

A Preparation Plan  
For Revision of the  
Grand Junction Resource Management Plan

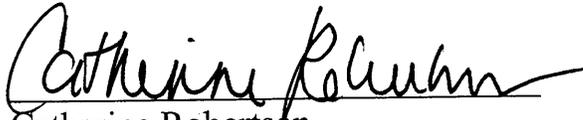
Prepared by  
Grand Junction Field Office  
Bureau of Land Management

November 2008

# Grand Junction Resource Management Plan

## Preparation Plan

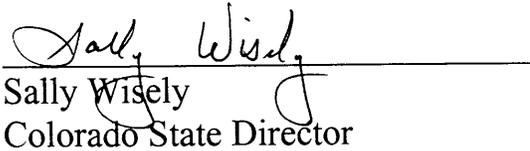
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## **A Preparation Plan**

### **For Revision of the Grand Junction Resource Management Plan**

#### **A. Introduction**

The purpose of this Preparation Plan is to identify the needs for revising the Grand Junction Resource Management Plan (RMP). Other specific objectives of the Preparation Plan are to:

- Describe the process for conducting the Grand Junction RMP planning revision;
- Identify data gaps, information, or decision needs, and recommend tasks and approaches to efficiently collect necessary data;
- Provide schedules and budgets for the plan revision work;
- Make staffing and workload evaluations and identify issues;
- Identify participants in the planning project and present a public participation plan.

Much of the plan review and revision, including National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, will be performed by a contractor, with oversight provided by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) personnel. Although much of the work is to be contracted, the ultimate responsibility for the content of the plan, alternative preparation, analysis of impact and decision making will be the responsibility of BLM Colorado.

#### **Background**

The Grand Junction RMP provides management guidance and direction for approximately 1.2 million acres of public land surface and 1.45 million acres of Federal mineral estate in Mesa, Garfield, Montrose, and Delta Counties. The Record of Decision (ROD) for the RMP was signed on January 29, 1987. Approximately 50 maintenance actions have been completed since the ROD was signed; however, the Grand Junction RMP has been amended about 12 times since it was signed. Ongoing or pending BLM planning and NEPA efforts include:

- Gateway Recreation Management Plan

Other agency planning efforts in or near the planning area includes Glenwood Springs/Kremmling, Montrose, Moab, Roan Plateau RMP revisions and the White River RMP amendment for oil and gas development. Also, the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument RMP and San Juan Land Use Plan are nearing completion.

#### **B. Anticipated Planning Issues and Management Concerns**

The process for developing, amending, or revising an RMP begins with identifying issues (40 CFR 1501.7; 43 CFR 1610.4-1). Issues express concerns, opportunities, conflicts, and problems associated with the management of public lands. Issues also reflect new data, new or revised policies, and changes in resource uses affecting the planning area. Management concerns are

topics or points of dispute that involve a resource management activity or land use. While some concerns overlap issues, a management concern is generally more important to an individual or group, as opposed to a planning issue which has more widespread point of conflict.

The following section identifies a spectrum of preliminary planning issues and management concerns based on Grand Junction Field Office staff input through an interdisciplinary process. For each resource element identified, a planning question is presented, and information that will be considered in answering the question that is identified. The questions and information will be refined during public scoping and throughout the planning process.

## **Issues**

### Energy Development

Special attention is needed to address mineral development (leasable i.e., oil/gas, coal, geothermal, uranium, salable, locatable, wind energy, and related transportation network conflicts) with other land and resource uses and values. How will areas where energy development is suitable, not suitable, or should be restricted, and need to be identified be defined. Questions to be answered include:

- What areas should be open to leasing, subject to existing laws, regulations, and formal orders?
- What areas should be open to leasing with moderate constraints such as seasonal and controlled surface use restrictions?
- Are there areas that should be open to leasing and subject to major constraints such as no-surface-occupancy stipulations?
- While the 1987 Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act requires BLM to conduct quarterly lease sales, are there any areas that should be closed to leasing?
- What specific lease stipulations, general/typical conditions of approval, and best management practices will be employed in leasing areas?
- Under what circumstances exceptions, waivers, or modifications should be granted/not be granted? What documentation requirements and public notification procedures would be necessary?
- What are the objectives for salable mineral materials such as gravel pits and flagstone?
- How will increased interest in Uranium development be managed?
- What leasing and development decisions would apply to geophysical exploration?
- What are the long-term resource condition objectives for areas currently under development which would guide reclamation?
- Regarding locatable mineral exploration and/or development, are there areas that should be closed to mining laws? What terms, conditions, or other special considerations are needed to protect other resource values?
- Are there areas that should be closed to exploration and/or development for mineral materials (sand, gravel, etc.)? What terms, conditions, or other special considerations are needed to protect other resource values?

For oil and gas development, Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) projections will be made for use in this planning review. For other minerals and all other programs and activities,

reasonably foreseeable actions or activity projections will also be made for the review and used in the cumulative impact analysis.

### Vegetation Management

There are conflicting demands for consumptive and non-consumptive uses of the vegetation resources in the planning area. Non-consumptive values include healthy vegetative native plant communities (including forests), wetland/ riparian area health, wildlife habitat (particularly big game crucial winter range and habitat for candidate, sensitive, proposed, or threatened and endangered wildlife and vegetative species), and visual aesthetics. Consumptive uses include grazing by livestock and wildlife, firewood and saw timber harvesting, Native American traditional uses, and other surface disturbing activities. Questions to be answered include:

- What are the specific desired outcomes for special status plant species? What are the management actions that will be needed to conserve and recover special status plant species?
- Should BLM determine priority areas for restoration and rehabilitation, the native plant species needed to restore those areas and the desired densities, frequencies or composition of those plants in the desired plant community or the potential natural community?
- Should the LUP address priority weed species? For the priority noxious weed species - what are the management techniques that eradicate contain or suppress?
- What prevention measures that minimize the amount of existing non-target vegetation that is disturbed should be identified in the RMP?
- What are the desired outcomes for all vegetation communities, including desired mix of vegetative types, structural stages, and landscape and riparian functions?
- How will Land Health Assessments be utilized and if necessary how will changes in management occur?
- Are seasonal grazing use rates on forage accurate?
- What areas have ecological importance? Are there areas that need to be designated for priority plant species and habitat? Are there areas that need to be designated for Native American traditional uses? What actions and area-wide use restrictions are needed to achieve desired conditions?
- What lands would be available or not available for livestock grazing? Is the current allotment categorization accurate given current resource issues and concerns? Are the current minimum rest requirements accurate?
- Are there Grazing Permits that have a higher value for Wildlife, Watershed, Recreation and grazing should not be continued? What should the criteria be?
- For areas that are available for grazing, what amount of forage for livestock (AUMs) could be made available and continue to be available for future anticipated demands while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance?
- How will the landscape be managed to become as productive as feasible for grazing, including descriptions of management practices, land treatments, or changes in season of use and/or stocking rates?
- What are the desired future conditions for wildlife habitat?

### Invasive/Noxious Weeds

The RMP will incorporate strategies from the Final Environmental Impact Statement Vegetation on BLM in Western States (2007). The management concerns considered below are also important to meet the goals and objectives for managing native vegetation communities. Some questions include:

- What management actions and/or treatment programs are needed to control, prevent, and/or eradicate noxious/invasive weeds in the planning area?
- Which areas are priorities for control/eradication?

#### Forestry & Woodlands

- What are the desired future conditions for forest/woodlands? What would be some possible management actions (e.g., appropriate harvest, reforestation, and/or forest development methods) and best management practices? Where on the landscape could actions occur?
- What Biomass utilization and commercial development opportunities are there?

#### Drought Management/Climate Change

Periodic and cyclic droughts are documented in historic weather records and inferred from science (i.e., tree ring studies, geologic, and archaeological evidence). About fifty percent of the time, the lands within the planning area experience a precipitation deficit; almost twenty-five percent of the time, we are in true drought conditions. Questions to be answered include:

- How will management actions adapt to moderate and severe drought conditions and climate change?
- What contingency planning is needed for various consumptive uses of vegetation communities? What practices will be needed for grazing management, reclamation success, and to meet the goals/objectives of habitat management?

#### Recreation

Recreational activities occur throughout the area and include motorized vehicle touring, big and small game hunting, backpacking, horseback riding, mountain bike use, sight-seeing, pleasure driving, rock climbing, hiking, and rafting. Most areas of the Field Office have experienced increased visitation over the years; however, the North Fruita Desert, Devil's Canyon, Bangs Canyons, and most recently, Dominguez Canyon and Gateway have seen a significant increase in use. Principal considerations include providing for suitable and sufficient recreation uses and facilities (including dispersed, organized, competitive and commercial), management of the WSA areas and NCAs, management of appropriate natural character and setting for recreational benefits, and visual resource management direction.

