

# CHAPTER 2

## ALTERNATIVES

### Introduction

This chapter details six different alternatives for managing the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (Monument) to meet the vision and management goals and address the issues discussed in Chapter 1. Each alternative represents a reasonable set of objectives and actions to guide future management of the Monument. Chapter 2 is presented in six sections:

- General Description of Each Alternative
- Decisions Common to All Alternatives
- Current Management and Action Alternatives
- Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail
- Comparison of Alternatives
- Comparison of Impacts

The guidance found in the Decisions Common to All Alternatives section has been carried forward from existing laws, regulations, policy, and previous planning efforts, primarily the West HiLine Resource Management Plan (RMP) (BLM 1988, 1992a) and the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP (BLM 1994a). In the Monument, the West HiLine RMP includes BLM land in the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River (UMNWSR) and north of the river in Chouteau and Blaine Counties (222,000 acres). The Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP includes BLM land south of the UMNWSR in Chouteau and Fergus Counties and north of the UMNWSR in Phillips County (153,000 acres). The Decisions Common to All Alternatives, combined with current management or any of the action alternatives, will form the management plan for the Monument.

### General Description of Each Alternative

The six alternatives provide a reasonable range of management options to resolve the issues identified for the Monument. The alternatives provide a range of more-intensive to less-intensive management. The following brief descriptions provide an overview of the alternatives developed and some of the unique aspects of each.

#### Alternative A (Current Management)

Alternative A emphasizes continuing the management activities that already occur in the Monument. These activi-

ties are now governed by the West HiLine RMP (BLM 1988, 1992a), Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP (BLM 1994a), Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River Management Plan Update (BLM 1993) and the State Director's Interim Guidance for Managing the Monument (BLM 2001a) to the extent these plans are consistent with the Proclamation. This is the "no action" alternative which would create no change from the current management direction.

Under this alternative motorized use on the river would continue with the seasonal limitations on upstream travel and a no-wake speed restriction in the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR. The number of boaters on the river would not be limited and no allocation system would be developed. About 579 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel either yearlong or seasonally and 10 backcountry airstrips would remain open.

Current stipulations would apply to the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases, and conditions of approval for applications to drill natural gas wells would be developed and considered on a case-by-case basis during the permitting process on all 43 oil and gas leases. Under this alternative, it is foreseeable that 35 wells could be drilled on these leases in the Monument.

#### Alternative B

Alternative B emphasizes more intensive recreation and transportation management. Resource management activities would allow camping facilities and interpretive sites at varying levels to enable visitors to experience both the natural and historic benefits of this Monument, while ensuring that resource protection is not compromised.

Under this alternative, motorized use on the river would be allowed yearlong on all segments. The number of boaters on the river would not be limited and no allocation system would be developed. About 538 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel either yearlong or seasonally and 10 backcountry airstrips would be designated open.

Alternative B would be the least restrictive alternative concerning oil and gas activity. Under this alternative, conditions of approval would protect the objects for which the Monument was designated. Under this alternative, it is foreseeable that 44 natural gas wells could be drilled on the existing leases in the Monument.

## Alternative C

Alternative C would emphasize providing visitors with opportunities to experience the Monument. This alternative is distinguished from Alternative B in that it would more readily identify and accommodate changing conditions over time through the application of management decisions responsive to these changing conditions. This alternative provides more flexibility to respond to increasing visitation and risks to resources that could occur over time.

Under this alternative, motorized use on the river would be allowed with seasonal limitations on upstream travel and a no-wake speed restriction in the wild and scenic segments. Standards and indicators would be used to manage boaters on the river and impacts to resources, and no allocation system would be developed. About 501 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel either yearlong or seasonally and seven backcountry airstrips would be designated open.

Management of oil and gas operations would be more restrictive under this alternative, allowing less activity to occur than Alternatives A, B and F. Existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing conditions of approval to protect the objects for which the Monument was designated. Under this alternative, it is foreseeable that 28 natural gas wells could be drilled on the existing leases in the Monument.

## Alternative D

Alternative D would also emphasize providing visitors with opportunities to experience the Monument, but in a more self-directed fashion. This alternative differs from Alternative C in that it would limit certain activities now rather than applying management decisions responsive to changing conditions.

Under this alternative, motorized use on the river would be allowed with seasonal limitations on upstream travel and a no-wake speed restriction in the wild and scenic segments. Standards and indicators would be used to manage boaters on the river and impacts to resources and an allocation system would be developed when those standards and indicators are exceeded. About 330 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel either yearlong or seasonally and six backcountry airstrips would be designated open.

Management of oil and gas operations would be more restrictive under this alternative, allowing less activity to occur than Alternatives A, B, C and F. Existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing conditions of approval to protect the objects for which the Monument was designated. Under this alternative, it is

foreseeable that 13 natural gas wells could be drilled on the existing leases in the Monument.

## Alternative E

Alternative E would emphasize the natural condition and place the most limitations on visitors and other activities. Subtle forms of resource management and monitoring would minimize intervention into natural processes.

Under this alternative, motorized use would not be allowed on any segment of the river. An allocation system would be developed to manage boaters on the river and impacts to resources. About 105 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel either yearlong or seasonally and no backcountry airstrips would be designated open.

Management of oil and gas operations would be most restrictive under this alternative, allowing no activity to occur on the existing leases within the Monument. Surface disturbance would not be allowed on the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases (the entire leasehold) or the other 31 existing oil and gas leases. Under this alternative, it is foreseeable that no natural gas wells would be drilled on these leases in the Monument.

## Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative F would emphasize providing visitors with opportunities to experience the Monument. This alternative would readily identify and accommodate changing conditions over time through the application of management decisions responsive to these changing conditions. This alternative provides more opportunities for adaptive management to respond to increasing visitation and risks to resources that could occur over time.

Under this alternative, motorized use on the river would be allowed with seasonal limitations on upstream travel and a seasonal no-wake speed restriction in the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR. In addition, the wild and scenic segment from Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge would be restricted to non-motorized watercraft from June 5 to September 15. Standards and indicators would be used to manage boaters on the river and impacts to resources and no allocation system would be developed. About 378 miles of roads would be open to motorized travel either yearlong or seasonally and six backcountry airstrips would be designated open yearlong or seasonally.

Management of oil and gas operations would be more restrictive under this alternative, allowing less surface-disturbing activity than Alternatives A or B. Existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing conditions of approval to protect the objects for which the

Monument was designated. Under this alternative, it is foreseeable that 34 natural gas wells could be drilled on the existing leases in the Monument.

## Decisions Common to All Alternatives

An adaptive management approach will be used for the Monument. Adaptive management is a process for continually improving management practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programs and recognizing, in advance, that adjustments may be necessary to achieve management goals. This approach will recognize biological uncertainty in the Monument, while accepting the need to proceed on the basis of the best available knowledge. The approach will include both monitoring and research to learn from our management guidance so subsequent improvements can be made in management programs.

### Air Quality

*The BLM’s goal is to maintain the Monument as a Class II airshed.*

Management will minimize or prevent air quality degradation. The BLM will comply with federal and state air quality standards (Appendix F) and Standard for Rangeland Health #4 which requires that air quality meets Montana state standards. Existing air quality will be protected by the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) (Appendix G).

The Monument is part of an area that is designated as a Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) Class II area by the State of Montana under the 1977 Amendments to The Clean Air Act. Class II limits allow for moderate, well-controlled growth. Table 2.1 shows the allowable PSD increases for a Class II area.

### Implementation

Federal and state regulations require air quality monitoring for activities which could degrade existing air quality. Detailed monitoring and mitigation plans will be developed when an environmental analysis is prepared for a proposed action that could degrade air quality.

All BLM actions and use authorizations will be designed with measures to protect the Class II designation in the Monument. These measures generally require actions during specific wind conditions to either disperse smoke or prevent chemical spray drift.

**Table 2.1.  
Federal Prevention of Significant Deterioration  
Allowable Increments for Class II**

<i>Allowable Increments (micrograms per cubic meter)</i>	
<b>Particulate Matter</b>	
Annual Arithmetic Mean	17
Maximum 24-Hour	30
<b>Sulfur Dioxide</b>	
Annual Arithmetic Mean	20
Maximum 24-Hour	91
Maximum 3-Hour	512
<b>Nitrogen Dioxide</b>	
Annual Arithmetic Mean	25

### Cultural Resources

*The BLM’s goal is to preserve historic and cultural values and sites by enhancing public awareness or protection of the resources.*

The Proclamation discusses the importance of the Monument’s archaeological and historical resources. The Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce National Historic Trails, teepee rings and abandoned homesteads are also mentioned. The Proclamation states, “Remnants of this rich history are scattered throughout the Monument, and the river corridor retains many of the same qualities and much of the same appearance today as it did then.” The Proclamation further states, “Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.”

Archaeological and historical sites, historic landscapes and legal traditional public uses will be preserved to the extent practical and consistent with other Monument goals. The authorization of archaeological and historical investigations along with the interpretation of some cultural sites is addressed under the Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

The BLM will seek to preserve the objects of the Monument for the benefit of scientific and sociocultural use for present and future generations.

The primary management objectives are to properly manage the cultural resources under BLM jurisdiction through a systematic program of identification and evaluation, and to reduce the level of conflict between cultural resources

and other land and resource uses. All cultural resources within the area are segregated into management objectives. These objectives include managing for information potential, managing for public values and managing for conservation.

Cultural resources which contain significant information on the prehistory and history of the area will be managed for their information potential. These are cultural properties that consist of artifacts and features on the surface or buried that have the potential to yield important information.

Cultural resources that possess sociocultural, educational and recreational attributes will be managed for their public values. These include cultural resources associated with traditional American Indian cultural values, and prehistoric or historic cultural properties which exhibit interpretive and/or recreational potential. Managing cultural properties used by American Indians will focus on avoiding uses incompatible with traditional values.

Special or unique cultural resources will be managed for their public values and conservation. These include cultural properties that contain sensitive prehistoric religious features such as medicine wheels or burials; cultural properties that are of a nature that would not permit current archaeological technology to adequately investigate the property; and cultural properties that are rare in the area.

## Implementation

The BLM will ensure that all proposed actions, initiated or authorized by the BLM, avoid damage to federal and non federal cultural resources. The BLM will determine, based on inventory and evaluation data, whether the proposed action will impact important cultural resources and, if necessary, take steps to avoid or mitigate possible impacts.

The BLM will consult with American Indian tribes when its actions have the potential to affect areas of concern to the practitioners of traditional religions. The activities of concern are those which might degrade the visual or aesthetic nature of an area, or cause the loss of plant species or other resources important to American Indians. The BLM is required to consult with traditional religious practitioners on policies and procedures to determine if changes are needed to ensure that such rights and freedoms are not abridged by agency practices.

Those traditional cultural properties that are at least 50 years old require consideration under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The BLM will analyze each proposed action by determining the likelihood of the presence of not only significant cultural properties, but also the potential for or the presence of traditional cultural proper-

ties. Potential impacts to traditional cultural properties subject to the NHPA and determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be avoided or, if possible, mitigated.

## Fish and Wildlife

*The BLM's goal is to manage, enhance and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and special status species.*

The Proclamation discusses the importance of the Monument's wildlife and wildlife habitat. Many of the biological objects described in the Lewis and Clark Journals continue to make the Monument their home. The Proclamation states, "The monument boasts the most viable elk herd in Montana and one of the premier big horn sheep herds in the continental United States. It contains essential winter range for sage-grouse as well as habitat for prairie dogs. ... The cliff faces in the monument provide perching and nesting habitat for many raptors, including the sparrow hawk, ferruginous hawk, peregrine falcon, prairie falcon, and golden eagle. Several pairs of bald eagles nest along the river in the monument and many others visit during the late fall and early winter. Shoreline areas provide habitat for great blue heron, pelican, and a wide variety of waterfowl. The river and its tributaries in the monument host forty-eight fish species, including goldeye, drum, sauger, walleye, northern pike, channel catfish, and small mouth buffalo. The monument has one of the six remaining paddlefish populations in the United States. The river also supports the blue sucker, shovel nose sturgeon, sicklefin, sturgeon chub, and the endangered pallid sturgeon."

The BLM will maintain and enhance habitat for wildlife. The emphasis for habitat maintenance and development will be placed on present and potential habitat for sensitive, threatened and/or endangered species, nesting waterfowl, game birds, fisheries and crucial big game winter ranges. The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) is responsible for fish and wildlife population management.

The BLM will coordinate with other agencies consistent with the National Invasive Species Management Plan (NISC 2001) to control non-native species that cause or may cause significant negative impacts and do not provide an equivalent benefit to society.

## Implementation

Specific management and mitigation measures for some wildlife species are addressed under the Health of the Land and Fire section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

## **Big Game**

A variety of big game species including mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope and mountain lion are found in the Monument.

Expansion of big game populations into existing, but previously unoccupied habitat may occur. The BLM will work with MFWP, landowners and grazing permittees to determine the most appropriate management practices if monitoring indicates a deterioration of rangeland health in herd expansion areas. These practices may involve adjusting livestock grazing (seasons of use, use levels) on a temporary or permanent basis, reducing wildlife populations or other management options.

The BLM will use grazing methods to enhance bighorn sheep habitat and allow their expansion in the Missouri Breaks. Domestic sheep and goats will not be allowed on BLM land within 15 miles of areas occupied by bighorn sheep. In other areas, domestic sheep and goats may be allowed on a case-by-case basis to control noxious weeds.

The BLM will improve the quality and quantity of wildlife forage by using different grazing systems, changes in seasons of use, movement of livestock, and reductions in livestock numbers where needed to meet Standards for Rangeland Health. This will include improving the production and availability of palatable forbs for deer and antelope; maintaining and/or improving deer and antelope winter range (especially woody species) and fawning cover; and maintaining existing sagebrush stands at a canopy cover of 15-50% with an effective height over 12 inches, or at the highest potential for existing ecological site present, as determined by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey.

## **Waterfowl**

Habitat enhancements (islands, nesting platforms) may be constructed on new or existing reservoirs, ponds, potholes or river systems where feasible. Pits and reservoirs will not be constructed within natural wetlands or riparian areas which provide habitat for waterfowl and amphibians. Rights-of-way on or across BLM land for the development of private water sources will carry stipulations to enhance waterfowl habitat.

The BLM may fence specific existing and new waterfowl and fishing reservoirs to establish or protect shoreline vegetation for a minimum perimeter of 1,000 feet around the high water line. Periodic, short-term grazing of fenced enclosures may be allowed, if necessary, to maintain or improve wetland habitat.

## **Upland Game**

The BLM will improve the quality and quantity of nesting, brood rearing and winter habitat for upland game birds. The BLM will provide residual grass and forb cover for upland bird and waterfowl nesting. Objectives for residual cover will be developed in watershed plans and measured in terms of percent of residual (utilization levels) or visual observation rating. The BLM will manage for a healthy diverse vegetative community with a variety of forbs, and maintain big sagebrush and silver sage on sage-grouse wintering and nesting areas with a canopy cover of 15-50% and an effective height of 12 inches. The BLM will improve or maintain woody vegetation for sharp-tailed grouse.

Construction of new water developments within 1/2 mile of a sharp-tailed grouse lek will only be allowed after careful consideration of potential impacts on woody vegetation due to possible increased livestock grazing. Land treatments will be designed to maintain sagebrush levels with the desired canopy cover range (15-50%) and to increase the amount of forbs. Controlled burning, seeding, and/or mechanical vegetation manipulation could be done on an individual basis to improve wildlife habitat.

## **Raptors**

Raptor nest sites will be protected. No designated camping or other recreational development will occur within 1,000 feet of raptor nest sites. In order to reduce risk of raptor mortality, Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) guidelines will be followed for all power lines and will be incorporated into all power line rights-of-way.

## **Great Blue Heron and Cormorant**

Identified great blue heron and cormorant rookeries on BLM land will be protected from roads, campsite developments, timber cutting and other intrusions. No disturbance will be allowed within 1,000 feet of rookeries from the start of nesting through the fledging of young birds.

## **Paddlefish**

Rights-of-way on BLM land that result in an underwater crossing of the Missouri River will be constructed between June 15 and August 15 to protect spawning paddlefish. Other mitigation to protect spawning paddlefish will be applied as necessary.

## **Migratory Birds**

The BLM will follow the Nongame Migratory Bird Habitat Conservation Plan (BLM 1992b) for managing nongame birds that migrate to the tropics or use neotropical habitats. The overall intent is to reverse the decline in some bird populations and to implement a proactive program for other

migratory species. BLM management actions will focus on providing a variety of habitat characteristics that support successful breeding by migratory birds. This generally requires providing properly functioning habitats with the appropriate vegetation diversity, density and structure based on ecological site potential to support nesting, security and foraging. Methods used can include mechanical vegetation manipulation, prescribed fire to maintain short/mixed grass prairie, seeding or live planting to reestablish native grasslands or wetlands, and planting woody species to return sagebrush or riparian woodland species.

### **Threatened and Endangered Species**

The BLM will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to recover threatened and endangered species, including reintroduction efforts consistent with recovery plans and conservation strategies. This includes the Recovery Plan for the Pallid Sturgeon (USFWS 1993a) and the Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan (BOR 1994). In order to reduce risk of bald eagle mortality, APLIC guidelines will be followed for all power lines and will be incorporated into all power line rights-of-way. The bald eagle, black-footed ferret and pallid sturgeon are all species of special interest.

Determinations concerning endangered or threatened plants and animals will be based on one or a combination of the following factors:

- The present or threatened destruction, modification or curtailment of a species' habitat or range.
- Over-utilization of a species for commercial, sporting, scientific or educational purposes.
- Disease or predation of the species.
- The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms.
- Other natural or human-caused factors affecting a species' continued existence.

No action will be initiated on BLM land that will jeopardize any federally listed threatened and endangered plant or animal. Future actions will require site-specific environmental review and, if necessary, associated biological assessments. The BLM will comply with all decisions reached during consultation with the USFWS. Prior to the initiation of any action on BLM land, its effect on other sensitive species and state-designated species of special interest will be evaluated and applicable mitigation developed.

No black-footed ferrets have been sighted in the Monument, but the area has not been block-cleared for ferrets. The USFWS Black-footed Ferret Survey Guidelines (USFWS 1989) will be followed for all prairie dog towns, and a survey is required before any control or surface-disturbing activities can take place on towns or complexes over 80 acres. Small prairie dog towns occur throughout the Monument, but they are not suitable ferret habitat. These

towns will be managed for the other sensitive species associated with prairie dog towns.

BLM land within the area was historic habitat for grey wolf and grizzly bear. This land is not within the recovery area or important habitat for either species. There is a remote possibility, in the future, of either species relocating to habitat within the area. In the unlikely event of these species establishing within the area, management would follow the guidelines from the USFWS and MFWP. Wolves north of the Missouri River would be considered threatened and south of the river would be considered experimental. Grizzly bear occurrence would follow the guidelines in the MFWP management strategy for northwestern Montana (scheduled for the Fall of 2006).

Canada Lynx and piping plover (both threatened) have been determined to be present in other portions of the counties included in the Monument. Lynx have no suitable habitat within the Monument and are unlikely to occur in the future. Piping plover occur downstream on the Missouri River, but annual mountain runoff causes untimely flooding of sandbars on the river, making the habitat unsuitable most years. Extensive surveys have repeatedly failed to find any piping plovers or nesting sites. If active nests are identified in the future, USFWS guidelines would be followed to protect these sites.

### **Fishes**

Consistent with a cooperative plan between the BLM and MFWP, the MFWP will be requested to stock the Butch, Sundance and Gazob reservoirs with fish. In the future, other reservoirs may be identified for fisheries management. Priority consideration will be given to reservoirs near communities with public access. Fisheries potential will be considered during the location and design phases of new reservoirs. New reservoir proposals should include surveys for breeding amphibians at the appropriate time of the year as well as an analysis of the effects of predators on upland birds.

Reservoirs will not be constructed in natural wetlands or riparian areas, which provide habitat for waterfowl and amphibians. New fisheries reservoirs will normally be fenced and a livestock watering tank provided below the reservoir. Existing fisheries reservoirs will be fenced to exclude livestock, if necessary, to improve emergent vegetation, shade and/or improve the recreational experience.

### **Animal Damage Control**

Animal damage control will be conducted only with the Monument manager's approval when the animal control measure targets the specific offending animal(s) and health and safety factors are not issues. Animal damage control activities will also adhere to off-road vehicle restrictions in

that all vehicle travel is limited to designated roads, including roads available for administrative use. The Monument manager will approve other site-specific restrictions as needed.

## Geology

*The BLM's goal is to protect the surface features in the landscape that are identified in the Proclamation.*

The Proclamation discusses the importance of the geology in the area. The Proclamation states, "The monument is covered with sedimentary rocks deposited in shallow seas that covered central and eastern Montana during the Cretaceous period. Glaciers, volcanic activity, and erosion have since folded, faulted, uplifted, and sculpted the landscape to the majestic form it takes today."

The Proclamation reserved and appropriated all federal lands and interests in lands within the Monument and withdrew them from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, leasing, or other disposition under the public land laws, including the mineral leasing and mining laws. No new mining claims can be located, and no new prospecting or exploration activities can be undertaken to identify locatable minerals or to establish the discovery of valuable mineral deposits. Plans of Operations for mining will not be approved unless the Department of the Interior has determined that the mining claims covered by the Plan of Operations are valid under the Surface Management Regulations at 43 CFR 3809.100.

The interpretation of geologic sites is addressed under the Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

## Implementation

There are no active mines in the Monument for saleable (sand and gravel) or locatable minerals (precious metals or gems). The area is closed to disposal of mineral materials by regulation (43 CFR 3601.12(a)). Currently, 63 mining claims for precious gems are located in the Monument. A Plan of Operations would have to be filed with the Lewistown Field Office before any surface disturbance exceeding casual use could be conducted on these claims (43 CFR 3809.11(7)). The first step in the process of responding to the Plan of Operations is a validity determination on the mining claim(s) involved. Each claim must have a discovery of a valuable mineral prior to the date of the withdrawal to be considered a valid existing right. In the event that the claims were determined to be valid, the Plan of Operations would be processed under the Surface Mining Regulations at 43 CFR 3809 or 3802 (for wilderness study areas). The Proclamation does not direct the BLM to initiate validity

determinations on the claims. Under existing policy for withdrawn lands, the claimant can continue to hold the claim by payment of annual fees in lieu of assessment or relinquish the claims. Unless the claimant initiates the process by either filing a Plan of Operations or an application for patent, no action will be taken by the BLM on the claims unless it is in the public interest to do so (BLM Manual 3060.12A).

## Soils

*The BLM's goal is to maintain or improve soil health and productivity to provide an ecosystem supporting plant and animal species.*

The BLM will comply with Standard for Rangeland Health #1 which requires that the uplands are in proper functioning condition and Standard #2 which requires that riparian and wetland areas are in proper functioning condition, to maintain and/or improve soil productivity by increasing vegetation cover and reducing erosion.

