completed, signed, and implemented. Monitoring and research on this species would continue. The existing habitat management plan for these two species would continue in force.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 3,049 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Maps SMA-4 and -11).

New rights-of-way would be avoided unless there were no other options and then only with appropriate mitigating measures to protect relevant and important values (Map L-8). Legal access across private land

would be obtained, if needed, for public and administrative access. The entire ACEC/RNA would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7). Approximately 1.9 miles of road closed in the past would remain closed (Table 4-4). These are shown as "historically closed" on Map SMA-11. An additional 1.8 miles of roads would be closed.

The area would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing would continue based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important resources and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced. If needed, fences would be installed to exclude livestock and wild horse use.

Collecting plant or plant material (living or dead) for personal use would be prohibited.

The ACEC/RNA would be open to all minerals activity. All minerals activities would be subject to stipulations and mitigating measures to protect relevant and important values including: a no-surface-occupancy stipulation for geothermal, oil, or gas leasing activity and preparation of a plan of operation for locatable mineral development (Map M-8, -9, and -10).

Camping and collection of dead or downed woody material for campfire use would be prohibited. Day-use only would be allowed.

The conservation agreement with USFWS for Cusick's buckwheat would be completed, signed, and implemented. Monitoring and research on Cusick's buckwheat and snowline cymopterus would continue. The existing habitat management plan for these species would continue in force.

Alternative E

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management would follow that for the remainder of the

planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Connley Hills ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. An area of 1,800 acres would continue to be managed under the 1985 interim RNA management plan to protect the western juniper/bluebunch wheatgrass, western juniper/Idaho fescue, and western juniper/big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass plant communities.

The south portion of the area is excluded from the placement of new rights-of-way. The rest of the area would be open to new rights-of-way (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 2 (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be open to OHV use (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Existing roads would be kept open.

Connley Hills would continue to be managed as a combination of VRM Class III and IV (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Present grazing management would continue. The area is in Allotment 705 (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS) which is grazed from March through June.

The area would be open to all minerals activities based on approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

Alternative B

Under this alternative, 3,599 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Map SMA-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

New rights-of-way would be avoided unless there were no other options and then only with appropriate mitigating measures to protect relevant and important resources (Map L-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Legal access across private land would be obtained if needed for public and administrative access. The ACEC/RNA would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV's would be limited to existing roads and trails (Map R-5 of the Draft RMP/EIS) and erosion control measures would be implemented where needed.

Visual resources would be managed similar to Alterna-

tive A (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Existing grazing use would continue similar to Alternative A (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The ACEC/RNA would be open to exploration, development, and extraction of locatable, salable, and leasable minerals. Any geothermal, oil, or gas leasing activity would be subject to a no-surface-occupancy stipulation. Mineral location would require preparation of a plan of operations.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 3,599 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

New rights-of-way would be excluded except to provide access to non-Federal land (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The ACEC/RNA would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Action would be taken to acquire the 80-acre inholding from a willing landowner.

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails. About 6 miles of roads or trails would be closed and rehabilitated (Table 4-4).

The area would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The ACEC/RNA would be closed to grazing to protect these important grass communities (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Fences would be installed as needed to keep livestock out of the area.

The ACEC/RNA would be limited to day-use only. No camping or collection of dead or downed woody material for campfire use would be allowed.

Collecting plant or plant material (living or dead) for personal use would be prohibited.

The area would be closed to sale or lease of minerals, but would be kept open for locatable mineral entry, subject to the preparation of a plan of operations.

Important sites within the area would be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 3,559 acres would be designated as an ACEC and an RNA (Maps SMA-4 and -12).

New rights-of-way would be avoided unless there were no other options and then only with stipulations to protect relevant and important resources (Map L-8). The ACEC/RNA would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5). Actions would be taken to acquire the 80-acre private inholding from a willing landowner.

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Maps SMA-12 and R-7). About 4.1 miles of existing roads would be closed (Table 4-4).

The entire ACEC/RNA would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and approved allotment management plans (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The ACEC/RNA would be limited to day-use only. No camping or collection of dead or downed woody material for campfire use would be allowed.

Collecting plant or plant material (living or dead) for personal use would be prohibited.

The ACEC/RNA would be open to all mineral development. Leasable mineral activity would be subject to a no-surface-occupancy stipulation. Locatable mineral activity would require preparation of a plan of operations.

Important sites within the area would be nominated to the NRHP.

Alternative E

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management would follow that for the remainder of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Fish Creek Rim ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

No ACEC would be designated. That part of the area within the WSA (Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS) would be managed according to the wilderness IMP until such time as Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation (USDI-BLM 1995b). Management of the part of the area outside of the WSA would continue as at present.

The WSA is considered a right-of-way exclusion area, except for those necessary to access non-Federal property (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from WSA status, the area would be opened to new right-of-way location. The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV use would be limited to existing roads and trails within the WSA (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Based on a recent road inventory, it has been discovered that about 5.8 miles of roads (Table 4-4) not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-13. All other roads would remain open year-round. If released from WSA status, the area would be opened to OHV use, including “historically closed” roads.

The WSA would continue to be managed as VRM Class I (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study, it would be managed as VRM Class II.

Livestock grazing use would continue as at present: the area is in Allotment 202 (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS) which is grazed from mid-April through mid-September.

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

The WSA would be closed to mineral disposal and leasing. Mineral location within the WSA would be subject to the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). If released from wilderness study, the WSA would be open to all mineral activity. The area outside of the WSA (falling within the proposed ACEC boundary) would be open to all mineral activity.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated. Management would be the same as that described under Alternative A (see Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 8,725 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Most of the proposed ACEC/RNA is within the Fish Creek Rim WSA (Map R-8 of the Draft RMP/EIS), and actions in the area would be managed according to the wilderness IMP until such time as a decision is made by Congress regarding wilderness designation (USDI-BLM 1995b).

The WSA is considered a right-of-way exclusion area, except for those necessary to access non-Federal property (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from WSA status, the area would still be managed as a right-of-way exclusion area. The remainder of the ACEC/RNA outside the WSA would be managed as a right-of-way avoidance area. The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Based on a recent road inventory, it has been discovered that about 5.8 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-13. An additional 7 miles of other roads would be closed (Table 4-4). These roads would remain closed even if the area is released from WSA status.

The WSA would be managed as VRM Class I. If it is not designated wilderness, it would be managed as VRM Class II. The remainder of the ACEC, outside the WSA would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Grazing use would be based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important resources and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Pro-

posed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced. Any fence construction in the WSA would be subject to the wilderness IMP guidelines.

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

The WSA would be closed to mineral disposal and leasing. Mineral location within the WSA would be subject to the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). If released from wilderness study, the WSA would be open to all mineral activity, with appropriate stipulations to protect relevant and important resources, including preparation of a plan of operations for mineral location. The area outside of the WSA (falling within the ACEC boundary) would be open to all mineral activity. Mineral location would require a plan of operation.

The spring and wetland site in the north end (outside the WSA) of the area would be rehabilitated.

A strategy would be developed to protect and manage the prostrate lousewort and the nodding melic grass, two sensitive plant species.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 8,725 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Maps SMA-4 and -13). Since part of the proposed ACEC/RNA is within the Fish Creek Rim WSA (Map R-9), management would be according to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as a decision is made by Congress regarding wilderness designation.

New rights-of-way would be excluded from the WSA and avoided in the remainder of the ACEC/RNA (Map L-8). If the WSA is released from wilderness study, it would be managed as a right-of-way avoidance area. The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7). About 5.8 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as "historically closed" on Map SMA-13. An additional 2.1 miles of other roads would be closed (Table 4-4). These roads would remain closed even if the area is released from WSA status.

The WSA would be managed as VRM Class I. If it is not designated wilderness, it would be managed as VRM Class II. The remainder of the ACEC, outside the WSA, would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Grazing use would be based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important resources and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced. Any fence construction in the WSA would be subject to the wilderness IMP guidelines.

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

The WSA would be closed to mineral disposal and leasing. Mineral location within the WSA would be subject to the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). If released from wilderness study, the WSA would be open to all mineral activity, with appropriate stipulations to protect relevant and important resources, including preparation of a plan of operations for mineral location. The area outside of the WSA (falling within the ACEC boundary) would be open to all mineral activity. Mineral location would require a plan of operation (Maps M-8, -9, and -10).

A strategy would be developed to protect and manage the prostrate lousewort and the nodding melic grass, two Bureau sensitive plant species.

Alternative E

No ACEC/RNA would be designated under this alternative. Most of the area is within the Fish Creek Rim WSA (Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would be managed according to the wilderness IMP, until such time as a decision is made by Congress regarding wilderness designation (USDI-BLM 1995b) or consistent with management direction for the rest of the planning area (i.e., closed to grazing).

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Foley Lake ACEC/RNA

Alternatives A and B

Under these alternatives, no ACEC or RNA would be designated.

The conservation agreement with the USFWS for the Columbia cress would be retained and would continue to be followed.

The area would remain open to new rights-of-way location (Maps L-2 and L-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would remain in land tenure Zone 2 (Maps L-1 and L-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would remain open to OHV use (Maps R-2 and R-5 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be managed as VRM Class IV as is the surrounding area.

Livestock grazing use would continue as at present. The area is divided between Allotment 515, which is grazed in the spring and lightly in the summer and fall, and Allotment 517, which is grazed from April through October.

Collecting plants or plant material for personal use would be allowed.

The area would be open to all minerals activities based on approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 2,747 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). This boundary would include Featherbed Lake (where Columbia cress has been located in the past).

The conservation agreement with the USFWS for the Columbia cress would be retained and would continue to be followed.

New rights-of-way would be excluded except to provide access to non-Federal property (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would be managed in land tenure Zone 1 (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The ACEC/RNA would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing would be excluded to protect sensitive plant species (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Fences would be constructed as needed to exclude livestock. The existing enclosure to protect the Columbia cress would be enlarged.

The ACEC/RNA would be open to locatable mineral entry, subject to the preparation of a mining plan of operations, and closed to the sale or lease of minerals.

Collecting plant or plant material (living or dead) for commercial purposes, including firewood cutting, would not be allowed.

Eligible cultural sites would be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 2,230 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Maps SMA-4 and -14). The Featherbed Lake portion would not be included since the Columbia cress has not been seen growing in or around the lake in 8 years. The boundary on the east side of the ACEC/RNA would be set back 100 feet from the existing County Road 3-10 right-of-way.

New rights-of-way in the ACEC/RNA would be avoided unless there are no other options (Map L-8). The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7). About 0.2 miles of roads would be closed (Table 4-4 and Map SMA-14).

The ACEC/RNA would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and approved allotment management plans (Map G-3). The enclosure at Foley Lake itself would be enlarged to protect the Columbia cress from further grazing. Other changes in grazing use could also be necessary. Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing

season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

Collecting plant or plant material (living or dead) for personal use would not be allowed.

The area would be open to all mineral activity with stipulations to protect relevant and important resources, and subject to preparing a plan of operations for mineral location.

Eligible cultural resource sites would be nominated to the NRHP.

Alternative E

No ACEC/RNA would be designated under this alternative. Management would follow that for the remainder of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Guano Creek/Sink Lakes ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. The area (except the recent Billy Burr acquisition parcel) is wholly within the Guano Creek WSA (Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Resource values would be managed according to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation. The Billy Burr parcel would be managed the same as adjacent non-WSA land.

The area is currently managed as a right-of-way exclusion area due to its WSA status (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study, the area would be opened to new rights-of-way location. The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV use is limited to existing roads and trails within the WSA (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). About 0.2 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed (Table 4-4) to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-16. If released from wilderness study, the area would be opened to OHV use, including “historically closed” roads.

The area is currently managed as VRM Class I due to its WSA status (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study the area would be managed as VRM Class III.

The area would continue to be closed to grazing (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS) as described in a recent plan amendment (USDI-USFWS and USDI-BLM 1998a, 1998b) and the “Oregon Public Lands Transfer and Protection Act” of 1998, even if released from wilderness study.

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Due to WSA status, the area would be closed to mineral disposal and leasing. Mineral location within the WSA would be subject to the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). If released from wilderness study, the WSA would be open to all mineral activity, based on approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

The draft conservation agreement with the USFWS for Crosby’s buckwheat and grimy ivesia would be completed. Monitoring and research of these plants would continue.

Alternative B

The proposed ACEC would not be designated under this alternative. Management would be the same as prescribed under Alternative A (see Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, about 4,936 acres would be designated as an ACEC and as a RNA (including the recent Billy Burr acquisition parcel) (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The north boundary would conform with the southern Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge boundary.

New rights-of-way would be excluded except to provide access to non-Federal property, even if released from wilderness study (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV’s would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS), even if the area is released from wilderness study. About 0.2 miles of

roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-16. An additional 2.4 miles of roads would be closed (Table 4-4) even if the area is released from WSA status.

The ACEC/RNA would be managed as VRM Class I due to WSA status. If the area is released from wilderness study, it would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would continue to be closed to grazing (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS) as described in a recent plan amendment (USDI-USFWS and USDI-BLM 1998a, 1998b) and the “Oregon Public Lands Transfer and Protection Act” of 1998, even if released from wilderness study.

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Due to WSA status, the area would be closed to mineral disposal and leasing even if released from wilderness study. Mineral location within the WSA would be subject to the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). If released from wilderness study, the WSA would be open to all mineral location, subject to the preparation of a plan of operations.

The draft conservation agreement with the USFWS for Crosby’s buckwheat and grimy ivesia would be completed. Monitoring and research on these plants would continue.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 11,239 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Maps SMA-4). The ACEC/RNA boundary would be expanded to the same boundary as Guano Creek WSA (Map R-9 and SMA-16).

New rights-of-way would be excluded, even if released from wilderness study (Map L-8). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

OHV’s would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7), even if the area is released from wilderness study. About 0.2 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as “historically closed”

on Map SMA-16. An additional 2.4 miles of roads would be closed (Table 4-4), even if the area is released from WSA status.

The area would be managed as VRM Class I due to WSA status. If the area is released from wilderness study, it would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would continue to be closed to grazing (Map G-3) as described in a recent plan amendment (USDI-USFWS and USDI-BLM 1998a, 1998b) and the “Oregon Public Lands Transfer and Protection Act” of 1998, even if released from wilderness study.

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Due to WSA status, the area would be closed to mineral disposal and leasing even if released from wilderness study. Mineral location within the WSA would be subject to the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). If released from wilderness study, the WSA would be open to all mineral location, subject to the preparation of a plan of operations.

Alternative E

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. The area is entirely within the Guano Creek WSA (Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would be managed according to the wilderness IMP, until such time as a decision is made by Congress regarding wilderness designation (USDI-BLM 1995b), or consistent with management direction for the rest of the planning area (i.e., closed to grazing).

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Hawksie-Walksie ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

Under this alternative, no ACEC or RNA would be designated. All of this proposed area is within the Hawk Mountain and Sage Hen Hills WSA’s and would be managed according to the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes a decision regarding wilderness designation.

The area is currently managed as a right-of-way exclusion area due to its WSA status (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study, the area would be opened to new rights-of-way location. The area would continue to be managed as land tenure

Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV use is limited to existing roads and trails within the WSA (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). About 3.7 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed (Table 4-4) to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-15. If released from wilderness study, the area would be opened to OHV use, including “historically closed” roads.

The area is currently managed as VRM Class I due to its WSA status (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study the area would be managed as VRM Class III.

The area would continue to be open to grazing (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). It falls completely within the Beauty Butte Allotment (600) and is managed in accordance with an existing allotment management plan and wild horse herd management plan (USDI-BLM 1977a; USDI-BLM and USDI-USFWS 1998a, 1998b).

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Due to WSA status, the area would be closed to mineral disposal. Mineral location within the WSA would be subject to the no reclamation requirement of the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). If released from wilderness study, the area would be open to all mineral activity. However, mineral location would be subject to the preparation of a plan of operations.

Alternative B

No ACEC/RNA would be designated. Management under this alternative would be the same as under Alternative A (see Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 17,339 acres would be designated as an ACEC and an RNA (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

New rights-of-way would be excluded from the ACEC/RNA except to provide access to non-Federal property, even if released from wilderness study (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV’s would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS), even if released from wilderness study. About 3.7 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as “historically closed” on Map SMA-15. An additional 10.5 miles of roads would be closed (Table 4-4), even if released from wilderness study.

The area is currently managed as VRM Class I due to its WSA status (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study the area would be managed as VRM Class III. The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

A total of 6,786 acres in two areas would be excluded from livestock and wild horse grazing to protect RNA plant community values, if needed (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Any fence construction would be subject to the wilderness IMP. In the rest of the ACEC/RNA, livestock grazing use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and the approved “Beauty Butte Allotment Management Plan” (USDI-BLM and USDI-USFWS 1998a, 1998b). Wild Horse use would continue to be managed in accordance with the wild horse herd management plan (USDI-BLM 1977a). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use.

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Under the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b), the area would be closed to the sale or lease of minerals. The area would be open to locatable mineral subject to the no reclamation stipulation. Should the area be released from WSA status, it would become open to mineral sale and location, subject to stipulations necessary to protect relevant and important resources. Mineral leasing would become open, subject to no surface occupancy.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 17,339 acres would be designated an ACEC and a RNA (Maps SMA-4 and -15).

New rights-of-way in the ACEC/RNA would be excluded (Map L-8), even if released from wilderness study.

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS), even if released from wilderness study. About 3.7 miles of roads not appearing on the wilderness inventory maps (USDI-BLM 1989a) must be closed to comply with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). These are shown as "historically closed" on Map SMA-15. An additional 4.1 miles of roads would be closed (Table 4-4), even if released from wilderness study.

The area is currently managed as VRM Class I due to its WSA status (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). If released from wilderness study the area would be managed as VRM Class III.

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and the approved "Beaty Butte Allotment Management Plan" (USDI-BLM and USDI-USFWS 1998a, 1998b) (Map G-3). Wild horse use would continue to be managed in accordance with the wild horse herd management plan (USDI-BLM 1977a) (Map SMA-4). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

Commercial and personal plant collecting would be limited by the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Under the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b), the area would be closed to the sale or lease of minerals. The area would be open to locatable mineral subject to the no reclamation stipulation (Maps M-8, -9, and -10). Should the area be released from WSA status, it would become open to mineral sale and location, subject to stipulations necessary to protect relevant and important resources. Mineral leasing would become open, subject to no surface occupancy.

Alternative E

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. The area is entirely within the Hawk Mountain WSA

(Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would be managed according to the wilderness IMP, until such time as a decision is made by Congress regarding wilderness designation (USDI-BLM 1995b) or consistent with management direction for the rest of the planning area (i.e., closed to grazing).

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed High Lakes ACEC

Alternative A

Under this alternative, no ACEC would be designated.

The area would also be open to new rights-of-way (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 2 (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be open to OHV's (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would continue to be managed as VRM Class IV (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Grazing use would continue under the Beaty Butte, O'Keeffe Individual, and Hill Camp allotment management plans (USDI-BLM 1975, 1994b; USDI-BLM and USDI-USFWS 1998a, 1998b) (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be open to all minerals activities based on approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

Important cultural resources sites would be nominated to the NRHP.

The berm at the north end of Long Lake would be retained.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management would be the same as that described under Alternative A (Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, about 40,095 acres would be designated an ACEC (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). A small portion in the northeast corner of this area falls within the Guano Creek WSA and would be managed in accordance with the wilderness IMP

(USDI-BLM 1995b).

New rights-of-way would be excluded, except to provide access to non-Federal land (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would be placed into land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Adjacent land on the west side of the ACEC would be acquired from a willing landowner, if such acquisition would improve resource protection or management of the ACEC.

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). About 23 miles of roads would be closed (Table 4-4).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and the approved allotment management plans (USDI-BLM 1975, 1994b; USDI-BLM and USDI-USFWS 1998a, 1998b) (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, particularly to cultural plants (plants used for traditional Native American practices), existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

Most of the ACEC (outside the WSA) would be open to locatable mineral entry, subject to the preparation of a plan of operations. The small WSA portion would be subject to the no reclamation stipulation for mineral location. The entire area would be closed to the sale or lease of minerals.

