

AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

This plan may be amended or revised if major changes are necessary. Monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances or a proposed action that may result in a change in the scope, terms, or conditions of the plan would warrant an amendment or revision. An amendment will be analyzed either in an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. The public and other agencies will be included in the amendment and revision processes.

VALID EXISTING RIGHTS

This plan may not repeal valid existing rights on public lands. Valid existing rights are those claims or rights to public land that take precedence over the actions in this plan. As an example, a mining claim issued prior to the preparation of this plan in an area withdrawn from mineral entry through the plan may be valid. Valid existing rights may be held by other federal agencies or by private individuals or companies. Valid existing rights may also pertain to oil and gas leases, rights-of-way, and water rights.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Administrative actions are the day-to-day transactions required to serve the public and to provide optimal use of the resources. These actions are in conformance with the plan and their continued implementation will not result in significant environmental impacts. These and other administrative actions will be conducted at the resource area, district, or state office. The degree to which these actions are carried out will be based upon BLM policy, available personnel, and funding levels. These actions are described in further detail in Chapter 1 of the Final Billings Environmental Impact Statement.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED

The Proposed Land Use Plan alternative was a selection of portions of the other alternatives, or a complete section contained within one of these alternatives, which presented the best mix of resource considerations and favorable economic and social factors. This alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative.

The Continuation of Existing Management Alternative maintained present management directions to resolve issues, while responding to the requirements of new regulations and changing policies. This was considered to be the No Action Alternative required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Low Level Management Alternative referred to a lower level of BLM management and involvement than either the Continuation of Existing Management or High Level Management Alternatives. Depending on the specific issue, this alternative meant fewer restrictions on development or a lesser degree of protection and enhancement of resource values. Moreover, this alternative generally resulted in greater resource production.

The High Level Management Alternative referred to a higher level of BLM management and involvement than the Continuation of Existing Management or Low Level Management Alternatives. Depending on the specific issue, this alternative meant more restrictions on development and provided a greater degree of protection and enhancement of resource values. These alternatives and related actions are summarized in Table 1.1.

CORRECTIONS AND REVISIONS TO THE FEIS

Certain changes in the FEIS resulted from public comment, review of the FEIS by BLM personnel, and changes in BLM policy or guidance from new regulations and laws. These corrections and revisions are presented in Appendix 2.12 of this document.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & CONSISTENCY

An active public participation process was conducted during the development of the draft EIS. Open houses were held in Billings and Lewistown, Montana and Lovell, Wyoming; news releases were sent to area television stations and newspapers; individual and group meetings with representatives of local organizations were held and a public notice in the August 26, 1980, Federal Register was used to focus public attention on the issues. Comments were also received from other Federal, state and local government agencies.

The major goal of the public participation process was to identify the issues the public wanted considered in the draft EIS. The procedure included mass mailing an issue identification brochure requesting information on issues individuals felt should be considered in this process.

Coordination meetings were also conducted with the National Park Service (NPS) (Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area) and the U.S. Forest Service (Custer and Lewis and Clark National Forests) to discuss the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) wilderness management proposals.

Wilderness proposals and the other issue areas addressed in this RMP were discussed with local and state officials. Public meetings to discuss wilderness proposals were held in Lovell, Wyoming and Billings and Lewistown, Montana during May 1982.

The draft EIS was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on April 5, 1983. The notice of availability and a public hearing announcement were published on April 15, 1983 in the Federal Register. This notice announced a 90 day comment period commencing on April 15 and ending July 15, 1983.

Over 1,000 copies of the draft EIS were mailed to Federal, state and local governments, private groups and organizations and individuals for review and comment. News releases provided information on how to obtain copies of the draft. Formal public hearings were held in Lovell, Wyoming on May 31, 1983 and Billings, Montana on June 1, 1983. A BLM official presided over each hearing and three BLM representatives served on the panel. A court reporter recorded the hearings verbatim. A total of 49 comment letters were received during the 90 day comment period. Responses to these comment letters and the public hearings were provided in the final EIS.

A consultation meeting with representatives of the Governor's staff for the State of Montana was also held on September 8, 1983 in Helena, Montana. The purpose of this meeting was to inform these representatives of the major changes in the final EIS and to assure consistency with state or local plans, policies or programs.

The notice of availability for the final EIS was published on November 30, 1983, in the Federal Register. This notice announced a 30 day protest period commencing on November 30, and ending on December 30, 1983.

Over 1,000 copies of the final EIS were mailed to Federal, state and local governments, private groups, organizations and individuals.