## Implementation

Prior to authorizing any surface-disturbing activity (including, but not limited to range improvements, natural gas development or right-of-way location) the BLM will evaluate the activity and, if necessary, apply mitigating measures, deny the authorization or relocate the activity to a more suitable soil type. Surface-disturbing activities may be prohibited during muddy and/or wet soil periods. Site-specific measures will be developed for soils with high erosion susceptibility, steep slopes, sparse vegetation and shallow soil depth. Activity plans will include mitigation to protect ground cover and streambank stability and to reduce sediment yields from surface-disturbing activities. All surface-disturbing activities are subject to an on-site evaluation to develop mitigation to reduce erosion and soil compaction and improve soil stability and salinity control. These mitigation measures or BMPs (Appendix G) will also prescribe revegetation programs.

## Vegetation – Native Plants

*The BLM's goal is to manage for healthy vegetation communities that provide for a wide variety of long-term benefits such as aesthetics, wildlife, recreation, livestock grazing, etc.*

Vegetation allocation to enhance plant health, protect watersheds, wildlife habitat, and wildlife forage and livestock forage was established according to policies, regulations and land use plan objectives (BLM 1979 and 1982). In general, about 60% of the annual vegetation production is allocated to watershed protection, plant health and/or wildlife forage and cover, and about 40% is allocated to live-

stock. However, as specific management goals are refined and changes in resource conditions become apparent through monitoring, the actual percentage of vegetation allocated may change. For example, if the area grazed is very steep and far from water the actual allocation to livestock could be substantially less than 40%. The Livestock Grazing section in Chapter 3 provides more information about forage allocation.

The Standards for Rangeland Health for northcentral Montana were developed in cooperation with the Central Montana Resource Advisory Council (BLM 1997). Standards are physical or biological conditions or functions required for healthy, sustainable rangelands. All of these standards depend on healthy native vegetation. The purpose of standards is to establish minimum required conditions for BLM lands within broad geographic areas. They address watershed function; nutrient cycling and energy flow; water quality; air quality; habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed or special status species; and habitat quality for native plant and animal populations and communities.

The following five standards were established for northcentral Montana:

- Standard #1 Uplands are in proper functioning condition;
- Standard #2 Riparian and wetland areas are in proper functioning condition;
- Standard #3 Water quality meets Montana state standards;
- Standard #4 Air quality meets Montana state standards; and
- Standard #5 Habitats are provided to maintain healthy, productive and diverse populations of native plant and animal species, including special status species (federally threatened, endangered, candidate or Montana species of special concern as defined in BLM Manual 6840, Special Status Species Management).

For a complete description of the Standards for Rangeland Health, see [Appendix H](#). Each of these standards has a set of indicators that provides clues to the health of the ecosystem. These indicators are compared with a set of criteria that have been recognized for a healthy and functional system. When measures of these indicators fall outside of the desired range, it may indicate that Standards for Rangeland Health are not being met.

The Monument will be managed to achieve a natural range of native plant associations, including measures to promote conservation of sensitive plant species. Management activities will not be allowed to substantially shift the makeup of native plant communities and associations or disrupt normal succession. However, there will be some circumstances where vegetation communities and associations will be shifted to meet specific management goals or

objectives. These could include prescribed burns to reduce hazardous fuel circumstances, restoration of some habitat components in the interest of wildlife, treatments to control invasive species, etc.

## Implementation

Standards determinations were made on an allotment basis. Once the determinations were documented, implementation was carried out in groups of allotments through watershed plans. This included changes to grazing management and construction of range improvements when necessary. Table 2.2 lists the watershed and landscape plans.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Year Completed</i>
Woodhawk Watershed Plan	1998
Two Calf Watershed Plan	1998
Armells Watershed Plan	2000
Beauchamp Watershed Plan	2001
Upper Missouri Watershed Plan	2002
Loma/Vimy Ridge Watershed Plan	2002
Arrow Creek/Upper River/Whiskey Ridge Landscape Plan	2004
Bears Paw to Breaks Implementation Plan	2005

When a grazing allotment is not meeting standards, the BLM is obligated to take action to correct the situation. Specifically, where grazing is responsible for not meeting standards, action is required in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2(c).

## Vegetation – Riparian

*The BLM's goal is to achieve, or make significant progress toward, proper functioning condition in riparian areas.*

The BLM will maintain and/or improve the riparian-wetland areas based on proper functioning condition (PFC) and the desired plant community ([Appendix H](#)).

## Implementation

The BLM will initially accomplish riparian-wetland objectives through livestock grazing methods at current stocking levels. If grazing methods are not successful in meeting management objectives, the BLM will take the necessary

actions to achieve those objectives. To accomplish the riparian-wetland objectives, the BLM will consider the importance of the intermingled private lands, including valuable riparian-wetland areas, which could be adversely impacted as a result of management changes on BLM land.

The eight watershed or landscape plans (Table 2.2) address implementation of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. With the completion of these plans, the Monument is included in several plans with stated riparian-wetland objectives and methods for achieving those objectives.

Riparian-wetland objectives will continue to be developed and implemented through the watershed planning process. Exclosures, change in season of use, refined grazing prescriptions, riparian pastures, etc. could be used to achieve PFC. The BLM will maintain current grazing systems for those riparian areas in PFC.

When hydrologic conditions allow, the BLM will coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and county/city/private organizations to secure the release of water from dams upstream from the Monument. These high water events would establish deciduous forest and woody riparian seedlings, create water flows favoring wildlife habitat and native fishes and promote endangered species recovery.

## **Vegetation – Noxious and Invasive Plants**

*The BLM's goal is to control, contain and if possible, eradicate invasive plants.*

The management of noxious and invasive plants will continue as prescribed in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument: Guidelines for Integrated Weed Management (BLM 2001b). This weed management plan provides guidelines for the prevention, containment and eradication of invasive and noxious plants, and for the coordination of BLM, state and private weed management efforts.

The BLM will coordinate with other agencies consistent with the National Invasive Species Management Plan (NISC 2001) to control non-native species that cause or may cause significant negative impacts and do not provide an equivalent benefit to society.

## **Implementation**

The BLM will designate the Monument a weed management area to facilitate cooperation among landowners and various federal and state agencies, and to secure funding to implement integrated weed management control measures.

The BLM will identify weed prevention areas and emphasize prevention activities to keep weed seed and regenerative plant parts from being introduced into weed free areas. Implementation of an early detection and rapid response program would ensure new infestations are identified early and aggressively managed to protect and maintain uninfested areas.

The BLM will increase public awareness of invasive plant and weed species and develop treatment strategies to control noxious weeds in and around developed and primitive recreation use areas.

The BLM will develop treatment strategies to contain and/or eradicate weed infestations throughout the Monument using integrated weed management methods.

## **Visual Resources**

*The BLM's goal is to protect the cultural landscape (viewshed) and the visual features in the landscape that are identified in the Proclamation.*

The visual resource management (VRM) classes are based on a process that considers scenic quality, sensitivity to changes in the landscape and distance zone. The four VRM classes are numbered I to IV; the lower the number, the more sensitive and scenic the area. Each class has a management objective which prescribes the level of acceptable change in the landscape.

The VRM class objectives are defined as follows:

Class I – The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

Class II – The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class III – The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat

the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class IV – The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance and repeating the basic elements.

Surface-disturbing activities and/or developments will be designed or mitigated to compliment and harmonize with the natural features and the VRM class objectives. Any projects must have a visual contrast rating worksheet completed as a part of the environmental analysis.

Specific management for visual resources is addressed under the Health of the Land and Fire section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

## Implementation

The visual resource contrast rating system will be used during project level planning to determine whether or not proposed activities will meet VRM objectives. Mitigation measures would then be identified to reduce visual contrasts, including the use of BMPs (Appendix G).

## Water Quality

*The BLM's goal is to maintain and/or improve the existing hydrologic systems in the Monument.*

Surface and ground water quality will be maintained to meet or exceed federal and state water quality standards, including Standard for Rangeland Health #3 which requires that water quality meets Montana state standards. The BLM will continue obtaining water rights for all projects on BLM land and will comply with Montana water laws.

The BLM will improve or maintain vegetative cover on uplands and riparian-wetland areas to reduce runoff and sedimentation.

## Implementation

The Environmental Protection Agency, in administering the Clean Water Act, requires all states to identify rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands where beneficial uses are impaired or threatened by human activity, and to schedule those waters for development of water quality restoration plans. This process is known as the Total Maximum Daily

Load (TMDL) process. The BLM will continue to comply with the TMDL process by addressing listed streams in the watershed planning process.

All surface-disturbing activities are subject to an on-site evaluation to mitigate impacts to water quality and quantity. No activities should alter stream courses. BMPs will be implemented to protect watershed values and maintain or improve water quality (Appendix G). Other measures to protect stream courses will be evaluated prior to project approval.

## Water Developments and Water Rights

Approximately 95 reservoirs, 4 springs, 14 water savers, 7 wells, 35 miles of pipeline, and 32 stock tanks exist in the Monument area for use by livestock and wildlife.

Several shortfalls exist in the physical demand for surface water in the Monument. Suitable reservoir sites are scarce due to high siltation rates, erodibility of fill material, potential for saline seeps and lack of access for heavy equipment. Water savers are an alternative for reservoirs.

Ground water in much of the area is too deep to be cost effective, although wells with pipelines supplying many tanks may solve localized water shortages. Where ground water is available, lack of power precludes many well sites from being developed. Solar or gas-powered pumps may provide stock water in some locations.

## Implementation

The BLM must consider downstream senior water rights claims before developing surface water sources. Specific management for water developments is addressed under the Health of the Land and Fire section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

## Reserved Water Rights

*The BLM's goal is to maintain and/or improve the existing hydrologic systems in the Monument.*

The Proclamation reserves “subject to valid existing rights, a quantity of water in the Judith River and Arrow Creek sufficient to fulfill the purposes for which this monument is established. Nothing in this reservation shall be construed as a relinquishment or reduction of any water use or rights reserved or appropriated by the United States on or before the date of this proclamation.”

The BLM land needs to be managed in a manner that preserves and protects the integrity of these watershed

systems. These protections must provide the opportunity for a flow regime that supports the health and regeneration of cottonwood galleries, which provide a seed source for the downstream cottonwood galleries. These galleries also contribute to the dilution of sediment, arsenic, and nutrient loading in the Missouri River.

The BLM is currently collecting hydrologic data from both the Judith River and Arrow Creek. Once this data collection is complete, the BLM will begin negotiations with the Reserved Water Right Compact Commission to quantify its claimed reserved right. After June 30, 2009, the Reserved Water Right Compact Commission no longer has authority to negotiate reserved water rights. The process of quantifying this reserved right then must be adjudicated through the state court system.

## Implementation

To maintain and/or improve the hydrologic conditions and restore instream flows, the BLM will pursue the purchase of water rights, from willing sellers only, on tributaries to Arrow Creek and the Judith River.

The BLM will continue its efforts to determine the extent and importance of the water rights reserved by the Proclamation. This will include a study to quantify the base flow and flood flows for the Judith River and the flood flows for Arrow Creek.

These water rights, if asserted, would carry a priority date of January 17, 2001 and would be junior to all water rights that existed at that time. Because these water rights are very junior in this area (the majority of water rights in these basins stem from the 1880s through the mid-1900s), they may have a very limited ability to affect or protect the streamflows in the Judith River and Arrow Creek.

Montana law provides for the Montana Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission, a state-appointed body, to negotiate with the various federal agencies and tribal governments who claim reserved water rights. This process provides for public input throughout the negotiation process and requires that the Montana legislature, Governor of Montana and Secretary of the Interior approve any settlement proposal. The BLM has not requested a negotiation at this time and cannot reach a decision on the assertion of the federal reserved right without further information on base and flood flows along with public input.

## Lands and Realty

*The BLM's goal is to provide reasonable access for the public, private landowners, as well as for the administrative needs and authorized uses of industry and government agencies.*

Under the Proclamation, all federal lands and interests in lands are “hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, or leasing or other disposition under the public land laws, . . . and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing, other than by exchange that furthers the protective purposes of the monument. The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. . . . Lands and interests in lands within the proposed monument not owned by the United States shall be reserved as a part of the monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States.”

## Implementation

### Rights-of-Way

Applications for rights-of-way will be considered pursuant to existing policies and practices, identified transportation and utility corridors, identified avoidance and exclusion areas, valid existing rights, and as necessary for adequate access to state or private land (e.g., access to explore, develop and produce state or private minerals) as well as access for utility or transportation services. Such applications must be in conformance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and provide for mitigation necessary to protect Monument resources. The BLM has discretion to evaluate such things as construction methods, alternate routes or type of access (including only aerial access) and to establish reasonable terms and conditions necessary to protect the public interest. All power line rights-of-way must comply with APLIC guidelines to protect, or reduce impacts to raptors and bald eagles.

Applications for commercial wind energy systems, solar energy systems and communication sites will not be considered.

### Leases and Permits

New land use authorizations (e.g., farming lease) issued under 43 CFR 2920, with the exception of film permits, will not be authorized. Applications for film permits using the uplands and which may cause impacts that require mitigation will require a Notice of Realty Action in the Federal Register, a 30-day public comment period, environmental analysis, and may require bonding and liability insurance. Film permits confined to the Missouri River and/or access roads in the Monument will be treated as minimum impact permits as defined at 43 CFR 2920.2-2. Permits are not required for casual use filming activities which normally involve non-commercial still photography or recreational videotaping.

## Land Ownership Adjustment

BLM land will not be disposed of other than by exchange, and only when necessary to further the protective purposes of the Monument, block up BLM land within the Monument and enhance the values for which the Monument was designated.

Disposal of BLM land would be limited to parcels meeting this criteria:

- The parcel is located at the edge of the Monument and disposal would not create an inholding;
- The parcel contains minimal Breaks topography;
- The parcel contains minimal objects for which the Monument was designated; and
- The parcel presents resource conflicts.

Private land or easement acquisitions that enhance the values of the Monument will be considered only with willing sellers. The BLM will explore the feasibility of a land exchange program with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Such exchanges would focus on state lands that would contribute to the objects for which the Monument was designated. The above criteria do not apply to BLM lands outside the Monument, which are available for exchange under criteria contained in the Judith-Valley-Phillips and West HiLine RMPs.

The BLM will consider the acquisition of private land (either fee or conservation easement) through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. These acquisitions are pursued only on a willing-seller basis.

Lands acquired by the BLM will be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land. Upon acquisition of title, acquired lands will become part of the Monument and are withdrawn accordingly.

### Revised Statute 2477

Revised Statute 2477, which provided that “[t]he right of way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted,” was repealed on October 21, 1976, by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The FLPMA did not terminate valid rights-of-way established under Revised Statute 2477 prior to its repeal. Since 1993, the BLM has deferred any processing of Revised Statute 2477 assertions except in cases where there is a demonstrated, compelling, and immediate need to make such determinations. Any assertions will be processed consistent with the “Interim Departmental Policy on Revised Statute 2477 Grant of Right-of-Way for Public Highways; Revocation of December 7, 1988 Policy,” dated January 22, 1997.

## Livestock Grazing

*The BLM’s goal is to permit livestock grazing consistent with maintaining healthy vegetation communities.*

Under the Proclamation, the “[l]aws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument.”

The allocation of forage for livestock grazing was established following the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. Since that time, several laws, regulations and changes have revised livestock grazing on BLM land. The most recent change concerning livestock grazing was the establishment of Standards for Rangeland Health in 1997. Continued livestock grazing is permitted pursuant to the terms and conditions of permits and leases. Livestock grazing will be managed through implementation of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management ([Appendix H](#)). Grazing guidelines were established in 43 CFR 4180(f)(2), and regionally refined guidelines were established in the Montana/Dakotas Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1997). Through the watershed and/or activity plan process, assessments of standards were prepared. If existing grazing management was responsible for not meeting standards, modifications to the grazing authorization are implemented to ensure standards will be met. These can include changes to allocated use, seasons of use, grazing rotations or other grazing management practices. The Monument designation in itself does not mandate a need for an adjustment of forage allocated to livestock. Continued monitoring as it relates to Standards for Rangeland Health will be the basis of making adjustments to livestock grazing.

Terms and conditions, beyond basic guidelines for livestock grazing, may be developed in the watershed planning process or as monitoring indicates a need for change to meet specific goals and objectives in the watershed or allotment.

Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management practices will be followed to protect rangeland resources and, where necessary, to mitigate conflicts with other Monument uses and values. Administrative actions will be implemented under existing regulations to ensure compliance with existing permit/lease requirements. These actions include monitoring and supervision of grazing use and enforcement in response to unauthorized use. Completed watershed plans will be implemented, including the associated range improvement projects, as part of this guidance to meet Standards for Rangeland Health ([Appendix H](#)). NEPA documentation will be prepared before renewal of grazing

permits. This documentation will include a review of new monitoring and resource data and may include a reassessment or evaluation. The normal term of a grazing permit is 10 years, but they may be issued for a shorter period if resource concerns or administrative reasons merit.

Grazing management facilities included in completed watershed plans and analyzed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process will be implemented as part of this guidance to meet Standards for Rangeland Health. Maintenance of existing projects will occur in the same general manner and degree as in the past. Other projects will be constructed only where an environmental review demonstrates they would enhance Monument resources and meet overall management goals.

## Implementation

Livestock grazing will continue to be managed through development and monitoring of grazing activity plans and supervision of grazing use. Plans and grazing prescriptions will be developed with multiple use objectives to enhance vegetation production and diversity; maintain and enhance wildlife habitat; protect watersheds; reduce bare ground; and minimize livestock/recreation conflicts. If improved grazing management alone does not meet management objectives, vegetation treatments will be considered.

All allotments have been assigned to a management category depending on the resources and problems contained in the allotment. The three categories of Improve (I), Maintain (M) and Custodial (C) reflect resource conditions, resource potential and economic considerations for each allotment. The terms improve, maintain and custodial relate to resource objectives for the allotment, i.e. whether conditions need to be improved or maintained, or if custodial management is appropriate because of relatively limited resources and resource problems. The BLM's allotment categorization system will continue to determine priorities for implementing grazing activity plans, spending range improvement funds and monitoring. Allotments will be subject to recategorization based on changes in resource conditions as determined through monitoring.

Range improvements (primarily reservoirs, other water facilities, fences and land treatments) will be built to support activity plans. Fences will be designed to allow easy passage of wildlife. Vegetative manipulations will be planned, developed and implemented to ensure that negative impacts to resources (primarily wildlife, soils, range, and watersheds) are identified and mitigated. Treatments will be applied if maintenance or improvement cannot be achieved with grazing management practices. Watershed parameters, topography, soil type, infiltration and soil loss potential will also be considered and mitigated, as necessary, in vegetation manipulation projects.

All vegetation increases will be allocated to watershed until soils and vegetation are stabilized to a satisfactory condition as determined by an interdisciplinary team prior to increasing livestock or wildlife allocations.

Some unallocated parcels will remain available for livestock grazing. These are generally isolated small tracts. An environmental assessment will be prepared for areas not previously grazed by livestock. When the opportunity becomes available to create resource reserve allotments, these allotments would technically not be allocated in the sense of adjudication of grazing preference attached to base property; however, they would be available for grazing under guidelines established for use of the resource reserve allotment.

Livestock forage allocations on newly acquired land will be based on management needs and objectives of the acquisition. The allocation may range from zero to full capacity and could be adjusted if monitoring indicates a need to make changes to meet management objectives.

Temporary decreases in livestock forage allocations will be implemented in the event of a temporary loss of forage such as in severe drought, fire, or insect or weed infestations. Temporary increases in livestock forage allocations will be made on a temporary nonrenewable basis, where such increases are within the available carrying capacity and are consistent with multiple use objectives as determined by an interdisciplinary review.

Grazing permittees (permit/lease) have an opportunity to apply each year for changes in grazing use within their permitted use level. These changes may include adjustments in season of use, livestock numbers or class of livestock. Applications for major changes in livestock use will be considered through environmental analyses.

Livestock forage allocation and rangeland health will be monitored on a continuing basis for actual use, utilization and trends, and to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of grazing permits and leases. The monitoring data will be analyzed to determine if grazing management is achieving land use or activity plan objectives; to allow temporary increases or decreases in AUMs; and to revise grazing activity plans. Monitoring intensity will be based on meeting Standards for Rangeland Health. Violations of permits will be pursued in accordance with the grazing regulations.

Developed recreation sites will be excluded from livestock grazing, except where grazing is needed to maintain the desired plant community. Goats and/or sheep could be used under strict prescriptions to control weeds in special circumstances. Grazing by horses and other livestock used by

recreationists in developed recreation sites will be managed through specific activity plans.

The BLM will maintain or enhance bighorn sheep habitat. A change in class of livestock from cows to domestic sheep will not be allowed within 15 miles of areas occupied by bighorn sheep. In other areas, domestic sheep may be allowed on a case-by-case basis to control noxious weeds.

The BLM will manage the Cow Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) with a strong emphasis on riparian management. Existing grazing activity plans will be revised to incorporate grazing management practices to improve riparian community conditions. The management emphasis will discourage or prevent livestock congregation along the bottoms to maintain or enhance riparian vegetation.

The Ervin Ridge Wild Horse Herd Area, identified under the Wild Horse and Burro Act, will remain free of wild horses (BLM 1985).

## Minerals – Oil and Gas

*The BLM's goal is to provide reasonable oil and gas exploration and development on existing leased land without diminishing the objects of the Monument.*

The Proclamation does not allow new oil and gas leases in the Monument. The 43 federal oil and gas leases in the Monument are considered to have valid existing rights based upon the Proclamation, wherein it states, “The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. The Secretary of Interior shall manage development on existing oil and gas leases within the monument, subject to valid existing rights, so as not to create any new impacts that would interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by this proclamation.” The existing leases are also in compliance with their lease terms and conditions. (See Chapter 3 Minerals – Oil and Gas, [Appendix K](#) and the Glossary for more information regarding the leases.)

Specific management for oil and gas is addressed under the Natural Gas Exploration and Development section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

### Implementation

Notices of Intent and/or Sundry Notices will be required for all seismic operations. Any approvals by the BLM will include inventories and mitigation measures to avoid new impacts that interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by the Proclamation. Off-lease seismic operations or seismic operations on BLM land with

unleased federal minerals may be permitted for the purpose of defining the limits of the federal lessee’s interests or for the purpose of exploring state and fee oil and gas minerals. Seismic operations planned off of existing roads must demonstrate that proposed transportation and exploration methods will minimize the potential for creating new roads or trails.

Existing well operations and maintenance will continue and could involve activities that do not require approval under existing oil and gas regulations. These activities could include routine well operations, well stimulation operations, down-hole well maintenance or tests for production capability.

The BLM will determine the potential impacts of oil and gas operations and mitigation measures to avoid interference with the proper care and management of the objects protected by the Monument. If the analysis and documentation indicate that a proposal may have impacts that are not in conformance with the Proclamation, regulation, BMPs or existing resource management plans, the BLM will work with the applicant to find alternatives or modifications to the proposal that will minimize such impacts through special permit conditions, consistent with the applicant’s rights under applicable laws, regulations and stipulations.