The high concentration of greater sage-grouse leks in the ACEC (Map W-1) would be managed to maintain the continuity of greater sage-grouse habitat and to avoid disturbance during the breeding season.

If the berm at the north end of Long Lake is no longer needed, it would be removed.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 38,985 acres would be designated as an ACEC (Maps SMA-4 and -16). The

southern boundary of the ACEC would be set back 100 feet from the northern edge of the State Highway 140 right-of-way. The northern boundary would extend to the southern boundary of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and Guano Creek WSA.

New rights-of-way in the ACEC would be avoided unless there were no alternatives (Map L-8). Legal access across the private land in the vicinity of Badger Hole would be acquired from a willing landowner, if necessary, to allow administrative and public access. The area would be placed into land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-5).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7). About 17.8 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Map SMA-16).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and the approved allotment management plans (USDI-BLM 1975, 1994b; USDI-BLM and USDI-USFWS 1998a, 1998b) (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, particularly to cultural plants (plants used for traditional Native American practices), existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The ACEC would be open to all mineral activities, subject to the preparation of a NEPA analysis, with stipulations to protect relevant and important resources. Mineral location would require preparation of a plan of operations (Maps M-8, -9, and -10).

The high concentration of greater sage-grouse leks in the ACEC (Map W-1) would be managed to maintain the continuity of greater sage-grouse habitat and to avoid disturbance during the breeding season.

If the berm at the north end of Long Lake is no longer needed, it would be removed.

Alternative E

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management would follow that for the remainder of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Juniper Mountain ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

Under this alternative, no ACEC would be designated.

The area would be open to new rights-of-way location and would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 2 (Maps L-1 and -2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

During the summer of 2001, after the Draft RMP/EIS went to print, a large wildfire occurred in the vicinity of Juniper Mountain (Map FM-2). As part of the rehabilitation for the area, OHV use was temporarily limited to existing roads and trails. This was accomplished through a *Federal Register* notice dated April 12, 2002. This change is not reflected in Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS.

The area would continue to be managed as VRM Class IV (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing would continue under current management (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Juniper Mountain is in Allotment 515 which is used primarily in the spring and less in summer and early fall.

Though an open wood cutting area exists along the eastern edge of the proposed ACEC/RNA, the recent fire has removed some of the juniper material. The area is slated to be closed to future juniper firewood, poles, boughs, and berry collection, under this alternative.

The area would be open to all mineral activity based on approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management of the area would be the same as described under Alternative A (Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 6,335 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The ACEC would also be excluded from new rights-of-way except to provide access to non-Federal land (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Actions would be taken to acquire the 80-acre inholding from a willing landowner.

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). About 6.7 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing would continue based on existing permit stipulations and approved allotment management plans (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The existing wood cutting area would be closed. Tree cutting for firewood, posts, or other uses, and gathering vegetative products, such as juniper boughs or berries, would be prohibited. Collection of dead and down wood for onsite campfire use would also be prohibited.

The ACEC would be open to locatable mineral entry, subject to the preparation of a plan of operations, and closed to the sale or lease of minerals.

Overnight camping would be prohibited.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 6,335 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Maps SMA-4 and -17).

New rights-of-way in the ACEC would be avoided unless there are no other options (Map L-8). The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention)

(Map L-5). Acquisition of the 80-acre inholding from a willing landowner would be pursued.

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7). About 4.3 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4 and Map SMA-17).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class IV (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing would continue based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The existing wood cutting area would be closed. Collecting dead and down woody material for onsite camping would be allowed.

The ACEC would be open to all mineral activity. Mineral location would require preparation of a plan of operations. Mineral leasing activity would be subject to a no-surface-occupancy stipulation (Maps M-8, -9, and -10).

Alternative E

No ACEC/RNA would be designated under this alternative. Management would follow that for the remainder of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Rahilly-Gravelly ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

Under this alternative, no ACEC would be designated.

The area would be open to new rights-of-way location (Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 2 (Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be open to OHV use (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The northwest side of the area would continue to be managed as VRM Class III. The rest of the area would continue to be managed as VRM Class IV (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing would be managed according to the existing "Rahilly-Gravelly Allotment Management Plan" (USDI-BLM undated C) (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area is in Allotment 212 which is grazed primarily from March through mid-September.

The area would be open to all mineral activity based on approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management would be the same as that described under Alternative A (Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 20,127 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Maps SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

New rights-of-way would be excluded from the ACEC/RNA except those necessary to access non-Federal land. The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Maps L-4 and -7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Actions to acquire the inholdings or adjacent lands from willing landowners would be initiated if such acquisition would enhance management of the relevant and important resources.

OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). About 11.8 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4).

The entire ACEC would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and approved allotment management plans (USDI-BLM undated C) (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced.

Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Of particular concern would be spring grazing of cultural plants (plants traditionally used by Native Americans). Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The ACEC/RNA would be open to locatable mineral entry, subject to preparation of a plan of operations, and open to leasable minerals subject to a no-surface-occupancy stipulation. It would be closed to the sale of minerals.

The high concentration of greater sage-grouse leks in the ACEC (Map W-1) would be managed to maintain the continuity of greater sage-grouse habitat and to avoid disturbance during the breeding season.

The ACEC would be identified as a traditional cultural property.

Commercial and noncommercial special recreation permits would not be authorized within the Rahilly-Gravelly ACEC/RNA.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 19,648 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Maps SMA-4 and -18).

New rights-of-way in the ACEC would be avoided unless there were no other options. The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Maps L-5 and -8). Actions to acquire inholdings or adjacent lands from willing landowners would be initiated if such acquisition would enhance management of the relevant and important resources.

OHV's would be limited to existing roads and trails (Map R-8).

The entire ACEC would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations and approved allotment management plans (USDI-BLM undated C) (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values

would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Of particular concern would be spring grazing of cultural plants (plants traditionally used by Native Americans). Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The ACEC would be open to all mineral activities. Locatable mineral development would require a plan of operations. Leasable mineral activity would be subject to a no-surface-occupancy stipulation.

The high concentration of greater sage-grouse leks in the ACEC (Map W-1) would be managed to maintain the continuity of greater sage-grouse habitat and to avoid disturbance during the breeding season.

The ACEC would be identified as a traditional cultural property.

Alternative E

Under this alternative no ACEC/RNA would be designated. Management would follow that for the remainder of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Red Knoll ACEC (formerly Tucker Hill)

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

There are major noxious weed infestations, primarily medusahead, in the proposed ACEC. Noxious weeds would be treated in the area using integrated weed management techniques with an emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation of medusahead sites. A Greater Abert Weed Management Area is proposed in this area which would include all of the land in the proposed Red Knoll ACEC. If a weed management area is established, the plan that would be developed for it would be the direction for weed management activities inside this ACEC. If the weed management area is not developed, but the ACEC becomes established, weed management would occur according to the weed management direction for the rest of the planning area.

Alternative A

The proposed ACEC would not be designated and management of the area would continue as at present.

The area would be open to the location of new rights-of-ways, as needed, based on a site-specific environmental analysis. The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 2 (Maps L-1 and -2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The entire area would be open to OHV use (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would continue to be managed as VRM Class III and IV (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Grazing would continue as currently managed (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The north half of the area, Allotment 0408, is not grazed. The south half of the area in Allotment 0404 is grazed.

The area would be open to mineral location, sale, and leasing based on approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

Alternative B

Under this alternative, the proposed ACEC would not be designated. The area would be managed as described under Alternative A (Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

A total of about 11,588 acres would be designated as an ACEC (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The ACEC would be entirely south of the existing Tucker Hill perlite mine.

New rights-of-way would be excluded except for any necessary to access non-Federal land. The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Maps L-4 and -7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Actions would be pursued to acquire private inholdings from a willing landowner.

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). About 7.3 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4).

The entire ACEC would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The entire ACEC would be closed to livestock grazing to protect cultural values (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The BLM would petition the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw the entire ACEC (11,588 acres) from

locatable mineral entry. The ACEC would be closed to the sale or lease of minerals.

The ACEC would be identified as a traditional cultural property. Eligible cultural sites would be nominated to the NRHP.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 11,127 acres would be designated an ACEC (Maps SMA-4 and -19). The boundary would exclude the Tucker Hill perlite mine. The southeast boundary of the ACEC would be set 100 feet back from existing county road right-of-way (Highway 2-10) to allow maintenance of the road or additional right-of-way uses.

New rights-of-way in the ACEC would be avoided unless there are no other options (Map L-8). The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Maps L-5).

OHV's would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7). Approximately 3.8 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4 and Map SMA-19).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing in the ACEC would continue based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The BLM would petition the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw the northwest one-third of the ACEC (approximately 4,600 acres) from locatable mineral entry. This same area would be closed to the sale or lease of minerals. The southern two-thirds of the ACEC would be open to locatable mineral entry, subject to the preparation of a plan of operations, and to the sale or lease of minerals with stipulations to protect relevant and important resources (Maps M-8, -9, and -10).

Alternative E

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management would follow that for the remainder of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Spanish Lake ACEC/RNA

Alternative A

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative.

The area would continue to be open to new rights-of-way location. The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 2 (Maps L-1 and -2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would be open to OHV use (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would continue to be managed as VRM Class IV (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Present grazing management would continue. The area is in Allotment 213 which is grazed for approximately 1 month each February (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

It would also be open to all mineral activity based on approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management would be the same as that described under Alternative A (Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 4,699 acres would be designated as an ACEC and a RNA (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Rights-of-way, except to provide access to non-Federal land, would be excluded from the ACEC. The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Maps L-4 and -7 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Approximately 4.4 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class III (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced. The livestock watering pond in the middle of the lake would be rehabilitated.

The ACEC would be open to locatable mineral activity under a plan of operation. It would be closed to the sale or lease of minerals.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 4,699 acres would be designated as an ACEC (Maps SMA-4 and -20).

New rights-of-way in the ACEC would be avoided unless there are no other options (Map L-8). The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Maps L-5).

OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7). Approximately 0.6 miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4 and Map SMA-20).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class IV (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock use would continue based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced. The livestock watering pond in the middle of the lake would be rehabilitated.

The ACEC would be open to all mineral activity (Maps M-8, -9, and -10). Mineral location would require preparation of a plan of operations.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, no ACEC would be designated. Management would follow that for the remainder of the planning area.

Management Direction by Alternative—Proposed Table Rock ACEC

Alternative A

Under this alternative, no ACEC would be designated.

No new major rights-of-way would be placed within 1 mile of the area. Distribution lines would be allowed. The rights-of-way for existing communication sites and access road to the site would be retained and managed according to the respective right-of-way grants. The area would continue to be managed as land tenure Zone 2 (Maps L-1 and -2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The area would continue to be open to OHV use except for an existing 56-acre closed area (Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). About 0.3 miles of roads and trails would remain closed (Table 4-4).

The area would continue to be managed as VRM Class IV (Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Livestock grazing would continue as presently managed (Map G-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The area is in two allotments. Allotment 714 encompasses most of the ACEC, but is currently not grazed. Allotment 708 includes the northwest portion of the ACEC and is grazed for 1 month in the spring.

The area would be open to all mineral activity subject to approval of a site-specific NEPA analysis.

The draft conservation agreement between BLM and USFWS for the protection and management of Cusick's buckwheat would be completed and implemented.

Alternative B

No ACEC would be designated under this alternative. Management would be the same as described under Alternative A (Maps G-1, L-3, L-6, R-1, R-5, and VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative C

Under this alternative, 5,891 acres would be designated as an ACEC (Map SMA-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

New rights-of-way, except to provide access to non-Federal land, would be excluded. The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Maps L-4 and -7 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Actions to acquire the private property adjacent to the northeast corner of the ACEC from willing landowners would be initiated.

OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Approximately 11.1 additional miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

The ACEC would be closed to livestock grazing to protect ACEC values (Map G-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Fences would be installed as needed to keep livestock out of the area.

The ACEC would be open to locatable mineral development, subject to the preparation of a plan of operations, but closed to the sale or lease of minerals.

The draft conservation agreement for the Cusick's buckwheat would be completed and implemented.

Recreation use would be limited to day-use only. The area would be closed to camping and associated collection of dead or down wood for campfire use.

The area would be identified as a traditional cultural property.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, 5,138 acres would be designated as an ACEC (Maps SMA-4 and -21). The western boundary of the ACEC would be set back 100 feet from the eastern edge of the county road right-of-way (Highway 5-14).

New rights-of-way would be allowed within existing rights-of-way. New rights-of-way outside the existing rights-of-way would be avoided unless there were no other options (Map L-8). The area would be managed as land tenure Zone 1 (retention) (Maps L-5). Actions to acquire the private property adjacent to the northeast corner of the ACEC from willing landowners would be initiated.

OHV use would be limited to designated roads and trails (Map R-7). About 3.6 additional miles of roads and trails would be closed (Table 4-4 and Map SMA-21).

The ACEC would be managed as VRM Class II (Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Part of the ACEC (Allotment 0714) would remain closed to grazing and part (Allotment 0708) would allow livestock use to continue based on existing permit stipulations (Map G-3). Any proposed changes in grazing, including time and intensity of use, would be evaluated for impacts on the relevant and important values and would be permitted if the values would be maintained or enhanced. Where adverse impacts are identified, existing livestock use would be adjusted using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, fencing, reduction in livestock numbers, and changes in grazing season of use. Proposed range improvement projects would be evaluated for impacts and permitted where relevant and important values would be maintained or enhanced.

The ACEC would be open for locatable mineral development, subject to preparation of a plan of operations, and leasable minerals, subject to a no-surface-occupancy stipulation. The ACEC would be closed to the sale of minerals (Maps M-8, M-9, and M-10).

The ACEC would be identified as a traditional cultural property.

Camping would be allowed in designated areas only.

The draft conservation agreement for Cusick's buckwheat would be completed and implemented.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, no ACEC would be designated. Management would follow that for the remainder of the planning area.

Wilderness Values

Management Goal—Wilderness study areas (WSA's) and proposed WSA additions would be managed under the "Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review" (wilderness IMP) (USDI-BLM 1995b). BLM-administered land acquired since the wilderness inventory and determined to have wilderness values would be included in adjacent WSA's.

Rationale

Under FLPMA, wilderness preservation is part of BLM's multiple use mandate, and wilderness is recognized as part of the spectrum of resource values considered in the land use planning process. Under the wilderness review program, the existing designated WSA's are managed in accordance with BLM's wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b). The general standard for interim management is that land under wilderness review must be managed so as not to impair suitability for preservation as wilderness. Wilderness characteristics and values, described in section 2(c) of the "Wilderness Act of 1964" (Public Law 88-577) must be protected and enhanced in all WSA's. The initial task of identifying areas suitable for wilderness preservation has been completed as mandated in FLPMA section 603, and is documented in BLM's "Oregon Final Wilderness EIS" (USDI-BLM 1989a) and "Wilderness Study Report for Oregon" (USDI-BLM 1991a).

Lands acquired by the BLM since that time (currently 3,043 acres via donation, exchange, or purchase) were not included in the initial inventory for wilderness suitability. Sections 201 and 202 of FLPMA provide for ongoing inventories of public land resources and identification of significant areas through the RMP process. If acquired parcels of land adjacent to WSA's are found recommended as suitable for wilderness designation, these areas would be included in the appropriate WSA and managed under authority of FLPMA sections 202 and 302. The IMP would apply to these areas while under wilderness consideration by Congress.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Management direction for all WSA's and ISA's is set under the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes a determination regarding wilderness designation. The wilderness IMP generally takes precedent over all other management direction. However, when a WSA overlaps another special designation, such as special recreation management area or an ACEC, if management of these areas is more restrictive than the IMP, the most restrictive management direction would be followed. Management of any congressionally designated wilderness areas would be set in future legislation, and can not be entirely predicted at this point in time. Management direction for any WSA's not designated by Congress and released from WSA status would be based on the existing RMP management direction for surrounding lands.

For WSA's studied under section 202 of the FLPMA, existing and new mining operations under the 1872 mining law would be regulated under 43 CFR 3802 only, to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands, not to prevent impairment of wilderness suitability. All other activities will be managed under the IMP.

According to the wilderness IMP, the use in WSA's of ". . . mechanical transport, including all motorized devices as well as trail and mountain bikes, may only be allowed on existing ways and within open areas that were designated prior to the passage of FLPMA (October 1976)." For the purposes of this analysis, existing roads and ways within WSA's are those that existed on the ground at the time the FLPMA was passed (1976) and were subsequently shown or described in the "Oregon Wilderness Final EIS" (USDI-BLM 1989a). After the publication of the Draft RMP/EIS, the BLM reexamined the roads and ways within all WSA's. This involved comparing the maps in the "Oregon Wilderness Final EIS" (USDI-BLM 1989a) with 1994 digital orthophotography, as well as, on-the-ground global positioning system location work. New roads and ways were captured using global positioning system or by "heads-up" digitizing from the digital orthophotography. Any new roads or ways that have been created or discovered either have already been closed to vehicle use or should be closed under all alternatives in order to comply with the wilderness IMP. These roads and ways are shown as "historically closed" on the SMA maps. (In contrast, existing roads and trails within the remainder of the planning area are defined as those roads or trails that exist on the ground at the time the RMP is approved and the record of decision is signed. These will be verified by comparison with 2000–2001 USGS National High Altitude Photography program photos which represents the best and most timely available source of data on this topic).

Preservation of wilderness values is paramount when managing WSA's and should be the primary consideration when evaluating any proposed action or use that may conflict with, or be adverse to, those wilderness values. Wilderness resource management objectives within a WSA would take precedence over all other management objectives.

All proposals for uses and/or facilities within WSA's would be reviewed to determine whether the proposal meets the nonimpairment criteria. The nonimpairment criteria are: (1) the use, facility, or activity must be temporary (this means a temporary use that does not create surface disturbance or involve permanent placement of facilities may be allowed if such use can

easily and immediately be terminated upon wilderness designation); and (2) when the use, activity, or facility is terminated, the wilderness values must not have been degraded so far as to significantly constrain the area's wilderness suitability for preservation as wilderness. The only permitted exceptions to the nonimpairment criteria are:

- 1) emergencies associated with wildfire or search and rescue operations;
- 2) reclamation activities designed to minimize impacts created by violations and emergencies;
- 3) uses and facilities which are considered grandfathered or valid existing rights under the IMP;
- 4) uses and facilities that clearly protect or enhance the land's wilderness values or are the minimum necessary for public health and safety; and
- 5) reclamation of pre-FLPMA impacts.

The *minimum tool* concept would be applied to any approved actions within WSA's. This means that any actions would be accomplished using methods and equipment that have the least impact on the quality of an individual or group's wilderness experience, as well as the physical, biological, and cultural resources with the WSA.

Pre-FLPMA developments may continue to be used and maintained in WSA's to keep them in an effective, usable condition, but can not be modified to where they exceed the physical and visual impacts existing at the time FLPMA passed. New, temporary developments would need to satisfy the nonimpairment criteria and truly enhance wilderness values. New, permanent developments must satisfy the nonimpairment criteria, enhance wilderness values, and not require motorized access if the area were designated as wilderness. Because pre-FLPMA facilities such as waterholes, spring developments, guzzlers, and fences are considered grandfathered, they may be maintained periodically using motorized equipment, if through analysis, that method was found to be the minimum tool necessary for maintenance.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

All lands acquired adjacent to or within WSA's since the "Wilderness Study Report for Oregon" (USDI-BLM 1991a) are required to be assessed for wilderness

values. A number of such areas have been assessed to date. This assessment has found that some of lands meet the criteria for identification as a WSA. However, these lands can only be managed under the wilderness IMP if they go through the land use planning process. Under Alternative A, a land use plan or plan amendment would need to be completed to accomplish this.

Alternative B

Land acquired within or adjacent to lands identified in the “Wilderness Study Report for Oregon” (USDI-BLM 1991a) would not be added to existing WSA’s and would not be managed under the IMP, even though they may meet the WSA criteria.