Increasing awareness of public lands recreation attractions, continued community growth-related increases in recreation demand, and related recreation-tourism developments are some of the factors requiring the BLM to revise the Grand Junction RMP. BLM's primary recreation role is dispersed recreation rather than developing facility-dependent recreation attractions. The BLM therefore needs to reassess these recreation-tourism demands and the BLM's capacity to meet them working jointly with affecting private sector and local government providers, and

considering regional recreation supply and demand. Among questions to be answered are the following:

- Where are the demands for specific kinds of recreation activities, experiences, and beneficial outcomes?
- Who and where are the markets exhibiting these demands for structured recreation outcomes?
- Are those demands significant enough to warrant intensive recreation management?
- What areas/issues require only custodial, care-taking (e.g., visitor safety, user conflicts, protecting attractions)?
- Are there certain setting characteristics that need to be provided and maintained for customers to achieve these life-enriching outcomes?
- What kinds of recreation-tourism services are needed to maintain those settings and provide those opportunities?
- Can the BLM meet these demands by itself, or does it need to engage other service and infrastructure providers?
- How can the BLM avoid trails and facility developments that compromise the recreation setting characteristics people value?
- What areas should be designated for special recreation management? What would be the specific strategy for managing the SRMA?
- To what extent, and where (general areas), should the BLM develop facilities and generally improve recreation access opportunities to meet public demand, to provide for public health and safety, and to direct use away from areas of conflict?
- What are the visual resource management objectives (management classes) for the planning area? Designation of VRM management classes will be based on visual resource inventories and management considerations for other land uses.
- For designated national scenic and historic trails, what are the goals, objectives and measures for them? What would be allowable uses and surface restrictions to avoid potential adverse affects?
- How will current and future Scenic Byways be managed within the planning area?
- What segments of rivers in the planning area are eligible for Wild and Scenic Rivers designation?

#### Wilderness

- What decisions should be made in order to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation)?
- What goals and objectives to protect the resource and management actions necessary to achieve these goals and objectives?
- What authorized activities should include conditions of use that would avoid or minimize impacts to wilderness characteristics?

#### Special Designation Areas

- What areas should be considered an Area of Critical Environmental Concern? What would be the goals, standards, and objectives for each area?
- What management direction for WSAs should be identified if they are released from wilderness consideration by Congress?
- What river segments are suitable or non-suitable to be designated a wild and scenic river?
- Are there any BLM Scenic or Back Country Byways that should be designated?
- Are there any national recreation trails, watchable wildlife viewing sites, wild horse and burro ranges, or other BLM administrative designations that should be considered?

### Travel Management

- Where should travel management areas be delineated (opened, limited, or closed)? What would be acceptable modes of access and travel for each travel management area?
- What road and trail access (and travel management) guidance will be incorporated into the RMP to ensure public and resource needs are met?
- How will planning areas be divided into travel management areas that are designated, limited or closed?
- What specific criteria will be developed for designated, limited and closed roads?
- What network of roads and trails should be selected for all limited areas in the RMP?
- How will public use of administrative routes be addressed?

### Lands and Realty/Community Growth and Expansion

Grand Junction has become one of the fastest growing urban areas in America, and has experienced the most growth out of any city in Colorado. The majority of the lands surrounding Grand Junction are public lands; with much of the land status being dominated by BLM managed lands. How will this RMP revision address community needs for expansion, increased populations and users of public lands?

The regional boom in mineral development has resulted in the need for additional rights-of-way for power lines and pipelines to support community and industrial infrastructures; the Westwide Energy Corridor, Section 369 Programmatic EIS addresses needed energy corridors on a western regional scale, and the revised RMP will incorporate the PEIS findings. Rapidly changing telecommunications technology is resulting in expansion of telephone and fiber optic systems and wireless communication sites to provide optimum grids and infrastructure coverage in many areas previously inaccessible to these types of technology. Questions to be addressed:

- What lands should be retained, proposed for disposal, or acquired within the planning area? What are the disposal, acquisition, and exchange criteria? What lands are suitable for R&PP applications or jurisdictional transfers?
- How will BLM manage community growth and expansion?
- What areas should be proposed for withdrawal? Are there areas that are currently withdrawn that should be extended or not renewed?
- Where should authorizations for use, occupancy, and development (such as major leases) be granted?

- Where should BLM designate potential right-of-way corridors? Are there some existing corridors that should be formally designated? Are there right-of-way avoidance or exclusion areas?
- What terms and conditions may apply to right-of-way corridors or development areas, including best management practices?

### Special Status Species Management

Special Status Species includes species that are formally designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as federally endangered, threatened, proposed, and/or as candidates, those designated by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) as state endangered or threatened, and those identified as BLM sensitive species in the state of Colorado. Responsibilities for management of federally listed or proposed species are outlined in the Endangered Species Act and the BLM 6840 Manual. The policy for management of BLM sensitive species and federal candidate species is to not authorize, fund or implement any action that may contribute toward the need for federal listing.

The goal of special status species management is to improve or provide habitat for the species that may occur on public lands in order to maintain viable populations of these species. Principal considerations include management of species habitat to ensure continued use by these species, identification of areas where other resource activities may conflict with special status species and their habitat requirements, and incorporation of programmatic consultations and conservation strategies. Questions to be addressed:

- What are the current special status species known to occur in the Field Office area and what are the conditions of available habitats?
- What are the short and long term resource and habitat objectives of high priority species in this category, where current range or potential impacts on the species is prevalent on BLM lands?
- What are the desired outcomes, strategies, restoration opportunities, use restrictions, and management actions needed to conserve and recover special status species?
- What are the long-term strategies for managing habitat for special status species, and what management actions should be taken to ensure habitat is available for these species?
- What is the appropriate mix of habitat types and native vegetation communities necessary across the landscapes to maintain special status species.
- Are there additional areas that should be considered for Area of Critical Environmental Concern status or may require some other special management protection or designation due to their unique or significant contribution toward one or more special status species?

### Wildland Fire Management

Goals of the Wildland Fire Management program include using wildland and prescribed fire to achieve identified resource objectives and reduce dangerous accumulations of fuels. Another goal is to take appropriate management action on all wildland fires based on a consideration of firefighter and public safety, anticipated management costs, resource values at risk, resource benefits, threats to private property, opportunities for reducing hazardous fuels, and political and social concerns. Some resource questions include:

- Where and under what conditions should prescribed and wildland fires be used as a vegetative management tool?
- What will be the appropriate management response to wildland fire throughout the planning area?
- Are there areas where fire should be allowed to burn with virtually no suppression activity?
- What emergency stabilization and rehabilitation practices will be implemented following wildfires?
- What types of fuels management or vegetation management treatments would be implemented? Where on the landscape should they occur?
- What are the landscape-scale fire management priorities and what criteria are needed to guide more site-specific priorities?
- What areas, if any, should be identified for restrictions on fire management practices when needed to protect natural and cultural resource values?

### Wildlife and Fish

BLM's wildlife habitat management goal is to ensure the natural abundance and diversity of fish and wildlife resources on public lands by restoring, maintaining, and enhancing habitat productivity and quality. Most wildlife require large areas to meet their life cycle or seasonal requirements, thus it is important to consider impacts from management action at both the project and ecosystem scale.

Public lands in the planning area provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Special management attention may be needed to restore, maintain, or enhance priority species and their habitats. Increased uses throughout the planning area, including energy development, recreational use, grazing, motorized & mechanized vehicle use, etc., have the potential for significantly impacting wildlife populations and their habitat if not properly managed. Integrating habitat management with other resource programs requires careful planning to minimize impacts to wildlife species and their habitats, while still providing for other uses on the public lands.

Public lands are important habitat for many types of wildlife and fish, including some threatened, endangered, and/or sensitive species. The habitat on public lands is becoming increasingly important due to loss of habitat on private lands. Fish and wildlife, and their habitat, are affected by a variety of uses, such as energy development, timber harvesting, grazing, mineral development, recreation, and by natural events, such as wildfire and insects. Some resource questions include:

- **Human Influences.** How do various activities occurring on the public lands affect wildlife and fish habitats? What is the appropriate balance between providing adequate habitats and allowing activities that can affect habitats, such as energy development, road construction, fire, grazing, and recreation? How should impacts be managed to maintain or improve wildlife and fish habitat? What is the connection between tourism and wildlife and fish? What are the socioeconomic impacts of activity in the planning area?