The current application for permit to drill (APD) review process will be utilized, which includes a 30-day posting period for public review of the proposal. Following the 30-day posting period, the application can be approved in accordance with lease conditions of approval; Onshore Oil and Gas Orders; and Onshore Oil and Gas regulation (43 CFR 3160) if the application is administratively and technically complete. (See [Appendix K](#) – Reasonably Foreseeable Development scenario regarding discussion under the section Possible Oil and Gas Operations to Occur in the Monument.) The BLM will determine if public review periods are necessary for additional well operations (e.g., pipelines, production pits, compressors) that require BLM approval.

Surface construction for new well pads, roads, pipelines and associated facilities will involve the minimum acreage necessary for safe operation in order to mitigate impacts to Monument objects. Existing rights-of-way and roads will be used for new operations as much as possible to avoid impacts that interfere with proper care of Monument resources. Using existing disturbed areas for well locations will be emphasized. Production facilities will be located at individual well sites or co-located if grouping of production facilities would minimize visual contrasts with Monument objects. Gas pipelines will follow existing road corridors if available. All oil and gas operations within the Monument, including reclamation activities, will be made a high priority for surface inspections.

## Recreation

*The BLM's goal is to manage for a variety of sustainable visitor opportunities in mostly primitive and natural landscapes.*

The BLM will maintain and/or enhance the recreational quality of BLM land and resources to ensure enjoyable recreational experiences. Specific management for recreation is addressed under the Visitor Use, Services, and Infrastructure section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

The BLM's Recreation 2000 guidance and the Tri-State Recreation Plan incorporate the following provisions:

- Managing visitor services including a permit system, interpretive programs, visitor contact and efforts to improve the BLM's image with public land users;
- Maintaining all facilities where the public comes in contact with BLM roads, trails, signs, recreation sites and buildings;
- Developing partnerships among other agencies, organizations and private citizens; and
- Enhancing budget/marketing techniques that showcase the BLM's land management.

The recreation emphasis will be to develop and maintain opportunities for dispersed recreational activities such as hunting, scenic and wildlife viewing and driving for pleasure, consistent with current policies and practices and the Proclamation. Methods to achieve these opportunities include emphasizing public access and the Watchable Wildlife and Back Country Byways programs. The BLM will provide dispersed recreation opportunities to support local, regional and national needs.

The BLM will increase coordination with the Montana tourism industry to market BLM recreational opportunities, particularly with the Charlie Russell and Missouri River Tourism Regions for the State of Montana.

The BLM will emphasize a pack in/pack out garbage policy.

The BLM will provide uniformed law enforcement patrols of the Monument. The law enforcement program will stress public compliance through education and outreach to develop a sense of public ownership of the Monument. The BLM will respond to resource violations consistent with current law enforcement responsibilities within the Lewistown Field Office. The Blaine, Chouteau, Fergus and Phillips County Sheriffs' Departments conduct emergency services in the Monument. The BLM assists as requested with available resources. Emergency services are guided by BLM policy and administrative action.

Geocaching is an appropriate, casual use of BLM land, and a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) is not required if the activity is casual use and inflicts no damage on the resources (no surface disturbance). However, if the activity becomes too large and begins to conflict with other authorized uses or affects the resources of the Monument, appropriate steps will be taken to manage the activity. This would include preparation of an environmental assessment or other appropriate NEPA document; issuance of letters of agreement or SRPs with special stipulations to mitigate concerns; and requirements for the registration of geocaching sites and removal of those geocaches if authorization is not given.

Four Undaunted Stewardship interpretive projects are located on private property intermingled with the Monument along the UMNWSR. This is a collaborative partnership program that involves private landowners (ranchers), Montana Stockgrowers Association, Montana State University and the BLM. The objective is to preserve both Lewis and Clark and Montana frontier history. The four sites include the ABN Ranch east of Virgelle, the Lanning/Terry Ranch south of Big Sandy, the Crawford Farm & Ranch north of Geraldine, and the Wortman Ranch near the PN Bridge (Judith Landing) north of Winifred.

## Implementation

### Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River

Management of the UMNWSR is guided by the 1993 River Plan Update (BLM 1993). The River Plan Update identified the specific actions necessary to implement guidance provided by the West HiLine RMP (BLM 1992a) and to revise some outdated management actions. In the future, the river plan will be updated based on the guidance from the Monument RMP, specifically the Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

The UMNWSR will be managed to protect and preserve the remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, and other values as directed by Congress in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 90-542, 1968) and the amendment for the Upper Missouri (PL 94-486, 1976). The BLM will manage the segment of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail within the planning area, in a manner that is consistent with the purposes and provisions of the National Trails System Act (PL 90-543, 1968) as amended by PL 95-625 (1978).

The BLM will provide recreational opportunities and visitor services consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended. Future developments will mitigate impacts to natural and cultural resources. Mitigation measures will be determined after site-specific evaluations.

The Fort Benton River Management Station will be maintained and operated as an administrative site, supporting visitor services for the UMNWSR until the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Interpretive Center is built in Fort Benton. Construction is scheduled for completion in 2006. The new center will continue to support visitor services for the UMNWSR and provide interpretive information on the cultural and natural history of the Monument. Access points at the Chouteau County Fairgrounds Campground and Canoe Launch, Fort Benton Power Boat Ramp, Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing and James Kipp Recreation Area will serve as points of contact to provide health and safety information, register boaters, and collect visitor use information.

The BLM will continue, and may expand, visitor services operations to provide for public health, safety and law enforcement. Search and rescue operations and law enforcement will continue as a cooperative effort between the BLM and state and local agencies.

The BLM will coordinate with the USFWS on bankside recreation use and management within the Charles M. Russell (CMR) National Wildlife Refuge boundaries, between river miles 139-149.

### **Nez Perce National Historic Trail**

The Nez Perce National Historic Trail passes through the Monument and the BLM will manage the recreation activities and opportunities associated with this portion of the trail in a manner consistent with the purposes and the provisions of Public Law 90-543, as amended by Public Law 99-445, and the comprehensive plan prepared by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS, 1990). This National Historic Trail System provides several opportunities for interpretation. This key segment begins near Winifred and enters the UMNWSR near Cow Island. It also parallels portions of the Missouri River Breaks Back Country Byway. Scenic and cultural values will be protected on BLM land along this historic trail.

An activity plan will be developed to detail the management activities along the trail.

## **Transportation**

*The BLM's goal is to provide access to state and federal land and reasonable access for private landowners while protecting the features of the Monument.*

*The BLM's goal is to manage legal and physical access to and within the Monument to provide opportunities for diverse recreation activities (motorized and non-motorized) while considering*

*the surrounding regional recreation opportunities in northcentral Montana.*

The Proclamation states, "the Secretary shall prohibit all motorized and mechanized vehicle use off road, except for emergency or authorized administrative purposes." In addition, the Secretary "shall prepare a transportation plan that addresses the actions, including road closures or travel restrictions, necessary to protect the objects."

According to the Proclamation, these BLM lands are part of a limited area designation consistent with 43 CFR 8340. A limited area means an area restricted at certain times, in certain areas, and/or to certain vehicular use, such as no off-road travel.

## **Implementation**

The Access and Transportation alternative discussions later in this chapter address the transportation plan for the Monument in accordance with the Proclamation and designation criteria outlined under 43 CFR 8342.1.

The BLM regulations (43 CFR 8341.2 and 8364.1) allow for area or road closures where off-road vehicles are causing or will cause considerable adverse impacts upon soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, threatened or endangered species, other authorized uses, or other resources. The authorized officer can immediately close the area or road affected until the impacts are eliminated and measures are implemented to prevent future recurrence.

## **Fire**

*The BLM's goal is to control wildland fire safely, efficiently and with minimal impact to resource values while minimizing the risk of catastrophic fire within the Monument and communities adjacent to the Monument. This includes maintaining or reestablishing the natural influence of fire on vegetation communities and associations.*

Fire will be used to manage fuels and minimize the risk to those biological, geological and historical objects of interest for which the Monument was established. Fire could be a positive influence in much of this area and restoration of natural fire regimes will be encouraged where practical. However, each occurrence will require special consideration. Obvious concerns focus around structural developments, croplands, livestock and livestock forage needs, the reduction of big game thermal and hiding cover, and reduced canopy coverage in sagebrush habitats. Social and political considerations will help determine how each fire occurrence will be managed.

Appropriate management responses based on current fire danger, resource availability and predicted weather will be used to ensure safety of fire suppression personnel, reduce cost of fire suppression and to return fire to a more natural ecological role. An appropriate management response may also include limiting fires ignited by lightning to pre-planned barriers and natural fuel breaks. During each wildland fire event, a decision matrix will be developed based on fuel and weather conditions, fire danger, other fire activity and resource availability. This matrix will be used to determine the appropriate response for each fire occurrence on BLM land.

Specific management for fire is addressed under the Health of the Land and Fire section of the alternative descriptions later in this chapter.

## **Implementation**

### **Wildland Fire Suppression and Rehabilitation**

The BLM will suppress fires at minimum cost, based on fire fighter and public safety and the benefits and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives. Where an identified risk to private croplands exists, all wildland fires will be suppressed during the hot or dry season. The BLM works in an interagency fashion with rural fire departments and other federal and state fire agencies. The closest available fire suppression resources respond to a fire for initial attack, irrespective of land ownership. The BLM Lewistown Fire Dispatch Center provides interagency dispatch for much of central Montana south of the Missouri River.

Appropriate management responses to wildland fire in the Monument, including wilderness study areas (WSAs), will include traditional fire line tactics, including the use of natural barriers and hand-constructed fire line. The use of earth-moving or tillage equipment is prohibited for wildland fire suppression on BLM land, unless waived by the authorized officer. Should earth-moving equipment be authorized for use in the Monument, careful consideration will be given as to how and where it is used to minimize potential impacts from erosion. Staging areas will be placed outside the Monument whenever possible. The application of fire retardant is prohibited within the White Cliffs section of the Monument, and is also prohibited within 300 feet of any perennial water body.

Rehabilitation will be based on careful consideration of resource objectives, area concerns and constraints. Certified weed-free seed and seeding with appropriate native species is required.

### **Prescribed Fire and other Fuels Management**

Prescribed burns will be used in the Monument to protect infrastructure or wildlife habitat that would be permanently lost in the event of a catastrophic fire, to achieve desired plant communities, and to reduce hazardous fuel loads. The BLM will coordinate fuel management with private landowners, affected interests and other agencies. Land uses are to be monitored and adjusted as necessary after a fire to sustain soils and vegetation.

### **Wildland Fire - Wilderness Study Areas**

The BLM will protect the wilderness characteristics of land within the National Wilderness Preservation System and in WSAs. Fire management-related activities should preserve the natural character of wilderness areas and avoid unnecessary impairment of a WSA's suitability for preservation as wilderness. The use of heavy equipment during wildland fire suppression and rehabilitation in WSAs should be avoided to protect wilderness characteristics. Fire camps should be located outside WSAs. Using motorized vehicles and mechanical equipment during mop-up should be minimized. A fire plan developed for any WSA should specify fire management objectives, historic fire occurrence, acceptable suppression techniques, buffer zones, smoke management concerns, and anticipated impacts on private or other agency inholdings and on adjacent landowners. Suppression methods may include use of power tools, aircraft, motorboats and motorized fire-fighting equipment while applying appropriate techniques. A wildland fire situation analysis will be completed by appropriate fire managers and resource staff for any fire that escapes initial attack or has the potential to remain in the extended attack mode for more than 48 hours.

### **Prescribed Fire – Wilderness Study Areas**

The use of heavy equipment will be avoided to protect wilderness characteristics. Staging areas and fire camps will be located outside of WSAs, unless safety or overriding logistical concerns dictate otherwise. A prescribed burn plan will specify fire management objectives, historic fire occurrence, the natural role of fire, expected fire behavior, smoke management, and impacts on private or other agency inholdings and on adjacent landowners. The use of power tools and motorized equipment will be limited.

## **Wilderness Study Areas**

*The BLM's goal is to preserve or enhance the primitive characteristics of the wilderness study areas.*

The wilderness program is in the transitional stage between wilderness study and Congressional action. Six WSAs in

**Table 2.3  
Montana Wilderness Recommendations  
For WSAs in the Monument**

<i>WSA Name</i>	<i>WSA Number</i>	<i>Acres Recommended for Wilderness</i>	<i>Acres Recommended for Non-Wilderness</i>
Antelope Creek	MT-065-266	9,600	2,750
Cow Creek	MT-066-256	21,590	12,460
Dog Creek	MT-068-244	0	5,150
SouthErvin Ridge	MT-068-253	0	10,200
Stafford	MT-066-250	0	4,800
Woodhawk	MT-068-246	0	8,100

the Monument were identified in the Montana Wilderness Inventory (BLM 1980). A final suitability study and environmental impact statement completed by the BLM (BLM 1987) recommended wilderness designation for a portion of the Antelope Creek and Cow Creek WSAs. Table 2.3 shows the recommendations for the six WSAs. All WSAs will be managed according to the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (BLM Manual H-8550-1) until such time as Congress acts upon the recommendations because only Congress can designate or release these lands.

### **Implementation**

The WSAs will continue to be managed under the BLM's Interim Management Policy. The BLM will prepare a wilderness management plan for any areas designated as wilderness by Congress. The WSAs not designated as wilderness by Congress will subsequently be managed in accordance with guidance for adjacent BLM land unless otherwise specified in this RMP.

## **Current Management and Action Alternatives**

The following sections provide a detailed description of the six alternatives for the four categories: Health of the Land and Fire; Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure; Natural Gas Exploration and Development; and Access and Transportation.

- The Health of the Land and Fire section includes management guidance that would apply to most resources and resource uses in the Monument and includes alternatives for fish and wildlife; vegetation; range improvements; visual resources; forest products; right-of-way corridors, avoidance areas and exclusion areas; land ownership adjustment; fire; and eligible wild and scenic rivers.
- The Visitor Use, Services, and Infrastructure section includes management for recreation in the Monument. This section includes alternatives for recreation management areas; fees; gateway communities; research, collection, and special events; recreation in sensitive wildlife habitat; potential interpretive sites; special recreation use permits; opportunities for boaters; camping facilities; and motorized watercraft.
- The Natural Gas Exploration and Development section includes management guidance for the existing oil and gas leases in the Monument. This section includes alternatives for the West HiLine and non-West HiLine oil and gas leases which include timing, controlled surface use and no surface disturbance; and alternatives for seismic; drilling operations; production facilities and equipment; and reclamation.
- The Access and Transportation section includes management guidance for the transportation system in the Monument. This section includes alternatives for access; the BLM road system; and aviation.

# Health of the Land and Fire

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## **Fish and Wildlife – Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat**

*The BLM's goal is to manage, enhance and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and special status species.*

### **Alternative A (Current Management)**

The BLM would maintain and enhance wildlife habitat, including greater sage-grouse habitat in the Judith-Valley-Phillips planning area (BLM 1994a), through monitoring of habitat conditions and grazing use, changing the season of use, adjusting stocking rates, specifying salt and supplement locations, or terminating grazing by October 31. In the West HiLine planning area (BLM 1988, 1992a) livestock grazing methods (which may include adjusting stocking rates, specifying locations of salt and other supplements, changing the season of use or terminating grazing by October 31) would be used to maintain sagebrush stands with 15-50% canopy cover with 12" height, or at the highest potential for existing ecological site present, as determined by NRCS soil survey.

### **Alternatives B, C, and D**

Sage-grouse management would utilize the 2005 "Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage-Grouse in Montana – Final" for overall guidance and direction.

The BLM would use prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatments to reduce or increase sagebrush cover to desired levels for nesting, brood rearing, breeding habitat and winter habitat.

The BLM would identify likely nesting habitat within 2 miles of individual sage-grouse leks through field assessments. These alternatives would require leaving adequate residual herbaceous cover beneath sagebrush within nesting areas at the end of the grazing season to allow adequate cover (sagebrush canopy cover of 15-20% and a perennial herbaceous cover greater than 7") for next year's nesting.

These alternatives would prohibit supplemental feeding, mineral placement or other livestock congregating functions in identified active crucial sage-grouse habitat during sensitive seasonal times (March 1 to June 15).

These alternatives may increase sagebrush habitat and reduce crested wheatgrass in selected areas in or near nesting habitat, and reseed native sagebrush in areas that have been previously disturbed.

Concentrations of livestock near leks or crucial winter habitat can disturb or displace sage-grouse. Therefore, high livestock densities would not be allowed in identified active

nesting habitat from March 1 to June 15. Also, when conditions are required for sage-grouse security, livestock grazing would not occur in identified active crucial winter habitat (sagebrush canopy 10-30% and 10-14" height) from December 1 to March 31.

### **Alternative E**

Sage-grouse management would utilize the 2005 "Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage-Grouse in Montana – Final" for overall guidance and direction.

The BLM would use prescribed fire and/or mechanical treatments to reduce or increase sagebrush cover to desired levels for nesting, brood rearing, breeding habitat, and winter habitat.

The BLM would identify likely nesting habitat within 2 miles of individual sage-grouse leks through field assessments. This alternative would require leaving adequate residual herbaceous cover beneath sagebrush within nesting areas at the end of the grazing season to allow adequate cover (sagebrush canopy cover of 15-20% and a perennial herbaceous cover greater than 7") for next year's nesting.

This alternative would prohibit supplemental feeding, mineral placement or other livestock congregating functions in identified active crucial sage-grouse habitat during sensitive seasonal times (March 1 to June 15).

This alternative would increase sagebrush habitat through conversion of crested wheatgrass in selected areas in or near nesting habitat, and native sagebrush would be reseeded in areas that have been previously disturbed.

Concentrations of livestock near leks or crucial winter habitat can disturb or displace sage-grouse. Therefore, livestock grazing would not be allowed in identified sage-grouse nesting habitat from March 1 to June 15. Also, livestock grazing would not occur in identified crucial winter habitat (sagebrush canopy cover of 10-30% and 10-14" height) from December 1 to March 31.

### **Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

Sage-grouse management would utilize the 2005 Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage-Grouse in Montana – Final for overall guidance and direction.

The BLM would consider mechanical treatment as the primary method and prescribed fire as a secondary method to remove conifers encroaching on sage-grouse habitat, except where forested habitat is limited.

The BLM would identify sage-grouse nesting habitat through field assessments. This alternative would require leaving adequate residual herbaceous cover beneath sagebrush

within nesting areas at the end of the grazing season to allow adequate cover for the next year's nesting (sagebrush canopy cover of 15-20% and a perennial herbaceous cover greater than 7", or at the highest potential for existing ecological site present, as determined by NRCS soil survey).

This alternative would require grazing permittees to avoid the placement of salt or mineral supplements near leks during the breeding season (March 1 to June 15). The placement of salt or mineral supplements by other entities would not be allowed. Supplemental winter feeding would not be allowed on sage-grouse crucial winter habitat and around leks, which have been occupied within the last 10 years.

This alternative would promote sage planting, where appropriate, on project areas (such as sites where sagebrush has been removed for crested wheat grass conversions) occurring with sage-grouse habitats and reclaim and/or reseed areas disturbed by treatments.

Concentrations of livestock near leks or crucial winter habitat can disturb or displace sage-grouse. Therefore, concentrations of livestock on leks or other key sage-grouse habitats would be avoided by using conservative stocking levels, locating salt or other supplements away from leks or crucial winter habitat, adjusting grazing seasons and locating water facilities where they would not jeopardize habitat.

## **Fish and Wildlife – Black-Tailed Prairie Dogs**

*The BLM's goal is to manage, enhance and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and special status species.*

### **Alternative A (Current Management)**

In the West HiLine planning area, prairie dog towns smaller than 10 acres would not be actively managed. Should control measures be considered on any town larger than 10 acres, threatened and endangered or special interest species would be given priority and necessary mitigation would be developed prior to initiating any control measures.

In the Judith-Valley-Phillips planning area, prairie dog towns on BLM land in Fergus and Chouteau Counties would be maintained or managed based on the values or problems encountered (these problems could include the loss of vegetation and/or prairie dog habitat). Prairie dog towns on BLM land in Phillips County would be maintained at the 1988 survey level for recreational viewing, associated species and prairie dog shooting. Some small, isolated prairie dog towns (towns smaller than 10 acres or towns further than 10 km from another active town) may be

reduced or eradicated, if approved by the authorizing officer.

When poisoning is scheduled on a prairie dog town that includes state or private land, a cooperative effort would be made to control the entire town. The cost of poisoning for the state and private land would be the responsibility of the private landowner or the state land permittee.

### **Alternatives B, C, and D**

Prairie dog management would utilize the Conservation Plan for Black-Tailed and White-Tailed Prairie Dogs in Montana (Montana Prairie Dog Working Group 2002) for overall guidance and direction. Regional plans (based upon Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks administrative regions) would be utilized when they are completed.

Prairie dogs towns would be allowed to expand as long as they are not adversely impacting adjacent private or state land, other resources, or affecting Standards for Rangeland Health (Appendix H). Prairie dog towns would be adversely impacting other resources, and controls could be considered, if prairie dog towns are: the source of or an exacerbation of invasive or noxious plants; substantially limiting forage and/or important habitat for wildlife species in the immediate area; substantially limiting forage for livestock in the immediate area; overriding the effectiveness of other management measures; or posing a substantial economic hardship or risk for other landowners, resulting from the need to control populations on private or state land because of prairie dogs on adjacent BLM land. Controls would not occur where mountain plover or burrowing owls have been documented using established habitat. Prairie dogs could be reestablished on historic towns which have been eradicated or which have died out due to bubonic plague. Specific actions to address adverse impacts to or from prairie dogs would be addressed through the watershed planning process and/or a site-specific environmental assessment.

### **Alternative E**

Prairie dog management would utilize the Conservation Plan for Black-Tailed and White-Tailed Prairie Dogs in Montana (Montana Prairie Dog Working Group 2002) for overall guidance and direction. Regional plans (based upon Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks administrative regions) would be utilized when they are completed. However, under this alternative, prairie dogs towns in the Monument would be allowed to expand with no control measures. Treatments to encourage prairie dog expansion or reestablish historic prairie dog colonies could be authorized, including prescribed fire, mechanical vegetation control, salting or mineral supplements for livestock, and translocation to suitable habitat.

## Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

This alternative would be the same as Alternatives B, C and D.

### Fish and Wildlife – Mitigation

*The BLM's goal is to manage, enhance and protect the fish and wildlife habitat and special status species.*

The following mitigating measures would be applied to surface-disturbing activities for identified/important wildlife habitat in the Monument. Mitigating measures would be applied during activity level planning, after an on-site evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource. Exceptions to these mitigation measures may be granted by the authorized officer if an environmental review demonstrates there would be no adverse impacts, habitat for the species is not present in the area, or portions of the area can be occupied without affecting a particular species.

#### Alternative A (Current Management)

**Greater Sage-grouse** – The BLM would not authorize any surface disturbance within 500 feet of sage-grouse leks. Nor would the BLM allow any surface disturbance within strutting grounds during the nesting period (March 1 to June 30). This alternative would not authorize surface disturbance in sage-grouse crucial winter habitat from December 1 to May 15.

**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** – This alternative would not allow surface disturbance with 1/4 mile of occupied prairie dog towns that are habitat for species of special interest.