CONSULTATION CONCERNING THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES, COAL UNSUITABILITY CRITERIA, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Informal and formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been initiated on all proposed actions which may affect any Federally listed threatened or endangered species. Consultation was done in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended. See Appendix 2.13 for the consultation confirmation letter from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

A state-federal interagency team of wildlife biologists has been established to review and make final recommendations on the application of the Federal coal program wildlife unsuitability criteria for the Bull Mountain area. This effort would be continued in consultation with the USFWS and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

An appropriate level of inventory to identify historic and prehistoric sites or features will be conducted in areas proposed for any Bureau initiated or authorized surface disturbing projects (i.e., range improvements, coal leasing), land sales, exchanges, or exchange pooling. Sites discovered are evaluated using criteria for placement on the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 60.6) in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer. The BLM considers the effect of any proposed undertaking on sites which meet the National Register criteria by following regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR 800) or a memoranda of agreement negotiated with the Council.

In most cases, adverse effects to National Register quality sites are avoided by relocating ground disturbing activities. Where moving an undertaking is not feasible, mitigation of adverse effects to significant cultural properties may be necessary. Mitigation will usually be an attempt to extract and preserve those attributes of a site which qualify it for the National Register. For example, many prehistoric sites are significant for the information they may provide about ancient Indian lifeways and cultural adaptations. Various levels of site recording, excavation, and analysis can often retrieve the important information, preserving it in records and reports.

Sites with socio-cultural values or aesthetic and recreational values amenable to public interpretation may be more difficult to mitigate by data recovery. Decisions about the treatment of such sites will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY DATA FOR FOUR ALTERNATIVES

GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management		Low Level Management		High Level Management			
		No.	Acres	No.	Acres	No.	Acres	No.	Acres
Existing	M	16	63,479	16	63,479	16	63,479	16	63,479
New	M	1	4,333	1	4,333	1	4,333	1	4,333
Non-AMPs	M	95	127,531	95	127,531	95	127,531	95	127,531
Revised	I	7	38,165	7	38,165	7	38,165	7	38,165
New	I	15	43,456	15	43,456	15	43,456	15	43,456
Existing	C	2	42,553	2	42,553	2	42,553	2	42,553
Non-AMPs	C	257	79,781	257	79,781	257	79,781	257	79,781
TOTAL		393	399,298	393	399,298	393	399,298	393	399,298
Unallotted (acres)		5,146		5,146		5,146		5,146	
Livestock Allocations	AUMs			AUMs		AUMs		AUMs	
Initial		62,437		62,437		59,816		62,437	
Long Term		73,148		65,557		62,037		73,148	
Range Improvements	Amounts			Amounts		Amounts		Amounts	
Structural									
Reservoirs (#'s)		5		4		0		5	
Spring Developments (#'s)		3		0		0		3	
Water Catchments (#'s)		2		19		0		2	
Wells (#'s)		14		9		0		14	
Pipelines (miles)		2.5		21		0		2.5	
Fences (miles)		22.5		13		0		22.5	
Cattle Guards (1)									
Nonstructural									
Mechanical (acres)		160		0		0		160	
Burning (acres)		6,418		0		0		6,418	
Spraying (acres) (annually)		45		45		0		45	

(1) Cattle guards would be installed when required where fence lines intersect roads; however, the number is not known at this time.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY DATA FOR FOUR ALTERNATIVES (cont.)

WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Estimated Horse Population				
Initial	121	121	130	121
Long Term	(3)	121	(2)	179
Structural Improvements				
Fences (miles)	2	7	5	15-19
Water Sources (#'s)	5	5	10	7-8
Horse Traps (#'s)	0	8	0	8
Acquisition of Nonpublic Lands	2,099	0	0	2,099
Acres Under Grazing Treatment	46,811(1)	0	0	46,811(1)
Acres Available for Wild Horse Grazing	46,811(1)	46,811(1)	36,600(4)	46,811(1)

- (1) Includes all public, state and private lands.
- (2) Due to a drastic reduction in ecological range condition, the carrying capacity of the horse range may be reduced to nearly 0; however, interbreeding, poor health and disease may drastically reduce the horse herd even if some forage remains. For this reason, horse population numbers are not estimated.
- (3) A slow increase in range condition will occur in the long term, but due to fragile soils, low precipitation and no rest rotation grazing system being utilized, increases in available forage for horses would be minimal.
- (4) Includes designated PMWHR only.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY DATA FOR FOUR ALTERNATIVES (cont.)

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Surveys & Monitoring Per Year				
Terrestrial Habitat (acres)	60,000	50,000	40,000	100,000
Waterfowl (reservoirs)	12	7	0	12
Prairie Dog Towns (acres)	300	300	0	500
Streams (miles)	10	5	0	10
Reservoirs (each)	3	2	0	5
HMPs (#'s)				
Waterfowl	0	0	0	1
Chukar	1	0	0	1
Fish	0	0	0	1
Structural Improvements (#'s)				
Water Catchments	5	12	0	20
Waterfowl Islands	50	20	0	50
Reservoir Fencing	7	7	0	7
Raptor Nests	20	0	0	20
Fish Ponds	3	0	0	3
Riparian Zone Fencing (acres)	0	10	0	0
Nonstructural Improvements				
Woody Floodplain Zone (miles)	41 (1)	0	0	41 (1)
Nesting Cover Planting (acres)	25	0	0	25

- (1) Improve or maintain 80% of 41 miles in "I" allotments to good or excellent ecological range condition in the long term.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY DATA FOR FOUR ALTERNATIVES (cont.)