- **Mitigation of Impacts.** What are the appropriate specifications and constraints (standards and guidelines) for activities that affect habitat? What kinds of mitigation measures and/or stipulations are needed for activities that affect habitats and species? What kinds of restoration practices should occur after habitat-disturbing activities?
- **Habitat Fragmentation.** What is the connection between BLM and private land in providing habitat and migration corridors? What are the implications of private land development for management of public lands? What kinds of cooperation are needed between the BLM and other agencies, and private landowners to maintain adequate habitat?
- **Wildlife Influences on Ecosystems.** What effects do wildlife populations have on the ecosystem? Should anything be done to affect population sizes? What are the priority species, habitats, and populations for fish and wildlife which are recognized as significant?
- **Habitat Needs.** Which areas are important for which species, communities or groups of wildlife (ex. big game, small game, non-game, special status species, fish, raptors, etc.)? What areas are important for big-game winter range? How should they be managed? How is winter range changing? What are the implications of increased development of private lands on big-game winter range and migration corridors? Are there areas where reintroduction of native animal species is desired? If so, what areas and which species? Are there species or habitats that should be designated as “Special Status” on public lands?
- **Migratory Birds.** How should Migratory Bird Habitat be managed and monitored? Which management activities affect Migratory Birds, how do they affect them? What is the BLM's responsibility under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act? What is needed to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act? What is BLM's responsibility in multi-agency efforts to monitor bird trends? What is needed to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act regarding “take”?
- **Conflicts between Species.** How should conflicts between different species be handled? What is the appropriate animal damage management policy for this area?
- **Aquatic Habitat.** Where is in-stream flow or point source water (rivers, streams, springs, reservoirs, and seeps) protection needed to protect or enhance aquatic plant and animal habitat? What are the water needs for wildlife and fish within the area?
- **Overall Management Direction.** What are the desired outcomes for fish and wildlife species and habitats? What are the actions and area-wide use restrictions needed to achieve desired population and habitat conditions while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship?

#### Cultural Resources, Heritage Resources, Native American Religious Concerns, and Paleontological Resources Management

The complex landscapes of cultural and paleontological resources in the Grand Junction Field Office have been a focal point for scientific, avocational, and recreational interests for over 100 years. These heritage resources provide a major source of public education, recreation, and cultural identity in this country. Unique and significant archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources exist throughout the planning area. The planning area was the

traditional homeland of the Ute Tribes and tribal members are actively involved in heritage resource projects in the planning area. Goals are to identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations, and to seek to reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts from natural or human-caused deterioration, or from other resource uses. Specific Cultural Resource management concerns include:

- Where do special limitations or stipulations need to be applied to developments or other resource uses to protect and preserve cultural resources in the planning area? Of the cultural resources currently being actively managed, are there site-specific use restrictions? If so, do they need to be modified to meet current conditions?
- How will visual intrusions that could affect the integrity of setting along historic, prehistoric and historic Native American trails, and Native American sacred places or landscapes be managed?
- Which of the six allocated uses (see the Land Use Planning Handbook, Appendix C, page 9, Table C-1) will known sites or sites projected to occur be assigned to?
- What, if any, area-wide criteria are needed for recognizing potential cultural resource conflicts, such as geographic characteristics of sacred sites, historic properties, traditional uses, or cultural landscapes?
- Are there issues and concerns related to access to sacred places and for use of areas for gathering plants for traditional purposes?
- How will Native American ethnographic information be managed and are there management actions needed to ensure the continued involvement of Native Americans in this process?
- What Native American tribes will be consulted for the plan? Is there a need to canvas surrounding tribes to change the current consultation list which includes the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe?
- Are there new historic properties (i.e. National Register sites) including places of traditional cultural importance since the last RMP that require special designation or site-specific use restrictions (e.g., heritage areas with land management actions that emphasize the properties' unique and nonrenewable character)?
- How will archival data be managed and made available for appropriate research, other proposed resource uses, and monitoring
- Are there known resource issues that need to be addressed (eg. SRMAs, travel management)?

Specific Paleontological Resource management concerns include:

- What management actions are needed to manage paleontological resources? What are the best ways to inventory and protect paleontological resources?
- What management actions or criteria are needed to promote the scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils? Are there areas that could be developed for scientific, educational, and/or recreational uses, and if so, where do they occur?

- Using the new WO IM 2008-009 on "Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) System for Paleontological Resources on Public Lands", can sensitivity maps be generated for the GJFO area ranking geologic units according to their likelihood of producing significant fossils?
- What paleo areas need to be preserved?
- What paleo areas need to be protected or need better protection?
- Do any paleo quarries or other paleo localities need some form of stabilization?
- Do any paleo localities need rehabilitation efforts? Are there any issues with rehabilitation efforts of ground disturbed areas and paleontological resources?

### Air Quality

As part of the land use planning process, the Grand Junction RMP will identify desired outcomes for air quality, including the standards and goals found in the Clean Air Act. Specific management concerns include:

- What air resources will be considered when developing the GJFO RMP?
- What area-wide criteria or restrictions would apply to activities authorized by the GJFO that might affect air quality standards?
- What management actions could be required to improve or maintain air quality throughout the planning area, including fuels management projects?
- What aspects of air quality are most important for BLM to consider? What BLM programs or activities contribute the most to air quality impacts?
- How do energy development operations affect air quality?
- Can restrictions on air emissions be put into a condition of approval or other forms of stipulation?
- How do climate change/global warming impact the RMP AQ analysis

### Soil and Water

As part of the land use planning process, the Grand Junction RMP will identify desired outcomes for soil and water resources, including the standards and goals found in the Clean Water Act. Specific management concerns include:

- Where are the Source Watershed Protection Areas (ie municipal watersheds) and what additional protection/BMP's will be implemented to protect water quality?
- What minimum size buffers will be for ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, wetlands, springs and seeps to protect water quality and riparian areas?
- What measures, including filing for water rights under applicable State or Federal permit procedures, are needed to ensure water availability for multiple use management and functioning, healthy wetland or stream systems?
- How will an inventory of current water rights, held by the DOI/BLM and its permittees, be developed?
- What additional measures/practices are necessary to maintain or reduce salinity to the Colorado River basin?

- How will vegetation communities, roads, well pads, and other oil and gas infrastructure be managed to improve or maintain water quality?
- What area(s) or watershed(s) are relatively intact refugia and could be protected and utilized as reference area(s)?
- What areas are in need of restoration to improve water quality, such as AML, uranium, OHV or energy development?
- What conditions of approval or lease stipulations are necessary to protect soil productivity, surface and groundwater quality from energy development and mining?
- Which watersheds or specific soils may need special protection from the perspective of human health concerns, ecosystem health, or other public uses? Where are the priority areas on the landscape?
- In stream and riparian areas, what are the desired width/depth ratios, stream bank conditions, channel substrate conditions, and large woody material characteristics?
- What, if any, area-wide use restrictions or other protective measures are needed to meet local, state, and tribal water quality requirements?

#### Wild Horses

There is one Herd Management Area (HMA) in the planning area known as the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range which is only one of three designated wild horse ranges in the BLM. The Appropriate Management Level (AML) for this wild horse ranges has been set at 90 to 150 horses. Some resource questions include:

- Is the current herd management area and wild horse range appropriate considering recent herd genetic data and information on herd movements?
- What guidelines and criteria should the Grand Junction RMP have for adjusting herd size?
- Is the current AML appropriate for the wild horse range to sustain a viable wild horse population while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationships?
- Are there other activities that conflict with wild horse management and necessary restrictions to reduce the impacts associated with the activity?

#### Wildland-Urban Interface

New demands are being placed on public lands because of accelerated growth in and around cities and towns in the planning area. Growth has changed the way communities relate to surrounding public lands, as well as their expectations of those public lands. The basic problem is providing for public land management along with increased demands for public land and resource uses. Considerations include providing for healthy air and water quality; preventing water source depletion and fragmentation of wildlife habitat; providing for development patterns, transportation and utility corridor planning, and demands for open space and recreational uses; land tenure adjustments; and wildland fire prevention and management.

### Public Safety

The BLM, in partnership with local communities, must coordinate the land use plan with the fire management plan for fire protection, hazardous materials management and abandoned mine land (AML) reclamation. As more development occurs, natural disasters from major storms, seismic events, catastrophic wildfires, and subsequent flooding will cause greater property damage. Associated with these are increased costs for search and rescue, disaster relief, fire suppression, and land rehabilitation to protect life and property. Planning for the wildland/urban interface will lessen the risk of permitting developments, facilities, and recreational opportunities in areas that are inappropriate, or place the public at unnecessary risk.

The RMP should be consistent with the National Fire Plan (2002) and the Grand Junction Fire Management Plan (2005). Objectives are to have wildland and prescribed fire be used to achieve identified resource objectives and reduce dangerous accumulations of fuels. Also, that the BLM will take appropriate management response to naturally caused wildland fires based on a consideration of firefighter and public safety, anticipated management costs, resource values at risk, resource benefits, threats to private property, opportunities for reducing hazardous fuels, and political and social concerns.