**Designated Sensitive Species** – Surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed for 60 days. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

**Bald Eagle** – This alternative may control or exclude surface-disturbing activities within 1/4 mile of essential habitat for the bald eagle.

**Big Game Winter Range** – Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed on crucial wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to May 15.

**Bighorn Sheep** – Surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed for 60 days.

## Alternative B

**Greater Sage-grouse** – The BLM would not authorize new surface disturbance within 1/4 mile of leks, nor would it allow new surface disturbance within nesting areas (a 2-mile radius of the lek) from March 1 to June 15. This alternative would not authorize any new surface disturbance in active sage-grouse crucial winter habitat from December 1 to March 31.

**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** – There would be no new surface disturbance authorized on any prairie dog towns.

**Designated Sensitive Species** – Surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed for 60 days. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

**Bald Eagle** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within 1 mile of active winter roosting areas from November 15 to February 29, if the disturbance could create an adverse impact. Surface-disturbing activities would also not be allowed within 1 mile of active bald eagle nest sites from February 1 to July 31, if the disturbance could create nest abandonment or failure.

**Big Game Winter Range** – Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed on crucial wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to March 31.

**Bighorn Sheep** – Surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed for 60 days. New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep lambing areas from April 1 to June 15, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

## Alternative C

**Greater Sage-grouse** – The BLM would not authorize new surface disturbance within 1/4 mile of leks, nor would it allow new surface disturbance within nesting areas (a 2-mile radius of the lek) from March 1 to June 15. This alternative would not authorize any new surface disturbance in active sage-grouse crucial winter habitat from December 1 to March 31.

**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** – New surface-disturbing activities would avoid or mitigate (routing proposed roads around a town or implementing timing stipulations) disturbance on prairie dog towns.

**Designated Sensitive Species** – New surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of

identified crucial habitat and active nests. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

**Bald Eagle** – This alternative would not allow new surface disturbance within 1/2 mile of an eagle nest that has been active in the last 7 years.

**Big Game Winter Range** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed on crucial wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to March 31.

**Bighorn Sheep** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep distribution areas from December 1 to March 31 and within bighorn sheep lambing areas from April 1 to June 15, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

## Alternative D

**Greater Sage-grouse** – The BLM would not authorize new surface disturbance within 1/4 mile of leks, nor would it allow new surface disturbance within nesting areas (a 2-mile radius of the lek) from March 1 to June 15. This alternative would not authorize any new surface disturbance in active sage-grouse crucial winter habitat from December 1 to March 31.

**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** – New surface disturbance would not be authorized within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns, if that activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

**Designated Sensitive Species** – New surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of identified crucial habitat and active nests. Surface-disturbing activities may also be controlled or excluded within 1/2 mile of active nests during the nesting period from March 1 to August 1. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

**Bald Eagle** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within 1/2 mile of an eagle nest that has been active in the last 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.

**Big Game Winter Range** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed on crucial wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to May 15.

**Bighorn Sheep** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep distribution areas from December 1 to March 31 and within 1 mile line-of-sight of bighorn sheep lambing areas, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

## Alternative E

**Greater Sage-grouse** – The BLM would not authorize new surface disturbance within 2 miles of leks, nor would it allow new surface disturbance within sage-grouse crucial winter habitat.

**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** – New surface disturbance would not be authorized within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns if that activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

**Designated Sensitive Species** – New surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 1/2 mile of identified crucial habitat and active nests. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

**Bald Eagle** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within 1/2 mile of an eagle nest that has been active in the last 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.

**Big Game Winter Range** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed on crucial wildlife winter ranges.

**Bighorn Sheep** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep distribution areas and within 1 mile line-of-sight of bighorn sheep lambing areas, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

## Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

**Greater Sage-grouse** – The BLM would not authorize new surface disturbance within 1/4 mile of active leks, nor would it allow new surface disturbance within nesting areas (a 2-mile radius of an active lek) from March 1 to June 15. This alternative would not authorize any new surface disturbance in active sage-grouse crucial winter habitat from December 1 to March 31.

**Black-tailed Prairie Dog** – New surface disturbance would not be authorized within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns, if that activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

**Designated Sensitive Species** – The BLM may control or exclude any new surface-disturbing activity within 1/2 mile of the proposed site or delay the activity for 90 days within identified crucial habitat and active nests. Surface-disturbing activities may also be controlled or excluded within 1/2 mile of active ferruginous hawk nests from March 1 to August 1. This determination would be made at the time of authorization and would be based on whether the sensitive species is present in the area of disturbance.

**Bald Eagle** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within 1/2 mile of an eagle nest that has been active in the last 7 years, if the disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.

**Big Game Winter Range** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed on crucial wildlife winter ranges from December 1 to March 31. This timeframe could be shortened depending upon weather conditions, animal health and forage availability.

**Bighorn Sheep** – New surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within bighorn sheep distribution areas from December 1 to March 31 and within bighorn sheep lambing areas from April 1 to June 15, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

## Vegetation

*The BLM's goal is to manage for healthy vegetation communities that provide for a wide variety of long-term benefits such as aesthetics, wildlife, recreation, livestock grazing, etc. This includes achieving, or making significant progress toward proper functioning condition in riparian areas.*

### Alternative A (Current Management)

In riparian areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation, the BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation. No additional guidance would be considered beyond the management detailed in the Vegetation section of Decisions Common to All Alternatives.

Reclamation would follow standard operating procedures. Previously disturbed sites would be allowed to reclaim naturally.

### Alternative B

Activity plan updates, such as watershed plans or allotment management plans, would emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. In riparian areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation, the BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation.

If the opportunity is available (through the cancellation or relinquishment of a livestock grazing permit or acquisition of additional land) the BLM would establish resource reserve grazing allotments. These allotments would be available to offset the impacts of drought or to implement projects such as prescribed fires, which could create a temporary loss of AUMs.

The BLM would determine in which priority non-native vegetation sites should be restored to a native species community. Priority ranking would be based on an emphasis to control highly invasive non-native species. Livestock grazing strategies such as adjusting grazing or rest seasons, adjusting stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements could be used to achieve the vegetation goals outlined during allotment or watershed planning.

Surface-disturbed areas would be rehabilitated with native and non-native grasses, forbs and shrubs to minimize the potential for soil erosion and to provide forage and cover for wildlife and livestock.

Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures. Where reclamation activities could cause more surface disturbance and natural reclamation is possible, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The reclamation standards for all surface-disturbing activities would minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. For previously disturbed sites, a reclamation plan would be completed. Non-functional reservoirs, pits and water developments could be allowed to reclaim naturally if the reclamation activity would cause more unnecessary disturbance.

### Alternative C

Activity plan updates, such as watershed plans or allotment management plans, would emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. In riparian areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation, the BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation.

If the opportunity is available (through the cancellation or relinquishment of a livestock grazing permit or acquisition of additional land) the BLM would establish resource reserve grazing allotments. These allotments would be available to offset the impacts of drought or to implement projects such as prescribed fires, which could create a temporary loss of AUMs.

The BLM would determine in which priority non-native vegetation sites should be restored to a native species community. Priority ranking would be based on the size and site potential, the need to increase biodiversity, the benefits to wildlife and other resources and the effectiveness of the treatment and the ongoing maintenance requirements. Livestock grazing strategies (such as adjusting grazing or rest seasons, adjusting stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements) could be used to achieve the vegetation goals outlined during allotment or watershed planning.

Surface-disturbed areas would be rehabilitated with native grasses, forbs and shrubs to minimize the potential for soil

erosion and to provide forage and cover for wildlife and livestock. Non-native plants may be used under special circumstances, such as emergency soil stabilization.

Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures. Where reclamation activities could cause more surface disturbance and natural reclamation is possible, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The reclamation standards for all surface-disturbing activities would minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. A reclamation plan would be completed for previously disturbed sites. Non-functional reservoirs, pits and water developments could be allowed to reclaim naturally if the reclamation activity would cause more unnecessary disturbance.

### **Alternative D**

This alternative would be the same as Alternative B, except that the BLM would restore all non-native vegetation sites to a native species community. In Level 1, 2, and 3 campgrounds the BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation. No planting of riparian vegetation would occur anywhere outside of Level 1, 2, or 3 campgrounds.

Livestock grazing strategies (adjusting grazing or rest seasons, stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements) could be used to achieve the vegetation goals outlined during site-specific planning.

The reclamation standards for all surface-disturbing activities would attempt to recapture an area's pre-disturbance appearance. When the disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre, the area would be recontoured and revegetated. A reclamation plan would be completed for previously disturbed sites. If the reclamation effort would reduce the impacts created by development, the BLM would remove and rehabilitate non-functional reservoirs, pits, and water developments in WSAs or in other areas where there is viewshed infringement.

### **Alternative E**

Site-specific activity plan updates, such as watershed plans or allotment management plans, would emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. In Level 1, 2, and 3 campgrounds BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation. No planting of riparian vegetation would occur anywhere outside of Level 1, 2, or 3 campgrounds.

The BLM would not establish resource reserve allotments.

The BLM would restore all non-native vegetation sites to a native species community. Livestock grazing strategies

(adjusting grazing or rest seasons, stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements) could be used to achieve the vegetation goals outlined during allotment or watershed planning.

The reclamation standards for all surface-disturbing activities would attempt to recapture an area's pre-disturbance appearance. When the disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre, the area would be recontoured and revegetated. A reclamation plan would be completed for previously disturbed sites. If the reclamation effort would reduce the impacts created by development, the BLM would remove and rehabilitate non-functional reservoirs, pits, and water developments in WSAs or in other areas where there is viewshed infringement.

### **Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

Activity plan updates, such as watershed plans or allotment management plans, would emphasize sagebrush and riparian habitat restoration and protection. In riparian areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation BLM would, at its discretion, restore or establish native riparian vegetation.

If the opportunity is available (through the cancellation or relinquishment of a grazing permit or acquisition of additional land) the BLM would establish resource reserve grazing allotments. The Hay Coulee allotment would be a resource reserve allotment. These allotments would be available to offset the impacts of drought or to implement a project such as a prescribed fire which could create a temporary loss of AUMs.

The Monument would be managed to achieve a natural range of native plant associations, including measures to promote conservation of sensitive plant species. Management activities would not be allowed to substantially shift the makeup of native plant communities and associations or disrupt normal succession. However, there would be some circumstances where vegetation communities and associations would be shifted to meet specific management goals or objectives. These circumstances could include prescribed burns to reduce hazardous fuel loads, restoration of some habitat components in the interest of wildlife, treatments to control invasive species, etc.

The BLM would determine which priority non-native vegetation sites should be restored to a native species community. Priority ranking would be based on an emphasis to control highly invasive non-native species. To achieve the vegetation goals outlined during site-specific planning, livestock grazing strategies (adjusting grazing or rest seasons, adjusting stocking rates or stocking densities and the location of supplements) could be used to manage vegetation communities.

Surface-disturbed areas would be rehabilitated with native grasses, forbs and shrubs to minimize the potential for soil erosion and to provide forage and cover for wildlife and livestock. Non-native plants may be used under special circumstances, such as emergency soil stabilization.

Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures. In some areas, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. For all surface-disturbing activities, the intent of the reclamation standards would be to minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. If the reclamation effort would reduce the impacts created by development, the BLM would remove and rehabilitate non-functional reservoirs, pits and water developments in WSAs or in other areas where there is viewshed infringement.

## Range Improvements

*The BLM's goal is to manage for healthy vegetation communities that provide for a wide variety of long-term benefits such as aesthetics, wildlife, recreation, livestock grazing, etc.*

### Alternative A (Current Management)

The BLM would follow the standard specifications for fence installation to mitigate risks to wildlife. However, some existing fences may restrict wildlife movement, especially big game.

On some terminal ridges, installation of water developments may be limited to avoid unnecessary competition between deer and livestock. To facilitate livestock watering, tanks could be placed in some allotments where it would be advantageous to improving resource values. All tanks would have bird escape ramps installed to reduce the possibility of birds and small mammals drowning. Proposed winter water tanks would be located away from private lands to encourage elk to increase their use of BLM land, which could reduce depredation on croplands.

### Alternatives B, C, and D

The BLM fence specifications would be followed with allowances for certain classes or types of livestock. Four-wire fences could be authorized if the class or kind of livestock necessitate the need for a more substantial fence. The BLM would modify existing fences that are creating barriers to wildlife movement. In isolated cases, the BLM would relocate fences to better fit with topography and management needs.

Any new water developments would be considered on a site-specific basis and would consider the benefits/detriment to all resources. Decisions about installing water developments would be based on grazing practices and wildlife habitat needs within a specific use area. A site

should only be developed if the development would improve resource values. Site-specific planning would be used to make these determinations.

### Alternative E

BLM fence specifications would be followed. Four-wire fences would not be allowed under any circumstance. The BLM would modify all existing fences to standards, even if the fence does not restrict wildlife movement. Fences that are poorly located within their surrounding topography would be relocated. Site-specific watershed plans would be modified to accommodate changes to allotment boundaries and the resulting change in carrying capacity.

Any new water developments would be considered on a site-specific basis and would consider the benefits/detriment to all resources. Decisions about installing water developments would be based on grazing practices and wildlife habitat needs within a specific use area. A site should only be developed if the development would improve resource values. Site-specific planning would be used to make these determinations.

### Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

The BLM fence specifications would be followed with allowances for certain classes or types of livestock. Four-wire fences could be authorized if the class or kind of livestock necessitate the need for a more substantial fence. The BLM would modify existing fences that are creating barriers to wildlife movement. In isolated cases, the BLM would relocate fences to better fit with topography and management needs.

Any new water developments would be considered on a site-specific basis and would consider the benefits/detriment to all resources. Decisions about installing water developments would be based on grazing practices and wildlife habitat needs (big game, migratory birds, sage-grouse, amphibians, etc.) within a specific use area. A site should only be developed if the development would improve resource values. Site-specific planning would be used to make these determinations.

## Visual Resources

*The BLM's goal is to protect the cultural landscape (viewshed) and the visual features in the landscape that are identified in the Proclamation.*

### Alternative A (Current Management)

The Monument is currently divided into Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I, II, III and IV ratings as shown in Table 2.4.

<i>VRM Class</i>	<i>Alt. A (Current Management) Acres</i>	<i>Alt. B Acres</i>	<i>Alt. C Acres</i>	<i>Alt. D Acres</i>	<i>Alt. E Acres</i>	<i>Alt. F (Preferred Alternative) Acres</i>
Class I	61,700	111,480	111,480	111,480	111,480	111,480
Class II	118,800	44,520	161,560	263,520	263,520	161,560
Class III	8,200	105,000	101,960	0	0	24,770
Class IV	186,300	114,000	0	0	0	77,190

In all areas, surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special designs (location, painting and camouflage) to blend with the natural surroundings and to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.

**Alternative B**

The WSAs, wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer Landscapes would be designated as VRM Class I. The Bodmer Landscapes are fan-shaped viewsheds associated with each of Karl Bodmer’s illustrative drawings along the Missouri River. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II, III or IV (Table 2.4). If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In all areas, surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special designs (location, painting and camouflage) to blend with the natural surroundings and to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.

**Alternative C**

The WSAs, wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer Landscapes would be designated as VRM Class I. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II or III (Table 2.4). If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In VRM Class I areas, the BLM would reduce the visual contrast on BLM land in the existing landscape by utilizing proper site selection; reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

In VRM Class II and III areas all surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special design including location, painting and camouflage

to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.

**Alternative D**

The WSAs, wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer Landscapes would be designated as VRM Class I. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II (Table 2.4). If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In VRM Class I areas the BLM may prohibit surface-disturbing activities if such activities are not designed to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.

In VRM Class II areas the BLM would reduce the visual contrast on BLM land in the existing landscape by utilizing proper site selection; reducing soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, returning the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

**Alternative E**

The WSAs, wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer Landscapes would be designated as VRM Class I. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II (Table 2.4). If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In VRM Class I and II areas, the BLM may prohibit surface-disturbing activities if such activities are not designed to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.

**Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

The WSAs, wild segments of the UMNWSR, and the Bodmer landscapes would be designated as VRM Class I. The remaining portions of the Monument would be designated as VRM Class II or III as shown on [Map A](#) and in Table 2.4. If the WSAs are determined by Congress as not

eligible, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

In VRM Class I areas the BLM may prohibit surface-disturbing activities if such activities are not designed to meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.

In VRM Class II, Class III and Class IV areas the BLM would reduce the visual contrast on BLM land in the existing landscape by utilizing proper site selection; reducing soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, returning the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

## Forest Products

*The BLM's goal is to manage these BLM lands in a manner that provides a healthy ecosystem that achieves a sustainable natural variation of vegetation communities, which provides current and future generations with the social and economic benefits compatible with the Proclamation.*

### Alternative A (Current Management)

It is not BLM's intent to conduct forest product sales within the Monument. However, vegetative use areas for forest products (post/pole/house logs/firewood/Christmas trees and incidental harvest related to activities such as road building or gas well site development) would be identified at BLM's discretion, as long as the resources for which the Monument was established are not adversely impacted. Also, before these products are lost to prescribed fire or mechanically cleared for fuel reduction, the BLM may consider a forest product sale.

Forest products would be available for sale outside of the WSAs and UMNWSR. The sale of forest products may be permitted and would undergo an environmental analysis during the site-specific evaluation phase.

Recreational use of forest products within the UMNWSR would be limited to dead-and-down material.

Each BLM office could establish areas for personal use forest product sales. Oftentimes, forest product personal use permits are issued for non-specific geographical areas, unless a specific product area is identified.

### Alternatives B and C

Any commercial forest product sales (post/pole/house logs/firewood/Christmas trees and incidental harvest related to activities such as road building or gas well site development) would be incidental and associated with other projects/

activities and vegetative goals or objectives as outlined in activity plans. Where forest/woodland health is in jeopardy, minimal impact wood product harvesting techniques may be pursued.

The Monument manager could designate incidental non-commercial or personal use areas for cutting Christmas trees, post and pole, firewood, or logs cut for private use.

### Alternative D

Where forest/woodland health is in jeopardy, minimal impact wood product harvesting techniques may be pursued.

The Monument manager could designate incidental non-commercial or personal use areas for cutting Christmas trees and firewood. Under a permit, individuals would be allowed to utilize material from wildland fires.

### Alternative E

Commercial product sales and incidental personal use would be prohibited.

### Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Where forest/woodland health is in jeopardy, minimal impact harvesting techniques which are appropriate for soil and topographical conditions may be pursued.

The Monument manager could designate incidental non-commercial or personal use areas for cutting Christmas trees and firewood. Under a permit, individuals could be allowed to utilize incidental material. The permit would address the specific type of material and conditions under which removal would occur.

## Right-of-Way Corridors, Avoidance Areas, and Exclusion Areas

*The BLM's goal is to provide reasonable access for the administrative needs and authorized uses of private landowners, industry and government agencies.*

### Alternative A (Current Management)

Seven utility and transportation corridors cross the Missouri River in the Monument (Table 2.5).

Avoidance areas for lineal rights-of-way (ROWs) include the Stafford Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the Ervin Ridge WSA, that portion of the Cow Creek WSA in Blaine County, the Cow Creek Area of Critical Environmental

<b>Table 2.5 Utility and Transportation Corridors</b>	
<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Utility and Transportation Corridor</i>
River Mile 0 to 1	State Highway #80 from Fort Benton to Stanford crosses the UMNWSR at Fort Benton. The road is located entirely on private land. At this location the Wild and Scenic River is bank to bank; therefore this corridor does not impact BLM land.
River Mile 20 to 21	A buried telephone line (M59069) parallels the county road (M78762) that connects Loma with Geraldine. The telephone and road cross a small portion of BLM land in Section 18, T25N R10E.
River Mile 38.5 to 39.5	A power line is located where the Ferry crosses the UMNWSR at Virgelle. The Wild and Scenic River is bank to bank in this location. The power line does not encumber BLM land
River Mile 88 to 89	Secondary Highway #236 extends southeast from Big Sandy and across the PN Bridge to Winifred. A power line (M59070) and an underground telephone line (M39347A) are located along this road and cross several miles of BLM land on the south side of the Missouri River.
River Mile 101 to 103	The McClelland (Lloyd)/Stafford Ferry road, which connects Chinook, north of the Monument, with Winifred, south of the Monument, crosses BLM land both north and south of the Missouri River. A power line (M24219) that provides power to the Ferry runs alongside the road on BLM land on the south side of the Monument.
River Mile 131.5 to 132.5	The DY Trail crosses BLM land and accesses the south bank of the Missouri River in Fergus County across from the location of the old Power Plant Ferry. The Bull Creek/Power Plant Ferry road crosses BLM land in Phillips County and leads to the abandoned ferry location on the north bank of the Missouri River. No utilities are located along these roads.
River Mile 148.5 to 149.5	U.S. Highway #191 (M013368) extends from Malta to Lewistown crossing the Monument near its eastern boundary. A power line (M052239) and a buried telephone line (M049342) parallel the highway; both are located on about a mile of BLM land, east of the highway in this area.

Concern (ACEC), riparian areas and areas containing sedimentary Breaks soils. The recreational and scenic sections of the UMNWSR would continue as avoidance areas.

Exclusion areas include the wild sections of the UMNWSR; the Dog Creek, Woodhawk, and Antelope Creek WSAs; and that portion of the Cow Creek WSA in Phillips County. If the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and released from WSA status, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

### **Alternative B**

In addition to the seven utility and transportation corridors that cross the Missouri River (Table 2.5), the Klabzuba pipeline would also be designated a corridor (Table 2.6). The utility and transportation corridors on BLM land would

have defined boundaries within 1/2 mile of the centerline of the following roads: U.S. Highway 191; State Secondary Highway #236; the Lloyd/Stafford Ferry road; DY Trail/Power Plant Ferry Road; and the Klabzuba pipeline. The corridors at Fort Benton, Loma and Virgelle would retain their current status.

<b>Table 2.6 Klabzuba Pipeline Corridor</b>	
<i>River Mile</i>	<i>Utility and Transportation Corridor</i>
River Mile 103 to 105	The Klabzuba natural gas pipeline M41268 crosses BLM land both north and south of the Missouri River.

Avoidance areas for ROWs would include the scenic sections of the UMNWSR, the Bodmer Landscapes, the Cow Creek ACEC, cultural/historic sites, riparian and wetland areas, areas containing unique geologic formations, areas containing highly erosive soils (sedimentary Breaks soils), and sage-grouse seasonal habitat unless the infrastructure is buried.

Exclusion areas would include the wild sections of the UMNWSR and the six WSAs, pending determinations by Congress. If the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and released from WSA status, they would be managed consistent with adjacent BLM land.

### **Alternative C**

This alternative would be the same as Alternative B, except if the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and released from WSA status, they would be managed as avoidance areas.

### **Alternatives D and E**

These alternatives would be the same as Alternative B, except if the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and released from WSA status, they would be managed as exclusion areas.