Alternatives C, D, and E

All lands acquired to date adjacent to or within WSA’s have been assessed for wilderness characteristics. Under these three alternatives, those lands possessing wilderness characteristics and meeting the criteria for identification as a WSA would be included in the adjacent WSA and managed under the IMP to protect its wilderness values. Approximately 1,194 acres of acquired lands currently determined to have wilderness characteristics would be added to the following WSA’s: Fish Creek Rim WSA—397 acres; Guano Creek WSA—604 acres; and Abert Rim WSA—193 acres. See Appendix J and Maps SMA-7, -13, and -16, for the wilderness study process and location of these acquired lands, respectively. Any inholdings or adjacent lands acquired in the future during the life of the plan which are determined to contain wilderness characteristics, would be automatically added to the WSA and managed in accordance with the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Management Goal—*Protect and enhance outstandingly remarkable values of rivers determined to be administratively suitable for potential inclusion in the national wild and scenic river (WSR) system until Congress acts.*

Rationale

The “National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act” (Public Law 90-542 and amendments), section 1(b), states that “. . . certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and

wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.” Section 5(d) requires Federal agencies to consider potential wild, scenic, and recreational river areas in all planning for the use and development of water and related land resources. Section 10(a) describes the basic management requirement of protecting and enhancing the values that caused the river to be included in the national WSR system. In accordance with BLM policy, all eligible rivers were evaluated for suitability. The planning determination of suitability provides the basis for any decision to recommend legislation. Factors to be considered (see section 4[a] of the “National Wild and Scenic River Act”) in the suitability determination include: the current status of land ownership and use in the area; the reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water which would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the national WSR system, and the values which would be foreclosed or diminished if the river is not protected as part of the national WSR system; other agencies, organizations or public interested in designation or nondesignation; administrative costs; ability of the agency to manage and/or protect the river area; historic or existing rights.

An inventory of rivers in the LRA determined that three rivers were eligible for further study: Guano Creek, Twelvemile Creek, and Honey Creek (see Appendix J2 of the Draft RMP/EIS for the inventory assessment).

Management Common to All Alternatives

Provide interim protection of the outstandingly remarkable values of eligible and administratively suitable rivers while awaiting a determination by Congress. Refer to Appendix J3 of the Draft RMP/EIS for interim management policy and guidelines. Acquisition of non-Federal lands along the river corridors would be through voluntary willing sellers or exchange proponents, and would be added to eligible and suitable rivers.

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, the visual resources for Honey and Twelvemile Creeks would be managed as VRM Class II, and Guano Creek would be managed as VRM Class I because it is located within the Guano Creek WSA. If Guano Creek is not congressionally designated a wilderness, the VRM Class for the Guano Creek corridor would revert to Class II.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

None of the eligible streams would be recommended administratively suitable for potential designation by Congress as WSR's.

Alternative B

Same as under Alternative A.

Alternative C

Approximately 6.6 miles on Twelvemile Creek and 5.6 miles of Honey Creek would be recommended administratively suitable for potential designation by Congress as a WSR (Table 2-35 and Map R-8 of the Draft RMP/EIS), with a tentative classification as scenic. Approximately 10.6 miles of Guano Creek would be recommended administratively suitable for potential designation by Congress as a WSR, with a tentative classification as wild. Management guidelines and standards for scenic classification as listed in Appendix J3 of the Draft RMP/EIS would be followed while awaiting a determination by Congress.

Alternative D

Approximately 6.6 miles on Twelvemile Creek would be recommended administratively suitable for potential designation by Congress as a WSR (Table 2-35 and Map R-9 and SMA-22) with a tentative classification as recreational. Guano Creek and Honey Creek would not be recommended suitable for designation in the national WSR system. Management guidelines and standards for wild, scenic, and recreational classifications listed in Appendix J3 of the Draft RMP/EIS would be followed while awaiting a determination by Congress.

Alternative E

None of the eligible streams would be administratively suitable for potential designation by Congress as WSR's.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Management Goal 1—*Preserve and protect cultural resources in accordance with existing laws, regulations, and Executive orders, in consultation with Native Americans.*

Rationale

The BLM is required by law, regulations, and Executive orders to manage cultural resources in such a fashion that they would be preserved and protected from destruction, and that the appropriate uses would be made of such resources. Law, regulations, and Executive orders further require that such management be coordinated with the appropriate Native American Tribes and individuals.

Actions Common to All Alternatives

All management actions on public lands and private land projects which are federally funded, permitted, or assisted would require completion of section 106 of the "National Historic Preservation Act" regulations. This would consist of a literature review, a site survey on the ground to determine the presence or absence of sites, and site evaluation in consultation with Native Americans, as appropriate, and with the State Historic Preservation Officer, as appropriate.

All sites which have currently been identified, as well as sites identified in the future would be evaluated for placement in one of four use categories as specified in BLM Manual 8110 (USDI-BLM 1988c). These four uses are as follows:

- 1) *Conservation for future use:* This category places a site in protection from destruction with the intent to have it available at an unspecified date in the future for use in research or public interpretation.
- 2) *Public use:* Sites placed in this category would be used for recreation, public interpretation, education, etc.
- 3) *Experimental use:* Sites placed in this category would be used in scientific research. Such use may result in the complete consumption of the site in some cases. Site may be placed in public use as a result of the research which is conducted.
- 4) *Discharged sites:* These are sites which no longer

Table 3-5.—Off-highway vehicle designations by area by alternative ^{1,2}

Area	Alternative A		Alternative B		Alternative C		Alternative D		Alternative E	
	Designation	Acres	Designation	Acres	Designation	Acres	Designation	Acres	Designation	Acres
Areas of critical environmental concern										
<i>Existing</i>										
Devils Garden	E	28,241	E	28,241	D	28,241	D	28,241	E	28,241
Lake Abert (overlap with Abert Rim WSA)	E	<u>50,117</u>	E	50,117	D	50,117	E	<u>43,007</u>	E	<u>50,117</u>
Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake										
Fossil Lake	C	6,660	C	6,660	C	6,660	C	<u>8,988</u>	C	6,660
Lost Forest RNA/ISA	D	9,047	D	8,883	C	8,883	D	<u>8,883</u>	E	9,047
Sand Dunes WSA	O	11,453	O	11,453	C	11,453	O	<u>9,910</u>	C	11,453
Remainder of ACEC	O	8,960	O	8,580	C	8,580	D/O	<u>7,344/1,418</u>	C/E	8,960
Warner Wetlands	D	53,087	D	53,087	D	53,087	D	53,087	E	<u>53,087</u>
<i>Proposed</i>										
Black Hills RNA	<u>D</u>	<u>1,729</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>1,729</u>	C	3,049	D	<u>3,049</u>	E	
Comley Hills RNA	E	3,599	E	3,599	D	3,599	D	3,599	E	
Fish Creek RNA					D	8,725	D	8,725	E	
Foley Lake RNA					D	2,746	D	2,230	E	
Guano Creek/Sink Lakes RNA					D		D	<u>11,119</u>	E	
Hawksie-Walksie RNA					D	<u>17,339</u>	D	<u>17,339</u>	E	
High Lakes					D	<u>40,095</u>	D	<u>38,985</u>	E	
Juniper Mountain RNA	<u>E</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>2,500</u>	D	6,335	D	6,335	E	
Lake Abert ACEC addition					D	<u>18,049</u>	D	<u>18,049</u>	E	
Rahilly-Gravelly RNA					D	20,127	E	19,648	E	
Red Knoll					D	11,588	D	11,127	E	
Spanish Lake RNA					D	<u>4,699</u>	D	<u>4,699</u>	E	
Table Rock	<u>C</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>57</u>	D	<u>5,891</u>	D	<u>5,139</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>57</u>
Wilderness study areas ^{3,6}	E	461,310	E	461,310	D	454,221	E	343,778	E	461,310
Wilderness study areas					D		D	110,443	E	
Proposed WSA additions (acquired lands)					D	1,194	D	1,194	E	

Area	Alternative A		Alternative B		Alternative C		Alternative D		Alternative E	
	Designation	Acres	Designation	Acres	Designation	Acres	Designation	Acres	Designation	Acres
Wild and scenic rivers										
<u>Guano Creek</u>					<u>D</u>	2,346			<u>E</u>	
<u>Honey Creek</u>					<u>E</u>	1,243			<u>E</u>	
<u>Twelvemile Creek</u>					<u>E</u>	2,206	<u>D</u>	1,311	<u>E</u>	
Other areas										
Alkali Lake Dunes	E	6,813	E	6,813	E	6,813	E	6,813	E	6,813
Buck Creek	C	590	C	590	C	590	C	590	C	590
Cougar Mountain	C	44	C	44	C	44	<u>D</u>	0 ⁷	C	44
Crane Mountain	C	1,057	C	1,057	C	1,057	C	1,030	C	1,057
Deer winter range ⁴	D/O ⁵	66,460	D/O ⁵	66,460	D/E	100,834	D/E	128,556	D/E	66,460
North Lake Special Recreation Management Area		0		0			<u>E</u>	550,392 ⁸	E	
Picture Rock Pass	E	491	E	491	E	491	E	491	E	491
South Green Mountain	C	14	C	14	C	14	C	14	C	14
West Side Cemetery	C	81	C	81	C	81	<u>D</u>	81	C	81
Remainder of LRA	O	2,508,408	O	2,504,974	E	2,349,385	O	1,756,799	E	3,075,000

¹ E = existing roads and trails; D = designated roads and trails; C = closed; and O = open.

² Acreage figures will not total correctly for the planning area (3,161,416 acres) due to overlap between areas (for example, Devils Garden ACEC equals the Devils Garden WSA, and acres appear in both designations).

³ The acreage for the Sand Dunes WSA is found under ACEC's.

⁴ Silver Lake and Fort Rock areas.

⁵ Designated roads and trails from 12/1-3/31; open for the remainder of the year.

⁶ OHV designations within WSA's are related to roads and ways; in the remainder of the LRA, they are referred to as roads and trails.

⁷ Acreage is included in deer winter range.

⁸ Total area within the special recreation management area (including non-BLM ownerships) is 1,117,007 acres. This acreage represents that portion of BLM lands in the special recreation management area not already included in some other area designation.

exist or have been so damaged that they have no value of any kind. Sites may have been destroyed by erosion, consumption in research, or through destruction caused by humans.

Alternative A

To protect against illegal artifact or fossil collecting, site or fossil excavations, and site or fossil vandalism, the listed, eligible, or potential NRHP sites and locations known to contain large numbers of sites would be patrolled regularly. This would include the subbasins of Warner Valley, Abert Lake, Summer Lake, Christmas Valley, and Fort Rock. In addition, the uplands surrounding these basins would also be patrolled.

A monitoring plan would be developed to evaluate the success of cultural resource protection and to provide a baseline for the present condition of sites and determine where stabilization and restoration is needed (Appendix R). Other uses would be limited as necessary to preserve and protect cultural resources. A regular schedule of meetings with local and regional Native American Tribes for consultation on the preservation and protection of sites would be established.

The OHV closure in the Fossil Lake paleontological area would be maintained, and exposed fossils would continue to be collected from the location.

Buildings and structures on the Shirk Ranch property located in Guano Valley would be stabilized or restored.

Alternative B

Management would be the same as Alternative A, except for the following. Buildings and structures on the Shirk Ranch property located in Guano Valley would be restored and plans for administrative and recreation use of the property would be developed.

The OHV closure in the Fossil Lake paleontological area would be maintained, and exposed fossils would continue to be collected from the location. An interpretive site for public recreational use at the location would be developed.

Alternative C

Management would be the same as Alternative A, except for the following: The buildings and structures at Shirk Ranch in Guano Valley would be restored.

The Fossil Lake and Sand Dunes areas would be closed

to OHV's in order to protect exposed fossils. Year-round paleontological resource monitoring to prevent collection of exposed fossils would be initiated.

Alternative D

To protect against illegal artifact or fossil collecting, site or fossil excavations, and site or fossil vandalism, the listed, eligible, or potential NRHP sites and locations known to contain large numbers of sites would be patrolled regularly. This would include the subbasins of Warner Valley, Abert Lake, Summer Lake, Christmas Valley, and Fort Rock. In addition, the uplands surrounding these basins would also be patrolled.

A monitoring plan would be developed to evaluate the success of cultural resource protection and to provide a baseline for the present condition of sites and determine where stabilization and restoration is needed (Appendix R). Other uses would be limited as necessary to preserve and protect cultural resources. A regular schedule of meetings with local and regional Native American Tribes for consultation on the preservation and protection of sites would be established.

The OHV closure at Fossil Lake would be enlarged to about 8,988 acres (Table 3-5). Paleontological resource monitoring to determine damage to and collection of exposed fossils would be initiated.

Buildings and structures on the Shirk Ranch property located in Guano Valley would be stabilized.

Alternative E

To protect against illegal artifact and fossil collecting, archaeological site or fossil site excavation, and archaeological site or fossil vandalism, the listed, eligible or potential NRHP sites and locations known to contain large numbers of sites would be patrolled regularly.

Management Goal 2—Increase the public's knowledge of, appreciation for, and sensitivity to cultural resources, Native American issues, and paleontological resources.

Rationale

The BLM is required by law to preserve and protect cultural and paleontological resources. In order to do so, the public must be aware of their values and the impact which their activities have upon them. Cultural and paleontological resources are fragile and irreplaceable and can be damaged or destroyed by actions of the

public. Through vandalism and natural erosion, these resources are disappearing. If the public understands the effects of their actions and feels it has equity in the Nation's cultural and natural history heritage, the resources would be appreciated and better protected from vandalism.

Actions Common to All Alternatives

Actions would be initiated to develop public appreciation and protection through public education of the values and importance of cultural resources. All interpretation projects would be done in consultation with Native Americans, and implemented only if it would not impact the values at the site.

Alternative A

Cost-share programs with universities, museums, and researchers, and volunteers to inventory, analyze, and research the cultural resources within the resource area would be continued. Regular consultation with Native American Tribes on all matters dealing with use, protection, and preservation of cultural resources within the resource area would continue.

Alternative B

Same as for Alternative A, except on- and offsite interpretation of archaeological/paleontological sites which have educational and recreational values would be developed as long as such work does not contribute to the deterioration or destruction of the resources being interpreted. Work would be conducted with museums of the region, as well as nationally, for the creation of displays about the resources of the area. In addition, work would be done with researchers for the creation of brochures and books on the archaeology and paleontology of the resource area.

Interpretive sites and publications, as described above, would be developed for the Shirk Ranch Historic Site, the Fossil Lake paleontological site, the archaeological resources of the Fort Rock Basin and the Warner Valley region.

Alternative C

Actions, as outlined under Alternative A, would continue. Public interpretation of sites would be developed, but only if it would not impact the site or would improve its condition.

Alternative D

Cost-share programs with universities, museums, and researchers, and volunteers to inventory, analyze, and research the cultural resources within the resource area would be continued. Regular consultation with Native American Tribes on all matters dealing with use, protection, and preservation of cultural resources within the resource area would continue. Public education programs, which would increase public awareness of the need to preserve and protect cultural resource sites, would be developed.

Alternative E

Public interpretation and educational programs that do not involve onsite work or require any visitation of sites in the field would be developed.

Management Goal 3—In consultation with local Native American Tribes, take actions, including designating areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC's), to protect traditional religious sites, landforms, burial sites, resources, and other areas of interest. Nominate as traditional cultural properties those areas that qualify.

Rationale

It is required by laws, regulations, and Executive orders to consult with and coordinate BLM activities with Native American Tribes, so that their rights and interests are taken into account when land use decisions are made. In addition, American Indian traditions and traditional uses must be considered. Specifically, the agency must comply with the "National Historic Preservation Act," the "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act," the "American Indian Religious Freedom Act," regulations 36 CFR 800, section 106 and 110, and Executive Order 13007 (Sacred Sites).

Actions Common to All Alternatives

Consultation with Native American Tribes would be documented under all alternatives.

Ownership of the West Goose Lake Reinterment Site (approximately 40 acres) and the Adel Paiute Cemetery (approximately 10 acres) would be transferred to the local Tribes or possibly to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be managed in trust for reinterment purposes.

Alternative A

All land-disturbing activities within identified Native American religious sites or traditional cultural properties would be designed to eliminate or minimize adverse impacts. Proposed projects or actions would be modified to avoid the site or area, avoid time of use by Native American groups, or be eliminated altogether. Religious sites and traditional cultural properties would be managed for continued use by Native Americans and retained in Federal ownership. Native American requests to practice traditional activities on public lands would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would be allowed where practical and appropriate. All treaty rights and trust responsibilities as they apply to public lands within the resource area would be honored. Activity plans for Native American traditional use areas, when identified in consultation with affected Tribes, would be developed.

Alternative B

Management actions would be the same as for Alternative A, except areas would be set aside for special management only if doing so would not restrict other uses of same area. No areas would be removed from mineral entry.

Alternative C

The areas listed below would be designated as ACEC's to protect cultural resource values and traditional use areas. Eligibility of these areas as traditional cultural properties would be determined.

Red Knoll
Table Rock
Abert Rim Addition
High Lakes
Hawksie-Walksie
Connley Hills
Rahilly-Gravelly
Fish Creek

Proposed specific management direction for each of these areas under this alternative is described in the Special Management Area section of this chapter.

Alternative D

The areas listed below would be designated as ACEC's to protect cultural resource values and traditional use areas. Eligibility of these areas as traditional cultural properties would be determined. Proposed specific

management direction for each of these areas under this alternative is described in the Special Management Area section in this chapter.

Red Knoll
Table Rock
Abert Rim Addition
High Lakes
Rahilly-Gravelly
Hawksie-Walksie
Connely Hills
Fish Creek

Alternative E

No ACEC's would be designated. Natural processes would be allowed to occur on all sites. Only management and uses required by law, regulations, and Executive orders would be allowed.

Management Goal 4—In order to fulfill trust responsibilities with Tribal peoples, manage public land to maintain, restore, or enhance plant community health and cultural plants. Identify traditional ecological knowledge with humans as part of the ecosystem, and maintain habitat integrity with sustainable yields at a landscape level.

Rationale

During the ICBEMP process, the concerns of American Indian peoples were analyzed—specifically their relationships with the natural environment and trends regarding agency relations with the project's affected Tribal peoples. The legal status of Tribal peoples, the sovereignty of Tribal governments, and the nature of reserved Tribes rights merit separate attention from the general public's concerns over ecosystem management. The BLM management actions affect resources and areas of concern to Tribal peoples, and the Federal government holds certain trust responsibilities and obligations to Tribal groups based on various legal agreements described in BLM Manual 8100, Information Bulletin OR 2000-095, Executive Order 1307, the "American Indian Religious Freedom Act," the "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act," 36 CFR 800 section 106, and the "National Historic Preservation Act." There are four recognized Tribes that have interest in the planning area: Burns Paiute, Fort Bidwell Paiute, Warm Springs Confederated Tribes, and the Klamath Tribes. The rights retained by Tribes are viewed by them as an assurance by the U.S. Government to allow for the continuation of traditional

land uses. Thus, what is reserved supports a way of life for Indian communities, not just resource uses.

The importance of native plants has received relatively little recognition compared to other native resources. Plants continue to be valued and their parts used for purification, ceremonial, subsistence, commercial, and medicinal purposes and for creating objects of personal use, trade, gift-giving, or sale. Cultural plant lists and plant community/habitats have been listed and given significance by Tribal peoples. Also, the aquatic/terrestrial world has cultural significance to Tribes beyond its value as a source of food, medicine, textiles and other material resources. Its cultural significance is much more complex, involving social values and meaning that intertwine traditional societal, political, religious, and economic areas of modern native cultures (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 1996h).