### Social and Economic Considerations

Communities in the planning area are both directly and indirectly affected by public land management considerations and decisions. Land allocation decisions impact many communities in the planning area and will be analyzed in the RMP process. RMP decisions can garner interest and have regional, state and national impacts as well. These include population and other demographic changes, employment, urbanization, environmental impacts, etc. The plan will rely on Appendix D of BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (2005) to guide the social and economic analysis for the planning area. This analysis will identify, describe and analyze social and economic conditions and trends including demographics, social organization, attitudes, employment, income and environmental justice.

### C. Preliminary Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that are developed to guide and direct the planning revision of the Grand Junction RMP. Planning criteria are based on laws and regulations, guidance provided by the BLM Colorado State Director, results of consultation and coordination with the public, other agencies and governmental entities, and Indian tribes, analysis of information pertinent to the planning area, public input, and professional judgment. The planning criteria focus on the development of management options and alternatives, analysis of their effects, and selection of the Preferred Alternative and the Proposed RMP. Additional planning criteria may be identified as the planning process progresses.

- The proposed RMP will be in compliance with FLPMA and all other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

- Impacts from the management alternatives considered in the revised RMP will be analyzed in an EIS developed in accordance with regulations at 43 CFR 1610 and 40 CFR 1500.
- Lands covered in the RMP will be public land and split estates managed by BLM. No decisions will be made relative to non-BLM administered lands.
- The planning process will follow ten stages of an EIS-level planning process: conducting scoping, development of a Management Situation Analysis report, formulation of alternatives, analysis of the alternatives' effects, selection of a preferred alternative, publication of a Draft RMP/EIS, providing a 90-day public comment period for the Draft, preparation and publication of a Proposed Plan/Final EIS, providing a 30-day public protest period, and preparation of a Record of Decision. For specific information, please see the Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1.
- For program specific guidance of land use planning level decisions, the process will follow the Land Use Planning Manual 1601 and Handbook H-1601-1, Appendix C.
- Broad-based public participation will be an integral part of the planning and EIS process.
- Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, federal, and tribal agencies as long as the decisions are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of federal law, and regulations applicable to public lands.
- The RMP will recognize the State's responsibility and authority to manage wildlife.
- The RMP will recognize the Office of Surface Mining's responsibility and authority to regulate coal activities.
- BLM will recognize the State's responsibility for permitting related to oil and gas activities and in regulating air quality impacts.
- BLM will recognize the State's responsibility for permitting related to uranium, coal and sand and gravel activities, and in regulating water quality impacts.
- The National Sage-grouse Strategy requires that impacts to sagebrush habitat and sagebrush-dependent wildlife species be analyzed and considered in BLM land use planning efforts for public lands with sagebrush habitat in the planning area.
- The RMP will recognize existing rights.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate existing adequate management decisions brought forward from existing planning documents.
- The planning team will work cooperatively and collaboratively with cooperating agencies and all other interested groups, agencies, and individuals.
- The BLM and cooperating agencies will jointly develop alternatives for resolution of resource management issues and management concerns.
- The planning process will incorporate the Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Colorado as goal statements.
- Areas with special environmental quality will be protected and if necessary designated as ACECs, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or other appropriate designations.
- Any public land surface found to meet the suitability factors to be given further consideration for inclusion in the W&SR System will be addressed in the RMP revision effort in terms of developing interim management options in the alternatives for the EIS.

- Wilderness Study Areas will continue to be managed under the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review until Congress either designates all or portions of the WSA as wilderness or releases the lands from further wilderness consideration. It is no longer the policy of the BLM to make formal determinations regarding wilderness character, to designate additional WSAs through the RMP process, or to manage any lands other than existing WSAs in accordance with the Wilderness IMP.
- Forest management strategies will be consistent with the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.
- Fire Management strategies will be consistent with the Colorado Fire Management Plan (2005).
- The planning process will involve American Indian tribal governments and will provide strategies for the protection of recognized traditional uses.
- Any location specific information pertaining to cultural resources (either map, description, or photo) is proprietary to the BLM and will not become the property of any contractors working on the EIS or attached to any document (paper or electronic), nor is this information subject to any public release or FOIA requests (36CFR 7.18).
- All proposed management actions will be based upon current scientific information, research and technology, as well as existing inventory and monitoring information.
- The RMP will include adaptive management criteria and protocol to deal with future issues.
- The planning process will use the BLM Colorado Mitigation Guidelines to develop management options and alternatives, and analyze their impacts. The guidelines will also be part of the planning criteria for developing the options and alternatives, as well as for determining mitigation requirements.
- A reasonable foreseeable development scenario for fluid minerals will be developed from analysis of past activity and production, which will aid in the environmental consequences analysis.
- Planning and management direction will be focused on the relative values of resources and not the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or economic output.
- Where practicable and timely for the planning effort, current scientific information, research, and new technologies will be considered.

#### **D. Data and GIS Needs**

Geographical Information System (GIS) maps are the building blocks to quantify resources and display information during alternative formulation. Existing resource information available will be used in formulating resource objectives and management alternatives. Much of this information needs to be compiled and put into digital format for use in the planning process and development of resource maps for the RMP/EIS. Existing data will be compiled and entered into GIS. Information already in a digital format must be to the same standards required for newly entered data. Geospatial database development assumptions are identified below. Existing data will be used where possible, and new data will be collected only where absolutely necessary. All new data will be collected to established data standards. Existing data will be converted to established data standards (see Appendix 1 for additional information).

GJFO will be piloting VISTA a decision support tool compatible with ESRI products. Nature Serve, a non for profit organization, has developed this software with a grant received from NASA. The GJFO will be the first BLM office to test the utility of VISTA in the land use planning process.

**E. Participants in the Process**

The table below identifies roles and responsibilities for conducting the planning/NEPA process. Assignments have been made for the Core, Interdisciplinary, and Support Teams. Following the tables is a brief description of general roles and responsibilities. Additional information on integrating public participation can be found in Section I. Public Participation Plan.

Table 1: Grand Junction Core Team

| Position                    | Name                | Work Month Estimate |      |      |      | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------|------|------|-------|
|                             |                     | 2008                | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |       |
| RMP/EIS Project Manager     | Matt Anderson       | 9                   | 9    | 9    | 9    | 36    |
| Field Office Manager        | Catherine Robertson | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| Associate Field Manager     | Raul Morales        | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| Minerals Specialist         | David Lehmann       | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| Wildlife Biologist          | Heidi Plank         | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| Range Management Specialist | Jim Dollerschell    | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| Archaeologist               | Aline LaForge       | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| Recreation Planner          | Ken Straley         | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| GIS Specialist              | Doug Diekman        | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| GIS Term                    | Vacant              | 4                   | 12   | 12   | 6    | 34    |

Table 2: RMP Interdisciplinary Team

| Position                                    | Name               | Work Month Estimate |      |      |      | TOTAL |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|------|------|------|-------|
|   |                    | 2008                | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |       |
| Air Quality                                 | Aaron Worstell     | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Geologist                                   | Scott Gerwe        | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Natural Resource Specialist (Right-of-Ways) | Christina Stark    | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Natural Resource                            | Julia Christiansen | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |

| Position                    | Name             | Work Month Estimate |      |      |      | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------|------|------|-------|
|                             |                  | 2008                | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |       |
| Specialist                  |                  |                     |      |      |      |       |
| Weed Management Specialist  | Sparky Tabor     | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Public Affairs Officer      | Melodie Lloyd    | 1                   | 1    | 1    | 1    | 4     |
| Range Management Specialist | Bob Fowler       | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Socioeconomic Analyst       | Chuck Romaniello | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Ecologist                   | Anna Lincoln     | 4                   | 4    | 4    | 4    | 16    |
| Wild Horse Specialist       | Jim Dollerschell | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Hydrologist                 | Janny Choy       | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Law Enforcement Officer     | Eric Boik        | 1                   | 1    | 1    | 1    | 4     |
| Petroleum Engineer          | Bob Hartman      | 2                   | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6     |
| Haz-mat specialist          | Alan Kraus       | 0                   | 1    | 1    | 1    | 3     |

### General Roles and Responsibilities

The amount of time involved by BLM and cooperating agency staff should not be underestimated, although any work prepared by an EIS consultant may take some workload off of BLM. During FY08 we will begin gathering information, identifying issues and data needs, begin data collection and review, organizing existing data into a standard GIS storage area for the RMP and complete an RMP preparation plan. In FY08 and beyond we will prepare statements of work (SOW), conduct and oversee the process, write and review, conduct briefings and public meetings, coordinate work with cooperating agencies and collaborate as a team throughout the process. Some Interdisciplinary Team members will have formal consultation responsibilities. A good portion of the team will need to attend planning training, currently scheduled through the Spring of 2008.