### **Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

In addition to the seven utility and transportation corridors that cross the Missouri River (Table 2.5), the Klabzuba pipeline would also be a designated corridor (Table 2.6). The utility and transportation corridors on BLM land would have defined boundaries within 1/2 mile of the centerline of the following roads: U.S. Highway 191; State Secondary Highway #236; the Lloyd/Stafford Ferry road; DY Trail/Power Plant Ferry Road; and the Klabzuba pipeline. The corridors at Fort Benton, Loma and Virgelle would retain their current status.

Avoidance areas for ROWs would include the scenic sections of the UMNWSR, the Bodmer Landscapes, the Cow Creek ACEC, cultural/historic sites, riparian and wetland areas, areas containing unique geologic formations, areas considered unsuitable due to erosion and slope, and sage-grouse seasonal habitat where impacts could not be mitigated or effectively controlled. If the WSAs are not designated by Congress as wilderness and released from WSA status, they would be managed as avoidance areas.

Exclusion areas would include the wild sections of the UMNWSR and the six WSAs, pending determinations by Congress. Exceptions to exclusion areas could be granted and would be handled in a site-specific environmental assessment on a case-by-case basis, based on the nature of

the action and level of impact. This exception clause is considered necessary due to the potential installation of an oil and gas pipeline which would enter on state land south of the Missouri River and exit on private land north of the Missouri River, but would cross under the river and under the Stafford WSA.

## **Land Ownership Adjustment**

### **Alternative A (Current Management)**

No BLM land would be identified for disposal. Any BLM land identified for disposal in the future would meet the criteria discussed in the Decisions Common to All Alternatives portion of this chapter and a plan amendment would be completed.

### **Alternatives B, C, D, E, and F (Preferred Alternative)**

The following BLM land is identified for disposal and meets the criteria discussed in Decisions Common to All Alternatives: T22N R16E, E2NE of sec. 15 (80 acres). The parcel is on the edge of the Monument, contains minimal Breaks topography, and contains no objects for which the Monument was designated. The BLM land would be exchanged for private land identified as T22N R15E, sec. 3, Lot 5 (24.60 acres) and sec. 4, Lot 8 (46.52 acres). This land exchange proposal was initiated by the private landowner in March 2002.

## **Fire**

*The BLM's goal is to control wildland fire safely, efficiently and with minimal impact to resource values while minimizing the risk of catastrophic fire within the Monument and communities adjacent to the Monument. This includes maintaining or reestablishing the natural influence of fire on vegetation communities and associations.*

The Monument includes four fire management units: Wild and Scenic River, Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument (Map B). Fire management alternatives for these fire management units (FMU) would be based on the options listed in Table 2.7 for wildland fire suppression and prescribed fire.

### **Alternative A (Current Management)**

The current fire management guidance, based on the State Director's Interim Guidance (BLM 2001a), would continue. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.8. The

<b>Table 2.7 Options for Wildland Fire Suppression and Prescribed Fire</b>	
<i>Option</i>	<i>Description of Fire Suppression Option</i>
Aggressive	All fires would be suppressed aggressively using all available methods. The focus of this strategy would be to limit acres burned. Cost would not be a consideration in most cases.
Appropriate	Appropriate suppression response would be based on firefighter and public safety considering the natural role of fire (fire regime and condition class (FRCC)). Fires would be managed using less than full suppression in most cases and allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. Cost of the suppression activity would also be considered.
Wildland Fire Use	A wildland fire use plan would be developed. Areas would be identified where fire would be used under prescription based on FRCC and the goal to return fire to a natural role on the Monument landscape.
<i>Option</i>	<i>Description of Prescribed Fire Option</i>
None	No prescribed fire use would be allowed.
Safety and Habitat	Prescribed fire would be used based on public safety (fuel hazard reduction) and resource issues (range improvement, wildlife habitat).
Natural Role of Fire	Prescribed fire would be used based on FRCC and the goal to return fire to a natural role on the Monument landscape with very few constraints.

<b>Table 2.8 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options – Alternative A (Current Management)</b>		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
Wilderness Study Areas	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
North Monument	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
South Monument	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat

appropriate, suppression response to wildland fires in all of the fire management units would be based on firefighter and public safety while considering the role of fire. Fires would be managed using less than full suppression efforts and, in most cases, would be allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered.

Prescribed burns could be used in all of the FMUs, based on public safety and resource issues.

**Alternative B**

Wildland fire suppression efforts would be more aggressive. The BLM could pursue limited use of prescribed fire,

based on public safety and property protection. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.9. Wildland fires in all of the FMUs would be suppressed aggressively using all available methods, including mechanical means. The focus of this strategy would be to limit the number of acres burned. Cost would not be a consideration in most cases.

Prescribed fires would not be used in three of the FMUs (Wild and Scenic River, North Monument and South Monument). Prescribed fire in the WSAs could be used based on public safety and resource issues.

<b>Table 2.9 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options – Alternative B</b>		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Aggressive	None
Wilderness Study Areas	Aggressive	Safety and Habitat
North Monument	Aggressive	None
South Monument	Aggressive	None

### Alternative C

The BLM would have more discretion in its fire management response, but the emphasis would remain on public safety and protection. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.10.

Wildland fires in three of the FMUs (Wild and Scenic River, North Monument and South Monument) would be suppressed aggressively using all available methods, including mechanical means. The focus would be to limit the number of acres burned. The appropriate suppression response to fires in WSAs would be based on firefighter and public safety while considering the natural role of fire. Fires would be managed using less than full suppression and, in most cases, would be allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered.

Prescribed fires would not be used in the Wild and Scenic River FMU. In the other three FMUs (Wild and Scenic River, North Monument and South Monument) prescribed fire could be used based on public safety and resource issues.

### Alternative D

The BLM would increase its management responsiveness based on a wide range of fire management tools available and more management flexibility. The wildland fire sup-

pression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.11.

The appropriate management response to wildland fires in three of the FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument) would be based on firefighter and public safety while considering the natural role of fire. Fires would be managed at less than full suppression and, in most cases, allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered. Wildland fires in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be suppressed aggressively using all available methods, including mechanical means. The focus would be to limit the number of acres burned. Cost would not be a consideration in most cases.

Prescribed fire in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be based on public safety and resource issues. In the other three FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument) prescribed fire would be used based on flexibility to respond to changing conditions and the goal of retuning fire to a natural role in the Monument landscape with very few constraints.

### Alternative E

This alternative would emphasize natural processes with minimal intervention. The management response would be subtle and provide the least intensive management approach. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.12.

<b>Table 2.10 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options – Alternative C</b>		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River	Aggressive	None
Wilderness Study Areas	Appropriate	Safety and Habitat
North Monument	Aggressive	Safety and Habitat
South Monument	Aggressive	Safety and Habitat

<b>Table 2.11 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options – Alternative D</b>		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River Wilderness Study Areas North Monument South Monument	Aggressive Appropriate Appropriate Appropriate	Safety and Habitat Natural Role of Fire Natural Role of Fire Natural Role of Fire

<b>Table 2.12 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options – Alternative E</b>		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River Wilderness Study Areas North Monument South Monument	Appropriate Wildland Fire Use Wildland Fire Use Wildland Fire Use	Safety and Habitat Natural Role of Fire Natural Role of Fire Natural Role of Fire

The BLM would develop a fire use plan for wildland fires in three of the FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument). This plan would identify areas where wildland fire would be used under prescription, based on flexibility to respond to changing conditions and the goal of returning fire to a natural role in the Monument landscape. The appropriate suppression response to fires in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be based on firefighter and public safety, while considering the natural role of fire. Fires would be managed using less than full suppression efforts and, in most cases, would be allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered.

Prescribed fires could be used in three of the FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument) based on the flexibility to respond to changing conditions and the goal of returning fire to a more natural role on the Monument landscape. Prescribed fire in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be based on public safety and resource issues.

### **Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

The BLM’s response would be based on a wide range of fire management tools available and more management flexibility to respond to changing conditions. The wildland fire suppression options and prescribed fire options for the FMUs are shown in Table 2.13.

The appropriate suppression response to all wildland fires would be based on firefighter and public safety, while considering the natural role of fire. Fires would be managed with less than full suppression efforts and, in most cases, allowed to burn to natural barriers or roads. The cost of suppression would also be considered. Resource values, such as sage-grouse habitat, would be protected during wildland fire suppression through the knowledge of resource advisors assigned to wildland fire incidents and/or information on the location of critical resource areas available to incident commanders; however, protection for resource values would be secondary to life safety and property values.

<b>Table 2.13 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Options – Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>		
<i>Fire Management Unit</i>	<i>Wildland Fire Suppression Strategy</i>	<i>Prescribed Fire Use Based On</i>
Wild and Scenic River Wilderness Study Areas North Monument South Monument	Appropriate Appropriate Appropriate Appropriate	Safety and Habitat Natural Role of Fire Natural Role of Fire Natural Role of Fire

Prescribed fires could be used in three of the FMUs (Wilderness Study Areas, North Monument and South Monument) based on the flexibility to respond to changing conditions and the goal of returning fire to a more natural role on the Monument landscape. Prescribed fire in the Wild and Scenic River FMU would be based on public safety and resource issues.

## **Wild and Scenic Rivers (Cow Creek, Eagle Creek and Dog Creek)**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Pub. L. 90-542 as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287) established a method for providing federal protection for certain of our country's remaining free-flowing rivers, preserving them and their immediate environments for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Rivers are included in the system so that they may benefit from the protective management and control of development for which the Act provides. [Appendix I](#) is the Wild and Scenic River Eligibility and Suitability Report for the Monument.

The BLM inventoried 66 streams and found three streams eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system: Cow Creek, Eagle Creek, and Dog Creek.

## **Alternative A (Current Management)**

The BLM would not make a recommendation on suitability. The three eligible stream segments would be managed to protect their outstanding remarkable values.

## **Alternatives B, C, and D**

The BLM would not recommend the three eligible stream segments as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Management for each area would be provided by the guidance in the Monument RMP.

## **Alternative E**

The BLM would recommend the three eligible stream segments as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Management for each area would be provided by the guidance in the Monument RMP.

## **Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

This alternative would be the same as Alternatives B, C and D.

# Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure

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## Recreation

*The BLM's goal is to preserve historic and cultural values and sites by enhancing public awareness or protection of the resources.*

This section addresses management for the entire Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and would apply to all the recreation management areas.

### Alternative A (Current Management)

**Recreation Management Areas** – The BLM would continue with the four special recreation management areas (SRMAs) for BLM land. The SRMAs do not follow a legal boundary. They are simply areas delineated for specific recreation management focus. The SRMAs include the South Phillips SRMA, the Judith Extensive SRMA, the North Missouri Breaks SRMA, and the Upper Missouri River SRMA. These SRMAs include BLM land in and outside of the Monument.

**Fees** – The BLM would continue the \$6 per vehicle expanded amenity fee for overnight camping at the James Kipp Recreation Area.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at the James Kipp Recreation Area. The fees would be used for site maintenance and visitor services improvements as established in the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA).

**Gateway communities** – The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The UMNWSR offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be financed by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with management objectives. These initiatives may or may not generate profit or result in permanent facilities.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the UMNWSR for touring and instructional purposes, for the development of privately funded research, and for expanded regional promotional activities.

**Research, collection and special events** – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value

and what they could add to the body of knowledge and interpretation opportunities. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds and berries) would be allowed. Wildcrafting or commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. Large group events would be authorized subject to restrictions to protect resources. These restrictions may include, but would not be limited to, the designation of specific roads or trails for a particular event, limitations on parking, use of campfires, sanitation requirements, and the number of people involved in the event.

**Recreation in sensitive wildlife habitat** – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting). However, the BLM could implement a seasonal restriction on the disturbance of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter, if harassment is a problem.

Recreational use of islands would not be permitted during deer and waterfowl reproduction (e.g., fawn birthing, nesting and brood rearing) periods. Camping on BLM islands in the Missouri River would be discouraged from April 1 to July 31.

**Interpretive sites** – Interpretation of cultural and geological sites would occur on a case-by-case basis. Some areas would be developed for self-guided interpretive study because of their geological, historical, cultural, paleontological or natural values. Prior to developing interpretive sites for cultural resources, the sites would be evaluated and criteria developed to minimize any potential negative impacts to critical resources. These developments may include interpretive signs and displays that would be consistent with visual resource management objectives. The cultural sites that could be developed include Stafford Ferry, Cow Creek, Evans Bend, Steamboat Point, Little Sandy and Hole-in-the-Wall. Other sites may be developed if substantial public use occurs, if BLM acquires important land, or major new resource discoveries are made.

## Alternative B

**Recreation Management Areas** – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map C). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

**Fees** – The BLM would discontinue the fee system at the James Kipp Recreation Area and would not implement a recreation user fee system at additional sites.

**Gateway communities** – The BLM would strive to provide a staffed visitor information site in Chinook, Big Sandy and Winifred or partner with these gateway communities to provide visitor information.

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The Monument offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be provided by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with the Monument. These initiatives would not result in permanent facilities in the Monument.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the Monument for touring and instructional purposes and for expanded regional promotional activities.

**Research, collection and special events** – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then moni-

tored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they could add to the body of knowledge and interpretation opportunities. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit, and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed in specific identified areas, as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds and berries) would be allowed. Wildcrafting or commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. The use of metal detectors without a permit may be authorized in certain areas. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. Large group events would be authorized subject to restrictions to protect resources. These restrictions may include, but would not be limited to, the designation of specific roads or trails for a particular event, limitations on parking, use of campfires, sanitation requirements, and the number of people involved in the event.

**Recreation in sensitive wildlife habitat** – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting). However, the BLM could implement a seasonal restriction on the disturbance of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter, if harassment is a problem.

There would be no restrictions concerning camping on BLM islands in the Missouri River.

**Interpretive sites** – Historic, archaeological and geological opportunities on BLM land would be enhanced by developing the interpretive potential at selected sites. Interpretive sites would be developed with explanatory signs, exhibits and trails.

Topics for interpretation would be selected based on access, information potential and the potential to provide important segments of the area’s history or prehistory via interpretation. Some potential cultural sites for interpretation would include Decision Point; Eagle Creek; Murray/PN dugout; Hagadone, Middleton, Ervin, Gist, Cable, and Nelson homesteads; Gilmore cabin; Nez Perce Trail; and the sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Other possible interpretive sites and topics include prehistoric sites and the steamboat era on the Missouri River.

Some potential geological interpretive sites would include the stratigraphic cross section of the Missouri River from Virgelle to the James Kipp Recreation Area showing the regional dip of beds starting in Colorado Shale and ending in Bearpaw Shale; the glacial geomorphology and paleo channel of the Missouri River at Little Sandy Creek; the igneous dike known as the Grand Natural Wall from the Lewis and Clark Journal entry; Hole-in-the-Wall; the Big Sag at Judith Landing; Sugarloaf Rock fault plane vs. bedding plane at Stafford Ferry; the diatreme at Gist Bottom; and the invertebrate paleo site at Woodhawk.

## Alternative C

**Recreation Management Areas** – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map C). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

**Fees** – The BLM would implement an expanded amenity fee (currently \$6 per night per vehicle at the James Kipp Recreation Area) for overnight camping in developed recreation sites (Level 1). This would include Wood Bottom, Coal Banks, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk, the James Kipp Recreation Area and any additional Level 1 sites that may be constructed. After the RMP is completed the BLM, with public input, would develop a business plan to determine the actual fee amounts charged.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at Level 1 sites for expenditure on site maintenance and visitor service improvements as established in FLREA.

**Gateway communities** – The BLM would strive to provide a staffed visitor information site in Chinook, Big Sandy and

Winifred or partner with these gateway communities to provide visitor information and benefits such as family education opportunities and educational and interpretive experiences.

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The Monument offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be provided by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with the Monument. These initiatives would not result in permanent facilities in the Monument.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the Monument for touring and instructional purposes and for expanded regional promotional activities.

**Research, collection and special events** – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they could add to the body of knowledge and interpretation opportunities. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit, and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed in specific identified areas, as limited by the BLM’s regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds, and berries) would be allowed in specified areas. Wildcrafting or commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument manager when determined to be in the

interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. The use of metal detectors without a permit may be authorized in certain areas. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. The BLM may limit the size of a group or specific activities. The authorization of large group events would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis prior to issuing an SRP.

**Recreation in sensitive wildlife habitat** – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) with a seasonal restriction (December 1 to March 31) on the disturbance of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter.

There would be no restrictions concerning camping on BLM islands in the Missouri River.

**Interpretive sites** – Historic, archaeological and geological opportunities on BLM land would be enhanced by developing the interpretive potential at selected sites. The BLM would establish small, low-key interpretive signs at specific sites that blend in with the surroundings and would not be visible from the Missouri River. The BLM would provide portable interpretation (guidebooks) for some cultural sites and install simple markers that key to the guidebooks.

Topics for interpretation would be selected based on access, information potential and the potential to provide important segments of the area's history or prehistory via interpretation. Some potential sites for interpretation would include Decision Point; Eagle Creek; Murray/PN dugout; Hagadone, Middleton, Ervin, Gist, Cable, and Nelson homesteads; Gilmore cabin; Nez Perce Trail; and sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Other possible interpretive sites and topics include prehistoric sites and the steamboat era on the Missouri River.

Some potential geological interpretive sites would include the stratigraphic cross section of the Missouri River from Virgelle to the James Kipp Recreation Area showing the regional dip of beds starting in Colorado Shale and ending in Bearpaw Shale; the glacial geomorphology and paleo channel of the Missouri River at Little Sandy Creek; the igneous dike known as the Grand Natural Wall from the Lewis and Clark Journal entry; Hole-in-the-Wall; the Big Sag at Judith Landing; Sugarloaf Rock fault plane vs. bedding plane at Stafford Ferry; the diatrema at Gist Bottom; and the invertebrate paleo site at Woodhawk.

## Alternative D

**Recreation Management Areas** – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map C). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

**Fees** – The BLM would implement an expanded amenity fee for overnight camping in Level 1 recreation sites. The site would provide at least a majority of the following: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, collection by an employee or agent, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities and simple devices for containing a fire. Level 1 sites currently include Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk and the James Kipp Recreation Area. This fee system would also apply to any additional Level 1 site that may be constructed. After the RMP is completed the BLM, with public input, would develop a business plan to determine the actual fee amounts charged.

A Special Recreation Permit would be required to boat on the Missouri River. It would be referred to as a Special Area Permit. The cost of the permit would be established by the State Director based on the cost of operating the permit system, special costs related to management of the area, comparability with other agencies and similar special areas, and fairness and equity among all users. Camping overnight at Level 1 expanded amenity fee sites would be included with the Special Area Permit fee.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at Level 1 sites for expenditure on site maintenance and visitor services as established in FLREA.

Fees associated with the Special Area Permit to float the Missouri River would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used to cover management costs. In addition, fees could be used to support county emergency services and to purchase short-term campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners.

**Gateway communities** – The BLM would strive to provide a staffed visitor information site in Chinook, Big Sandy and Winifred or partner with these gateway communities to provide visitor information and other visitor benefits such as family education opportunities and educational and interpretive experiences.

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The

Monument offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be provided by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with the Monument. These initiatives would not result in permanent facilities in the Monument.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the Monument for touring and instructional purposes and for expanded regional promotional activities.

**Research, collection and special events** – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they could add to the body of knowledge and interpretation opportunities. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit, and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed in specific identified areas, as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds and berries) would be allowed in specified areas. Wildcrafting or commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. The use of metal detectors without a permit may be authorized in certain areas. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. The BLM may limit the size of a group or specific activities. The authorization of large group events would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis prior to issuing an SRP.

**Recreation in sensitive wildlife habitat** – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting). However, the BLM could implement a seasonal restriction (December 1 to May 15) on the disturbance of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter, if harassment is a problem.

Camping would not be allowed on BLM islands from April 1 to July 31, to protect wildlife during sensitive periods (e.g., nesting, brooding periods).

**Interpretive sites** – Historic, archaeological and geological opportunities on BLM land would be enhanced by developing the interpretive potential at selected sites. The BLM would establish small, low-key interpretive signs at specific sites that blend in with the surroundings and would not be visible from the Missouri River. These low-key sites would be for dispersed recreation experiences. The BLM would provide portable interpretation (guidebooks) for some cultural sites and install simple markers that key to the guidebooks.

Topics for interpretation would be selected based on access, information potential and the potential to provide important segments of the area's history or prehistory via interpretation. Some potential cultural sites for interpretation would include Decision Point; Eagle Creek; Murray/PN dugout; Hagadone, Middleton, Ervin, Gist, Cable, and Nelson homesteads; Gilmore cabin; Nez Perce Trail; and sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Other possible interpretive sites and topics include prehistoric sites and the steamboat era on the Missouri River.

Some potential geological interpretive sites would include the stratigraphic cross section of the Missouri River from Virgelle to the James Kipp Recreation Area showing the regional dip of beds starting in Colorado Shale and ending in Bearpaw Shale; the glacial geomorphology and paleo channel of the Missouri River at Little Sandy Creek; the igneous dike known as the Grand Natural Wall from the Lewis and Clark Journal entry; Hole-in-the-Wall; the Big Sag at Judith Landing; the Sugarloaf Rock fault plane vs. bedding plane at Stafford Ferry; the diatreme at Gist Bottom; and the invertebrate paleo site at Woodhawk.

## **Alternative E**

**Recreation Management Areas** – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA ([Map](#)

C). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

**Fees** – The BLM would implement an expanded amenity fee for overnight camping in Level 1 recreation sites. The site would provide at least a majority of the following: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, collection by an employee or agent, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities and simple devices for containing a fire. Level 1 sites currently include Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk, and the James Kipp Recreation Area. This fee system would also apply to any additional Level 1 site that may be constructed. After the RMP is completed the BLM, with public input, would develop a business plan to determine the actual fee amounts charged.

A Special Recreation Permit would be required to boat on the Missouri River. It would be referred to as a Special Area Permit. The cost of the permit would be established by the State Director based on the cost of operating the permit system, special costs related to management of the area, comparability with other agencies and similar special areas, and fairness and equity among all users. Camping overnight at Level 1 expanded amenity fee sites would be included with the Special Area Permit fee.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at Level 1 sites for expenditure on site maintenance and visitor services as established in FLREA.

Fees associated with the Special Area Permit to float the Missouri River would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used to cover management costs. In addition, fees could be used to support county emergency services and to purchase short-term campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners.

**Gateway communities** – The BLM would provide visitor information to local communities to enhance their capability to provide benefits such as family education opportunities and educational and interpretive experiences.

**Research, collection and special events** – The BLM would not allow or authorize archaeological and historical investigations (except 106 permits) or paleontological research.

The personal collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood would be prohibited.

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds, and berries) would be prohibited.

The use of metal detectors would be prohibited.

The BLM would not authorize large group activities or events in the Monument.

**Recreation in sensitive wildlife habitat** – The BLM would not allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) in the Monument.

Camping would not be allowed on BLM islands in the Missouri River.

**Interpretive sites** – The BLM would not provide site interpretation, but would encourage search and discover experiences.