In order to more effectively protect Tribal interests under ICBEMP, certain guidelines were developed between the Tribal peoples and the Federal agencies concerning cultural plants and communities:

“Through treaties with the Federal government and regulatory acts signed over the past 30 years, Indian Nations have reserved rights and recognized interests to harvest a broad range of native plant and animal species. Therefore, sustainable harvest levels of the various species should be a management goal. Availability of these species is considered by Indian governments a trust responsibility of the Federal government. Inadequate quantities can lead to substantial effects on community well-being because numerous social activities center on the harvest, preparation, and consumption of the resources. This involves both the occurrence and access to the relevant resources. Occurrence of culturally important plant species may be measured through linkage with existing dominant overstory categories or associated soil types. Degree of access is determined by judging the potential effects that a number of anticipated impediments may be posed by differing management actions.”

Plant communities that have cultural importance and value were identified in the process of consultation between the ICBEMP planners and Tribal peoples; these plant communities are labeled “cultural plant ethno-habitats.” These communities were rated for vulnerability and viability. In order that resources can be protected, the specific locations of these plants are not identified, except in broad areas where they are protected, such as in ACEC’s (Table 2-33) and in ethno-habitats (habitats defined by Tribal people as having human importance). There is great concern by Tribal peoples, anthropologists,

botanists, and some land managers of Federal lands to protect the habitats where cultural plants are located. One conclusion from ICBEMP analysis also has importance in the Lakeview area: “Tribal plants occurring in nonforested habitats are most at risk for decreases in habitat that may influence continued harvestability.” Nonforested ethno-habitats of critical concern in the LRA include tall sagebrush, low sagebrush scablands, wet meadows, and riparian zones.

Cultural plants are defined as those plants important to Tribal groups, both past and present, for subsistence, economic, and ceremonial purposes. Various historical factors since European contact have affected the availability of these plants within the planning area. Noxious weeds; the exclusion of fire; and impacts from grazing, timber harvest, and road building, among other factors, have all contributed to declines and dislocations in many of the plant species important to Tribes in eastern Oregon (Hanes, R., *personal communication*).

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

In the project planning/NEPA process, cultural plants would be inventoried to insure that management actions on the land do not contribute to the declines of cultural plants. Meetings would be arranged with Tribal peoples to discuss management actions. Field trips with Tribal elders would be arranged to view cultural plant areas and other area for management actions. Surveys would be conducted, as needed for cultural resources related to western juniper woodlands.

Alternative B

Management would be the same as for Alternative A.

Alternative C

Plant resources, especially western juniper woodlands, would be managed for desired range of conditions by using a mix of protection, restoration, and enhancements measures. These measures may include prescribed fire and special considerations for wildland fire management. Old growth western juniper would be maintained or enhanced (see Forest and Woodlands section). Tribal resource people would be encouraged to contribute their concerns for management of all cultural plants.

Alternative D

Plant resources, especially western juniper woodlands, would be managed for desired range of conditions by using a mix of protection, restoration, and enhancements measures. These measures may include prescribed fire and special considerations for wildland fire management. Old growth western juniper would be maintained or enhanced (see Forest and Woodlands section). Tribal resource people would be encouraged to contribute their concerns for management of all cultural plants.

Alternative E

Natural processes would be allowed to operate; however, wood cutting or bough collecting for commercial purposes would be prohibited.

Human Uses and Values

Management Goal—*Manage public lands to provide social and economic benefits to local residents, businesses, visitors, and future generations.*

Rationale

Historically, commodity values on public lands have been made available to private individuals or businesses through sales, permitting, or other methods. The Federal government collects revenues when commodities are used. These commodities also generate private economic activity in the local, regional, national, and in some cases international economies.

Public lands also provide or contribute to numerous environmental amenities, such as clean water, scenic quality, and recreational opportunities. These amenities enhance local communities as places to live, work, or visit. Public lands also attract visitors to the area, many of whom purchase goods and services that generate local economic activity.

Business activities of Federal agencies also generate economic activity in the local, regional, and national economies as both an employer and purchaser of goods and services.

Federal lands also contribute to local governments where they are located. Many commodity programs include provisions to share collections with local governments. Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes are also

made to compensate counties because Federal lands are exempt from local property taxes. Continuation of programs limits disruption of existing economic structures. Guidance within the plan defines the amount of economic opportunity in the future, especially related to mining and recreation.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

The following objectives/actions which contribute to achieving the management goal would be the same for Alternatives A–D:

- Provide predictable and sustainable levels of commodity outputs.
- Meet subsistence needs of Tribes and Tribal communities to the greatest extent practicable.
- Provide natural resource amenities on public lands that enhance local communities as places to live, work, or visit (this could include water quality, scenic views, recreation sites, wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing).
- Protect special areas with unique natural resource values for the enjoyment of future generations (this could include habitats of endangered species) (refer to Special Management Area section in this chapter).
- Target government business activities associated with public land management to the local economies to the extent permitted by the existing authorities (a monitoring plan would need to be developed to evaluate if local versus nonlocal government spending changes over time).

In its resource management planning, the BLM selects a balance between current and future generations, local and regional and national interests, commodity uses and natural values, and physical and biological and social-economics.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Commodity use would continue at existing levels and contribute to stability in the local livestock, mining, and tourism industries.

Natural resource amenities would continue to be provided at levels that meet or exceed existing legal

requirements. Where needed, improve environmental quality to meet or exceed requirements.

Existing facilities (roads, recreation sites, interpretive sites, and range improvements) would continue to be managed to facilitate commodity uses and continued access and availability of natural resource amenities. Continue existing management direction when determining the need for additional facilities.

Anticipated increases in demand for recreational opportunities would be addressed by implementing improvements in the Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area, as identified in the existing plan. Management of the Sunstone Collection Area would continue under existing guidelines. Commercial recreation opportunities would be encouraged through the authorization of special recreation permits.

Existing special areas would be protected.

Existing business practices would be continued.

Alternative B

Availability of Federal forage available for use through the permit process would be increased. The availability of sunstone-bearing areas available for mining claim location would be increased. Maintain the existing level of opportunity for mineral exploration and development. Increased commodity availability would likely contribute to the expansion of the local tourism, livestock, and mining industries.

Natural resource amenities would continue to be provided at levels that meet or exceed existing legal requirements. Where needed, improve environmental quality to meet or exceed requirements using administrative or project-related solutions which minimize impacts to commodity production and public uses.

Existing facilities (roads, recreation sites, interpretive sites, and range improvements) would continue to be managed to facilitate commodity uses and continued access and availability of natural resource amenities. Additional facilities would be developed, as needed, to support commodity uses, consistent with natural resource objectives.

Anticipated increases in demand for recreational opportunities would be addressed by designating the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area to enhance tourism and recreation opportunities. This includes expanding existing developed and undeveloped recreation sites to accommodate increased

visitation and developing partnerships to expand tourism and recreation. Implement improvements in the Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area, as identified in the existing plan, and continue management of the Sunstone Collection Area under existing guidelines. Commercial and competitive use opportunities would be emphasized through the issuance of special recreation permits.

Existing and newly designated special areas would be protected.

Implement business practices which promote participation by local vendors and purchasers. This would include offering contracts that are diverse in size, type, term, and season. Operate within existing legal, regulatory, and administrative authorities.

Alternative C

Commodity uses would be reduced from existing levels to increase the level of protection for natural values. New commodity use levels would be established that could be maintained through time to contribute to stability in the local livestock, mining, and timber industries.

Natural resource amenities would continue to be provided at levels that meet or exceed existing legal requirements. Where needed, environmental quality would be improved to meet or exceed requirements using administrative or project related solutions which would protect or improve natural values.

Existing facilities (roads, recreation sites, interpretive sites, and range improvements) would continue to be managed to facilitate commodity uses and continued access and availability of natural resource amenities. Eliminate or develop alternatives for existing facilities which negatively impact natural values.

Anticipated increases in demand for recreational opportunities would be addressed by designating the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area to emphasize undeveloped, dispersed recreation opportunities and protect natural values. Minimal facilities would be constructed and maintained under this alternative. Management of the Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area would be modified to further emphasize protection of natural and cultural values. Management of the Sunstone Collection Area would continue under existing guidelines as in Alternative A. Issuance of special recreation permits would be limited.

New special areas would be designated and existing special areas would be protected.

Business practices would be implemented that promote participation by local vendors and purchasers. This includes offering contracts that are diverse in size, type, term, and season. Operate within existing legal, regulatory, and administrative authorities.

Alternative D

Commodity use would continue at existing levels to contribute to stability in the local livestock, mining, and tourism industries.

Natural resource amenities would continue to be provided at levels that meet or exceed existing legal requirements. Where needed, improve environmental quality to meet or exceed requirements using administrative or project-related solutions which minimize impacts to commodity production and public uses while protecting natural values.

Existing facilities (roads, recreation sites, interpretive sites, and range improvements) would continue to be managed to facilitate commodity uses and continued access and availability of natural resource amenities. Eliminate or develop alternatives for existing facilities which negatively impact natural values.

Anticipated increases in demand for recreational opportunities would be addressed by designating the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area to emphasize undeveloped, dispersed recreation opportunities and protect natural values. Minimal facilities would be constructed and maintained under this alternative. Implementation of improvements in the Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area as identified in the existing plan and continued management of the Sunstone Collection Area under existing guidelines. Special recreation permits would only be issued on an as-need basis to meet demand while protecting cultural and natural values.

New special areas would be designated and existing special areas protected.

Business practices that would promote participation by local vendors and purchasers would be implemented. This includes offering contracts that are diverse in size, type, term, and season. Operate within existing legal, regulatory, and administrative authorities.

Alternative E

Commodity uses would be eliminated on BLM-managed lands. This would likely contribute to the contraction and instability of the local livestock, mining, and tourism industries. It is unlikely that these industries would be completely eliminated because of the availability of these commodities on private lands and other public lands in the local area.

Natural resource amenities would continue to be provided at levels that meet or exceed existing legal requirements. Where needed, improve environmental quality to meet or exceed requirements using administrative or project-related solutions which emphasize elimination of commodity production and public uses to protect natural values.

Minimal levels of existing facilities (roads, recreation sites, and interpretive sites) would be maintained to protect human health and safety and to honor existing rights-of-way agreements. Alternatives would be developed for existing facilities that would negatively impact natural values. Eliminate and rehabilitate facilities no longer needed.

Anticipated increases in demand for recreational opportunities would be addressed by deemphasizing tourism opportunities. Recreation would be focused toward undeveloped types of activities while assuring a high level of protection of natural and cultural values. No special recreation permits would be issued for commercial recreational uses. Site rehabilitation or closure would be favored if resource values are being degraded beyond acceptable levels.

Special areas would be eliminated and no new special areas would be designated.

The overall number and value of contracts offered would be reduced. Business practices would be implemented that would promote participation by local vendors and purchasers. This includes offering contracts that are diverse in size, type, term, and season. Operate within existing legal, regulatory, and administrative authorities.

Air Quality

Management Goal—*Meet the national ambient air quality standards as described in the “Clean Air Act” (CAA) and follow the direction and requirements of the Southcentral Oregon Fire Management Partnership.*

Rationale

Out of all of the possible management activities considered, smoke produced from wild and prescribed fires would be the main factor affecting air quality.

Smoke may limit a land manager's ability to use larger and more frequent wildland fire for restoration and maintenance of fire-dependent ecosystems.

The CAA requires Federal agencies to comply with all Federal, state, and local air pollution requirements. The CAA also requires each state to develop a state implementation plan to ensure that the national ambient air quality standards are attained and maintained for the criteria pollutants. The ODEQ is responsible for producing the state implementation plan, but delegates the smoke management portion to the Oregon Department of Forestry. As part of the state implementation plan, the Oregon Department of Forestry developed instructions and requirements for wildland and prescribed fire emissions in the smoke management plan. Federal agencies are required to ensure that their actions conform to state implementation plans.

The national ambient air quality standards are described in the CAA and have been established for six pollutants. Of these six criteria pollutants, natural resource management activities largely affect only one—the production of particulate matter. Most particulate matter produced from fire is less than 10 micrometers (PM10) in diameter, which is the size class that is regulated. Because fire and smoke are a natural part of forest and rangeland ecosystems, PM10 produced from fire does not seriously affect these ecosystems. At the current time, PM2.5 is being studied by the State of Oregon, and ODEQ data is being collected to determine attainment status. This study should be completed within the next couple of years. However, it does have effects on human health.

Land managers and the public must make choices regarding prescribed fire and wildland fire use emissions versus emissions from wildland fires. Land managers have little control over where, when, and how much smoke is put into the air during wildland fires. Through prescribed fire, smoke levels can be better managed. For example, air quality can be somewhat diminished in the short term so that the probability is decreased of violating air quality standards in the long term. Although some of the alternatives call for a significant increase in emissions from prescribed fire and wildland fire use, these emissions would be mitigated to provide for public health and safety.

Management Direction by Alternative**Alternative A**

An average of 5,000 to 20,000 acres would be burned per year using prescribed fire.

Alternative B

Under this alternative, prescribed fire and wildland fire use for achieving resource management objectives would be limited to 64,000 acres per year.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, prescribed fire and wildland fire use to achieve resource management objectives would be limited to 640,000 acres per year. Ideally, much less would be burned, but this would enable achieving landscape-scale objectives in years when those opportunities were available.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, prescribed fire and wildland fire use to achieve resource management objectives would be limited to 480,000 acres per year. Over a 10-year period, using prescribed fire and wildland fire use would be limited to 1,120,000 acres.

Alternative E

Prescribed fire would not be used. Natural fire processes would be allowed to operate in the ecosystem.

Fire Management

Management Goal 1—*Provide an appropriate management response on all wildland fires with emphasis on firefighter and public safety. When assigning priorities, decisions would be based on relative values to be protected commensurate with fire management costs.*

Rationale

Protection of human life (firefighter and public safety) is the highest priority during a wildland fire. Once firefighters have been assigned to a fire, their safety becomes the highest value to be protected. Property and natural and cultural resources are lower priorities.

The "Review Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire

Management Policy” (http://www.nifc.gov/fire_policy/index.htm) acknowledges that fire is a critical natural process and must be reintroduced into the ecosystem on a landscape scale. Wildland fire management decisions are based on approved fire management and activity level plans, this RMP, and the best available science. The policy further emphasizes that for natural ignitions (i.e., lightning caused), a manager must have the ability to choose from the full spectrum of fire management actions—from prompt suppression to allowing fire to function in its natural ecological role. The “Interior Columbia Basin Final Environmental Impact Statement” (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 2000b) states that wildland fire management strategies and suppression activities should minimize damage to long-term ecosystem function, and should emphasize protection, restoration, or maintenance of key habitats.

Management Common to All Alternatives

The “Lakeview District Fire Management Plan” (USDI-BLM 1998e) would be revised soon after completing the RMP. The fire management plan would prescribe the appropriate management response, including full suppression and modified suppression, throughout the resource area. It would also identify conditions and potential locations for wildland fire use and for prescribed fires, as well as other factors pertaining to fire management in the LRA.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Provide for an appropriate management response of initial attack and full suppression on all wildland fires occurring outside of the Fort Rock Fire Management Area (Map FM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS). For the Fort Rock Fire Management Area, wildland fires may be managed using limited suppression activities; this includes monitoring wildland fires that occur within the wildland fire use area boundaries (USDI-BLM 1996g). Use natural and human-created barriers (i.e., roads) as available for control lines. Use of heavy equipment in ACEC’s, WSA’s, and RNA’s would be avoided and would require line officer approval. If used, heavy equipment would be restricted to existing roads and trails. Use of retardant would be allowed within these areas for initial attack. Retardant use during extended attack would be considered as a part of the wildland fire situation analysis, considering the resource values at risk and public and firefighter safety.

Alternative B

Provide for an appropriate management response of initial attack and full suppression on all wildland fires threatening commodity areas (Map FM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Use natural and human-created barriers (i.e., roads), as available, for control lines. The use of surface-disturbing equipment and fire retardant in WSA’s, ACEC’s, and RNA’s would be avoided. Exceptions may be granted by the field manager to protect public and firefighter safety, other Federal, state and private property, and commodity areas. During times of multiple ignitions and limited suppression resources, place highest priority on suppression resources to protect commodity areas from wildland fire. Use of heavy equipment in ACEC’s, WSA’s, and RNA’s would be avoided and would require line officer approval. If used, heavy equipment would be restricted to existing roads and trails. Use of retardant would be allowed within these areas for initial attack. Retardant use during extended attack would be considered as a part of the wildland fire situation analysis, considering the resource values at risk and public and firefighter safety.

Alternative C

Provide for an appropriate management response (Map FM-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS) utilizing the full range of suppression options from active suppression to confining wildland fire spread by employing direct and indirect actions and use of natural topographic features, human-created barriers (i.e., roads), fuel, and weather factors. If the fire is achieving resource benefits, such as fuel reduction or restoring natural process to rangelands, the fire would be managed using a confinement strategy, allowing the fire to burn up to defensible natural or human-created barriers. Use of heavy equipment in ACEC’s, WSA’s, and RNA’s would be avoided and would require line officer approval. If used, heavy equipment would be restricted to existing roads and trails. Use of retardant would be allowed within these areas for initial attack. Retardant use during extended attack would be considered as a part of the wildland fire situation analysis, considering the resource values at risk and public and firefighter safety.

Alternative D

Provide for an appropriate management response of initial attack and full suppression on all wildland fires threatening other Federal, state, and private property, or other sensitive areas such as threatened or endangered species and habitat, and cultural sites (Map FM-5). However, where the fire can achieve resource benefits, consider confining wildland fire spread by employing

direct and indirect actions and use of natural topographic features, human-created barriers (i.e., roads), fuel, and weather factors. Use of heavy equipment in ACEC's, WSA's, and RNA's would be avoided and would require line officer approval. If used, heavy equipment would be restricted to existing roads and trails. Use of retardant would be allowed within these areas for initial attack. Retardant use during extended attack would be considered as a part of the wildland fire situation analysis, considering the resource values at risk and public and firefighter safety.

Alternative E

Provide for an appropriate management response emphasizing initial attack, full suppression in instances only to protect human life, and other Federal, state, or private property. For wildland fires not threatening human life or other Federal, state, or private property, spend a minimal amount of time and effort on fire suppression.

Management Goal 2—*Rehabilitate burned areas to mitigate the adverse effects of wildland fire on soil and vegetation in a cost-effective manner and to minimize the possibility of wildland fire recurrence or invasion of weeds.*

Rationale

The “Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Handbook” (H-1742-1) (USDI-BLM 1998k) outlines the process for implementing emergency fire rehabilitation projects following wildland fires and wildland fire use. Emergency fire rehabilitation funds may be used to:

- protect life, property, and soil, water, and vegetation resources;
- prevent unacceptable onsite or offsite damage;
- facilitate meeting land use plan objectives and other Federal laws; and
- reduce the invasion and establishment of undesirable or invasive vegetation species.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Areas burned by wildland fire would be rested from grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons. Rest for less than two growing seasons may be justified on a case-by-case basis. Under Alternative C only, the area would be rested for a minimum of two full years.

Other temporary use restrictions, such as no off-road travel, may be imposed where warranted.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Currently, emergency fire rehabilitation activities are implemented on a case-by-case basis following wildland fire. A separate environmental analysis is completed for each emergency fire rehabilitation project.

Alternatives B, C, and D

Emergency fire rehabilitation activities would be implemented after wildland fire. Emergency fire rehabilitation funds may be available for rehabilitation after wildland fire use, depending on the situation. Resource area direction for implementing emergency fire rehabilitation projects is found in Appendix L. Separate environmental analysis would only be completed for emergency fire rehabilitation projects that are outside the scope of activities described in Appendix L.

Alternative E

No emergency fire rehabilitation projects would be implemented under this alternative.

Management Goal 3—*Restore and maintain ecosystems consistent with land uses and historic fire regimes through wildland fire use, prescribed fire, and other methods. Reduce areas of high fuel loading resulting from years of fire suppression that may contribute to extreme fire behavior.*

Rationale

Both the “Integrated Scientific Assessment for Ecosystem Management in the Interior Columbia Basin” (USDA-FS and USDI-BLM 1996c) and the “Review Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review” (http://www.nifc.gov/fire_policy/index.htm) recognize fire's essential role as an ecological process. The LRA is charged with clearly defining fire management goals, objectives, and actions in comprehensive fire management plans, which are tiered to this RMP. Fire management plans would include identification of areas for wildland fire use and prescribed fire.