Table 3: Management and Program Roles and Responsibilities

| Position                 | Name            | Roles and Responsibilities  |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---|
| State Director           | Sally Wisely    | <p>The Colorado State Director approves the Preparation Plan, issues the Draft RMP/EIS, Proposed RMP/Final EIS, and Record of Decision (ROD), approves the RMP/EIS, and signs the ROD. The State Director is the approving official for all land use plan amendments and revisions.</p> <p>The State Director is responsible for the overall review and quality control of documents and for ensuring consistency with laws, regulations, and policy. He also provides staff coordination and review, assists in protests and provides scarce skill specialists for the interdisciplinary team.</p>   |
| State Office Coordinator | Brian St George | <p>Coordinate assignments and scheduling of any needed personnel from the Colorado State Office</p> <p>Coordinate timely reviews by State Office reviewers in cooperation with Project Manager in accordance with schedule.</p> <p>Ensure consistent and accurate interpretation of policy and State Director guidance and that process review is focused on content and substance.</p> <p>Act as the State Director's representative for the project. Provide technical assistance to the Field Office when necessary. Provide orientation, planning/NEPA procedural guidance and training for the planning team.</p> <p>Serve as main contact points with State government for consistency review.</p> <p>Serve as main contact points with Washington Office (WO) for briefings of the Director and Secretarial staffs and for protest resolution.</p> |
| State Office Review Team |                 | <p>Ensure that review comments include suggestions for revision, improvement, solution, etc.</p> <p>Ensure consistent and accurate interpretation of policy and State Director guidance and that process review is focused</p>  |

| Position             | Name                | Roles and Responsibilities  |
|----------------------|---------------------|---|
|                      |                     | <p>on content and substance.</p> <p>Ensure all comments provide clear direction on what needs to be done.</p> <p>Maintain familiarity with the planning effort so they can coordinate with other State Office staffs.</p> <p>Ensure conformance with policy, the planning/NEPA process individual program requirements, and the Planning Manual and Handbook (1601 and H1601-1).</p>  |
| Field Office Manager | Catherine Robertson | <p>Responsible for preparation, content, and completion of the RMP/EIS. Participates in all planning team meetings.</p> <p>Contribute to establishing the scope and level of detail of the planning effort. Providing input to key portions of the planning/NEPA process, particularly updating of issues and planning criteria, MSA direction, alternative formulation, and selection of the preferred alternative. With the Core Team and IDT, helps develop issues and questions, keeps the Colorado State Director up-to-date on progress and helps keep the project on schedule. Ensures that the final product responds to the issues and concerns, and contains decisions that can be implemented.</p> <p>With support from Public Affairs, keeping all local interest groups, key individuals and Cooperating Agencies informed of general progress of the planning/NEPA effort.</p> <p>Ensuring that the plan revision process and documents meet BLM State Director and Director policy, and all regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Supervise Project Manager/Team Leader during work on the RMP. Apprise Project Manager of needed corrections and ensure original direction is maintained.</p> <p>Coordinating with Assistant Field Manager to set priorities in relation to other workloads and provides overall direction to Core Team and IDT members.</p> <p>Recommends that the Colorado State Director approve the Preparation Plan, the Draft RMP/EIS, and the Proposed</p> |

| Position                    | Name          | Roles and Responsibilities  |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---|
| Assistant Field Manager     | Raul Morales  | <p>RMP/Final EIS.</p> <p>Assure availability of Core Team and Interdisciplinary Team members on their staff for completion of all phases of the RMP within assigned dates.</p> <p>Participate in planning team meetings if the Field Manager is not available.</p> <p>Participate in all reviews.</p> <p>In consultation with Field Manager, sets priorities in relation to other workloads and provides overall direction to Core Team and IDT members on their staff.</p>   |
| Team Leader/Project Manager | Matt Anderson | <p>Primary responsibility for directing the planning effort through the planning/NEPA process and for the preparation of the EIS and RMP documentation and ensuring that schedules are met.</p> <p>Primary spokesperson for the planning/NEPA effort and will direct all public involvement connected with the project. The Team Leader will direct the day-to-day activities of the ID team when they are involved in the planning process. Critical support needs will be coordinated by the Team Leader.</p> <p>Responsible for the coordination among various agencies, cooperating agencies, industry and interest groups, the planning team, and the general public.</p> <p>Supervising the contractor hired to assist BLM in the land use planning process.</p> <p>Working with the Protest Response process to provide information for processing responses.</p> <p>Ensures the planning process is conducted and the EIS and RMP are prepared within the technical and procedural quality standards, which meet the requirements of NEPA, CEQ, BLM, and departmental guidelines.</p> |

RMP Core Team

Core Team Members attend all Core Team meetings or conference calls as determined by the project manager; submit input for various components of the RMP/EIS in an interdisciplinary and coordinated manner; submit accurate and properly formatted input to a contractor when

needed; provide all submissions by the assigned due dates; coordinate and communicate with BLM staff specialists and specialists with other agencies to ensure that the RMP/EIS contains interdisciplinary, complete and accurate information; provide information for maps at the appropriate scale and standards for publication and for use during the analysis; and when event delays are anticipated or questions arise consult with the BLM Project Manager and their supervisors in advance of deadlines. Members of the Core Team provide overall direction and management guidance to the BLM Project Manager. In addition, the Core Team provides representation for resource issues to ensure the RMP/EIS is developed in an interdisciplinary fashion and addresses all key issues. Line managers on the Core Team make decisions based upon recommendations received from other Core Team members.

#### *Internal Review of the Plan*

The Core Team will review the RMP/EIS throughout its development. For any portions prepared by a contractor the Team will meet with the contractor to continually refine the contractor's product. Team members will submit review comments to the BLM Project Manager by email within the allotted timeframes.

#### *Accountability*

Individuals working on this RMP/EIS are accountable for completing their specific tasks on time; a smooth progression to each step requires this. Management and supervisors will be kept informed of the team's progress. The Team Leader will keep team members and reviewers aware of the schedule and elapsed time. Being accountable for a job carries a responsibility for each individual involved to meet deadlines and to submit the best product possible. Any situations that occur in which a delay seems imminent will be resolved immediately by collaboration between the Team Leader, management, and individuals involved. The objective will be to evaluate the circumstances, ensure all involved are aware of the impacts, and take actions to get the schedule and products on track again.

#### RMP Interdisciplinary Team

Will supply technical data, draft narratives, impact analyses, and other information in approved formats and in time to meet established deadlines, and includes working with the contractor(s) hired for the planning effort and cooperating agency representatives.

Responsible for consulting with the RMP Team Leader and managers, in advance of deadlines, on any questions and on any anticipated needs or shortfalls. Members will also meet with the public and industry to acquire information and input.

During the course of the planning effort, ID team members will work in an interdisciplinary manner, consult with other professionals as needed or required, and make full use of other Field Office, State Office and cooperating agency expertise assigned to the planning team.

#### Cooperating agencies

As per IM-2002-149, the Grand Junction Field Office will develop Memoranda of Understanding with local, state, other federal and tribal agencies to designate each as a cooperating agency in the environmental impact analysis and documentation process. Each MOU will define procedures

through which the cooperators will work, responsibilities for each cooperator, terms of the agreement and other provisions. Cooperating agency status invitations will be extended to include the following:

- State of Colorado
- Local Municipality and County Governments
- Forest Service
- Mesa County
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

## **F. Process and Format for the Planning Effort**

### **Procedural Requirements**

The BLM land use planning process, explained in 43 CFR 1600, BLM 1601 Manual, and BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), falls within the framework of the NEPA environmental analysis and decision-making process described in the CEQ regulations of 40 CFR 1500-1508, the Department of the Interior NEPA Manual (516 DM 1-7), and the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1. The land use planning procedural requirements in 43 CFR 1600 are the same as those in the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1500) except as outlined below. The following list includes only requirements of the BLM planning process that are not imposed by the NEPA guidance.

BLM managers are required to involve Indian tribes at five specific points: (1) identification of issues; (2) review of proposed planning criteria; (3) review of the draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS); (4) review of the final RMP/EIS; and (5) notice of any changes as a result of protests. (H-8120-1. III-2)

A Notice of Intent (NOI) that meets both the CEQ regulations and the planning regulations will be published in the Federal Register. The NOI identifies preliminary issues and planning criteria. The GJFO will prepare planning criteria to ensure decision making is tailored to the issues pertinent to the Grand Junction planning effort and to avoid unnecessary data collection and analyses. The GJFO will provide the planning criteria for public review and comments before the criteria are approved [see 43 CFR 1610.2 (f) (2) and 1610.4-2]. In giving public notice, GJFO will use whatever means necessary, such as use of e-mail and web pages, postal service mailings, and publication in print and broadcast news media sources, to reach the community.