## **Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

**Recreation Management Areas** – The Monument would be included in two special recreation management areas: Upper Missouri River SRMA and Uplands SRMA (Map C). The Upper Missouri River SRMA includes BLM land from Fort Benton downstream to Arrow Creek and the entire UMNWSR. The Uplands SRMA includes BLM land both north and south of the UMNWSR downstream from Arrow Creek to the James Kipp Recreation Area.

**Fees** – The BLM would implement an expanded amenity fee for overnight camping in Level 1 recreation sites. The site would provide at least a majority of the following: tent or trailer spaces, picnic tables, drinking water, access roads, collection by an employee or agent, reasonable visitor protection, refuse containers, toilet facilities and simple devices for containing a fire. Level 1 sites currently include Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk and the James Kipp Recreation Area. This fee system would also apply to any additional Level 1 site that may be constructed. In addition, the BLM may charge fees for use of some existing structures in the Monument, including cabins and corrals, consistent with FLREA. After the RMP is completed the BLM, with public input, would develop a business plan to determine the actual fee amounts charged.

A Special Recreation Permit would be required to boat on the Missouri River. It would be referred to as a Special Area Permit. The cost of the permit would be established by the State Director based on the cost of operating the permit system, special costs related to management of the area, comparability with other agencies and similar special areas, and fairness and equity among all users. Camping overnight at Level 1 expanded amenity fee sites would be included with the Special Area Permit fee.

Expanded amenity fees collected for camping would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used at Level 1 sites for expenditure on site maintenance and visitor ser-

vices as established in FLREA.

Fees associated with the Special Area Permit to float the Missouri River would be returned to the Lewistown Field Office and used to cover management costs. In addition, fees could be used to support county emergency services and to purchase short-term campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners.

**Gateway communities** – The BLM would strive to encourage and sustain collaborative partnerships, volunteers and citizen-centered public service. The BLM would provide a staffed visitor information site in Chinook, Big Sandy and Winifred or partner with these gateway communities to provide visitor information.

The BLM would encourage private sector initiatives as a means of developing river visitor use opportunities. The Monument offers a wide range of visitor opportunities, only some of which can be provided by the BLM. To overcome these limitations, non-governmental entities, either individuals or institutions, could help accomplish initiatives compatible with the Monument. These initiatives would not result in permanent facilities in the Monument.

A wide variety of activities can be generated by private sector initiatives. Services for boats or horses, overnight or extended-stay lodging facilities, food/water and other provision sales and guiding are services traditionally offered in this way. Other opportunities may be created by using the Monument for touring and instructional purposes and for expanded regional promotional activities.

**Research, collection and special events** – The BLM would authorize archaeological and historical investigations. Prehistoric sites would be evaluated and then monitored, protected or excavated based on their scientific value and what they can add to knowledge and interpretation of the Monument. Historic sites would be evaluated and then monitored or maintained based on their historic value, the attraction they have for visitors and their use as safety shelters.

The BLM would allow and authorize paleontological research. All BLM land is closed to commercial collecting of paleontological resources under existing policy and regulation (BLM Manual 8270). Permits are issued to accredited institutions to conduct activity on BLM land to ensure that the resource is used for public display and education purposes only. Scientific use allows for survey/reconnaissance or limited excavation work with a minimum amount of surface disturbance, as long as such work is conducted under a paleontological permit and maintains the values for which the Monument was established.

The collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for personal use would be allowed in specific identi-

fied areas within the Monument, as limited by the regulations (43 CFR 3620 and 8365).

The personal collection of plant material (e.g., vegetation, seeds and berries) would be allowed. Wildcrafting or commercial collection of plant materials would not be allowed without a specific permit.

The use of metal detectors would be allowed by permit only. A permit for metal detector use may be authorized by the Monument manager when determined to be in the interest of the public and consistent with the goals of the Monument. Metal detectors, magnetometers or other remote sensing equipment may also be allowed for administrative purposes or public health and safety uses as determined by the Monument manager.

Special recreation permit applications for activities or events may be granted, if the activity would not impact the resources or values for which the Monument was designated. Large group events would be authorized subject to restrictions to protect resources. These restrictions may include, but would not be limited to, the designation of specific roads or trails for a particular event, limitations on parking, use of campfires, sanitation requirements and the number of people involved in the event.

**Recreation in sensitive wildlife habitat** – The BLM would allow the personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting). However, the BLM could implement a seasonal restriction (December 1 to March 31) on the disturbance of shed antlers to protect wildlife during the winter, if harassment is a problem.

Camping would not be allowed on BLM islands from April 1 to July 31, to protect wildlife during sensitive periods (e.g., nesting, brooding periods).

**Interpretive sites** – Historic, archaeological, and geological opportunities on BLM land would be enhanced by developing the interpretive potential at selected sites (Map 1). Small, low-key interpretive signs that blend in with the surroundings (and not visible from the Missouri River) would be established at specific sites. These low-key sites would be for dispersed recreation opportunities. Simple markers would be provided for some cultural sites. Portable interpretation (guidebooks and brochures) would be available.

Topics for interpretation would be selected based on setting, visitor benefits and the potential to provide the area's history or prehistory via interpretation. Some potential cultural sites for interpretation would include Decision Point; Eagle Creek; the Murray/PN dugout; Hagadone, Middleton, Ervin, Gist, Cable, and Nelson homesteads, Gilmore cabin; Nez Perce Trail; and sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Other possible interpre-

tive sites and topics could include prehistoric sites and the steamboat era on the Missouri River.

Some potential geological interpretive sites would include the stratigraphic cross section of the Missouri River from Virgelle to the James Kipp Recreation Area showing the regional dip of beds starting in Colorado Shale and ending in Bearpaw Shale; the glacial geomorphology and paleo channel of the Missouri River at Little Sandy Creek; the igneous dike known as the Grand Natural Wall from the Lewis and Clark Journal entry; Hole-in-the-Wall; the Big Sag at Judith Landing; the Sugarloaf Rock fault plane vs. bedding plane at Stafford Ferry; the diatreme at Gist Bottom; and the invertebrate paleo site at Woodhawk.

## Upper Missouri River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

*The BLM's goal is to manage these lands for a variety of sustainable visitor experiences in mostly primitive and natural landscapes. This goal would allow BLM to provide for dispersed and developed recreation opportunities and ensure visual quality characteristics reflect a predominantly primitive or natural landscape while providing for a diversity of visitor experiences.*

This section addresses specific management for the Upper Missouri River SRMA, which primarily includes management for the UMNWSR.

### Alternative A (Current Management)

**Special recreation use permits** – There would be a limit of 23 SRPs and a one-trip-per-season permit for non-permit-

ted commercial users. An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930) to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts. A free use permit would be required for non-profit organized groups.

**Opportunities for boaters** – The BLM would re-determine user capacity based on the Limits of Acceptable Change criteria (West HiLine RMP, Appendix 22.10). This process would, with public participation, identify how much environmental change would be acceptable. The character and rate of change due to human factors would be kept within acceptable levels. Parameters to be considered during the review process would include, but not be limited to, vegetation change; the amount of bare ground near a campsite; bank-side trails; sanitation problems; litter; and available firewood.

The BLM would require a special recreation permit for groups larger than 50 people boating the Missouri River. This would be a free use permit.

**Camping facilities** – The existing camping facilities would remain at the current campsites along the Missouri River. Dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities) would be allowed on all BLM land.

BLM land currently provides varying levels of camping facilities and recreational opportunities. See “River Recreation Facilities.”

The BLM would continue maintaining undeveloped sites by clearing brush (maximum 1/4 acre) for campsite location, enforcing a pack-in/pack-out policy and removing trash as necessary. All undeveloped sites in the scenic and recreation segments of the UMNWSR would be signed and shown on user maps.

#### River Recreation Facilities

**Level 1 – Developed public access sites.** These sites are accessible by road with a full range of developments that could include parking lots, boat ramps, vault toilets, campsites for tents and RVs and picnic facilities. These sites include the Chouteau County Fairgrounds Campground and Canoe Launch, Decision Point Interpretive Trail, Wood Bottom, Coal Banks Landing, Judith Landing, Lower Woodhawk and the James Kipp Recreation Area.

**Level 2 – Developed boat camps.** These sites are accessible to the public only by boat. The sites could include vault toilets, metal fire rings and occasionally open-air shelters. They include Little Sandy, Eagle Creek, Hole-in-the-Wall and Slaughter River. BLM has administrative road access to these sites.

**Level 3 – Primitive boat camps.** These sites are accessible only by boat and could contain a metal fire ring. There are no other developments. These sites include Evans Bend, Senieurs Reach, Black Bluff Rapids, Dark Butte, Pablo Rapids, The Wall, McGary Bar, Gist Bottom, Cow Island, Upper and Middle Woodhawk and Hideaway.

**Level 4 – Dispersed camping opportunities.** In addition to the developed sites described above, camping is permissible on any of the 90,000 acres of BLM land adjacent to the river. The absence of development allows opportunities for those seeking a completely primitive experience.

Undeveloped sites may be improved to developed sites in scenic and recreation segments of the UMNWSR, if one or more of the following criteria are met:

- Public use of the river or the existing undeveloped sites increases;
- Impacts to soil and vegetation become damaging (heavy use that compacts soils/kills vegetation);
- Sanitation becomes a problem;
- Additional sites are needed to rest existing campsites;
- Better distribution of public use sites is needed.

The BLM would maintain all developed sites. New sites would be established if one or more of the above criteria are met. New capital improvements would be allowed if impacts to cultural and natural resources could be mitigated to an acceptable level. Improvements in the wild section of the UMNWSR would be allowed if the sites can be serviced by existing roads or by river. All improvements would comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended.

Developed sites in recreational sections would be established and managed based on demand and economic feasibility.

The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit for camping.

Camp stoves, fire pans, or fire mats would not be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Level 1 sites would continue offering a full range of signs including kiosks, interpretive signs, traffic signs and other signs as necessary to provide information and facilitate the safe use of campgrounds. International signs would continue being used to mark Level 2 and 3 campsites and some signs and notices would be posted in vault toilets at Level 2 sites.

**Motorized watercraft** – The BLM would continue the seasonal boating restrictions (Memorial Day to Labor Day) on the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR (89 miles). The recreation segments would remain open to motorized watercraft yearlong (60 miles). Table 2.14 shows the motorized watercraft restrictions by river segment.

There would be no restrictions for the administrative use of motorized watercraft on the Missouri River.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

## Alternative B

**Special recreation use permits** – An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the

Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR. There would be no limit on the number of SRPs.

**Opportunities for boaters** – The BLM would not develop an allocation system and there would be no limit or restriction on the number of boaters.

The BLM would not require a special recreation permit for large groups boating the Missouri River. There would be no launch restrictions for groups.

**Camping facilities** – The BLM would provide additional Level 1, 2 and 3 recreation sites, as needed, to address increasing use demands or to resolve visitor use issues (such as constructing a launch/take out facility at Stafford Ferry or building a boat ramp in the vicinity of Coal Banks Landing).

The BLM would work to establish agreements with willing private landowners to develop alternative campsites on their private property.

The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit for camping.

Camp stoves, fire pans, or fire mats would not be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Appropriate signing could be used, as necessary, at any level of facility development (Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4) or on other BLM lands located within the UMNWSR. Such signing would not necessarily be associated with a developed site.

**Motorized watercraft** – The BLM would revise the current seasonal boating restrictions and the Missouri River would be open to motorized watercraft yearlong (149 miles). Table 2.15 shows the motorized watercraft restrictions by river segment.

There would be no restrictions for the administrative use of motorized watercraft on the Missouri River.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

## Alternative C

**Special recreation use permits** – There would be a limit of 30 SRPs for commercial users and a one-trip-per-season permit for non-permitted commercial users. An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930) to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts.

**Table 2.14**  
**Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River**  
**Alternative A (Current Management)**

<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from the Saturday before Memorial Day through the Sunday after Labor Day.  Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from the Monday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed only from the Monday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day.
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from the Saturday before Memorial Day through the Sunday after Labor Day.  Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from the Monday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed only from the Monday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day.

**Opportunities for boaters** – The BLM would monitor standards and indicators to manage visitor use of and impacts to resources (Appendix J). Once those standards and/or indicators are reached or exceeded, the BLM would take the necessary action to reduce impacts to resources without limiting the number of people boating the Missouri River. Management actions are discussed in Appendix J and include, but would not be limited to, a mandatory registration system, camping at designated sites, limiting the number of days camping at designated sites, resting and/or rotating campsites, and closing campsites.

From June 15 to August 1, the BLM would require groups larger than 20 people to launch at Coal Banks or Judith

Landing on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Groups of less than 20 people could launch from any site, any day.

**Camping facilities** – Additional Level 1 sites would be constructed only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Improvements to existing Level 1 and 2 sites could occur to improve infrastructure or address visitor use issues. New Level 2 facilities could be constructed between Fort Benton and Judith Landing, but only as necessary to improve resource conditions, improve visitor distribution or resolve visitor use conflicts. Associated facilities and construction could not detract from the visual character and integrity of the UMNWSR. Additional Level 3 campsites could be added as needed to accommodate increases in use.

**Table 2.15**  
**Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River**  
**Alternative B**

<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be allowed yearlong.

Dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities) would be allowed on all BLM land.

During the core use period on the river, June 15 to August 1, the BLM would implement a 2-night limit at Level 2 campsites. The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit at Level 1, 3 and 4 sites.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and require the use of camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in Level 1 sites could be used to safely direct traffic, provide information or provide interpretive messages. Signing should be commensurate with visual surroundings and the level of development. Signing located along the Missouri River would identify campsites and would be of minimum size and only used at Level 1, 2 and 3 campsites. Signing within campsites and elsewhere within the UMNWSR would be limited to existing infrastructure and of sufficiently low profile to not be visible from the river.

**Motorized watercraft** – The BLM would revise the current boating restrictions and the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR would have a seasonal restriction from June 15 to September 15 (89 miles); however, personal

watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong. The recreation segments would be open to most types of motorized watercraft yearlong; however, personal watercraft and floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 (Fort Benton area) and floatplanes would be allowed from September 16 to June 4 on river miles 84.5 to 92.5 (Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island). Table 2.16 shows the motorized watercraft restrictions by river segment.

During the seasonal restrictions in the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR, the BLM would designate specific days (selected to avoid peak visitor use days) when agencies could use upstream travel. The BLM would pursue administrative use agreements with other agencies, encouraging them to also abide by these guidelines for motorized use.

Livestock grazing permittees would be allowed upstream travel to administer their grazing permit with prior notification to the BLM. The BLM would authorize the travel verbally for unplanned situations or by a letter to the permittee for activities requested in advance.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

**Table 2.16**  
**Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River**  
**Alternative C**

<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 yearlong.
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from June 15 to September 15.  Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from September 16 to June 14.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft would not be allowed yearlong.  The landing of floatplanes would be allowed only from September 16 to June 4.
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from June 15 to September 15.  Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from September 16 to June 14.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.

## Alternative D

**Special recreation use permits** – There would be a limit of 30 SRPs for commercial users and a one-trip-per-season permit for non-permitted commercial users. An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930) to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts.

**Opportunities for boaters** – The BLM would monitor standards and indicators to manage visitor use and impacts to resources ([Appendix J](#)). Once those standards and/or indicators are reached or exceeded, the BLM would first take the necessary actions to reduce impacts to resources without limiting the number of people boating the Missouri River and then, if necessary, develop and implement an

allocation system. Management actions are discussed in [Appendix J](#) and include, but would not be limited to, a seasonal allocation system, or a temporary emergency allocation system in the White Cliffs area, a mandatory registration with stipulations pertaining to camping on BLM land, resting and/or rotating campsites, and closing campsites.

The BLM would require a special recreation permit for groups larger than 30 people boating the Missouri River. The processing of SRP applications would follow administrative cost recovery procedures (43 CFR 2930).

**Camping facilities** – To provide dispersed recreation opportunities and benefits, no additional Level 1 facilities would be constructed. Improvements to existing Level 1 and 2 sites could occur to improve infrastructure or address

visitor use issues. Additional Level 2 campsites would be constructed only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Additional Level 3 sites could be added, as needed, to accommodate increases in use. However, in the wild and scenic segments of the UMNWSR at least 60% of campsites would be Level 4 opportunities.

The BLM would work to establish agreements with willing private landowners to develop alternative campsites on their private property.

During the core use period on the Missouri River, June 15 to August 1, the BLM would implement a 2-night limit at Level 2 campsites. The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit at Level 1, 3 and dispersed camping sites (Level 4 opportunities).

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and require the use of camp stoves, fire pans, or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing would be limited to Level 1 sites, commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing could be used as necessary at Level 2 sites, but only within new or existing infrastructure. No other signing would be used within the UMNWSR.

**Motorized watercraft** – The BLM would revise the current boating restrictions on the UMNWSR as shown in Table 2.17.

The recreation segments of the UMNWSR would be open to motorized watercraft yearlong, except personal watercraft would not be allowed from June 15 to September 15. However, floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 near Fort Benton.

The wild and scenic segment from Pilot Rock to Deadman Rapids would have a seasonal restriction from May 1 to December 1 with downstream travel only at a no-wake speed. Personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed on this segment of the river yearlong.

The wild and scenic segment from Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge would have a seasonal restriction from June 5 to September 15, when no motorized watercraft would be allowed. From September 16 to December 1, motorized watercraft would be allowed for downstream travel only at a no-wake speed. Personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed on this segment of the river yearlong.

The BLM (and those with special use authorizations) would abide by the seasonal no-wake downstream travel restrictions and would pursue administrative use agreements with other agencies, encouraging them to also abide by these guidelines for motorized use.

Livestock grazing permittees would be allowed upstream travel to administer their grazing permit with prior notification to the BLM. The BLM would authorize the travel verbally for unplanned situations or by a letter to the permittee for activities requested in advance.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

## Alternative E

**Special recreation use permits** – Based on a use allocation system (developed after the RMP is completed) the number of user days would be limited for commercial users. However, there would be no limit on the number of commercial SRPs. A Special Recreation Permit, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930) to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts.

**Opportunities for boaters** – The BLM would develop and implement an allocation system after completion of the Monument RMP. The development of an allocation system would include public participation.

The BLM would require a special recreation permit for groups larger than 16 people boating the Missouri River. The processing of SRP applications would follow administrative cost recovery procedures.

**Camping facilities** – The BLM would maintain the current number and location of recreation facilities and campsites within the UMNWSR. Additional campsites would not be developed.

The BLM would work to establish agreements with willing private landowners to develop alternative campsites on private property.

During the core use period on the Missouri River, June 15 to August 1, the BLM would implement a 2-night limit at Level 2 and 3 campsites and maintain the 14-night limit at Level 1 and dispersed camping sites (Level 4 opportunities).

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and require the use of camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing would be limited to Level 1 sites and would be commensurate with the visual surroundings and level of development. No other signing would be used within the UMNWSR.

**Table 2.17  
Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River  
Alternative D**

<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft would be allowed only from September 16 to June 14.</p> <p>The landing of floatplanes would be allowed only on river miles 0 to 3 yearlong.</p>
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild and Scenic Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from May 1 to November 30.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from December 1 to April 30.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft would be allowed only from September 16 to June 14.</p> <p>The landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segment)	<p>Motorized watercraft travel would not be allowed from June 15 to September 15.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from September 16 to November 30.</p> <p>Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed from December 1 to June 14.</p> <p>The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.</p>

**Motorized watercraft** – The BLM would revise the current seasonal boating restrictions on the UMNWSR as shown in Table 2.18. Motorized watercraft would not be allowed on any segment of the UMNWSR.

Agency motorized watercraft (and those with special use authorizations) would abide by the same seasonal restrictions as the public. The BLM would pursue administrative use agreements with other agencies, encouraging them to also abide by these guidelines for motorized use.

Livestock grazing permittees would be allowed upstream travel to administer their grazing permit with prior notification to the BLM. The BLM would authorize the travel verbally for unplanned situations or by a letter to the permittee for activities requested in advance.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

**Table 2.18**  
**Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River**  
**Alternative E**

<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft would not be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft would not be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft would not be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft would not be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.

**Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

**Special recreation use permits** – There would be a limit of 23 SRPs and a one-trip-per-season permit for non-permitted commercial users. An SRP, with a fee, would be required for commercial recreational use on the Missouri River and related land in the UMNWSR (43 CFR 2930) to prevent damage to BLM land or water resource values and to prevent social conflicts.

**Opportunities for boaters** – The BLM would monitor standards and indicators to manage visitor use of and impacts to resources (Appendix J). Once those standards and/or indicators are reached or exceeded, the BLM would take the necessary action to reduce impacts to resources without limiting the number of people boating the Missouri River. Management actions are discussed in Appendix J and include, but would not be limited to, a mandatory registration system, camping at designated sites, limiting the number of days camping at designated sites, resting and/or rotating campsites, and closing campsites.

From June 15 to August 1, the BLM would require groups larger than 20 people to launch at Coal Banks or Judith Landing on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Groups of less than 20 people could launch from any site, any day. Groups larger than 30 people would require a special recreation permit, year round, for boating the Missouri River.

**Camping facilities** – The existing camping facilities would remain at the current campsites along the Missouri River (Map 1). To provide dispersed recreation opportunities and benefits, additional Level 1 sites would be constructed only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Improvements to existing Level 1 and 2 sites could occur to improve infrastructure or address visitor use issues. Additional Level 2 sites could be constructed between Fort Benton and Judith Landing as necessary to improve resource conditions, improve distribution of visitor use or resolve visitor use conflicts. Associated facilities and construction could not detract from the visual character and integrity of the UMNWSR. Additional Level 3 campsites could be added as needed to accommodate increases in use. Dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities) would be allowed on all BLM land.

The BLM would maintain all developed sites. New capital improvements would be allowed if impacts to cultural and natural resources could be mitigated to an acceptable level. All improvements would comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended.

The BLM would seek to purchase short-term (1-5 year) campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners for alternative or additional campsites to provide dispersed camping opportunities and benefits.

The BLM would implement a 2-night limit at Level 2

campsites from June 15 to August 1. The BLM would maintain the 14-night limit at Level 1 and 3 sites and for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and require the use of camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in Level 1 sites could be used to safely direct traffic, provide information, or provide interpretive messages. Signing should be commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing located along the Missouri River would identify campsites and would be of minimum size and only used at Level 1, 2 and 3 campsites. Signing within campsites and elsewhere within the UMNWSR would be limited to existing infrastructure and of sufficiently low profile to not be visible from the river.

**Motorized watercraft** – The BLM would revise the current seasonal boating restrictions on the Missouri River as shown in Table 2.19 and displayed on Map 1. The recreation segments of the UMNWSR would be open to motorized watercraft year round except personal watercraft and floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 0 to 3 near Fort Benton.

The wild and scenic segment from Pilot Rock to Deadman Rapids would have a seasonal restriction from June 5 to September 15 with downstream travel only at a no-wake speed. Personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed on this segment of the river yearlong.

The wild and scenic segment from Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge would have a seasonal restriction from June 5 to September 15, where no motorized watercraft would be allowed. Personal watercraft and floatplanes would not be allowed on this segment of the river yearlong.