ICBEMP emphasizes that strategic watershed-scale fuel management and fire use planning, often integrat-

ing a variety of treatment methods, would cost-effectively reduce fuel hazards to acceptable levels and achieve both ecosystem health and resource benefits. Fire management programs and activities should be based upon protecting resources, minimizing costs, and achieving land management objectives. They must also be economically viable. ICBEMP also stresses the use of fire to restore and sustain ecosystem health based on sound scientific principles and information. This must also be balanced with other societal goals, including public health and safety, air quality, and other specific environmental concerns. Finally, ICBEMP states that prescribed fire should be considered in wilderness areas where it has been determined that wildland fire use for resource benefit would not achieve desired rates of ecosystem maintenance or restoration.

Sound risk management is a foundation for all fire management activities. Risks and uncertainties relating to fire management activities must be understood, analyzed, communicated, and managed as they relate to the cost or consequences of either doing or not doing an activity.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

A fire management plan would be updated for the LRA soon after completion of the RMP. The fire management plan would identify conditions and potential locations for wildland fire use and for prescribed fires, as well as other factors pertaining to fire management in LRA.

For Alternatives A, B, C, and D, treatment acres refer to those areas analyzed in an environmental assessment; it does not assume that 100 percent of those acres are treated. The intent is to actually treat approximately 40–70 percent of the area, and keep 30–60 percent untreated. A goal of landscape-level treatment is to break up treated and untreated areas in a mosaic effect. The acres listed in the alternatives are upper limits for analytical purposes, and not targets. For Alternatives C and D, wildland fire use may cause the number of treated acres to vary widely from year to year, and in some years may accomplish a very large number of treated acres. Lightning-caused fires in excess of 100,000 acres have occurred periodically in the rangeland fuels on the LRA.

Areas burned by prescribed fire would be rested from grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons. Rest for less than two growing seasons may be justified on a case-by-case basis. Under Alternative C only, the area would be rested for a minimum of two full years. Other temporary use restrictions, such as no off-road

travel, may be imposed where warranted.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Use prescribed fire and mechanical, chemical, and biological hazardous fuels reduction treatments on a case-by-case basis to improve forage base and restore natural processes. There are no areas designated for wildland fire use. The Fort Rock Fire Management Area is managed for appropriate suppression response, rather than wildland fire use. Many fires occurring within the Fort Rock Fire Management Area boundaries are monitored and allowed to be extinguished naturally. For the past 5 years, BLM has prescribed burned approximately 5,000 to 20,000 acres per year (this is approximately 0.15 to 0.6 percent of the LRA). There have been very little mechanical hazardous fuels reduction treatments on the LRA. Appendix B of the “Lakeview Grazing Management EIS” (USDI-BLM 1982a) describes mechanical/chemical treatments to shrub/western juniper habitats, few of which have been implemented to date.

Alternative B

Under this alternative, prescribed fire and mechanical, chemical, and biological hazardous fuels reduction treatments would be used primarily to enhance commodity production and enhance the forage base for livestock. Therefore, landscape-level treatments would not occur under this alternative. There would be no areas designated for wildland fire use. No more than 2 percent of the resource area (64,000 acres) would be treated annually by prescribed fire or mechanical methods under this alternative; less than 10 percent (320,000 acres) would be burned or mechanically treated for hazardous fuels reduction in a 10-year period.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, prescribed fire, mechanical, chemical, and biological fuel treatments, and wildland fire use would be emphasized to restore natural processes, and to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources. Emphasis would be placed on using prescribed fire for restoration of degraded rangelands. Areas for possible wildland fire use would be determined under this alternative, but would be further analyzed in the fire management plan. The Fort Rock Fire Management Area would no longer be managed for appropriate suppression response, but would be

managed for wildland fire use. No more than 20 percent of the resource area (640,000 acres) would be treated annually by prescribed fire, mechanical fuel treatments, and wildland fire use combined under this alternative. Less than 50 percent (1,600,000 acres) would be treated in a 10-year period.

Alternative D

Under this alternative, prescribed fire, mechanical, chemical, and biological fuel treatment, and wildland fire use would be used to: protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources; restore degraded habitats; and protect other adjacent Federal, state and private land. Areas for wildland fire use would be determined under this alternative, but would be further analyzed in the fire management plan. The Fort Rock Fire Management Area would no longer be managed for appropriate suppression response, but would be managed for wildland fire use. No more than 15 percent of the resource area (480,000 acres) would be treated annually by prescribed fire, mechanical fuel treatment for hazard reduction, and wildland fire use under this alternative. Less than 35 percent (1,120,000 acres) of the resource area would be treated in a 10-year period.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, there would be no prescribed fire, no mechanical, chemical, and biological fuel treatments for hazard reduction, and no wildland fire use for resource benefit.

Recreation Resources

Management Goal—Provide and enhance developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities, while protecting resources, to manage the increasing demand for resource-dependent recreation activities.

Rationale

The FLPMA provides for recreation use of public land as an integral part of multiple use management. Dispersed, unstructured activities typify the recreational uses occurring throughout the majority of the LRA. Policy guidelines in BLM Manual 8300 direct the BLM to designate special units known as special recreation management areas. Management within these special recreation management areas focuses on providing recreation opportunities that would not otherwise be available to the public, reducing conflicts among users, minimizing damage to resources, and reducing visitor

health and safety problems. Major investments in recreation facilities and visitor assistance are appropriate in special recreation management areas when required to meet management objectives.

Public lands not designated as special recreation management areas, or other special designations, are managed as extensive recreation management areas. Management direction within extensive recreation management areas focuses on actions to facilitate recreation opportunities by providing basic information and access. Visitors in extensive recreation management areas are expected to rely heavily on their own equipment, knowledge, and skills while participating in recreation activities.

In accordance with FLPMA, the “BLM’s Recreation—A Strategic Plan” (USDI-BLM 1990) sets recreation policy on the national level. The policy emphasizes resource-dependent recreation opportunities that typify the vast western landscapes; striving to meet the social and economic needs of present and future generations, providing for the health and safety of the visitor, and accomplishing these goals within the constraints of achieving and maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Actions Common to Alternatives A–D

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area (Maps R-1 and -8 of the Draft RMP/EIS and map R-9) and extensive recreation management area designations would become effective upon signature of the approved RMP and record of decision. An individual recreation area management plan outlining specific management for the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area would be prepared following publication of the approved RMP.

All areas within the LRA not covered under a special designation, such as WSA’s, special recreation management areas, ACEC’s, etc., would be managed as an extensive recreation management area.

Recreation area management plans would not be prepared for the extensive recreation management areas. Specific management actions or projects in the extensive recreation management areas would be included in individual project plans or in plans written for SMA’s following publication of the approved RMP.

Any recreational use within ACEC’s, including commercial and noncommercial uses authorized under special recreation permits, would be evaluated and permitted, modified, or prohibited as needed to protect ACEC values. However, camping would be prohibited

in a few of the ACEC's under Alternatives C and D.

Throughout the LRA, occupancy and use for recreational camping is limited to 14 consecutive days. Camping within 300 feet of any water source is prohibited. A water source is defined as any fenced spring enclosure, flowing spring, man-made metal or concrete water tank or trough, or dirt pond.

Designation of additional scenic byways or vehicle routes would be considered, provided they are consistent with OHV designations and resource concerns are addressed. Existing scenic byway designations would remain.

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, designation of the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area is proposed.

Operations for all wilderness therapy groups authorized within the proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Area would be limited to the following area: east of County Road 5-12 B and BLM Road 6121, and north of Lake County Road 5-14. Adjacent to the proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Area there are a number of campsites associated with wilderness therapy operations located within the Prineville and Burns Districts that are addressed under this RMP process. Within the Prineville District campsites are located in Sections 4, 14, and 34, T.22S., R.19E.; Sections 1 and 3, T.23S., R.19E.; Sections 15 and 36, T.23S., R.20E.; Sections 19, 29, and 33, T.23S., R.12E.; and Sections 5, 8, and 23, T.24S., R.21E. Campsites within the Burns District are located in Sections 4, 13, 22, and 26, T.25S., R.22E., and Section 2, T.26S., R.22E.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Under this alternative, management of the existing Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area would continue and the remaining public land throughout the LRA would be managed as an extensive recreation management area. Possible future designation of special recreation management areas to enhance tourism and recreation opportunities would be considered. Existing developed and undeveloped recreation sites (including trails, wildlife viewing areas, back country byways, interpretive areas, and campgrounds) would be expanded to accommodate increased visitation. Opportunities for partnerships to expand tourism and recreation would be optimized. Recreation experiences would be provided through increased information

and education opportunities.

Commercial recreation opportunities would be continued through the authorization of special recreation permits consistent with present management direction while providing for resource protection. Special recreation permits, for both commercial and noncommercial activities, would be authorized throughout the LRA.

The Sunstone Collection Area would be managed under existing guidelines, where there would be no commercial collection of stones, and only hand tools may be used.

Development of a watchable wildlife site on the north end of Abert Lake would be considered.

Wilderness therapy schools would be authorized, through the issuance of special recreation permits, to operate on BLM-administered lands within the LRA and portions of the Prineville and Burns Districts. Total user days (defined as any calendar day, or portion thereof, that a participant/client/student is accompanied or serviced by an operator or permittee) associated with wilderness therapy school operations may not exceed 16,600 for combined use in Lakeview, Prineville, and Burns Districts. Group size would be limited to nine students, plus staff. In the vicinity of Fredericks Butte in north Lake County, no wilderness therapy schools would be authorized to operate with more than two groups at any one time within Lakeview, Burns, and Prineville Districts. No more than five groups would be authorized to operate concurrently within this area. When possible, no campsites would be authorized within 5 miles of any year-round residence.

Special Recreation Management Areas

Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management

Area: Management of the Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area would be as outlined in the "Warner Wetlands Recreation Area Management Plan" (USDI-BLM 1990). Existing management direction allows hunting, motorized boating, and personal motorized watercraft (jetskis and waverunners) use. Vehicles would be required to stay on designated roads and trails. The following projects, previously approved to enhance and provide new recreation opportunities, would be considered:

- Upgrade approximately 12–13 miles of existing roads to provide all-weather public access to Turpin, Campbell, and Stone Corral Lakes.

- Construct small campgrounds at Turpin and Campbell Lakes with associated boat ramps, parking areas, and vault toilets.
- Continue to develop handicap accessible nature trails, view points, and interpretive sites within the special recreation management area.
- Develop and maintain foot and canoe trails and develop self-guiding interpretive literature.
- Pursue development of a joint USFWS and BLM campground along County Road 3-12.

Alternative B

The designation of special recreation management areas to enhance tourism and recreation opportunities would be optimized. All remaining public land not under special designation status would be managed as an extensive recreation management area. Existing developed and undeveloped recreation sites (including trails, wildlife viewing areas, backcountry byways, interpretive areas, and campgrounds) would be expanded to accommodate increased visitation. Opportunities for partnerships to expand tourism and recreation would be optimized. Visitors' recreation experiences would be enhanced through increased information and education opportunities.

Commercial and competitive use opportunities would be emphasized through the issuance of special recreation permits.

Wilderness therapy schools would be authorized up to 16,400 user days, through the issuance of special recreation permits, to operate on BLM-administered lands within the LRA. The 16,400 users days would be split between the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area (8,300) and the remainder of the LRA (8,100). The North Lake Special Recreation Management Area would include use within the general areas of Prineville and Burns Districts as described under management common to all alternatives section. Group size would be limited to 12 students/group, plus staff. No company would be authorized to operate with more than two groups at any one time in the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area and no more than five groups could operate concurrently. No more than three groups per company would be authorized to operate within the remainder of the LRA at any one time. When possible, no campsites would be authorized within 5 miles of any year-round residence.

Special Recreation Management Areas

Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area: Management of the Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area would be the same as listed under Alternative A.

Proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Area: The North Lake Special Recreation Management Area would be established. Primary values include, but are not limited to, unique geologic features, cultural resources, wildlife resources, botanical resources, scenery, and a variety of recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, sightseeing, motorized and non-motorized OHV activities, environmental education, and scientific studies. The special recreation management area would include four WSA's (Devils Garden, Squaw Ridge, Four Craters, and Sand Dunes), the Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC, Duncan Reservoir Campground, West Fork Silver Creek, Buck Creek, and the associated geologic and natural features in the area (such as Black Hills, Crack-in-the-Ground, Derrick Cave, Sand Dunes, Lost Forest, Fossil Lake, and Table Rock) (Map R-8 of the Draft RMP/EIS). The management emphasis for this special recreation management area would include, but not be limited to, OHV use, increased monitoring and patrols to curb vandalism, and encourage commercial uses (such as wilderness therapy schools, guided hunting, and nature tours, etc.).

Management of the Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC would be consistent to that under Alternative A. Collection of down and dead wood and cutting trees in the ACEC would be prohibited. Means to provide firewood for campers on high-use weekends would be investigated including permitting a concessionaire to sell firewood. The main road through the Lost Forest RNA/ISA (BLM Roads 6151 and 6141A) would be upgraded to a single lane road with turnouts and parking pulloff. If the Sand Dunes WSA is not designated wilderness, the BLM would consider developing a campground on adjacent public land and charge use fees if no private campground is developed on nonpublic land.

The Green Mountain primitive campground would be upgraded to a developed campground. Facilities could include developed campsites, toilet facilities, and a potable water system. The Duncan Reservoir Campground would be upgraded with the development of a potable water system. Fees would be charged for the use of these campgrounds, if the proposed upgrades are implemented.

Development of picnic area along Highway 31 (at milepost 34.5) would be considered. Facilities could include picnic sites with tables, vault toilets, potable water system, and kiosks for interpretation of resources and history within the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area.

Alternative C

Recreation would be focused towards undeveloped types of activities while assuring a high level of protection of natural and cultural values. Developed recreation would be focused on the protection and interpretation of cultural and natural values and for public health and safety. If resource values are being degraded beyond acceptable levels, site rehabilitation or closure would be favored. Tourism opportunities would be deemphasized. Visitors' recreation experiences would be enhanced through increased information and education opportunities.

Special recreation management areas would be designated with an emphasis on undeveloped, dispersed recreation opportunities and protection of natural values. Minimal facilities would be constructed and maintained. All lands not designated as a special recreation management area would be managed as an extensive recreation management area.

The issuance of special recreation permits would be limited and the protection of cultural and natural values would be emphasized.

The Sunstone Collection Area would be managed under existing guidelines as listed in Alternative A.

Overnight camping would be prohibited within the Juniper Mountain ACEC.

Commercial and noncommercial special recreation permits would not be authorized within the Rahilly-Gravelly ACEC/RNA.

Wilderness therapy schools would be authorized a maximum of 10,200 user days to operate on BLM-administered lands within the Lakeview District and portions of Prineville and Burns Districts. The 10,200 users days would be split between the proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Area (4,800) and the remainder of the LRA (5,400). Group size would be limited to nine students/group, plus staff. No school would be authorized to conduct operations with more than one group at any one time, and no more than four groups would be authorized to operate concurrently in the proposed North Lake Special Recreation Manage-

ment Area. Throughout the remainder of the LRA, no school would be authorized to conduct operations with more than two groups at any one time. When possible, no permanent campsites would be authorized within 5 miles of any year-round residence. No wilderness therapy school would be allowed to operate within the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area in the winter between December 1 and March 31, annually.

Special Recreation Management Areas

Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area: The Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area would be managed to protect natural and cultural values. Management could be modified through a site-specific NEPA analysis. Motorized boating and personal motorized watercraft (jetskis and waverunners) within the special recreation management area would be allowed. Vehicles would be restricted to a few designated roads and trails. The following projects would be considered:

- Upgrade roads, as necessary, for resource protection.
- Close and rehabilitate roads, as necessary.
- Maintain present facilities, such as handicap accessible nature trails, view points, and interpretive sites within the special recreation management area.
- Develop and maintain foot and canoe trails and develop self-guiding interpretive literature in response to increased use.
- Pursue development of a joint USFWS and BLM campground along County Road 3-12.

Proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Area: The proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Area would be established to include the areas as described under Alternative B (Map R-8 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Management emphasis would be on protection of natural and cultural resource values.

The proposed Black Hills and Connley Hills ACECs would be a day-use area only with no overnight camping. Collection of dead and down wood and cutting of trees would be prohibited.

The Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC would be closed to overnight camping. The entire ACEC

would be day-use only. The entire ACEC would be closed to OHV's. The collection of dead and down wood and cutting of trees within the ACEC would be prohibited. Open fires would be prohibited throughout the ACEC.

Recreation use within the proposed Table Rock ACEC would be limited to day-use only—no overnight camping would be allowed.

Climbing and rappelling activities would be prohibited in the Crack-in-the-Ground.

Alternative D

Management of two special recreation management areas (Warner Wetlands and the proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Areas) would focus on providing quality recreation opportunities while protecting resource values. Remaining public lands throughout the resource area would be managed as an extensive recreation management area. Management of existing developed recreation use areas and their associated maintenance would be continued and improvements and expansion would be allowed if needed for protection of natural values, for public health and safety, and to address increases in demand. This would include such actions as replacing old toilets or picnic tables, installing barriers to contain vehicles, or adding a toilet, firerings, or interpretive information to an existing site that is receiving heavier use. New recreation sites and areas would be established, if needed, to meet increased recreation demand, but only if other resource values can be protected. Examples of this may include providing toilets, parking areas, or interpretive displays. Tourism opportunities and development would be pursued only if they are consistent with meeting other resource objectives.

Special recreation permits would be issued on an as-needed basis to meet demand while protecting cultural and natural resource values and to maintain public health and safety.

No commercial collection of stones and only hand tools would be allowed in the Sunstone Collection Area. Development of a designated, primitive campground in the vicinity of the Sunstone Collection Area would be considered within the next 10 to 15 years. Facilities could include firerings, campsite pads, and a potable water source. There is currently a vault toilet on site. The area would be proposed as a fee site, if facilities were constructed.

Wilderness therapy schools would be authorized a

maximum of 12,800 user days to operate on BLM-administered lands within the LRA. The 12,800 users days would be split between the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area (7,400) and the remainder of the LRA (5,400). Group size would be limited to nine students/group, plus staff. No school would be authorized to operate with more than two groups at any one time within the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area and no more than four groups would be authorized to operate concurrently. No more than two groups would be authorized to operate at any one time in the Burns and Prineville Districts (this applies only to those areas in the Burns and Prineville Districts listed under the Actions Common to All Alternatives section). Throughout the remainder of the LRA, each school would be authorized to operate with no more than three groups at any one time. When possible, no permanent campsites would be authorized within 5 miles of any year-round residence.

Special Recreation Management Areas

Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area: Management of the Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area would be as outlined below, unless modified through a site-specific NEPA analysis. Hunting and motorized boating would be allowed within the Warner Wetlands Special Recreation Management Area. Personal motorized watercraft (jetskis and waverunners) would not be allowed. Vehicles are required to stay on designated roads and trails. The following projects, previously approved to enhance and provide new recreation opportunities, would be considered:

- Upgrade roads and construct facilities such as trailheads and boat ramps as necessary for resource protection.
- Close and rehabilitate roads as necessary.
- Maintain present facilities, e.g., handicap accessible nature trails, view points, and interpretive sites within the special recreation management area.
- Develop and maintain foot and canoe trails and develop self-guiding interpretive literature in response to increased use.
- Pursue development of a joint USFWS and BLM campground along County Road 3-12.

Proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Area: The North Lake Special Recreation

Management Area would be established and would include four WSA's (Devils Garden, Squaw Ridge, Four Craters, and Sand Dunes), the Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC, the proposed Devils Garden ACEC, the proposed Connley Hills ACEC/RNA, the proposed Black Hills ACEC/RNA, the proposed Table Rock ACEC, Duncan Reservoir Campground, West Fork Silver Creek, Buck Creek, and the Green Mountain primitive camping area (Map R-9). The management emphasis for this special recreation management area would include, but not be limited to, OHV use, increased monitoring and patrols to curb vandalism, commercial uses (such as wilderness therapy schools, guided hunting, and nature tours, etc.), the protection of natural and cultural resource values, maintaining public health and safety, and meeting increased recreation demand.

No overnight camping would be allowed in the Black Hills ACEC or the Connley Hills ACEC. Collection of dead and down wood and the cutting of trees (firewood cutting) would be prohibited.

The main road through the Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC would be minimally upgraded to prevent continued resource damage. Camping would only be allowed in four designated primitive campsites located along the outer boundary of the Lost Forest RNA/ISA. The campsites would be small, with parking for one or two vehicles. No new campsites or other facilities would be developed within the Lost Forest RNA/ISA (see Map SMA-9 for campsite locations). Camping at the base of Sand Rock would be prohibited and the sites rehabilitated. A small pulloff along the road for parking would be delineated for day-use access to the Sand Rock area.

There would be three camping/staging areas allowed in the Sand Dunes WSA. Use of these three camping/staging areas would be managed on a rotational basis, i.e., two of the camping/staging areas would be open and available to use and the other area would be closed for an indeterminate amount of time (2–6 years) to allow natural rehabilitation to occur. The length of the closure would be based on the following criteria: (1) success of natural revegetation, (2) obliteration of human activities from the natural movement of sand, and (3) the public's adherence to the closure. Designation of specific travel routes from the camping/staging areas to the barren dunes which are open to OHV use would be established. Adaptive management activities which would allow the continued use of each of these camping/staging areas would be adopted as necessary to ensure the long-term use and protection of these areas. Collection of dead and down wood and the

cutting of trees would be prohibited throughout the ACEC. However, opportunities such as a concessionaire to provide firewood for high-use weekends would be explored. The BLM would also consider developing a campground on adjacent Federal or acquired land and charge use fees if no private campground is developed in the adjacent area.

Camping would be allowed in designated camping areas within the proposed Table Rock ACEC. Specific sites would be designated in the future North Lake Special Recreation Management Area plan.

Climbing and/or rappelling activities would be prohibited in the Crack-in-the-Ground.

Development of a picnic area along Highway 31 (at milepost 34.5 south) would be considered. Facilities would include picnic sites with tables, vault toilets, and kiosks for interpretation of resources and history within the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area.

Alternative E

Recreation management would be kept to a minimal level. Recreation would be focused towards undeveloped types of activities while assuring a high level of protection of natural and cultural values. Developed recreation would be focused on the protection and interpretation of cultural and natural values and for public health and safety. If resource values are being degraded beyond acceptable levels, site rehabilitation or closure would be favored.

Tourism opportunities would be deemphasized. Information and interpretive education would not be provided to the visiting public. No commercial special recreation permits would be issued and existing permits would be terminated. Only surface collection would be allowed in the Sunstone Collection Area.

The Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC designation would be revoked. The former ACEC would be managed in the same manner as the surrounding land. OHV's would be limited to existing roads and trails. The Lost Forest ISA and Sand Dunes WSA designations would continue. These areas would continue to be managed according to the wilderness IMP until such time as Congress makes a decision regarding their designation as wilderness.

Special Recreation Management Areas

No special recreation management areas would exist; all public land would be managed as an extensive

recreation management area.

Off-Highway Vehicles

Management Goal—*Manage off-highway vehicle (OHV) use to protect resource values, promote public safety, provide OHV use opportunities where appropriate, and minimize conflicts among various users.*

Rationale

Federal regulations (43 CFR Part 8340) and BLM planning guidance require the BLM to designate all BLM-administered land as either open, limited, or closed in regard to off-road vehicle (now termed off-highway vehicle or OHV) use. These designations are designed to help meet public demand for OHV activities, protect natural resources, ensure public safety, and minimize conflicts among users.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

All management actions for those portions of ACEC's within ISA's or WSA's would be governed by "Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review" (USDI-BLM 1995b) until such time as Congress makes a determination regarding wilderness designation. The OHV designations in WSA's would remain in effect until congressional release of the WSA's, or until such time that actual or unforeseeable use levels cause the nonimpairment criteria to be violated, in which case more restrictive designations may be made. Areas released from WSA status would be managed according to the designations of the surrounding area.

Map R-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS shows the location of each WSA and Appendix J1 of the Draft RMP/EIS contains a description of each area.

According to the wilderness IMP, the use in WSA's of "... mechanical transport, including all motorized devices as well as trail and mountain bikes, may only be allowed on existing ways and within open areas that were designated prior to the passage of FLPMA (October 1976)." For the purposes of analysis, existing roads and ways within WSA's are those that existed on the ground at the time the FLPMA was passed (1976) and were subsequently shown or described in the "Oregon Wilderness Final EIS" (USDI-BLM 1989a). Any new roads or ways that have been created or discovered since either have already been closed to vehicle use or should be closed under all alternatives in

order to comply with the wilderness IMP. Existing roads and trails within the remainder of the planning area are defined as those roads or trails that exist on the ground at the time the RMP is approved and the record of decision is signed. These will be verified by comparison with 2000–2001 USGS National High Altitude Photography program aerial photography which represents the best available source data on this topic.

Off-road vehicle is defined as any motorized vehicle designed for, or capable of, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, *excluding*: (1) any nonamphibious registered motorboat; (2) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (3) vehicles in official use; (4) any combat or combat support vehicle when used in times of national defense emergencies; and (5) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer, or is otherwise officially approved. The exceptions to OHV use proposed under all alternatives would automatically apply in cases 1 through 4 above without further authorization required.

Under case 5, individuals authorized to use public lands under a license, lease, permit, contract, or other authorization may be allowed to use an OHV in a closed area or off-road in a limited use area on a case-by-case basis. This would have to be approved by the authorized officer as part of the appropriate authorization process. Approval would take into consideration the type of vehicle, frequency of trips, season of use, purpose, and existing resource values requiring protection (soils, vegetation, wildlife, cultural, paleontological, WSA, etc.). The requester would have to demonstrate that the use was necessary to carry out the primary purpose(s) of the license, lease, permit, contract, or other authorization and no other practicable alternatives were available. The vehicle would have to be the least impacting type capable of performing the required task. Travel would be limited to frozen or dry soil conditions to minimize potential impacts to soil and avoid other protected resource values. The frequency of trips would be limited to the minimum necessary to complete the required task and would be controlled to prevent the development of new trails on the landscape.

Existing scenic byways or vehicle routes would be retained.

Designation of new scenic byways or vehicle routes would be considered, provided they are consistent with OHV designations and resource concerns are addressed. Additional environmental analysis and

documentation would be required.

Emergency vehicle closures previously implemented would become permanent. Future emergency vehicle closures may be implemented if it is determined that OHV's are causing or would cause considerable adverse effects upon resources. Such emergency closures would be announced via a notice published in the *Federal Register* and in local newspapers.

Any roads designated for closure may be signed, physically barricaded, and/or restored. Priority areas for restoration would be riparian conservation areas, damaged watersheds, and wildlife or plant habitat.

Table 3-5, Maps R-2, R-5, and R-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS, and Map R-7 show OHV designations by alternative. Refer to Table 4-5 in Chapter 4 for total acres designated for OHV use. Refer to Table 4-4 for miles of roads proposed for closure by alternative.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Motorized vehicle use would be managed according to current designations. Table 3-5 and Map R-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS display the existing OHV designations in the LRA. Organized off-highway vehicle use would be allowed if it is consistent with protection of resource values. Within WSA's, all mechanical and motorized vehicle use would be limited to existing roads and ways, except for the Sand Dunes WSA which would remain in the open designation.

Alternative B

Off-highway vehicle use would be similar to Alternative A and shown on Map R-5 of the Draft RMP/EIS and Table 3-5 and SMA-5, except for additional limited acres in the proposed Connley Hills ACEC. There would be an emphasis on the open designation. Opportunities for organized OHV events would be greater under this alternative.

Alternative C

Off-highway vehicle use would be managed to emphasize the protection of natural values. Organized OHV events would only be allowed on existing and/or designated roads and trails.

The Sand Dunes WSA would be closed to OHV's.

The existing deer winter range area closure in north Lake County would be expanded by 34,374 acres. During the period December 1 through March 31, annually, motorized travel would be limited to designated roads and trails. The remainder of the year, motorized travel would be limited to existing roads and trails.

The remainder of the LRA, including a northern wildlife area in north Lake County, would be limited to existing roads and trails year-round.

These restrictions are shown on Maps R-6 and SMA-23 of the Draft RMP/EIS and Tables 3-5 and 4-4.

Alternative D

Off-highway vehicle use would be managed with the focus on protection of natural values. Organized OHV events would only be allowed on existing and/or designated roads and trails, and in the Sand Dunes WSA (subject to wilderness IMP guidelines).

Off-highway vehicle designations in the following WSA's would be limited to designated roads and ways: Abert Rim WSA; Fish Creek Rim WSA; Guano Creek WSA; Hawk Mountain WSA; Devils Garden WSA; and Sage Hen Hills WSA. Off-highway vehicle designations in the following WSA's would be limited to existing roads and ways: Basque Hills WSA; Diablo Mountain WSA; Four Craters Lava Bed WSA; Orejana Canyon WSA; Rincon WSA; Spaulding WSA; and Squaw Ridge Lava Bed WSA (Table 3-5). Map R-7 depicts the OHV designations for the above listed WSA's.

Proposed OHV designations for the Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC vary from open to limited to closed (Table 3-5 and Map SMA-9A). The existing Fossil Lake Vehicle Closure Area encompasses approximately 6,660 acres and an additional 2,328 acres are proposed for closure to OHV's (totalling approximately 8,989 acres).

The OHV designation for the portion of the existing Lake Abert ACEC which lies on the east side of Highway 395 would be limited to designated roads and trails (ways); the remainder of the existing ACEC located on the west side of Highway 395 would be limited to existing roads and trails. The proposed Lake Abert ACEC addition lies entirely within the boundaries of the Abert Rim WSA, and the OHV designation for the proposed ACEC would be the same as the WSA—limited to designated roads and ways (trails) (Map R-7).

The proposed OHV designation for the existing Devils Garden ACEC and WSA (the ACEC and WSA boundaries are the same) would be a seasonal limitation. It is within the proposed addition to the deer winter range closure area (Map SMA-24). Throughout most of the year, the Devils Garden WSA and ACEC would be limited to designated roads and trails. However, during the period December 1 through March 31, annually, all of the roads and ways within the WSA and ACEC would be closed. Cougar Mountain, adjacent to the Devils Garden WSA and ACEC, would be limited to designated roads and trails (Maps SMA-5 and 24).

Off-highway designations for the following proposed ACEC's would be limited to designated roads and trails (or ways if they overlap existing WSA's): Black Hills ACEC; Connley Hills ACEC; Fish Creek Rim ACEC (which overlaps with the Fish Creek Rim WSA); Foley Lake ACEC (2,230 acres); Guano Creek/Sink Lakes ACEC (11,239 acres which overlap with the Guano Creek WSA); Hawksie-Walksie ACEC (which overlaps with the Sage Hen Hills WSA and the Hawk Mountain WSA); High Lakes ACEC; Juniper Mountain ACEC; Rahilly Gravelly ACEC; Red Knoll ACEC; Spanish Lake ACEC; and Table Rock ACEC (Table 3-3).

The existing Cabin Lake/Silver Lake Deer Winter Range Cooperative Road Closure area in north Lake County would be expanded by an additional 34,374 acres. During the period December 1 through March 31, annually, OHV uses within the expanded deer winter range area (totaling 100,834 acres) would be limited to designated roads and trails (Table 3-5). During the remainder of the year, the OHV designation for the expanded deer winter range area would be limited to existing roads and trails, with the exception of the Devils Garden WSA and ACEC which would be under the designated roads and ways (trails) designation (Map SMA-5). Refer to Map SMA-24 which depicts the expanded Cabin Lake/Silver Lake Deer Winter Range Cooperative Road Closure area. Under the Draft RMP/EIS, OHV uses were limited to existing roads and trails in an area of north Lake County referred to as the northern wildlife area. The northern wildlife area is located entirely within the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area and the proposed OHV designations are the same so any reference to the proposed northern wildlife area will be dropped. The proposed OHV designation for most of the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area (encompassing approximately 552,558 acres) would be limited to existing roads and trails, unless an area within the special recreation management area is associated with another special management area and subsequently other OHV designations. Special management areas

located within the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area include WSA's, ACEC's, deer winter range, etc., and other OHV designations would apply as addressed elsewhere under this alternative. Refer to Maps R-7 and R-8 which depict the OHV designations and boundary for the proposed North Lake Special Recreation Management Area.

Off-highway vehicle designations for the Alkali Lake Sand Dunes (6,813 acres) and an area near Beauty Butte (59,206 acres) would be limited to existing roads and trails. Refer to Map R-7 which shows these areas.

The following areas are presently closed to OHV uses and the closures would be carried forward under this alternative: Buck Creek (590 acres); Crane Mountain (1,057 acres); South Green Mountain (14 acres); and, the West Side Gravel Pit Area (80 acres). Refer to Maps R-7, SMA-24, -25, and -27.

Alternative E

Designations for existing ACEC's (and associated OHV designations) would be revoked and no new ones would be designated. Vehicle management in WSA's and several small areas would be the same as in Alternative A, except for the Sand Dunes which would be closed. The rest of the LRA would be limited to existing roads and trails.

Visual Resources

Management Goal—*Manage public land actions and activities consistent with visual resource management (VRM) class objectives.*

Rationale

Section 102(8) of FLPMA declares that public land would be managed to protect the quality of scenic values and, where appropriate, to preserve and protect certain public land in its natural condition. NEPA, section 101(b), requires Federal agencies to “. . . assure for all Americans . . . esthetically pleasing surroundings.” Section 102 of NEPA requires agencies to “. . . utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which would ensure the integrated use of . . . Environmental Design Acts in the planning and decision making . . .” process. Guidelines for the identification of VRM classes on public land are contained in BLM Manual Handbook 8410-1, Visual Resource Inventory (USDI-BLM1986c). See Draft RMP/EIS Appendix M-3 for a detailed description of VRM classifications. The establishment of VRM classes on public land is based

Table 3-7.—Summary of mineral restrictions by alternative ¹

	Alternatives				
	A	B	C	D	E
Locatable minerals					
Open	<u>971,377</u>	<u>975,464</u>	0	<u>917,447</u>	0
Closed	17,231	14,225	55,415	<u>21,050</u>	<u>3,043,900</u>
Closed NMM ²	1,900	0	1,900	1,900	0
NSO ³	0	0	2,340,360	0	0
NREC ⁴	466,864	466,864	440,916	<u>457,332</u>	0
Other ⁵	<u>1,586,528</u>	<u>1,587,347</u>	214,547	<u>1,646,171</u>	0
Leasable minerals					
Open	<u>963,213</u>	<u>966,686</u>	0	<u>944,621</u>	0
Closed	493,697	492,812	579,187	<u>496,983</u>	<u>3,043,900</u>
NSO ⁶	612,776	620,006	2,369,434	<u>810,490</u>	0
Special stipulations ⁵	<u>974,214</u>	<u>964,396</u>	290,189	<u>791,806</u>	0
Salable minerals					
Open	<u>981,664</u>	<u>985,438</u>	0	<u>947,232</u>	0
Closed	975,044 ⁷	969,224 ⁷	2,870,643 ⁸	<u>1,193,945 ⁸</u>	3,043,900
Other	<u>1,087,192</u>	<u>1,089,238</u>	312,623	<u>902,724</u>	0

¹ Numbers shown are in acres.² Closed to nonmetaliferous mining.³ Includes areas where no surface occupancy restrictions from greater sage-grouse interim guidelines would apply, but would require a formal withdrawal to implement.⁴ Activities requiring future reclamation are not currently allowed under the wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b).⁵ Other restrictions or special stipulations may include: plan of operations, seasonal access limitations, and special design.⁶ No surface occupancy.⁷ Includes areas identified in existing land use plans under Alternatives A and B where no ground disturbance is allowed to protect greater sage-grouse.⁸ Includes areas where no surface occupancy restrictions from greater sage-grouse interim guidelines would effectively result in closure to salable minerals under Alternatives C and D.

on an evaluation of the landscape's scenic qualities, public sensitivity toward certain areas (such as certain special recreation designations and WSA's), and the location of affected land from major travel corridors (distance zoning).

Actions Common to Alternatives A–D

WSA's would be managed under VRM Class I. Should a WSA not be designated by Congress, the area would return to the original inventoried VRM class unless it has been reclassified due to overlap with a SMA (such as an ACEC, RNA, or WSR, etc.).

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Management would continue as described under the

existing management framework plan and plan amendments. Emphasis would be given to protecting and/or mitigating intrusions in medium and high scenic quality areas. All developments, land alterations, and vegetative manipulations within 5 miles of all major travel routes and recreation sites would be designed to minimize visual impacts (unseen areas within these 5-mile zones would not be held to this standard). Pipelines, powerlines, season-long grazing, vegetation spraying, western juniper chaining, or other major vegetative alteration projects would not be allowed in high scenic quality areas. Grass seedings, shrub plantings, tree plantings, fires, insect infestations, and other vegetation alterations would be allowed along major travel routes within low-quality scenic areas. Vegetation manipulation projects would be designed to maximize scenic quality, but minimize scenic intrusions. Visual resources in existing ACEC's would be managed as displayed in Table 3-3. Public lands would

be managed under VRM classifications shown on Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS.

Alternative B

Visual resources in the LRA within the planning area would be managed the same as under Alternative A, as shown in Map VRM-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS.

Alternative C

Emphasis would be given to protecting and/or mitigating intrusions in all areas. All developments, land alterations, and vegetative manipulations within 5 miles of all major travel routes and recreation sites would be designed to minimize visual impacts (unseen areas within these 5-mile zones would not be held to this standard). Pipelines, powerlines, season-long grazing, vegetation spraying, western juniper chaining, or other major vegetative alteration projects would not be allowed in high scenic quality areas. Grass seedings, shrub plantings, tree planting, fires, insect infestations, and other vegetation alterations would be allowed along major travel routes within low-quality scenic areas. Vegetation manipulation projects would be designed to maximize scenic quality, but minimize scenic intrusions.

Visual resources within ACEC's would be managed as displayed in Table 3-3. Management of eligible or suitable WSR's would be managed under Class II, unless managed as Class I under other resource prescriptions (e.g., WSA's, ACEC's/RNA's). Public land would be managed under VRM classifications as indicated on Map VRM-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS.

Alternative D

Emphasis would be given to protecting and/or mitigating intrusions in all areas. All developments, land alterations, and vegetative manipulations within 3 miles of all major travel routes and recreation use areas would be designed to minimize visual impacts (unseen areas within these 3-mile zones would not be held to this standard). All projects would be designed to maximize scenic quality, but minimize scenic intrusions.

Visual resources in ACEC's would be managed as displayed in Table 3-3. Management of eligible or suitable WSR's with a potential classification of wild or scenic would be under Class II, unless managed as Class I under other resource prescriptions (e.g., WSA's, ACEC/RNA's). Public land would be managed under

VRM classifications shown in Map VRM-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS.

Alternative E

Natural processes would occur with minimal human intervention. Existing VRM classes would be removed except for WSA's, which would be managed under VRM Class I. Should a WSA not be congressionally designated as wilderness, the area would not be assigned any VRM management class.

Energy and Mineral Resources

Within legal constraints, all Federal mineral estate locatable, leasable, and salable minerals would be available for exploration, development, and production subject to existing regulations and standard requirements and stipulations. Locatable minerals would not be available in areas withdrawn from the operation of the mining laws. Where necessary to protect important lands and resources, mineral exploration and development would be subject to additional restrictions which could include no leasing, no disposal of mineral materials, no surface occupancy, no ground disturbance, wilderness IMP nonimpairment standard, special design requirements, requiring preparation of a plan of operations, and seasonal or other timing restrictions. Appendix N3 describes the types of standard mineral development stipulations and guidelines that apply to the planning area. Table 3-7 summarizes acres of mineral restrictions which would apply to the various alternatives.