After publication of the draft EIS, which analyzes land use plan decision alternatives, there will be a 90-day minimum public review and comment period [see 43 CFR 1610.2(e)].

The land use plan will be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans of local and state governments, other Federal agencies, and Indian tribes to the maximum extent practical, as long as the plan is also consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of FLPMA and other Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands [see 43 CFR 1610.3-2 (a)].

If the other agencies, tribes and/or governments do not have officially approved or adopted resource-related plans, then the land use plan must, to the maximum extent practical, be consistent with their officially approved and adopted resource-related policies and programs, so long as the land use plan is consistent with the policies, programs, and provisions of public land laws and regulations [see 43 CFR 1610.3-2 (b)].

Before GJFO approves the proposed land use plan, the Governor will have 60 days to identify inconsistencies between the proposed plan and State plans and programs, and to provide written comments to the State Director. The BLM and the State may mutually agree upon a shorter review period. If the Governor does not respond within this period, it is assumed that the proposed land use plan decisions are consistent. If the Governor recommends changes in the proposed plan that were not raised during the public participation process, the State Director will provide the public an opportunity to comment on the recommendations [see 43 CFR 1610.3-2 (e)]. This public comment period will be offered for 30 days and may coincide with the 30-day comment period for the Notice of Significant Change. If the State Director does not accept the Governor's recommendations, the Governor has 30 days to appeal in writing to the BLM Director [see 43 CFR 1610.3-2(e)].

The public will have 60 days to review any proposed ACEC designations (see 43 CFR 1613).

There is a 30-day protest period for proposed land use plan decisions (see 43 CFR 1610.5-2). Protests must be filed with the BLM Director.

Before a land use plan is approved, the GJFO will give public notice and provide a 30-day public comment period if there has been any significant change to the proposed plan [see 43 CFR 1610.5-1(b)]. Comments in response to this Notice of Significant Change will be addressed by the State Director.

## **Environmental Analysis, Documentation, and Review**

### Preplanning -- Development of the Management Situation Analysis

The ID Team, in collaboration with a contractor, will be involved in preplanning as follows:

The ID Team will begin the planning effort by developing the management situation analysis (MSA) for the planning area. The MSA will begin with a comprehensive description of the existing management direction in the planning area. This description will eventually become the No Action Alternative to be included in the description of the alternatives section of the environmental analysis document (EA or EIS) for the planning effort. The description of the existing management direction is comprised of brief statements of management actions and objectives. This section should follow the format used in recently published BLM Colorado EISs for RMPs (such as the White River RMP). The description of the existing management direction should identify the land use activities and production levels that are anticipated to occur during the analysis period of the EIS. These Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) and

Reasonably Foreseeable Action (RFA) scenarios are important assumptions for analysis that are needed to formulate and understand environmental consequences.

Next, the MSA will include a description of the Affected Environment. This will become the existing or affected Environment section of the EIS for the planning effort. The description of the Affected Environment will be prepared by the contractor in collaboration with the ID Team. Finally, the contractor, in collaboration with the ID Team, will prepare a comprehensive description of the environmental consequences associated with continuation of existing management. The analysis will become part of the environmental consequences section of the EIS for the planning effort and will set the stage for developing the alternatives to existing management.

### Conservation Planning

GJFO will be piloting VISTA as well as a TNC (The Nature Conservancy) developed process, Planning for Priority Species and Vegetation (PPSV), and Energy by Design. The intent of these processes is to manage for species diversity and maintain certain ecological values within a landscape. TNC, Nature Serve, and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) will be assisting GJFO with utilizing these tools and processes.

### Alternative Formulation

The basic goal in formulating alternatives for the EA or EIS is to identify desired combinations of management options among the various resources and land uses (and the allowable public land uses and actions to achieve the desired outcomes) that respond to the planning issues. The alternatives should also address ways to resolve or mitigate the environmental consequences of continuing existing management that are described in the MSA.

Each alternative represents a complete and reasonable land use plan to guide future management of public lands and resources. The No Action Alternative represents continuation of the existing management direction. Other alternatives provide a range of choices for solving problems associated with existing management. (The problems with existing management are identified through the MSA process, including scoping and other public involvement.)

The analysis of impacts that would be associated with each of the alternatives is required by BLM planning regulations and the CEQ regulations. Comparison of the differences of impacts among the alternatives is also required. With this analysis, BLM managers are able to choose a preferred alternative from one of the complete alternatives, from combined portions of the various alternatives, by modification of an alternative, or by development of a different alternative.

At least three alternative themes can be identified in the development of most RMPs.

- Alternative A. This alternative would continue present management practices, based on existing land use plans. The alternative is known as the Continuation of Existing Management Direction or No Action Alternative.
- Alternative B. Compared to existing management, this alternative would focus on increasing resource yields and uses through fewer restrictions on activities such as mineral resource development, livestock grazing, and OHV travel.
- Alternative C. Compared to existing management, this alternative would favor resources such as wildlife habitat, vegetative production, and opportunities for primitive recreation in resolving resource conflicts.

### Development of the Preferred Alternative

The development and selection of the Preferred Alternative occurs after the previously formulated alternatives have been analyzed and their effects have been evaluated. After this analysis and evaluation, the Field Manager develops and selects the Preferred Alternative from various options among the alternatives considered or develops a different alternative as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative is then analyzed and the analysis is documented. The Preferred Alternative, in the manager's judgment, best addresses the issues and management requirements of the planning area.

The Preferred Alternative may be one of the alternatives studied in detail; it may be developed from parts of the various alternatives; it may reflect management's modification of options previously considered; or it may be developed from new options. The latter two situations could occur when management actions result in undesirable impacts in all of the alternatives and it becomes apparent that another management approach, or a management compromise, is needed.

The State Director reviews the Preferred Alternative in the Preliminary Draft EIS for the RMP and notifies the Field Manager of any required revisions. If necessary, a modified Preferred Alternative is again analyzed and the Draft EIS is submitted to the State Director for approval. When approved by the State Director, the Draft EIS is published and filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and made available for public review and comment.

### G. Grand Junction RMP Revision Schedule

The estimated schedule for the Grand Junction RMP Revision will result in completion of the proposed RMP and Final EIS, including the 30-day protest period, in 44 months (starting in January 2008 and completing the plan in August 2011). The schedule includes all steps necessary to complete a plan review from Preparation Plan development through Protest of the Proposed RMP Decisions. An additional time period will be required to resolve any protests before issuing the ROD and RMP decisions for State Director approval. See Appendix 2 for the schedule.

**H. Budget**

Table 4: Preliminary Grand Junction RMP Budget

| Item  | FY08      | FY09        | FY10        | FY11      |
|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| <b>Salaries/Labor</b>   |           |             |             |           |
| Core Team   | \$75,000  | \$200,400   | \$200,400   | \$200,400 |
| ID Team   |           | \$205,100   | \$105,700   | \$105,500 |
| Labor Totals  | \$75,000  | \$405,500   | \$306,100   | \$305,900 |
| <b>Contracts</b>  |           |             |             |           |
| Environmental Consultant Group (includes all items outlined in SoW, except air) | \$125,000 | \$1,192,100 | \$500,000   | \$300,000 |
| Air quality analysis (modeling)   |           | \$100,000   | \$350,000   | \$50,000  |
| Socioeconomic Report  |           | \$39,000    |             |           |
| Contracts Totals  | \$125,000 | \$1,331,100 | \$850,000   | \$350,000 |
| Vehicle Costs (1 vehicle)   |           | \$8,400     | \$8,400     | \$8,100   |
| Travel/Operations   |           | \$15,000    | \$15,000    | \$10,000  |
| Total Proposed Budget by FY   | \$200,000 | \$1,760,000 | \$1,180,000 | \$674,000 |

These salaries/labor costs were estimated at the appropriate grade for each specialist but figured at an average of a Step 5 and rounded to the nearest hundred. Contract amounts are consistent with BPS submissions and FY08 dispersion amount.

**I. Public Participation Plan**

Public involvement is an integral part of BLM's planning process and is needed to facilitate the revision of the Grand Junction Resource Management Plan (RMP). BLM Handbook H-1601-1, Chapter I, III, and Appendix A, and "A Desktop Reference Guide to Collaborative, Community-Based Planning" will be used to guide public participation. The public participation process for the Grand Junction planning effort will consist of three components which coincide with the resource management planning process. The components are preplanning, plan revision, and plan implementation. The preplanning component involves activities that include issue identification, development of planning criteria, determination of inventory needs, and the existing management situation analysis. The plan preparation phase involves development of alternatives for analysis, preparation of an environmental impact statement, a record of decision and a modified RMP. Plan implementation includes implementing land use plan decisions, ensuring activities conform with the land use plan decisions, monitoring to track the

implementation of land use plan decisions, and evaluating decisions made in the plan to determine if the decisions and NEPA analysis are still valid, or if changes are needed.