**Table 2.19**  
**Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Upper Missouri River**  
**Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

<i>River Segment</i>	<i>Motorized Use</i>
River Mile 0 to 52 Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would only be allowed on river miles 1 to 3 yearlong.
River Mile 52 to 84.5 Pilot Rock – Deadman Rapids (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel downstream at a no-wake speed would be allowed from June 5 to September 15.  Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from September 16 to June 4.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 Deadman Rapids to Holmes Council Island (Recreation Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed yearlong.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.
River Mile 92.5 to 149 Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (Wild and Scenic Segment)	Motorized watercraft travel would not be allowed from June 5 to September 15.  Motorized watercraft travel both upstream and downstream would be allowed the remainder of the year, from September 16 to June 4.  The operation of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would not be allowed yearlong.

A cooperative effort among agencies operating on the river would be initiated. A Memorandum of Understanding would be developed with the goal of achieving uniform standard operating procedures designed to minimize impacts to boaters from administrative use of motorized watercraft.

Livestock grazing permittees would be allowed upstream travel to administer their grazing permit with prior notification to the BLM. The BLM would authorize the travel verbally for unplanned situations or by a letter to the permittee for activities requested in advance.

There would be no restrictions for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement watercraft used for emergency purposes.

## Uplands Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

*The BLM's goal is to manage these lands for a variety of sustainable visitor experiences in mostly primitive and natural landscapes. This goal would allow BLM to provide for dispersed and developed recreation opportunities and ensure visual quality characteristics reflect a predominantly primitive or natural landscape while providing for a diversity of visitor experiences.*

This section addresses specific management for the Uplands SRMA, which primarily includes management for the BLM land outside of the UMNWSR.

### Alternative A (Current Management)

**Special recreation use permits** – The BLM would continue to issue SRPs for commercial hunting with no limit on the number issued (43 CFR 2930). The BLM would not allocate permits or specific use areas for outfitters and guides. All BLM land would be available at the discretion of the Monument manager as long as permittees maintain a special use permit and meet the BLM requirements. However, each permit would be assigned to a specific geographic area (requested or assigned hunting area). Outfitters and other recreational users would continue to be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would issue special recreation use permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be allowed on all roads designated open.

### Upland Recreation Facilities

**Level 1 – Developed public access sites.** Recreation sites where a high level of infrastructure development could include campsites, parking lots, vault toilets, interpretive signs, campground host facilities, tree plantings, picnic tables, waste facilities and other infrastructure improvements that accommodate the transition from highway to collector roads. Sites would be marked on a map. An example of a Level 1 site is James Kipp Recreation Area on the river.

**Level 2 – Developed upland sites.** Campsites, trailheads, scenic overlooks and reservoirs where moderate levels of infrastructure development could include metal fire rings, vault toilets, and improved gravel parking areas. Interpretive signs and information boards may be present but would be much less obtrusive than at Level 1 sites and would blend well with natural surroundings. Sites would be marked on a map. Examples of Level 2 sites are FR Reservoir, Butch Reservoir, Spencer Road Overlook, Gazob Reservoir, Gilmore Cabin, Snake Point Overlook and Sunshine Ridge Overlook.

**Level 3 – Primitive campsites.** Pull-out sites immediately adjacent to a resource road that could contain a fire ring and minimal signing, but no other infrastructure.

**Level 4 – Dispersed camping opportunities.** This would be the utilization of public land in a natural state for dispersed, undeveloped camping. These areas may be accessible by motorized or non-motorized travel. There would be no infrastructure in these areas.

**Camping facilities** – Dispersed camping and camping facilities would be allowed. In some areas, the BLM would not construct developed recreation sites based strictly on local use, unless these sites can be realized through partnerships with other government entities, local service organizations, etc. The BLM would encourage and support reasonable recreational initiatives from local and regional groups through partnerships, agreements, challenge cost sharing and volunteer efforts.

The BLM would not require camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

The BLM would use upland signs, maps and brochures to identify recreational resources for the public.

Level 1 sites currently contain a full range of signs including kiosks and interpretive signs, traffic signs and other signs to provide for safe use of campgrounds. International signs would be used to mark Level 2 and 3 campsites. Signs and notices could be posted in vault toilets at Level 2 sites.

### Alternative B

**Special recreation use permits** – The BLM would continue to issue SRPs for commercial hunting with no limit on the number issued. Each permit issued would be assigned

to the entire Monument. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would issue special recreation use permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be allowed on local and collector roads and some identified resource roads.

**Camping facilities** – The BLM would consider developing Level 1 and 2 campsites, but they would be confined to places such as, but not limited to, fishing reservoirs, overlooks and historic sites. Level 3 camping sites would be pull-out sites away from the road and fire rings would be the only improvement at these sites.

The BLM would not require camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in the uplands could be used as necessary at all levels of facility development (Level 1, 2 and 3 campsites) or on BLM lands located within the uplands, but not necessarily associated with a developed site.

## Alternative C

**Special recreation use permits** – The BLM would limit the number of SRPs for commercial hunting to the current level of outfitters (14). Each permit issued would be assigned to the entire Monument. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would issue special recreation use permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be allowed on local and collector roads.

**Camping facilities** – The BLM would consider developing Level 1 campsites, but they would only be constructed at the beginning of public access roads into the Monument. These sites could include interpretive kiosks. The BLM would encourage private landowners outside the Monument to develop Level 1 sites and services. Level 2 campsites would be “park and explore” sites where people could walk from designated parking areas. Level 3 campsites would be pull-out sites away from the road and fire rings would be the only improvement at these sites.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats would be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing at Level 1 sites in the uplands could be used as needed to safely direct traffic, provide information, or

provide interpretive messages. Signing in Level 1 sites should be commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing located in the uplands to identify campsites would be of minimum size and only used at Level 1, 2 and 3 campsites. Signing within campsites and elsewhere in the uplands would be limited to existing infrastructure.

## Alternative D

**Special recreation use permits** – The BLM would issue SRPs for commercial hunting with no limit on the number issued. However, permits would only be issued in areas with large blocks of BLM land that have limited public access. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would issue special recreation use permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be restricted to two vehicles or less per operator per day on local, collector and some identified resource roads.

**Camping facilities** – The BLM would not develop Level 1 campsites. Level 2 sites would only be developed on main artery roads (collector and some local roads). Level 3 campsites would be pull-out sites located away from the road and fire rings would be the only improvement at these sites.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats would be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in the uplands would be limited to Level 1 sites, commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing could be used as necessary at Level 2 sites, but only within new or existing infrastructure. No other signing would be used within the uplands except for required transportation system signs.

## Alternative E

**Special recreation use permits** – The BLM would issue SRPs for commercial hunting with no limit on the number issued. However, permits would only be issued in areas with large blocks of BLM land that have public access. Outfitters and other recreational users would be required to use weed-free feed on BLM land for their livestock as a part of the integrated weed management program.

The BLM would not issue special recreation use permits for commercial motorized tours.

**Camping facilities** – The BLM would not develop Level 1, 2 or 3 campsites.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats would be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in the uplands would be limited to safety and commensurate with visual surroundings. No other signing would be used in the uplands.

### **Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

**Special recreation use permits** – The BLM would limit the number of SRPs for commercial outfitting and guiding (hunting) to the current level of outfitters (14). Each of the 14 permits issued would be assigned to the existing use area/lease as of 2004.

It is the BLM's goal to provide recreational opportunities via authorized commercial operators for visitors lacking the skill or equipment necessary to otherwise participate. To meet this goal, an adaptive management strategy would be developed that is responsive to changing visitor use trends and resource conditions. While the current use levels for the upland SRPs appear to be adequate, visitor demand for commercial hunting and guiding services could increase in the future. Visitor use data would continue to be collected and analyzed with the results incorporated into future management decisions. Should visitor use levels increase or patterns of use change, it may be necessary to issue additional permits, adjust use areas, incorporate conditions limiting net hunter/client use days (visitor use days), or include other conditions necessary to best manage upland permits.

Adaptive management decisions would be based on BLM's 2930 Recreation Permit Administrative Handbook, BLM's

Montana Outfitter Management Guidelines and the 1997 Memorandum of Understanding with the Montana Board of Outfitters (BLM MOU MT932-9111).

The BLM would issue special recreation use permits for commercial motorized tours. Motorized tours would be restricted to two vehicles or less per day for each commercial permit on local, collector and some identified resource roads.

**Camping facilities** – The BLM would consider developing Level 1 campsites, but they would only be constructed at the beginning of public access roads into the Monument. These sites could include interpretive kiosks. The BLM would encourage private landowners outside the Monument to develop Level 1 sites and services. Level 2 campsites would be park and explore sites where people could walk from designated parking areas. Level 3 sites would be pullout sites adjacent to local and collector roads or on identified/signed (camping access only) closed resource roads that are spurs (dead end within 300 feet) from a designated "open" local or collector road. Fire rings would be the only improvement at these sites. Level 3 sites would be shown on a map with information concerning the facilities and opportunities associated with the site.

The BLM would implement a Leave No Trace program and camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats would be required for dispersed camping (Level 4 opportunities).

Signing in the uplands would be limited to Level 1 sites commensurate with visual surroundings and level of development. Signing could be used as necessary at Level 2 sites, but only within new or existing infrastructure. No other signing would be used within the uplands except for required transportation system signs.

# Natural Gas Exploration and Development

The alternatives in this section address natural gas exploration and development of the existing oil and gas leases in the Monument.

This section is organized in the following format:

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## Oil and Gas

*The BLM's goal is to provide reasonable oil and gas exploration and development on existing leased land without diminishing the objects of the Monument.*

The Proclamation does not allow new oil and gas leases in the Monument. The 43 federal oil and gas leases in the Monument are considered to have valid existing rights based upon the Proclamation, wherein it states, "The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. The Secretary of Interior shall manage development on existing oil and gas leases within the monument, subject to valid existing rights, so as not to create any new impacts that would interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by this proclamation." The existing leases are also in compliance with their lease terms and conditions. Chapter 3 (Minerals – Oil and Gas), [Appendix K](#) and the Glossary all provide more information about these leases.

In March 2000, the Montana Wilderness Association (MWA) filed suit challenging BLM's issuance of three leases, which are now included in the Monument, alleging the BLM did not fully comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The leases involved in the suit, as well as nine others in the Monument were based on the BLM's 1988 West HiLine RMP. In March 2002, the United States District Court for the District of Montana, Great Falls Division, ruled in favor of the Plaintiffs and ordered the BLM to:

- Prepare an EIS for the oil and gas leasing program that covers the three leases.
- Prepare a valid biological assessment of the oil and gas leasing program in conjunction with the EIS.
- Consult with all required entities.

Under the order, all surface-disturbing activity on the three leases is prohibited pending completion of the appropriate environmental reviews. In addition, the BLM will not process any further applications for permits to drill (APDs) on any leases in the Monument until the RMP is completed (BLM 2002d). Consultation under the ESA and NHPA is discussed in Chapter 5.

Leases issued for federal minerals include stipulations that apply to the exploration and development activity that might be proposed during the lease term. Existing resources should be taken into consideration before oil and gas lease activity is permitted. Over the last 36 years of issuing leases within the Monument, eight stipulation forms were used. Many of the early leases (May 1967 through September 1971) contained no stipulations beyond the standard terms of the lease; the majority of the leases issued after July 1972 included stipulations with provisions for wildlife, cultural resources, rough terrain and threatened and endangered species, should they be present on the lease. All oil and gas lease activities would be subject to existing laws (e.g., Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act) regardless of the age of the lease or the stipulations attached to the lease.

The oil and gas leases in the Monument can be divided into two categories: those leases issued under the West HiLine RMP, and non-West HiLine RMP leases (Table 2.20). Some of the leases are located both in and outside of the Monument. The range of alternatives for the leases in the Monument (42,805 acres) focuses on the conditions of approval necessary during the APD process to protect the objects. With the exception of Alternative E, the current stipulations (Form 3109-1, and others for the older leases) would apply to portions of the leases located outside of the Monument (25,097 acres) along with other site-specific conditions determined during the permitting process. However, under Alternative E, surface disturbance would not be allowed on the entire 12 West HiLine RMP leases (12,783 acres); this includes the entire leasehold. The leases are displayed on [Map 2 – Side A](#). [Appendix K](#) provides additional information about these oil and gas leases.

Each alternative describes management of natural gas operations for the existing leases in the Monument. The alternatives address seismic operations, conditions of approval, drilling operations, production facilities and equipment and reclamation.

## Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations and Conditions of Approval

The lease stipulations which apply to Alternative A (Current Management) are detailed in [Appendix K.1](#). The conditions of approval for all the other alternatives are displayed in Table 2.21, with specific conditions of approval for timing, controlled surface use, and no surface disturbance displayed within each alternative description.

**Table 2.20  
Oil and Gas Leases in the Monument**

<i>MTM Lease No.</i>	<i>Lease Effective Date</i>	<i>Specific Resource Stipulations</i>	<i>Lease Acreage in the Monument</i>	<i>Lease Acreage Outside the Monument</i>	<i>Total Lease Acreage</i>
<b>West HiLine Leases</b>					
084559	November 1, 1995	Yes <sup>1</sup>	1,880	0	1,880
084560	November 1, 1995	Yes <sup>1</sup>	134	1,119	1,253
087212	September 1, 1997	Yes <sup>1</sup>	122	528	650
087658	October 1, 1998	Yes <sup>1</sup>	485	0	485
089082	May 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	1,131	167	1,298
089452	November 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	800	0	800
089469	November 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	640	0	640
089473	November 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	1,240	0	1,240
089474	November 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	80	480	560
089475	November 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	1,280	0	1,280
089476	December 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	1,120	160	1,280
089482	November 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	1,416	0	1,416
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>10,328</b>	<b>2,454</b>	<b>12,782</b>
<b>Non-West HiLine Leases</b>					
1565	May 1, 1967	None	2,560	0	2,560
1568	May 1, 1967	None	2,320	240	2,560
1578	May 1, 1967	None	575	1,988	2,563
1885	June 1, 1967	None	40	611	651
1886	June 1, 1967	None	1,920	640	2,560
1888	June 1, 1967	None	480	1,982	2,462
1903	June 1, 1967	None	1,360	200	1,560
1903-B	June 1, 1967	None	320	240	560
1914	June 1, 1967	None	200	440	640
2060	July 1, 1967	None	640	0	640
2061	July 1, 1967	None	640	0	640
13816	November 1, 1969	None	2,533	0	2,533
13818	November 1, 1969	None	2,532	0	2,532
13821-A	November 1, 1969	None	1,099	0	1,099
13827	November 1, 1969	None	1,156	0	1,156
16098	September 1, 1970	None	1,240	1,280	2,520
16102	September 1, 1970	None	1,506	163	1,669
16103	September 1, 1970	None	13	2,507	2,520
16327	October 1, 1970	None	80	2,358	2,438
16458	October 1, 1970	None	688	1,272	1,960
16461	October 1, 1970	None	2,547	0	2,547
16617	November 1, 1970	None	490	929	1,419
16618	November 1, 1970	None	320	2,240	2,560
16939	December 1, 1970	None	2,530	0	2,530
17376	February 1, 1971	None	40	80	120
18274	July 1, 1971	Some	1,367	1,160	2,527
18282	May 1, 1973	Some	851	1,680	2,531
18283	May 1, 1973	Some	1,240	1,320	2,560
19446	May 1, 1971	None	110	1,113	1,223
53751	June 1, 1982	Yes <sup>1</sup>	680	160	840
89460	November 1, 1999	Yes <sup>1</sup>	400	40	440
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>32,477</b>	<b>22,643</b>	<b>55,120</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>42,805</b>	<b>25,097</b>	<b>67,902</b>

<sup>1</sup> See Table 2.21 and [Appendix K.1](#).

**Table 2.21  
Stipulations for Alternative A and the Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval (by Alternative)**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval</b>				<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
		<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	
<b>Greater Sage-Grouse</b>						
<b>Lek</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be restricted or excluded within 1/4 mile from identified sage-grouse leks. <sup>1</sup>  For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface disturbance within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.			No surface disturbance within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks.	No surface disturbance within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.
<b>Nesting Area</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be restricted or excluded during the period March 1 and June 30. <sup>1</sup>  For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface disturbance from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek.			No surface disturbance within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks.	No surface disturbance from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek.
<b>Crucial Winter Habitat</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be restricted or excluded during the period December 1 to May 15. <sup>1</sup>  For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface disturbance from December 1 to March 31 within crucial winter habitat.			No surface disturbance within crucial winter habitat.	No surface disturbance from December 1 to March 31 within crucial winter habitat.

**Table 2.21 (continued)  
Stipulations for Alternative A and the Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval (by Alternative)**

<b>Stipulations for Alternative A and the Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval (by Alternative)</b>		<b>Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval</b>				
		<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>
<b>Black-tailed Prairie Dog</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be restricted or excluded within 1/4 mile of identified essential habitat of prairie dogs. <sup>1</sup> For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface disturbance on any prairie dog towns.	Surface-disturbing activities would avoid, or minimize, disturbance on prairie dog towns.	If an activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species, surface disturbance would not be allowed within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns.	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b> If an activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species, new surface disturbance would not be allowed within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns.	
<b>Designated Sensitive Species</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be restricted or excluded within identified crucial habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests. <sup>1</sup> For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	Surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days within identified crucial habitat or active nests.	No surface disturbance within identified crucial habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests.	No surface disturbance within identified crucial habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests. Surface disturbance may be prohibited from March 1 to August 1 within 1/2 mile of active nests.	Surface disturbance may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of the activity or the activity delayed 90 days within identified crucial habitat or active nests. Surface disturbance may be prohibited from March 1 to August 1 within 1/2 mile of active ferruginous hawk nests.	
<b>Bald Eagle</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of identified habitat of the bald eagle. <sup>1</sup> For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface disturbance within 1 mile of active winter roosting areas from November 15 to February 29, if disturbance could cause an adverse effect. No surface disturbance within 1 mile of active bald eagle nest sites from February 1 to July 31, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.	No surface disturbance within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years.	No surface disturbance within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.	No surface disturbance within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.	

**Table 2.21 (continued)  
Stipulations for Alternative A and the Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval (by Alternative)**

Resource	Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)	Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval				Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)
		Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	
<b>Big Game Winter Range (Deer, Elk, &amp; Antelope)</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be restricted or excluded from December 1 to May 15 on winter range. <sup>1</sup>  For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface disturbance from March 31 within winter range.	No surface disturbance from December 1 to May 15 within winter range.	No surface disturbance from December 1 to May 15 within winter range.	No surface disturbance within winter range.	No surface disturbance from December 1 to March 31 within winter range.
<b>Bighorn Sheep Distribution</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days. <sup>1</sup>  For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	Surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days.	No surface disturbance from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution.	No surface disturbance from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution.	No surface disturbance within bighorn sheep distribution.	No surface disturbance from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution.
<b>Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days. <sup>1</sup>  For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface disturbance from April 1 to June 15 in bighorn sheep lambing areas.	No surface disturbance from April 1 to June 15 in bighorn sheep lambing areas.	No surface disturbance within bighorn sheep lambing areas.	No surface disturbance within 1 mile of bighorn sheep lambing areas, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.	No surface disturbance within bighorn sheep lambing areas from April 1 to June 15.

**Table 2.21 (continued)  
Stipulations for Alternative A and the Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval (by Alternative)**

	Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)	Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval				Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)
		Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	
<b>Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be restricted within 500 feet of the channels of reservoirs, ephemeral, intermittent and perennial streams. <sup>1</sup> Surface disturbance may be restricted or excluded within 1,000 feet of riparian and wetland areas. <sup>1</sup> For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface disturbance within the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within riparian and wetland areas.	No surface disturbance within 1,000 feet of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1,000 feet of riparian and wetland areas.	No surface disturbance within 1/4 mile of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1/4 mile of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.	No surface disturbance within 500 feet of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 500 feet of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.	
<b>Soils</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance may be restricted or excluded on slopes over 30% or with severely erodible and/or slumping soils. <sup>1</sup> For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	Prior to surface disturbance on slopes 30% and greater an engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer.	Prior to surface disturbance on slopes 30% and greater with severely erodible and/or slumping soils, an engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer.	Prior to surface disturbance on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erodible and/or slumping soils, an engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer.	No surface disturbance on slopes 20% and greater.	Prior to surface disturbance on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erodible and/or slumping soils, an engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer.  No surface disturbance on slopes 40% and greater. This applies to well locations, facilities and roads. No exceptions would apply to pipelines and to access roads for short distances (less than 300 feet).

**Table 2.21 (continued)  
Stipulations for Alternative A and the Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval (by Alternative)**

		Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval					
		Alternative A (Current Management)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)
<b>Resource</b>	<b>VRM Class I</b>	For 14 leases, all surface disturbance, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives. <sup>1</sup>  For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.	Reduce the visual contrast on public land in the existing landscape by utilizing 1) proper site selection; 2) reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; 3) choice of color; and 4) over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.	No surface disturbance in VRM Class I areas.		
	<b>VRM Class II, III and IV</b>	For 14 leases, all surface disturbance, semi-permanent and permanent facilities may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives. <sup>1</sup>  For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	All surface-disturbing activities and permanent facilities may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the intent of the visual quality objectives.	Reduce the visual contrast on public land in the existing landscape by utilizing 1) proper site selection; 2) reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; 3) choice of color; and 4) over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.	Reduce the visual contrast on public land in VRM Class II, III and IV areas.	Reduce the visual contrast on public land in the existing landscape by utilizing 1) proper site selection; 2) reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; 3) choice of color; and 4) over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.	

Table 2.21 (continued) Stipulations for Alternative A and the Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval (by Alternative)						
Resource	Stipulations Alternative A (Current Management)	Oil and Gas Conditions of Approval				Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)
		Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	
<b>Recreation Sites</b>	For 14 leases, surface disturbance would be restricted 300 feet from developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. <sup>1</sup> For the other 29 leases, standard terms and conditions would apply. <sup>2</sup>	No surface-disturbing activity within 300 feet of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use.	No surface-disturbing activity within the line of sight or sound or 300 feet, whichever is closer. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays only, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.	No surface-disturbing activity within the line of sight or sound or 300 feet, whichever is closer. Work-over types of operations, like well fracing or maintenance, would be limited to Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.	No surface-disturbing activity within the line of sight or sound or 300 feet, whichever is closer. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays only, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.	No surface-disturbing activity within the line of sight or sound or 300 feet, whichever is closer. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays only, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.

<sup>1</sup> See Table 2.20 and Appendix K.1.

<sup>2</sup> Surface-disturbing activities may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed 60 days (43 CFR 3101.1-2).

## Alternative A (Current Management)

**West HiLine Oil and Gas Leases** – Twelve oil and gas leases were issued under the West HiLine RMP (Table 2.20). These oil and gas leases include stipulations for a variety of resources should they be present on the lease during the permitting process (Appendix K.1). The stipulations include: seasonal or distance restrictions to protect sage-grouse nesting areas, sage-grouse winter habitat and big game winter range; controlled surface use to protect soils and visual resources; no surface occupancy to protect sage-grouse leks, designated sensitive species and streams and riparian/wetland areas. A notice is used to inform lessees and operators of the requirements for cultural resource historic preservation compliance and compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

**Non-West HiLine Oil and Gas Leases** – Thirty-one non-West HiLine oil and gas leases were issued over a number of years, some with stipulations but most with no stipulations (Table 2.20 and Appendix K.1).