Energy derived from the burning of biomass generated by juniper treatment is covered in the Forest and Woodlands section.

Management Goal 1—Provide opportunity for the exploration, location, development, and production of locatable minerals in an environmentally-sound manner. Eliminate and rehabilitate abandoned mine hazards.

Rationale

The general mining laws give the public the right to locate and develop mining claims on public land. The "Mining and Minerals Policy Act" of 1970 declares that it is the continuing policy of the Federal government to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources. Section 102 of FLPMA directs that the public land would be

managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals and other commodities from the public lands, while managing these lands in a manner that would protect scientific, scenic, historic, archeological, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, and hydrologic values. The Bureau's mineral and national energy policy policies state that public lands shall remain open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawal or other administrative action is justified in the national interest.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Locatable mineral exploration and development is regulated under 43 CFR 3802 for WSA's, and 3809 (as amended) for other public lands. The wilderness IMP (USDI-BLM 1995b) states that locatable mineral development and exploration activities within WSA's can occur in accordance with the mining laws, but are currently limited to only those actions that do not require reclamation, unless the operation had established grandfathered uses or valid existing rights on October 21, 1976. This policy restriction effectively closes WSA's to mining that requires reclamation or degrades wilderness values. However, should the wilderness IMP be revised or Congress takes action to remove some areas from WSA status, some of these areas could eventually be made more available for mineral development during the life of the plan.

For WSA's studied under section 202 of FLPMA, existing and new mining operations under the 1872 mining law would be regulated under 43 CFR 3802 only to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands, not to prevent impairment of wilderness suitability.

Locatable mineral exploration and development within ACEC's typically requires the preparation and approval of a plan of operations prior to development. In addition, many areas within the planning area are subject to numerous overlapping types of mineral location restrictions or special stipulations (refer to Appendix N3). This makes determining the amount of area open, closed, or restricted to mineral development difficult. For instance, an ACEC (which requires a plan of operations) may partially overlap a WSA (which is subject to the no reclamation stipulation). For simplicity, such an area of overlap has been reclassified as no reclamation allowed to reflect the most restrictive management measure in place, regardless of how many other types of restrictions may also apply. Any WSA's which overlap with areas where other mineral restrictions apply, which are later re-

moved from WSA status, would be managed in accordance with the remaining restrictions. In the example above, an area where a WSA overlaps an ACEC could change from no reclamation to mineral development after approval of a plan of operations if Congress removed WSA status during the life of the plan.

The amended 3809 regulations became effective on January 20, 2001. Acknowledging a notice (exploration operations of 5 acres or less, outside of SMA's) is not a Federal action that requires compliance with NEPA, so no environmental documentation must be prepared. The BLM does review notices to ensure that no unnecessary or undue degradation would occur, and that a plan of operations is not required. A plan of operations is required for all mining activity that is not casual use, regardless of the number of acres disturbed. A plan is also required for all exploration activities that disturb over 5 acres, bulk sampling which would remove 1,000 tons or more of presumed ore for testing, or for any surface-disturbing operations greater than casual use in certain SMA's and lands/waters that contain federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or their proposed or designated critical habitat. The approval of plans of operations is a Federal action that requires NEPA compliance. Mining claim use and occupancy under 43 CFR 3710 also requires NEPA compliance.

As a result of the implementation of the amended 3809 regulations, it is anticipated that LRA would receive several plans of operations in the Rabbit Basin sunstone area annually. Descriptions of plan filing and processing requirements, anticipated activity, and resulting surface disturbance can be found in Appendix N2, Mineral Development Scenarios, Locatable Mineral Resources. Standard mitigating measures can be found in Appendix N3. The Lakeview Proposed RMP/FEIS constitutes the NEPA analysis guiding the approval of future sunstone exploration and mining plans of operations in the Rabbit Basin sunstone area only (Map M-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS). It supplements the "Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Surface Management Regulations for Locatable Mineral Operations" (USDI-BLM 2000i). It also amends EA No. OR-010-98-05, "Mining Use and Occupancy—Sunstone Mining Area" (USDI-BLM 1998h). Any mining plans of operations or mining claim use and occupancy outside of the Rabbit Basin sunstone area would require separate, and site-specific, NEPA environmental documentation prior to approval.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Lands currently open to locatable mineral activity would continue to be available (Table 3-7). Existing restrictions and requirements for other resource protection would apply. The Lost Forest RNA/ISA, part of Abert Rim WSA, and the Public Sunstone Area, totaling approximately 17,231 acres, are currently closed to locatable mineral entry, and would remain closed under this alternative (Map M-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS). Approximately 468,864 acres of additional lands located within WSA's are subject to the wilderness IMP nonimpairment/no reclamation standard, and are, for all practical purposes, closed to locatable mineral entry. Mining restrictions for non-metalliferous minerals would continue in public water reserves totaling approximately 1,900 acres. About 1,371,538 acres are subject to a combination of other types of protective stipulations including preparing a plan of operations, seasonal restrictions, and special visual design measures. These other restrictions/stipulations apply primarily to areas of big game winter range, raptor nesting habitat, areas within 2 miles of greater sage-grouse leks, and VRM Class II. The Public Sunstone Collection Area would remain open to recreational collecting.

Alternative B

Locatable mineral restrictions under this alternative would be similar to those for Alternative A with the following exceptions. The mineral segregation on the Public Sunstone Area would be revoked thereby making an additional 2,540 acres of sunstone-bearing basalt available for mining claim location. Public water reserve withdrawals would be revoked. These reserves could be protected by more site-specific rights-of-way and the 43 CFR 3809 regulations. This would open approximately 1,900 acres of public land to non-metalliferous mineral entry.

Designation of one new SMA (Connley Hills ACEC/RNA) would occur which would require a plan of operation before locatable mineral activity could occur in this area. Public land or minerals with moderate or high potential would not be disposed of unless equal values would be obtained. See Table 3-7 for a summary of areas affected by mineral restrictions under this alternative.

Alternative C

The areas identified in Table 3-7 represent existing formal withdrawals (Map M-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS) from the operation of the mining laws and areas proposed for withdrawal under this alternative, such as Devils Garden ACEC/WSA and Red Knoll ACEC. (Formal withdrawal approval would be required by the Secretary of the Interior and Congress before most of this area could be officially closed to mineral location). The "Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem Management Guidelines" call for locatable mineral activity, where a plan of operation is required, to avoid surface occupancy within 0.6 miles of known/occupied greater sage-grouse habitat. This would apply to up to 2,340,360 acres of the planning area.

About 440,916 acres would be subject to the no reclamation stipulation under the wilderness IMP. About 214,547 acres would be subject to a combination of other types of protective stipulations including preparing a plan of operations, seasonal restrictions, and special visual design measures. These other restrictions/stipulations apply primarily to areas of big game winter range, raptor nesting habitat, suitable WSR's, and VRM Class II.

The mineral segregation on the Public Sunstone Area (2,540 acres) would be retained, thereby keeping the area open to recreational collecting by the public. Existing public water withdrawals would be retained (1,900 acres), closing them to nonmetalliferous mining.

Alternative D

The resource area would be open to locatable mineral activity except for the area (21,064 acres) shown in Table 3-7 as closed. The areas identified as closed represent existing formal withdrawals from the operation of the mining laws (Map M-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS) and areas proposed for withdrawal under this alternative, such as the northwestern portion of Red Knoll ACEC (about 4,600 acres). An additional 468,102 acres would be subject to the no reclamation stipulation of the wilderness IMP. About 1,436,196 acres would be subject to a combination of other types of protective stipulations including: preparing a plan of operations, seasonal restrictions, and special visual design measures. These other restrictions/stipulations apply primarily to areas of big game winter range, greater sage-grouse breeding habitat, raptor nesting habitat, suitable WSR's, and VRM Class II. Existing public water reserve withdrawals would be retained (1,900 acres). The mineral segregation on the Public Sunstone Area (2,540 acres) would be retained thereby

keeping the area open to recreational collecting by the public.

Alternative E

Actions would be taken to withdraw the entire resource area from locatable mineral entry, subject to existing rights. Because the withdrawal would exceed 5,000 acres, congressional approval would be required.

Management Goal 2—Provide leasing opportunity for oil and gas, geothermal energy, and solid minerals in an environmentally-sound manner.

Rationale

The “Mineral Leasing Act” of 1920, as amended, and the “Geothermal Steam Act” of 1970, as amended, provide the opportunity for the public to explore for, develop, and produce publicly-owned leasable minerals. The “Mining and Minerals Policy Act” of 1970 declares that it is the continuing policy of the Federal government to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources.

Section 102 of FLPMA directs that the public land would be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals and other commodities from the public lands, while managing these lands in a manner that would protect scientific, scenic, historic, archeologic, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, and hydrologic values. The Bureau’s mineral and national energy policy states that public lands shall remain open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawal or other administrative action is justified in the national interest.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Oil and gas leasing and development would be regulated under 43 CFR 3100, Geothermal Resources Leasing and Development, under 43 CFR 3200, and Solid Mineral Leasing, under 43 CFR 3500, to ensure that all operations are conducted with adequate consideration given to environmental and resource conservation concerns. In order to protect special resource values and special investments, leasing would be subject to lease stipulations shown in Appendix N3. Although the specific wording of the stipulations could be adjusted at the time of leasing, the protection standards described in the appendix would be maintained.

All WSA’s would be closed to mineral leasing until

such time as Congress makes a decision regarding designation of these areas as wilderness. Areas not designated wilderness could be opened to mineral leasing during the life of this plan. Many areas within the planning area are subject to numerous, overlapping types of mineral leasing restrictions or special stipulations (refer to Appendix N3). This makes determining the amount of area open, closed, or restricted to mineral development difficult. For instance, an ACEC (which may have a no-surface-occupancy stipulation) may partially overlap a WSA (which is closed to leasing). For simplicity, such an area of overlap has been reclassified as closed to reflect the most restrictive management measure in place, regardless of how many other types of restrictions may also apply. Any WSA’s which overlap with areas where other mineral restriction/stipulations apply, which are later removed from WSA status by Congress, would be managed in accordance with the remaining restrictions. In the example above, an area where a WSA overlaps an ACEC would change from closed to open to mineral leasing with no surface occupancy. Table 3-7 summarizes mineral leasing restrictions for each alternative.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Exploration permits and leases would continue to be issued in those areas currently open to mineral leasing with stipulations, as appropriate, to protect other resources (Table 3-7). A total of about 493,697 acres, primarily in WSA’s, existing ACEC’s and Lost Forest RNA/ISA, would be closed to mineral leasing. Of that total, about 18,000 acres in the Lake Abert ACEC would be closed only to sodium leasing. About 612,776 acres would be subject to no-surface-occupancy restrictions. These apply primarily to portions of the Lake Abert and Warner Wetlands ACEC’s, areas within 2 miles of greater sage-grouse leks, and known raptor nesting habitat. Other restrictions/stipulations would apply to approximately 759,214 acres of the planning area, primarily in big game winter range, VRM Class II, and the remainder of the Warner Wetlands ACEC.

Alternative B

Mineral leasing restrictions would be similar to Alternative A with the following exceptions. The lake-level and total dissolved solid stipulations for mineral leasing on Lake Abert would be eliminated under this alternative in order to facilitate future sodium mining operations. Future leasing of lands eliminated from wilderness consideration would be allowed during the

life of the plan. Designation of new SMA's that could restrict or prohibit mineral leasing would be limited to Connley Hills ACEC/RNA.

A total of 492,812 acres would be closed to mineral leasing, mainly within WSA's, Lost Forest RNA, and the northern part of Lake Abert ACEC. About 620,006 acres would be subject to no-surface-occupancy restrictions. About 747,396 acres would be subject to other leasing restrictions/stipulations, primarily in big game winter range, VRM Class II, raptor nesting habitat, and part of Warner Wetlands ACEC. The remainder of the resource area would be open to mineral leasing.

Alternative C

About 579,187 acres would be closed to mineral leasing, primarily within WSA's and some of the proposed ACEC's. Future leasing of lands eliminated from wilderness consideration would be allowed with necessary constraints to protect resource values. About 2,369,434 acres would be subject to no-surface-occupancy restrictions, primarily in known/occupied greater sage-grouse habitat. An additional 290,189 acres would be subject to other restrictions/stipulations, primarily in big game winter range.

Alternative D

A total of 1,305,124 acres would be open to mineral leasing. About 498,602 acres in WSA's, WSR's and some ACEC's would be closed to mineral leasing. Most ACEC's would be open to mineral leasing with stipulations to protect relevant and important resources. Future leasing of lands eliminated from wilderness consideration would be allowed with necessary constraints to protect resource values. Another 776,436 acres would be subject to no-surface-occupancy restrictions, primarily in some ACEC's and all greater sage-grouse breeding habitat. Other restrictions/stipulations would apply to approximately 658,648 acres of the planning area, primarily in big game winter range, VRM Class II, raptor nesting habitat, and the remainder of the Warner Wetlands ACEC.

Alternative E

All mineral estate (3,238,810 acres) in the planning area would be closed to energy and mineral leasing.

Management Goal 3—*In an environmentally-sound manner, meet the demands of local, state, and Federal agencies, and the public, for mineral material from public lands.*

Rationale

The "Materials Act" of 1947, as amended, authorized the disposal of mineral materials such as sand, gravel, stone, clay, and cinders. The "Mining and Minerals Policy Act" of 1970 declares that it is the continuing policy of the Federal government to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources.

Section 102 of FLPMA directs that the public land would be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals and other commodities from the public lands, while managing these lands in a manner that would protect scientific, scenic, historic, archeologic, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, and hydrologic values. The Bureau's mineral and energy policy states that public lands shall remain open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawal or other administrative action is justified in the national interest.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Mineral material exploration and development is regulated under 43 CFR 3600. Throughout the alternatives, effort would be made to work with the State and counties to rehabilitate exhausted rock sources and relinquish any material site rights-of-way and free use permits no longer needed. All surface disturbance would be reclaimed at the earliest feasible time. The standards that govern these activities are shown in Appendix N3. Table 3-7 shows the restrictions and lands open and closed to mineral location under each alternative.

All WSA's would be closed to mineral material disposal until Congress makes a decision regarding designation of these areas as wilderness. Areas not designated as wilderness could be made available for mineral disposal during the life of the plan. Many areas within the planning area are subject to numerous, overlapping types of mineral disposal restrictions or special stipulations (refer to Appendix N3). This makes determining the amount of area open, closed, or restricted to mineral development difficult. For instance, an ACEC (which may have a seasonal restriction) may partially overlap a WSA (which is closed to mineral disposal). For simplicity, such an area of

overlap has been reclassified as closed to reflect the most restrictive management measure in place, regardless of how many other types of restrictions may also apply. Any WSA's which overlap with areas where other mineral restriction/stipulations apply, which are later removed from WSA status by Congress, would be managed in accordance with the remaining restrictions. In the example above, an area where a WSA overlaps an ACEC would change from closed to mineral disposal to open.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Mineral material disposal would continue from existing pits and quarries, and from potential sources currently open to mineral material disposal. A total of about 975,044 acres would remain closed to mineral material disposal under this alternative, primarily in WSA's, portions of ACEC's, areas within 2 miles of greater sage-grouse leks, and the Sunstone Public Collection Area. However, use of the southern portion of the Devils Garden lava flow as a common use area for the sale of decorative stone would be pursued if this area is dropped from wilderness consideration during the life of the plan. An additional 872,192 acres would have other types of restrictions apply, primarily associated with big game winter range, VRM Class II, raptor nesting habitat, and most of Lake Abert ACEC (Table 3-7).

Alternative B

Salable mineral disposal under this alternative would be similar to Alternative A, except as described below. Mineral material disposal would be allowed from all public lands, except those shown as closed under this alternative in Table 3-7. A total of about 969,224 acres would be closed to mineral material disposal, primarily in WSA's, Lost Forest RNA, areas within 2 miles of greater sage-grouse leks, and parts of Lake Abert and Warner Wetlands ACEC's. However, any lands eliminated from wilderness consideration could be opened to mineral disposal during the life of the plan. Should this occur, common-use areas for the disposal of decorative stone and cinders in the Devils Garden, Squaw Ridge, and Four Craters lava flows would be established, as the best quality decorative stone within the planning area is known to occur in these areas, and cinders are needed for local roads.

An additional 874,238 acres would have other types of restrictions apply, primarily associated with big game winter range, VRM Class II, raptor nesting habitat, and

parts of Lake Abert and Warner Wetlands ACEC's (Table 3-7).

Community pits in high-demand areas would be established when it is not possible to make sales from state or county sources. Possible future community site designations include Cougar Mountain pit and the Paisley, Westside, and Summer Lake areas. Except for the Connley Hills ACEC/RNA, no new SMA's would be designated which would restrict or prohibit mineral material disposal. The BLM would work with state and county road departments to find rock sources that meet the demand for public projects and mineral material sale to the public.

Alternative C

Approximately 2,810,643 acres would be closed to mineral sale, mainly in WSA's, existing and proposed ACEC's, all known/occupied greater sage-grouse habitat, and proposed WSR's. Mineral material disposal would be allowed on a case-by-case basis in WSA's eliminated from wilderness consideration in the future, with priority consideration given to protecting sensitive resources.

An additional 312,623 acres would have other types of restrictions apply, primarily associated with big game winter range, VRM Class II, raptor nesting habitat, and Lake Abert ACEC (Table 3-7).

Alternative D

The resource area would be open to mineral material disposal, except for those areas identified in Table 3-7 as closed (1,161,052 acres) under this alternative. Areas closed to mineral sale involve mainly WSA's, existing and proposed ACEC's, greater sage-grouse breeding habitat, and proposed WSR's. Mineral material disposal from lands eliminated from wilderness consideration by Congress in the future would be allowed on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to protecting sensitive resources.

An additional 772,634 acres would have other types of restrictions apply, primarily associated with big game winter range, VRM Class II, raptor nesting habitat, and Lake Abert ACEC (Table 3-7).

Alternative E

The entire resource area (about 3,238,810 acres), including existing pits and quarries, would be closed to mineral material disposal, except where required by law or where essential for critical road construction and

emergencies to protect human safety.

Lands and Realty

Management Goal 1—*Retain public land with high public resource values. Consolidate public land inholdings and acquire land or interests in land with high public resource values to ensure effective administration and improve resource management. Acquired land would be managed for the purpose for which it was acquired. Make available for disposal public land within Zone 3 by State indemnity selection, private, or state exchange, “Recreation and Public Purpose Act” lease or sale, public sale, or other authorized method, as applicable.*

Rationale

Section 102 of FLPMA requires that public land be retained in Federal ownership unless disposal of a particular parcel would serve the national interest. Acquisition of land to consolidate ownership patterns would provide for more efficient land management and administration for both public and private landowners. Retention and acquisition of land containing significant resource values would provide for long-term protection and management of those values.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Newly acquired lands would be managed for the highest potential purpose for which they are acquired. Acquired lands within ACEC’s or other SMA’s which have unique or fragile resources would be managed the same as the surrounding SMA. Lands acquired without special values or management goals would be managed in the same manner as comparable surrounding public lands.

Land tenure would be based on three zones:

- (1) Zone 1 land is identified for retention in public ownership and includes high-value lands such as lands within WSA’s and ACEC’s;
- (2) Zone 2 land has been identified generally for retention and consolidation of ownership and includes BLM-administered lands outside of Zone 1 areas; and
- (3) Zone 3 land generally has low or unknown resource values and meets the disposal criteria of section 203 of FLPMA and is potentially suitable for disposal by a variety of means (see Appendix O1 for a complete

explanation of land tenure).