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Annual Cut (MBF)	70	45	90	45
Protected Areas (acres) (1)	9,500	14,457	217	15,607

(1) Exclusive of wilderness areas. These figures also include productive and non-productive forested areas.

COAL

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Annual Production (ton/year)				
Surface Mining				
Short Term	10,000 (1)(3)	10,000	10,000 (1)(3)	10,000 (1)(3)
Long Term	300,000	10,000 (1)	300,000	300,000
Underground Mining				
1984-86	0	0 (2)	0	0
1987	30,000 (3)	0 (2)	30,000 (3)	30,000 (3)
1988-2009	150,000	0 (2)	150,000	150,000

(1) Current production would be maintained under emergency lease procedures.

(2) No underground mining at present.

(3) Assuming surface mining operations will not begin for 12 years; underground mining to begin by 1987.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY DATA FOR FOUR ALTERNATIVES (cont.)

OIL & GAS LEASING

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Acres in No-Lease Category	(2)	0	0	0
Acres Leased With Special Stipulations	70,000	49,870	0	70,000 (1)
Acres Leased With Standard Stipulations	579,443	599,573	649,443	579,443

(1) This area encompasses the Twin Coulee WSA, PMWHR, Beartooth Face, Young's Point, Hamilton's (Asparagus) Point, Bad Canyon, Steamboat Butte, Castle Butte, Weatherman's Draw, Crooked Creek Natural Area, Bridger Fossil Area, Red Dome, Red Valley, Petroglyph Canyon, Shepherd Ah-Nei, Acton area and Federal minerals within 2 miles of the Yellowstone River. New areas will be delineated where application of special stipulations is necessary.

(2) There is a strong probability that some areas will not be leased; acreage cannot be quantified at this time.

LAND TENURE ADJUSTMENT

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Inside Land Tenure Adjustment Area:				
Acres Found Suitable for Disposal (1)	7,459 (3)	(2)	0	7,459 (3)
Acres Recommended for Retention	26,315	36,156	36,156	26,315
Acres Recommended for Further Study	2,382	0	0	2,382
Outside Land Tenure Adjustment Area:				
Approximate Disposal Acreage	52,500 (3)	0	0	52,500 (3)
Approximate Retention Acreage	364,350	416,850	416,850	364,350

(1) Land exchange will be the predominant method of disposal.

(2) Projected acreage based on acreage sold or exchanged in the last 10 years (1,142 acres short term; 3,570 acres long term).

(3) Includes approximately 10,150 acres suitable for exchange to the U.S. Forest Service.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY DATA FOR FOUR ALTERNATIVES (cont.)

CLASSIFICATIONS

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Acres Segregated from Mineral Entry	970	28,586	0	28,586
Additional Withdrawal Applied for	360	0	0	0

RECREATION ACCESS

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Number of Sites to be Acquired	7	0	0	10

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE USE

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Acres Limited	57,830	55,800	55,800	139,800
Acres Closed	70	70	70	70
Additional Roads Closed (miles)	3	0	0	2
Additional Roads Open (miles)	9	0	13	0

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Number of Acres	77-0-133 (1)	77	0	133

(1) Assume 77 acres maintained pending no vandalism and 133 acres if visitation exceeds 6,000 visitors/year on 77 acre site.

TABLE 1.1: SUMMARY DATA FOR FOUR ALTERNATIVES (cont.)

WILD HORSE INTERPRETATION

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Acres Disturbed	0	0	0	10
Number of Signs	6	3	3	6
Miles of Road Constructed	0	0	0	1

WILDERNESS

Resource Proposals	Proposed Action	Continuation of Existing Management	Low Level Management	High Level Management
Suitability Recommendations in Acres by Study Areas				
Twin Coulee				
Suitable	0	0	0	6,870
Nonsuitable	6,870	6,870	6,870	0
Pryor Mountain				
Suitable	16,927	0	0	16,927
Nonsuitable	0	16,927	16,927	0
Burnt Timber Canyon				
Suitable	3,430	0	0	3,955
Nonsuitable	525	3,955	3,955	0
Bighorn Tack-On				
Suitable	2,550	0	0	4,550
Nonsuitable	2,000	4,550	4,550	0
Total				
Suitable	22,907	0	0	32,302
Nonsuitable	9,395	32,302	32,302	0

Source: BLM, 1982