The objectives of public participation for this planning effort are to:

- Ensure a community-based, collaborative planning effort.
- Inform the public of the BLM's resource management planning activities.
- Solicit diverse community participation.
- Provide the public with an understanding of BLM mandated authorities, programs and proposed actions.
- Ensure that public needs and concerns are understood by BLM.
- Broaden the information base upon which planning decisions are made.
- Communicate to the public the reasons for decisions and the benefits to be derived through the chosen course of action.
- Sustain public participation throughout the planning effort.

### Community-Based Assessment

A community assessment study will be contracted to an appropriate contractor to gather information from publics and users of public lands within the planning area to aid in the development the RMP.

### Criteria for Collaborative Planning and Public Involvement

IM-2002-149 directs the BLM to develop RMPs in close collaboration with other affected agencies and governments by using the cooperating agency process. Qualifying local, state, federal and tribal agencies will have the opportunity to become cooperating agencies by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the BLM. Cooperating agencies will be sent invitation letters prior to starting the revision process. MOUs will be drafted early in the planning process and maintained throughout the RMP revision and EIS development. Cooperating agencies will be invited to attend RMP planning meetings to help identify concerns, develop alternatives, review draft documents, and provide input into final planning decision.

The collection of regional information to support planning efforts and the use of new information technologies are leading to stronger partnerships, better science, and improved public participation. Planning Support Project (PSP) work related to coal and oil and gas development, watershed mapping, T&E and sensitive plant and animal species, socioeconomics, and historic trails will involve BLM in partnerships with the U.S. Geological Survey, Department of Energy, the University of Colorado, various State of Colorado agencies, conservation districts, county governments, and local historical societies.

Finally, technology is bringing a new dimension to partnering and public involvement by allowing planning documents and the results of resource assessments to be posted on the internet. Under a cooperative agreement between BLM and the State of Colorado, geographic information used in various agency planning efforts is being gathered in an online data clearinghouse by the Colorado Geographic Information Advisory Council. Through these partnerships, the BLM in

Colorado can magnify the efficiencies and benefits of land use planning, while making the planning/NEPA process more available and accessible to all Americans.

### Components of Public Participation

A Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS will be published in the Federal Register to start the RMP planning process, followed by a public scoping process.

After the NOI is published, public participation for the RMP planning review will begin with press releases and media contacts indicating the BLM's intention to conduct a planning review of the RMP and to revise the RMP as necessary and related time frames.

The cooperating agency Memoranda of Understanding will be drafted, finalized, and signed during this initial planning stage.

The publication of a Federal Register Notice of Intent, requesting resource information and indicating the BLM's intention to revise the RMP will include the following:

- Identification of the geographic area to be covered.
- Kind and extent of public participation activities to be provided.
- Time, date, and location of scheduled public open houses and meetings.
- Name, title, address, and telephone number of the BLM officials to be contacted for further information.
- Location and availability of documents relevant to the planning process.
- A request for coal and other resource-specific information.
- A preliminary list of resource management issues and concerns identified by BLM Field Office staff.
- A request for identification of concerns, problems, conflicts, and issues by the public.

A scoping letter will be mailed to notify people about the planning effort. A regional press release about the planning effort will be issued.

Upon publication of the draft EIS for the RMP revision/amendment, a notice will be published in the Federal Register allowing a 90-day review period and requesting public comment. This will include notification of any proposed special management area designations.

Upon publication of the proposed plan and final EIS, a notice will be published in the Federal Register allowing a 30-day protest period.

Following State Director approval of the RMP Record of Decision, a notice will be published in the Federal Register informing the public of the availability of the RMP and of any changes made as a result of protests on the proposed RMP presented in the final EIS.

RMP Implementation Phase - An education phase begins with issuance of the record of decision and the approved RMP. It will be necessary for BLM to continue contacts with the public in

order to effectively implement the RMP.

Feedback from the public will be needed to assess the effectiveness of the RMP decisions and to document shortcomings and changes which will be addressed in future RMP maintenance actions, amendments, or revisions. Contacts will be made primarily by resource specialists during their day-to-day activities. Written documentation of these contacts must continue throughout the implementation of the RMP. Additional feedback will likely come in the form of letters from people experiencing problems or having questions.

At the same time the public is assessing the effectiveness of the RMP from its standpoint, it is incumbent upon resource specialists to help the public understand the precepts of the RMP, and how and why its implementation is to be accomplished.

### Getting Started

#### General Meetings (Scoping)

#### Community assessment studies

The purpose of the general meetings is to make the public aware of our planning revision, its purpose, what it would involve, and what will be their involvement.

#### Briefings/Meetings (Ongoing):

- County Commissioners – Mesa and Garfield Counties
- State of Colorado agencies coordination meeting
- Congressional briefings
- Open house in Grand Junction
- Individual industry or target group meetings (i.e., energy operators or livestock permittees) upon request
- Others

Establish an internet website linked to BLM Colorado's home page

#### Press Releases

- General release issued on initiation of the planning review
- Other releases as appropriate during planning review

Tours - Schedule for summer when the planning review is completed and next phase begins.

Materials - Materials, websites, and presentations intended for public consumption will be coordinated with the Field Office Public Affairs Specialist.

### The Interested and Affected Public

Identification of the Public - A mailing list of individuals, organizations, businesses, and other

parties interested in planning and resource management in the Grand Junction Field Office will be maintained. The mailing list will be updated when other interested individuals or groups are identified, ensuring that all interested parties are represented.

In addition to other public involvement, the planning regulations in 43 CFR 1610.3-1 and CEQ regulations 40 CFR 1501.6, 1508.5 require coordination with other local, state, federal, and tribal governments; involving them as “cooperating agencies” in the NEPA process. The objectives are for the State Director and Field Manager to keep apprised of non-BLM plans; assure that consideration is given to those plans that are germane to the development of RMPs for public lands; assist in resolving inconsistencies between federal and non-federal government plans; and provide for meaningful public involvement of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes in developing the RMP, including early public notice of proposed decisions which may have a significant impact on non-federal lands. See the list of required reviewers at the end of this appendix.

Methods of public involvement include:

- Direct mailings will be made to parties identified on the mailing list.
- The public will be informed of the various stages of the planning effort through the local news media, mailings and through Federal Register notices at specific points in the process.
- The opportunity for orientation and planning meetings will be offered to interested organizations and individuals.
- Opportunities will be provided for resource specialists to discuss management proposals with specific elements of the public at open houses, organizational meetings, and public outreach activities.
- An internet website will be established and updated regularly with information about the status of the planning effort, planning criteria, upcoming public meetings, Federal Register notices, press releases, etc., with a link to the NEPA page.

### Handling Public Comment

Documentation - Written records of all public comments will be maintained. Each record will be completed by the person responsible for obtaining the public input. Copies of all correspondence from the BLM to the public and copies of news releases and Federal Register notices will be retained. Summaries or transcripts of all public meetings will be prepared and retained.

Analysis and Summary - Comments having specific information about the planning effort, such as those providing new or additional technical information or those that point out errors, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Appropriate action will be taken to include the information or make needed corrections. The person providing the input will be acknowledged of our receipt and disposition of the input.

General comments, especially those received during formal comment periods, will be reviewed for their applicability to the planning effort. Those providing specific information will be treated as described above. Unless management desires a specific breakdown of comments to be used in

answering specific questions, input will not be coded. Instead, input will be summarized. Vote counting will be avoided. Summaries will be used to support development of the various planning phases.

### Freedom of Information Act Considerations

Comments submitted to BLM for use in its planning efforts, including names and home addresses of individuals submitting the comments, are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552). However, names and home addresses of individuals may be protected from disclosure under exemption 6 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In order to protect names and home addresses from public review or disclosure, the individual(s) submitting comments must request that their names and addresses be held in confidence.

The following or a similar statement must be placed in all notices requesting public input, including notices on the Internet, in Federal Register Notices of Intent and Notices of Availability, and in Dear Interested Party letters in the EIS:

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT CONSIDERATIONS:** Public comments submitted for this planning review, including names and street addresses of respondents will be available for public review at the Grand Junction Field Office during regular business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals who are representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

An abbreviated statement would also be included in press releases:

Public comments including name and address would be available for public review. If people wish to withhold their name and/or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, they must state this prominently at the beginning of the written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law.

### Public Participation Plan Evaluation

Evaluation of this public participation plan will be ongoing throughout the planning effort. The team leader, field office public affairs officer, and the management team will regularly assess the efficiency and success of the plan. It is suggested that evaluation of this plan occur after each major public participation period.