Land tenure adjustments in any of the zones would generally occur under the authority of FLPMA; however, under certain circumstances, other authorities may be applicable as well. The disposition of Bankhead-Jones lands would be accomplished by FLPMA sale or exchange and not by “Recreation and Public Purpose Act” or by State In Lieu Selection.

Public access would be maintained or improved through all land tenure adjustment transactions.

All past and future public lands sold or exchanged under 43 U.S.C. 682(b) (“Small Tracts Act”), 43 U.S.C. 869 (“Recreation and Public Purposes Act”), 43 U.S.C. (Sales), or 43 U.S.C. 1716 (Exchanges), where minerals are reserved to the United States, shall be opened to operation under the mining laws upon the publication of opening orders in the *Federal Register* informing the public of such action.

All land tenure adjustments would be made in conformance with the “Interior Appropriations Act” of 1992 and the “Federal Land Ownership Plan for Lake and Harney Counties.” These require no net increase in Federal ownership as of September 30, 1991.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Land tenure adjustments would be consistent with existing land use planning with emphasis on acquiring land with high public resource values such as lands within ACEC’s or WSA’s, threatened or endangered species habitat, or riparian/wetland areas, etc.

Approximately 41,500 acres of public land in Zone 3 would be available for disposal as specifically identified in existing land use planning on Map L-1 of the Draft RMP/EIS, and as described in Appendix O2. Land could be disposed of through a variety of means including, but not limited to sale, exchange, and “Recreation and Public Purpose Act” lease or patent.

Alternative B

Public land holdings in Zone 1 would be retained or increased with emphasis on acquiring land that would facilitate commodity production. Under certain circumstances, disposal of small parcels of public land would be permitted in Zone 1 to meet other resource objectives.

Public land holdings in Zone 2 would be retained or increased with special emphasis on land exchanges that benefit commodity production. Under certain circumstances, disposal of public land may be permitted in Zone 2 to meet other resource objectives.

Approximately 54,500 acres of public land in Zone 3 as specifically identified on Map L-3 of the Draft RMP/EIS, and as described in Appendix O2, would be available for disposal.

Approximately 200 acres are identified for disposal by direct sale to Lake County or other civic-related entity(s) with county approval for Fort Rock community expansion purposes only. An additional 200 acres is identified for direct sale to Native American Tribal entity(s) or transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be managed in trust for reinternment purposes. The Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation has requested possible disposal consideration of approximately 28,750 acres of public and Bankhead-Jones land northwest of Fort Rock, Oregon, adjacent to the Deschutes National Forest. The purpose of the consideration is for the reestablishment of the historic Fort Rock Ranch.

Alternative C

Public land holdings in Zone 1 would be retained or increased with emphasis on acquiring land with high public resource values. Actions would be pursued to acquire lands from owners willing to dispose of private or state lands within or adjacent to WSA's, ACEC's, or WSR's. Under certain circumstances, disposal of small parcels of public land would be permitted in Zone 1 in order to achieve other resource objectives.

Public land holdings in Zone 2 would be retained or increased with special emphasis on acquiring land with high public resources values. Actions would be pursued to acquire lands from owners willing to dispose of private or state lands within or adjacent to WSA's, ACEC's, or WSR's. Under certain circumstances, disposal of public land would be permitted in Zone 2 in order to achieve other resource objectives.

Approximately 7,500 acres of public land in Zone 3 as specifically identified on Map L-4 of the Draft RMP/EIS, and as described in Appendix O2, would be available for disposal.

Approximately 200 acres are identified for disposal by direct sale to Lake County or other civic-related entity(s) with county approval for Fort Rock community expansion purposes only. An additional 200 acres

is identified for direct sale to Native American Tribal entity(s) or transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be managed in trust for reinternment purposes.

Alternative D

Public land holdings in Zone 1 would be retained or increased with emphasis on acquiring land with high public resource values. Actions would be pursued to acquire lands from owners willing to dispose of private or state lands within or adjacent to WSA's, ACEC's, or WSR's. Under certain circumstances, disposal of small parcels of public land would be permitted in Zone 1 in order to achieve other resource objectives.

Public land holdings in Zone 2 would be retained or increased with special emphasis on acquiring land with high public resources values. Actions would be pursued to acquire lands from owners willing to dispose of private or state lands within or adjacent to WSA's, ACEC's, WSR's. Under certain circumstances, disposal of public land would be permitted in Zone 2 in order to achieve other resource objectives.

Approximately 8,750 acres of public land in Zone 3 as specifically identified on Map L-4, and as described in Appendix O2, would be available for disposal.

Approximately 200 acres are identified for disposal by direct sale to Lake County or other civic-related entity(s) with county approval for Fort Rock community expansion purposes only. An additional 200 acres is identified for direct sale to Native American Tribal entity(s) or transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be managed in trust for reinternment purposes.

Alternative E

Public land would be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis only.

Management Goal 2—*Meet public needs for land use authorizations such as rights-of-way, leases, and permits.*

Rationale

Rights-of-way and other land uses are recognized as major uses of the public lands and are authorized pursuant to sections 302 and 501 of FLPMA.

Section 503 of FLPMA provides for the designation of rights-of-way corridors and encourages utilization of rights-of-way in-common to minimize environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate rights-of-way.

Table 3-8.—Acres of rights-of-way exclusion and avoidance areas

Rights-of-way restriction	Alternative				
	A	B	C	D	E
Avoid (acres)	68,257	58,297	2,201,664	828,332	0
<i>Reason for restriction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parts of 2 ACEC's¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parts of 3 ACEC's ■ 1 Watchable Wildlife site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Greater sage-grouse habitat² ■ Big game winter range³ ■ 2 WSR's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Greater sage-grouse breeding habitat ■ Big game winter range ■ 15 ACEC's ■ 1 WSR ■ 3 NRHP districts ■ 1 Watchable Wildlife site 	
Exclude (acres)	510,722	485,898	696,545	487,192	3,161,326
<i>Reason for restriction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 13 WSA's⁴ ■ ISA⁴ ■ 4 sensitive resource areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 13 WSA's ■ 1 ISA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 13 WSA's ■ 1 ISA ■ 15 ACEC's ■ 3 NRHP districts ■ 1 Watchable Wildlife site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 13 WSA's ■ 1 ISA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All BLM lands in planning area except existing rights-of-way corridors

¹ "High Desert Management Framework Plan Amendment for Lake Abert ACEC in Lake County, Oregon" (1996).

² "Greater Sage-Grouse and Sagebrush-Steppe Ecosystems Management Guidelines" (2000).

³ "High Desert Management Framework Plan" (1983).

⁴ Wilderness IMP (1995).

Bureau policy is to encourage prospective applicants to locate their proposals within corridors. Designation of avoidance areas—those areas that would be avoided by new rights-of-way unless there are no other options—would provide early notice to potential applicants when they are planning rights-of-way or other land use projects. Only facilities and uses would be permitted in avoidance areas which are consistent with the special designation associated with that area. Designation of exclusion zones—those areas where no new rights-of-way would be allowed—would provide protection of lands and resources, which have values which are not compatible with rights-of-way or other land uses.

The United States' potential liability, under various hazardous materials statutes, would be limited if disposal of waste, both hazardous and nonhazardous, are prohibited on public lands. Private lands are generally available for private waste disposal. If a bonafide public need for new waste disposal sites arise, land could be made available by sale or exchange. Currently, there are no authorized waste disposal sites on public lands in the LRA.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

Applications for rights-of-way, leases, permits, and other forms of land-use authorization, with the exception of rights-of-way corridors within WSA's and SMA's (which are addressed separately) would be processed in a timely manner, on a case-by-case basis, in compliance with the NEPA process. In accordance with current policy, land-use authorizations may not be issued for any use which would involve disposal or storage of materials which could contaminate the land (i.e., landfills, hazardous waste disposal sites, etc.).

With proper NEPA compliance, the upgrading/expansion of existing rights-of-way and issuance of new rights-of-way would be allowed within existing corridors crossing designated rights-of-way exclusion and avoidance areas. Parallel and/or perpendicular access roads across designated right-of-way exclusion and avoidance areas for construction and maintenance of facilities located within existing corridors would also be allowed.

Realty-related unauthorized uses on public land would be detected, confirmed, and abated on all lands. Upon resolution, unauthorized uses on public land which do not conflict with other significant resource values would be authorized or terminated, as appropriate. Sites affected by unauthorized uses would be rehabilitated, as necessary.

Generally, there is no regulatory width that dictates rights-of-way corridors. A width of 2,000 feet (1,000 feet each side of centerline) is considered an appropriate/reasonable width to provide engineering flexibility, system compatibility, and reliability factors, and would be used for purposes of this plan. Variation from the 2,000-foot width may occur within the range of alternatives.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Corridor designation would continue as necessary, consistent with existing land use plans.

All WSA's and the Buck Creek Watchable Wildlife Site are considered rights-of-way exclusion areas, except for rights-of-way needed to provide reasonable access to non-Federal inholdings. Lake Abert ACEC is considered a right-of-way avoidance area (Table 3-8 and Map L-2 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

Alternative B

Applicants for electrical transmission lines greater than 69 kilovolts, all mainline fiber optics facilities, and pipelines greater than 10 inches in diameter would be encouraged to locate their facilities within designated corridors.

Portions of the Lost Forest/Sand Dunes/Fossil Lake ACEC/RNA, Lake Abert ACEC, Connley Hills ACEC, the Buck Creek Watchable Wildlife Site would be rights-of-way avoidance areas. All WSA's would be rights-of-way exclusion areas (Map L-6 of the Draft RMP/EIS and Table 3-8).

All existing transdistrict electrical transmission lines, except the south corridor, identified by the "Western Regional Corridor Study" (Western Utility Group 1993) and some county roads would be designated as right-of-way corridors. Nominal corridor width would be 1,000 feet on each side of centerline of existing facilities, except where the alignment forms the boundary of a SMA, where the width would be 2,000 feet on the side opposite that boundary. Corridor widths may vary dependent upon project size and would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative C

All linear rights-of-way for electrical transmission lines greater than 69 kilovolts, all mainline fiber optics

facilities, and all pipelines greater than 10 inches in diameter would be located within designated corridors.

All ACEC's, WSR's, the Buck Creek Watchable Wildlife Site, NRHP Districts, and WSA's would be rights-of-way exclusion zones (Map L-7 of the Draft RMP/EIS) except for rights-of-way needed to provide reasonable access to non-Federal inholdings. All greater sage-grouse habitat would be considered a right-of-way avoidance zone (Table 3-8).

All existing transdistrict electrical transmission lines, except the south corridor, identified by the "Western Regional Corridor Study" (Western Utility Group 1993) and some county roads would be designated as rights-of-way corridors. Nominal corridor width would be 500 feet on each side of centerline of existing facilities, except where the alignment forms the boundary of a SMA, where the width would be 1,000 feet on the side opposite that boundary. Corridor widths may vary dependent upon project size and would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative D

Applicants for electrical transmission lines greater than 69 kilovolts, all mainline fiber optics facilities, and pipelines greater than 10 inches in diameter would be encouraged to locate their facilities within designated corridors.

All ACEC's, WSR's, the Buck Creek Watchable Wildlife Site, and greater sage-grouse breeding habitat would be designated right-of-way avoidance areas except for rights-of-way which would not conflict with management objectives for the area. WSA's and NRHP districts would be considered exclusion areas (Map L-8 and Table 3-8).

Alternative E

The entire planning area would be considered a right-of-way exclusion area, except for existing rights-of-way.

Management Goal 3—Acquire public and administrative access to public land where it does not currently exist.

Rationale

Due to the fragmented nature of public lands in some parts of the resource area, the need to acquire legal public and administrative access is required to ensure continued effective administration and public use of

these lands. This need becomes more acute as public use of these lands increases and as landowners become more aware of the value of public and private land for recreation and other purposes. Land tenure adjustment actions (exchanges or fee purchases) can be a valuable tool for access acquisitions. However, without careful review, lands actions, particularly exchanges, can result in lost access. Other tools can also be utilized, such as constructing new roads around lands where access is restricted and the cost associated with acquisition excessive, or where such acquisition is not feasible.

Management Common to Alternatives A–D

SMA's would receive first priority for both fee title and easement acquisition, with the North Lake Special Recreation Management Area receiving second priority. Shifts in priority may occur dependent upon the level of necessity.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Legal public or administrative access, including conservation and scenic easements, would be acquired on a case-by-case basis as the need arises. Emphasis would be placed on providing access for BLM administrative facilities and program-related activities.

New roads would be constructed around private lands where easement acquisition is not feasible or desirable.

Alternative B

Legal public or administrative access would be acquired on a case-by-case basis where public demand or an administrative need exists. Emphasis would be placed on providing administrative access to public land with high mineral, timber, grazing, or recreational value.

New roads would be constructed around private lands where easement acquisition is not feasible or desirable.

Alternative C

Legal public or administrative access would be acquired on a case-by-case basis where public demand or an administrative need exists.

New roads around private lands would be constructed where easement acquisition is not feasible or desirable, when it supports the protection of natural values.

Alternative D

Legal public or administrative access would be acquired on a case-by-case basis where public demand or an administrative need exists. Emphasis would be placed on providing access to areas containing high public values, when it supports the protection of natural values.

New roads would be constructed around private lands where easement acquisition is not feasible or desirable.

Alternative E

New access rights would not be acquired unless prescribed by law. No road construction would occur unless prescribed by law and/or for the protection of public health and safety.

Management Goal 4—*Utilize withdrawal actions with the least restrictive measures necessary to accomplish the required purposes.*

Rationale

Section 204 of FLPMA gives the Secretary of the Interior the authority to make, modify, extend, or revoke withdrawals and mandates periodic review of existing withdrawals.

Interior Departmental Policy (DM 603) further requires that:

- 1) All withdrawals shall be kept to a minimum, consistent with the demonstrated needs of the agency requesting the withdrawals.
- 2) Lands shall be available for other public uses to the fullest extent possible, consistent with the purposes of the withdrawal.
- 3) A current and continuing review of existing withdrawals shall be instituted.

Management Common to All Alternatives

Withdrawal review continuations, modifications, and revocations would continue in the future, as the need arises.

Other agency requests for new withdrawals, relinquishments, and modification would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Management Direction by Alternative

Alternative A

Requests for new withdrawals and withdrawal relinquishments or modifications would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative B

No new lands would be withdrawn from the public land, mining, and mineral leasing laws unless required by law. All existing public water reserves would be revoked upon completion of the required revocation process, NEPA-related compliance, and with BLM Oregon and Washington State Office approval.

Alternative C

Under this alternative, the entire Red Knoll ACEC and Devils Garden ACEC/WSA would be withdrawn from the public land and mining laws.

Alternative D

Approximately 4,600 acres of the Red Knoll ACEC would be withdrawn from the public land and mining laws under this alternative.

Alternative E

The entire resource area would be withdrawn from public land, mining, and mineral leasing laws.

Roads/Transportation

Management Goal —*Maintain existing roads on the resource area transportation plan and other roads to provide administrative or public access to public land. Construct new roads using best management practices (BMP's) and appropriate mitigation to provide administrative, permitted, and recreational access as needed. Close roads that are not longer needed or that are causing resource damage.*

Rationale

Access is necessary for BLM personnel to administer the various resource management programs on public land including livestock grazing, mining, wildlife habitat management, watershed management, recreation management, and numerous other programs. Access is also an important factor in fire suppression

and fire management. Roads on BLM-administered lands are used by permitted users such as miners and livestock operators. Roads are also heavily used by recreationists for dispersed recreation activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, rockhounding, OHV driving, and sightseeing. Providing and maintaining access to the public lands is an important public service provided by BLM.

Actions Common to All Alternatives

Any roads on the transportation plan which are not needed for administrative or public access do not need to remain open. Likewise, any roads that are causing significant resource damage need to be closed and rehabilitated.

Any roads proposed to be closed would be reviewed by an interdisciplinary team to determine need for the road, resource damage being caused, appropriate closure means, alternative access available, etc. Appropriate NEPA documentation would then be completed if it is determined the road should be closed. Closures would consist of signing and physically blocking access if needed. Rehabilitation could consist of simply closing a road and allowing natural regrowth of vegetation to occur, or it could consist of plowing or ripping the road and seeding with an appropriate seed mix.

The draft "Washington and Eastern Oregon Districts Transportation Management Plan" (USDI-BLM 2000e) would serve as the LRA transportation management plan when that document is approved. A supplemental transportation management plan specific to the resource area and tiered to the larger plan may be prepared, if necessary.

An estimated amount of road construction is shown for each alternative for the the life of the plan. This estimate is based on actual road construction for the past 10 years and is for analysis purposes only. It is meant to include only BLM construction and does not include construction that may result from a major project such as a mine development, oil and gas exploration and development, or major utility line. Any new roads constructed or trails developed as a result of such a project would be reclaimed after the project is completed if they are not needed for future access such as monitoring or maintenance.

Management Direction By Alternative

Alternative A

Approximately 100 miles of roads would be maintained annually based on priority determinations and the amount of annual road maintenance budget. New roads would be constructed on an as-needed basis, but new construction would be minimal. New roads could be constructed around private property to allow access to public land. Based on road construction for the past 10 years, new road construction is expected to be less than 20 miles over the life of the plan.

Roads not needed for resource management or causing significant erosion problems would be closed on a case-by-case basis. In recent years, about 187 miles of roads and trails (ways) have been permanently closed, primarily in WSA's. Another 164 miles are seasonally closed within deer winter range (Table 4-4).

Alternative B

Approximately 100 miles of roads would be maintained annually based on priority determinations and the amount of annual road maintenance budget. Management would be the same as under Alternative A, except that new roads would be constructed to facilitate commodity production and recreation access. New roads would be allowed for major projects such as mineral development, power generating plants, electrical transmission lines, and pipelines. For analysis purposes, it is estimated that no more than 30 miles of new roads would be constructed by BLM over the life of the plan. New road construction would meet BMP's to protect soils and watersheds (Appendix D).

Roads that are causing resource damage and that are no longer needed for access to facilitate commodity production would be considered for closure. Existing road closures would be similar to Alternative A (Table 4-4).

Alternative C

Approximately 100 miles of roads would be maintained annually based on priority determinations and the amount of annual road maintenance budget. The emphasis of road maintenance would be to protect and maintain resources. New construction would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would meet BMP's for road construction as outlined in Appendix D. New roads would be allowed for major projects such as mineral development, power generating plants,

and transmission lines, etc., if such projects are permitted. Roads could be constructed around private property to provide access to public land. For analysis purposes, it is estimated that no more than 20 miles of new roads would be constructed by BLM over the life of the plan.

Roads on the transportation plan, as well as roads not on the plan, which are no longer needed for administrative or public access or which may be causing resource damage such as erosion, would be noted and actions would be taken to close and rehabilitate the road or to correct the cause of the resource damage. Approximately 399 miles of roads in ACEC's and WSA's would be closed permanently. Another 239 miles would be seasonally closed in deer winter range (Table 4-4).

Alternative D

Approximately 100 miles of roads would be maintained annually based on priority determinations and the amount of annual road maintenance budget. The emphasis of road maintenance would be to protect and maintain resources. New construction would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would meet BMP's for road construction as outlined in Appendix D. New roads would be allowed for major projects such as mineral development, power generating plants, and transmission lines, etc., if such projects are permitted. Roads could be constructed around private property to provide access to public land. For analysis purposes, it is estimated that no more than 20 miles of new roads would be constructed by BLM over the life of the plan.

Roads on the transportation plan, as well as roads not on the plan, which are no longer needed for administrative or public access or which may be causing resource damage such as erosion, would be noted and actions would be taken to close and rehabilitate the road or to correct the cause of the resource damage. Approximately 246 miles of roads in SMA's would be closed permanently. Another 288 miles would be seasonally closed (Table 4-4).

Alternative E

Roads would be maintained only as needed to provide for human health and safety. No new roads would be constructed unless required by law.

Permanent road closures would be the same as under Alternative A. About 5 miles of roads would be seasonally closed (Table 4-4).