This public participation plan is necessarily flexible. It should be altered to take advantage of changes in policy direction, schedules, budgets, and manpower and should be responsive to periodic evaluations.

## Coordination and Consultation

The RMP Revision will be carried out in a manner which encourages and provides for early involvement by affected federal, state, local and tribal governments, interest groups, and the general public.

### Colorado Media for Grand Junction RMP Revision

#### *Newspapers:*

Daily Sentinel  
Grand Junction Free Press  
Business Times  
Palisade Tribune  
Fruita Times  
Plateau Valley Times  
High Country News

#### *Television:*

KKCO  
KJCT  
KREX

#### *Radio:*

Cumulus Broadcasting  
KNZZ  
Colorado Public Radio  
National Public Radio  
KAFM

## List of Acronyms

|                     |   |       |  |
|---------------------|---|-------|--|
| ACEC                | area of critical environmental concern                | LUP   | land use plan                                |
| BA                  | biological assessment                                 | MSA   | management situation analysis                |
| BLM                 | Bureau of Land Management                             | NEPA  | National Environmental Policy Act            |
| BOR                 | Bureau of Reclamation                                 | NOI   | notice of intent                             |
| CAP                 | coordinated activity plan                             | NRCS  | Natural Resources Conservation Service       |
| CEQ                 | Council on Environmental Quality                      | OEPC  | Office of Environmental Project Coordination |
| CFR                 | Code of Federal Regulations                           | OHV   | off highway vehicle                          |
| DEIS                | draft environmental impact statement                  | PSP   | planning support project                     |
| DM                  | Departmental Manual (U.S. Department of the Interior) | R&PP  | Recreation and Public Purposes Act           |
| EA                  | environmental assessment                              | RFA   | reasonably foreseeable action or activity    |
| EIS                 | environmental impact statement                        | RFD   | reasonably foreseeable development           |
| EPA                 | Environmental Protection Agency                       | RMP   | resource management plan                     |
| ERMA                | extensive recreation management area                  | ROD   | record of decision                           |
| ESI                 | ecological site inventory                             | ROW   | rights-of-way                                |
| FEIS                | final environmental impact statement                  | S&G   | standards and guidelines                     |
| FGDC                | Federal Geographic Data Committee                     | SRMA  | special recreation management area           |
| FLPMA               | Federal Land Policy and Management Act                | T&E   | threatened and endangered                    |
| FWS                 | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service                        | VRM   | visual resource management                   |
| FY                  | fiscal year   | WSR   | wild and scenic river                        |
| GIS                 | geographic information system                         | WARMS | Colorado Air Resources Monitoring System     |
| H <sub>2</sub> S    | hydrogen sulfide                                      | WO    | Washington Office                            |
| ID                  | interdisciplinary (team)                              | WSA   | wilderness study area                        |
| IMP                 | interim management policy                             | CSO   | Colorado State Office                        |
| IMPLAN <sup>J</sup> | an economic impact assessment modeling system         |       |  |

## Appendices

Appendix 1: GIS Needs and Standards

Appendix 2: Estimated RMP Revision Schedule

## Appendix 1: GIS Needs

Geographical Information System (GIS) maps are the building blocks to quantify resources and display information during alternative formulation. Existing resource information available will be used in formulating resource objectives and management alternatives. Much of this information needs to be compiled and put into digital format for use in the planning process and development of resource maps for the RMP/EIS. This must be done before actual analysis can begin. Any new data generated during the RMP will be used to address planning issues and will meet applicable established standards. Existing data in the preceding disciplines will be compiled and entered into GIS. Information already in a digital format must be to the same standards required for newly entered data. Geospatial data base development assumptions are identified below. Existing data will be used where possible and new data will be collected only where absolutely necessary. All new data will be collected to established data standards. Existing data will be converted to accepted and established data standards.

### **Geospatial Data Development**

The development of the geospatial database for this planning effort will be accomplished by the BLM and its contractors and within the context of existing BLM data management strategies currently under development. Database development tasks performed by the BLM and any of its contractors will incorporate goals, objectives, mandatory policies, and procedures identified in national Federal governmental guidance and instructions regarding the use, development, and sharing of geospatial data and its management including the following:

- Template for GIS data storage
- Executive Order 12906 of 1994 – Coordinating Geographic Data Acquisition and Access: The National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)
- OMB Circular A-16 & the expected revision
- OMB Information Initiative of 2000 – “Collecting Information in the Information Age”
- OMB Information Quality Guidelines – (Public Law 106-554; H.R. 5658)
- Incorporate goals, objectives, mandatory policies, and procedures identified in Washington Office BLM planning guidance and other instructions regarding data management
- BLM H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook
- BLM IM No. 2001-038 (11/30/2000) – Development/Approval of Preparation Plans for New Planning Starts
- BLM IM No. 2001-029 (11/13/2000) – Interim Data Management Guidance
- BLM IM No.2001-202 (8/3/2001) – Interim Guidance for Data Management in Land Use

Any location specific information pertaining to cultural resources (either map, description, or photo) is proprietary to the BLM and will not become the property of any contractors working on the EIS or attached to any document (paper or electronic), nor is this information subject to any public release or FOIA requests (36CFR 7.18).

- Appropriate data sharing with the public will be accomplished through the use of BLM planning project webpage.

As applicable, the following map data themes may be used in the planning/NEPA effort to support RMP decisions:

Land and Mineral Ownership

Boundaries

Planning Area

Political

Other federal agencies

Vegetation

T&E plant species

Special status species habitat

National Wetlands Inventory Maps

Forest and Woodland Inventory Maps

Noxious weed inventory and treatment areas

Weed Management Area (WMA) boundaries

Slope (Digital Elevation Models)

Aspect

Hydrology

Surface Water

Perennial Streams

Intermittent Streams

Standing Water

Watershed boundaries

Range Management

Fencing

Grazing Allotments

Range Improvement Projects

Range Sites

Vegetative Community Types

Precipitation Zones

Wildlife areas

Antelope

Mule Deer

White-Tailed Deer

Elk

Moose

Big Horn Sheep

Important and crucial big game seasonal Ranges and Parturition Areas

Migration Corridors

Herd Units and Colorado Game and Fish hunt areas

Sage Grouse leks, nesting, and brood rearing habitats

Raptor Nests and roosting areas

Prairie Dog Towns

T&E species habitat

Special status species habitat

- Soils
  - Soil Erosion hazard (wind, water)
- VRM management classes
- OHV designations
- Recreation
  - SRMA
  - Recreation Sites-developed/undeveloped
- Rights-of-Way (ROW) Corridors and exclusion, avoidance, and open areas
- Land Tenure Adjustment
  - Acquisition and disposal areas
  - Jurisdictional transfer or cooperative management lands
  - Withdrawals
  - Public Water Reserves
  - R&PP lands
  - Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) withdrawal lands
- Transportation and Transmission systems
  - Roads
  - Pipelines
  - Power lines
  - Railroads
  - Communication sites
- Mineral Occurrence and development Potential
  - Solid Minerals
  - Fluid Minerals
  - Locatable Minerals
  - Leasable Minerals
  - Salable Minerals
- Oil and Gas well information
- Surface Geology
- Geologic Hazards
  - Landslides
  - Active faults
  - Wind blown sand deposits
  - Hydrogen Sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) production areas
- Oil and Gas Unit Boundaries
- Cultural
  - Cultural inventory boundaries
  - Cultural sites
  - National Historic Trails
  - Other sites
- Air Quality
- Forestry
- Paleontology
- Fire Occurrence
- Fire Management Units

Fire Wildland /Urban Interface  
ACEC's and Proposed ACEC areas  
WSAs and Proposed Areas  
Fisheries  
Wild Horse Management Units  
Special management areas (i.e. National Natural Landmarks)

**Metadata**

Metadata or "data about data" is information about data and/or geospatial services, such as content, source, vintage, spatial scale, accuracy, projection, responsible party, contact phone number, method of collection, and other descriptions. Reliable metadata, structured in a standardized manner, is essential to ensuring that data are used appropriately, and any resulting analysis is credible. The creation and use of metadata is a requirement in order for GIS data to be used for NEPA/Planning. Although the whole idea of metadata appears too many, to be complex and confusing, metadata is simply information that is used to identify what the data is, when it was collected, who collected it, what the accuracy of the data is, and so forth. Information about metadata can be found here: <http://fgdc.er.usgs.gov/metadata/metadata.html>

Appendix 2: Estimated RMP Revision Schedule

Attached is the estimated Grand Junction RMP revision schedule.

RMP SCHEDULE

|                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Public Scoping                | November 2008 ✓ |
| Release Draft EIS             | February 2010   |
| Release Final EIS             | March 2011      |
| Signing of ROD                | August 2011     |
| Prepare Administration Record | August 2011     |