Two oil and gas leases were issued with stipulations for a variety of resources, which are the same as those attached to the West HiLine leases (Appendix K.1).

Three oil and gas leases were issued with reasonable requirements/conditions for soil erosion, air and water pollution, and unnecessary damage to the surface vegetation. The stipulations also included no occupancy of the surface within specific distances from improved roads, highways, trails, and water sources (lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and springs) (Appendix K.1).

Twenty-six oil and gas leases were issued without stipulations.

During the permitting process for APDs, conditions of approval may also be applied to surface-disturbing activities consistent with the leases rights. These conditions would be considered on a case-by-case basis during the well onsite evaluation and review of the APD.

## Alternative B

Under this Alternative, conditions of approval would protect the objects in the Monument. The conditions of approval would apply to all the oil and gas lease acreage (42,805 acres) in the Monument (Table 2.21). The conditions of approval would be applied to the APD after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource and after considering the waivers, exceptions, and modifications list in Appendix K.1. The current stipulations (Form 3109-1) would apply to that portion of five of the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases that are not entirely within the Monument (2,454 acres).

Seasonal or distance restrictions would be placed on oil and gas activities to protect sage-grouse nesting areas and winter habitat, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, big game winter range and bighorn sheep lambing areas.

### Timing – Alternative B

*Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Greater Sage-Grouse Crucial Winter Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within crucial winter habitat for sage-grouse. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1 mile of active winter roosting areas from November 15 to February 29, if disturbance could cause an adverse effect.

*Big Game Winter Range* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter range for deer and elk and crucial antelope winter range. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from April 1 to June 15 within bighorn sheep lambing areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Controlled surface use conditions or standard lease terms would be applied to protect designated sensitive species, bighorn sheep distribution, soils, visual resources and cultural resources.

### Controlled Surface Use – Alternative B

*Designated Sensitive Species* – Surface disturbance may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed 60 days within identified crucial habitat or active nests.

*Bighorn Sheep Distribution* – Surface disturbance may be controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the proposed site or the activity delayed 60 days within bighorn sheep distribution.

*Soils/Steep Slopes* – Prior to surface disturbance on slopes 30% and greater a certified engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized

officer. This plan must demonstrate how the following would be accomplished:

- Site productivity would be restored.
- Surface runoff would be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas would be protected from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gullying, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.
- Nearby watercourses would be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.
- Surface-disturbing activities would not be conducted during extended wet periods.
- Construction or reclamation would not be allowed when soils are frozen.

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes I, II, III and IV* – All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Class I, II, III, and IV areas may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the visual quality objectives for the area.

*Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources* – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface disturbance would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, black-tailed prairie dogs, streams and riparian/wetland areas and developed recreation sites.

#### ***No Surface Disturbance – Alternative B***

*Greater Sage-Grouse Leks* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.

*Black-tailed Prairie Dogs* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited on prairie dog towns.

*Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or

within riparian and wetland areas.

*Recreation* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 300 feet of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use.

### **Alternative C**

Under this Alternative, the existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing conditions of approval to protect the objects in the Monument. The conditions of approval would apply to all the oil and gas lease acreage (42,805 acres) in the Monument (Table 2.21). The conditions of approval would be applied to the APD after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource and after considering the waivers, exceptions, and modifications list in [Appendix K.1](#). The current stipulations (Form 3109-1) would apply to that portion of five of the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases that are not entirely within the Monument (2,454 acres).

Seasonal or distance restrictions would be placed on oil and gas activities to protect sage-grouse nesting areas and winter habitat, big game winter range, bighorn sheep distribution and bighorn sheep lambing areas.

#### ***Timing – Alternative C***

*Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone* – Surface use would be prohibited from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Greater Sage-Grouse Crucial Winter Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter habitat for sage-grouse. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Big Game Winter Range* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter range for deer and elk and crucial antelope winter range. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Bighorn Sheep Distribution* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from April 1 to June 15 within bighorn sheep lambing areas. This condition would

not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Controlled surface use conditions would be applied to protect black-tailed prairie dogs, soils, visual resources and cultural resources.

### ***Controlled Surface Use – Alternative C***

*Black-tailed Prairie Dogs* – Surface disturbance would avoid, or minimize, disturbance on prairie dog towns.

*Soils/Steep Slopes* – Prior to surface disturbance on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erosive and/or slumping soils, a certified engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. This plan must demonstrate how the following would be accomplished:

- Site productivity would be restored.
- Surface runoff would be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas would be protected from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gullyng, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.
- Nearby watercourses would be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.
- Surface-disturbing activities would not be conducted during extended wet periods.
- Construction or reclamation would not be allowed when soils are frozen.

The operator must also provide an evaluation of past practices on similar terrain and be able to demonstrate success under similar conditions.

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I* – All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Class I would utilize proper site selection; reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes II and III* – All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Class II and III areas may require special design including location, painting and camouflage to blend with the natural surroundings and meet the visual quality objectives for the area.

*Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources* – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other

statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface disturbance would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, designated sensitive species, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, streams and riparian/wetland areas, soils on slopes 40% and greater, and developed recreation areas.

### ***No Surface Disturbance – Alternative C***

*Greater Sage-Grouse Leks* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.

*Designated Sensitive Species* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within identified crucial habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests.

*Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of known bald eagle nest sites that have been active within the past 7 years.

*Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1,000 feet of the channel of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1,000 feet of riparian and wetland areas.

*Soils/Steep Slopes* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited on slopes 40% and greater.

*Recreation* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within the line of sight/sound or 300 feet (whichever is closer) of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.

## **Alternative D**

Under this Alternative, the existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing of conditions of approval to protect the objects in the Monument. The conditions of approval would apply to all the oil and gas lease acreage (42,805 acres) in the Monument (Table 2.21). The conditions of approval would be applied to the APD after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific

resource and after considering the waivers, exceptions and modifications list in [Appendix K.1](#). The current stipulations (Form 3109-1) would apply to that portion of five of the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases that are not entirely within the Monument (2,454 acres).

Seasonal or distance restrictions would be placed on oil and gas activities to protect sage-grouse nesting areas and winter habitat, active nests of designated sensitive species, big game winter range and bighorn sheep distribution.

#### ***Timing – Alternative D***

*Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Greater Sage-Grouse Crucial Winter Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within crucial winter habitat for sage-grouse. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Designated Sensitive Species* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from March 1 to August 1 within 1/4 mile of active nests.

*Big Game Winter Range* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to May 15 within winter range for deer and elk and crucial antelope winter range. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Bighorn Sheep Distribution* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

Controlled surface use conditions would be applied to protect most soils, visual resources in Class II, III and IV areas and cultural resources.

#### ***Controlled Surface Use – Alternative D***

*Soils/Steep Slopes* – Prior to surface disturbance on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erosive and/or slumping soils, a certified engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. This plan must demonstrate how the following would be accomplished:

- Site productivity would be restored.
- Surface runoff would be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas would be protected

from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gullyng, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.

- Nearby watercourses would be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.
- Surface-disturbing activities would not be conducted during extended wet periods.
- Construction or reclamation would not be allowed when soils are frozen.

The operator must also provide an evaluation of past practices on similar terrain and be able to demonstrate success under similar conditions.

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II* – All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Class II would utilize proper site selection; reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

*Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources* – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface disturbance would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, black-tailed prairie dogs, designated sensitive species, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, bighorn sheep lambing areas, streams and riparian/wetland areas, soils on slopes 40% and greater, visual resources in VRM Class I areas and developed recreation areas.

#### ***No Surface Disturbance – Alternative D***

*Greater Sage-Grouse Leks* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.

*Black-tailed Prairie Dogs* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns if an activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

*Designated Sensitive Species* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within identified crucial habitat and within 1/4 mile of active nests.

*Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of known bald eagle nest sites that have been active within the past 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.

*Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within bighorn sheep lambing areas. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities.

*Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1/4 mile of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.

*Soils/Steep Slopes* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited on slopes 40% and greater. This would apply to locations, facilities and roads.

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited in VRM Class I areas.

*Recreation* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within the line of sight/sound or 300 feet (whichever is closer) of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. Work-over types of operations, like well fracing or maintenance, would be limited to Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

## **Alternative E**

Surface disturbance would not be allowed on all 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases (Table 2.21). This includes the entire leasehold (12,783 acres). APDs on these leases would not be processed.

Conditions of approval would be applied to surface-disturbing activities for the 31 non-West HiLine oil and gas leases in the Monument (32,477 acres). Table 2.21 and [Appendix K.1](#) provide more information about these leases. The conditions of approval would be applied at the activity level phase, after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource. The application of conditions of approval would be consistent with lease rights.

Surface use would be controlled to protect cultural resources.

## **Controlled Surface Use – Alternative E**

*Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources* – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface disturbance would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, nesting areas and winter habitat, black-tailed prairie dogs, designated sensitive species, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, big game winter range, bighorn sheep distribution, bighorn sheep lambing areas, streams and riparian/wetland areas, soils on slopes 20% and greater, visual resources and developed recreation sites.

## **No Surface Disturbance – Alternative E**

*Greater Sage-Grouse Leks* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks.

*Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks.

*Greater Sage-Grouse Crucial Winter Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within crucial winter habitat for sage-grouse.

*Black-tailed Prairie Dogs* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns.

*Designated Sensitive Species* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within identified crucial habitat and within 1/2 mile of active nests.

*Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of known bald eagle nest sites that have been active within the past 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.

*Big Game Winter Range* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within crucial winter range for elk, mule deer, and antelope.

*Bighorn Sheep Distribution* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within bighorn sheep distribution areas.

*Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1 mile of bighorn sheep lambing areas, if such activities would adversely impact lamb survival.

*Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 1/4 mile of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.

*Soils/Steep Slopes* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited on slopes 20% and greater.

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes I and II* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited in VRM Class I and II areas.

*Recreation* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within the line of sight/sound or 300 feet (whichever is closer) of developed recreation areas and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. Work-over types of operations, like well fracing or maintenance, would be limited to Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

## Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Under this Alternative, the existing lease stipulations would be strengthened by implementing conditions of approval to protect the objects in the Monument. The conditions of approval would apply to all the oil and gas lease acreage (42,805 acres) in the Monument (Table 2.21). The conditions of approval would be applied to the APD after an onsite evaluation indicates the presence of the specific resource and after considering the waivers, exceptions and modifications list in [Appendix K.1](#). The current stipulations (Form 3109-1) would apply to that portion of five of the 12 West HiLine oil and gas leases that are not entirely within the Monument (2,454 acres).

Seasonal or distance restrictions would be placed on oil and gas activities to protect sage-grouse nesting areas and winter habitat, active ferruginous hawk nests, big game winter range, and bighorn sheep distribution and bighorn sheep lambing areas.

### *Timing – Alternative F*

*Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Zone* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from March 1 to June 15 in sage-grouse nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek.

Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

*Greater Sage-Grouse Crucial Winter Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within crucial winter habitat for sage-grouse. This condition would not apply to the operation and maintenance of production facilities. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

*Ferruginous Hawk* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from March 1 to August 1 within 1/2 mile of active ferruginous hawk nest sites.

*Big Game Winter Range* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within winter range for elk and deer and crucial antelope winter range. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

*Bighorn Sheep Distribution* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from December 1 to March 31 within bighorn sheep distribution areas. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

*Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited from April 1 to June 15 within bighorn sheep lambing areas. Travel on identified designated roads may include these timing restrictions or limited site visits.

Controlled surface use conditions would be applied to protect black-tailed prairie dogs, designated sensitive species, most soils, visual resources in Class II, III and IV areas and cultural resources.

### *Controlled Surface Use – Alternative F*

*Black-tailed Prairie Dogs* – Surface disturbance may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of prairie dog towns, if an activity would adversely impact prairie dogs and/or associated species.

*Designated Sensitive Species* – Surface disturbance may be controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of the proposed site or the activity delayed 90 days within identified crucial habitat or active nests.

*Soils/Steep Slopes* – Prior to surface disturbance on slopes 30% and greater or on slopes 20% and greater with severely erosive and/or slumping soils, a certified engineering and reclamation plan must be approved by the authorized officer. This plan must demonstrate how the following would be accomplished:

- Site productivity would be restored.
- Surface runoff would be adequately controlled.
- The site and adjacent areas would be protected from accelerated erosion, such as rilling, gullying, piping, slope failure, and mass wasting.
- Nearby watercourses would be protected from sedimentation. Water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws.
- Surface-disturbing activities would not be conducted during extended wet periods.
- Construction or reclamation would not be allowed when soils are frozen.

The operator must also provide an evaluation of past practices on similar terrain and be able to demonstrate success under similar conditions.

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes II, III and IV* – All surface-disturbing activities, semi-permanent and permanent facilities in VRM Classes II, III and IV would utilize proper site selection; reduction of soil and vegetative disturbance; choice of color; and over time, return the disturbed area to a seamless, natural landscape.

*Historic Properties and/or Cultural Resources* – The affected area may be found to contain historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM would not approve any ground-disturbing activities that may affect any such properties or resources until it completes its obligations under applicable requirements of the NHPA and other authorities. The BLM may require modification to exploration or development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in adverse effects that cannot be successfully avoided, minimized or mitigated.

Surface disturbance would not be allowed in order to protect sage-grouse leks, bald eagle nest sites and nesting habitat, streams and riparian/wetland areas, soils on slopes 40% and greater, visual resources in VRM Class I areas and developed recreation areas.

#### **No Surface Disturbance – Alternative F**

*Greater Sage-Grouse Leks* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of sage-grouse leks.

*Bald Eagle Nest Sites and Nesting Habitat* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of

known bald eagle nest sites that have been active within the past 7 years, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.

*Streams and Riparian/Wetland Areas* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within 500 feet of the channels of ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams, or within 500 feet of the outer margins of riparian and wetland areas.

*Soils/Steep Slopes* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited on slopes 40% and greater.

*Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited in VRM Class I areas.

*Recreation* – Surface disturbance would be prohibited within the line of sight/sound or 300 feet (whichever is closer) of developed recreation areas (Level 1, 2, and 3 sites) and undeveloped recreation areas receiving concentrated public use. Work-over types of operations would be limited to weekdays, except for emergency situations when operations would be allowed.

## **Natural Gas Operations**

### **Alternative A (Current Management)**

**Seismic** – Seismic operations planned off of roads must demonstrate that proposed transportation and exploration methods would minimize the potential for creating new roads or trails. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter.

**Drilling Operations** – The BLM would be consistent with the state spacing requirements and current Board Orders for the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain Gas Fields. Currently, one well is allowed per half section within the Leroy Gas Field and one well per section is allowed within the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field ([Appendix K.2](#)). Each field contains multiple exceptions for additional wells to be drilled per half section/sections or location exceptions. Changes, exceptions or modifications would be allowed to maximize the extraction of the natural gas resource.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), American Petroleum Institute (API) recommended practices and standard operating procedures, including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and FS 1989, referred to as the “Gold Book”).

Administrative access on resource roads for natural gas operations would be allowed with no restrictions.

**Production Facilities and Equipment** – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security), No. 5 (Measurement of gas), and No. 7 (Disposal of produced water); and BMPs ([Appendix G](#)).

The placement and construction of pipelines would follow standards consistent with the Gold Book (BLM and FS 1989) and operating procedures, including allowing cross-country pipelines.

Administrative access on resource roads would be allowed with no restrictions.

**Reclamation** – Reclamation would follow BMPs and standard operating procedures ([Appendix G](#)). Previously disturbed sites (i.e., current wells with final abandonment notices with less than 100% reclamation) would be allowed to reclaim naturally.

## Alternative B

**Seismic** – Seismic operations planned off of roads must demonstrate that proposed transportation and exploration methods would minimize the potential for creating new roads or trails. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter.

**Drilling Operations** – The BLM would limit spacing to no more than four well locations/sites per section, subject to other siting criteria (i.e., visual resources, sensitive wildlife species and slope/soil concerns). Changes, exceptions or modifications would be allowed in the interest of maximizing the extraction of the natural gas resource.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices and standard operating procedures, including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and FS 1989, referred to as the “Gold Book”).

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The objective would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from trouble or problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The objective would be to reduce impacts,

avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Administrative access on resource roads for natural gas operations would be allowed with no restrictions.

**Production Facilities and Equipment** – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security) and No. 5 (Measurement of gas); and BMPs ([Appendix G](#)).

Pipeline placement and construction would follow standards consistent with the Gold Book (BLM and FS 1989) and operating procedures, including allowing cross-country pipelines.

The BLM would require operators to utilize wildlife mitigation and BMPs on all gas compressors for noise control ([Appendix G](#) and [Appendix L.1](#)). Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre (total surface disturbance) would not be allowed on BLM land. Pumping units would be allowed, provided all noise producing mechanisms could be mitigated to acceptable levels for wildlife considerations ([Appendix L.1](#)). Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment and water disposal pits would be allowed.

Water disposal would follow current regulations and standard operating procedures (43 CFR 8164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 7 (Disposal of produced water)). Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with sloped berms into the pit. All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps where necessary. For wells in the Monument, only two trips per month would be authorized to transport water off site. Exceptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via a pipeline to an approved facility, disposal pits (including tanks) or in an approved water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Administrative access on resource roads would be allowed with no restrictions.

**Reclamation** – Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures and BMPs ([Appendix G](#)). When reclamation activities could cause more surface disturbance and natural reclamation is possible, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The reclamation standards would minimize erosion and establish native vegetation.

## Alternative C

**Seismic** – Seismic operations (vehicle activity) would be restricted to designated roads. Exceptions would be autho-

rized on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the degree of data needed to identify the resource and the operator's ability to mitigate surface disturbance. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter.

**Drilling Operations** – The BLM would be consistent with the state spacing requirements and current Board Orders for the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain Gas Fields. Currently, one well is allowed per half section within the Leroy Gas Field and one well per section is allowed within the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field. Each field contains multiple exceptions for additional wells to be drilled per half section/sections or location exceptions. Changes, exceptions or modifications are allowed to maximize the extraction of the natural gas resource.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices and standard operating procedures, including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and FS 1989, referred to as the “Gold Book”).

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The goal would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from trouble or problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The goals would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Vehicle activity would be restricted to designated roads. Exceptions would be authorized on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the degree of data needed to identify the resource and the operator's ability to mitigate surface disturbance.

**Production Facilities and Equipment** – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security) and No. 5 (Measurement of gas); and BMPs (Appendix G).

Pipeline locations would be restricted to existing disturbance or the least intrusive disturbance.

The BLM would require operators to utilize wildlife mitigation and BMPs on all gas compressors for noise control (Appendix G and Appendix L.1). Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre (total surface disturbance) would not be allowed on BLM land. Pumping units would be allowed, provided all noise producing mechanisms could

be mitigated to acceptable levels for wildlife considerations (Appendix L.1). Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment and water disposal pits would be allowed.

Water disposal would follow current regulations (43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 7 (Disposal of produced water)) and standard operating procedures. Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with sloped berms into the pit. All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps where necessary. For wells in the Monument, only two trips per month would be authorized to transport water off site. Exceptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via a pipeline to an approved facility, disposal pits including tanks or in an approved water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Vehicle activity would be restricted to designated roads. Exceptions would be authorized on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the degree of data needed to identify the resource and the operator's ability to mitigate surface disturbance.

**Reclamation** – Reclamation efforts would follow standard operating procedures. When reclamation activities could cause more surface disturbance and natural reclamation is possible, disturbed surfaces would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The reclamation standards would minimize erosion and establish native vegetation.

## Alternative D

**Seismic** – Only helicopter-supported seismic activities would be allowed in specific areas. Gravitation methods would be allowed on designated roads. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter.

**Drilling Operations** – The BLM would be consistent with current state spacing requirements and current Board Orders for the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain Gas Fields. Currently, one well is allowed per half section within the Leroy Gas Field and one well per section is allowed within the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field. Each field contains multiple exceptions for additional wells to be drilled per half section/sections or location exceptions.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices and standard operating procedures, including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and FS 1989, referred to as the “Gold Book”).

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed

area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The goals would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from trouble or problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The goals would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts, and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

**Production Facilities and Equipment** – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security) and No. 5 (Measurement of gas); and BMPs ([Appendix G](#)).

Pipeline placement and construction would be restricted to existing disturbance or access roads.

The BLM would require operators to utilize wildlife mitigation and BMPs on all gas compressors for noise control ([Appendix G](#) and [Appendix L.1](#)). Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre (total surface disturbance) would not be allowed on BLM land. Pumping units would be allowed, provided all noise producing mechanisms could be mitigated to acceptable levels for wildlife considerations ([Appendix L.1](#)). Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment and water disposal pits would be allowed.

Water disposal would follow current regulations and standard operating procedures (43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 7 (Disposal of produced water)). Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with no berms into the pit (vertical sides) reducing surface disturbance. All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps. For each well there would be a limit of no more than five barrels of water per day. For wells in the Monument, no water would be transported via tanker. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via a pipeline to an approved facility, disposal pits including tanks, or in an approved water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

**Reclamation** – The reclamation standards would attempt to recapture an area's pre-disturbance appearance. When the disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre, the area would be recontoured and revegetated.

## Alternative E

**Seismic** – Only helicopter-supported seismic activities would be allowed in specific areas. Gravitation methods would be allowed on designated roads. All seismic activities would be subject to the wildlife mitigation measures discussed earlier in this chapter.

**Drilling Operations** – The BLM would reduce spacing in specific areas where necessary from two wells per section to one well per section. Changes, exceptions or modifications would be allowed.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices and standard operating procedures including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and FS 1989, referred to as the “Gold Book”).

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The goals would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from trouble or problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The goals would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

**Production Facilities and Equipment** – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security), No. 5 (Measurement of gas), and No. 7 (Disposal of produced water); and BMPs ([Appendix G](#)).

Pipeline placement and construction would be restricted to existing disturbance or access roads.

The BLM would require operators to utilize Best Available Control Technology (BACT) on all gas compressors for nitrogen oxide emissions. The BLM would also require operators to utilize wildlife mitigation and BMPs on all gas compressors for noise control ([Appendix G](#) and [Appendix L.1](#)). Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre (total surface disturbance) would not be allowed on BLM land. Pumping units would be allowed, provided all noise producing mechanisms could be mitigated to acceptable

levels for wildlife considerations ([Appendix L.1](#)). Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment and water disposal pits would be allowed.

Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with no berms into the pit (vertical sides). All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps. For each well there would be a limit of no more than five barrels of water per day. For wells in the Monument, no water would be transported via tanker. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via pipeline, disposal pits including tanks, or in a water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

**Reclamation** – The reclamation standards would attempt to recapture an area’s pre-disturbance appearance. When the disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre, the area would be recontoured and revegetated.

## Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

**Seismic** – Vehicle activity would be restricted to designated roads. Exceptions would be authorized on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the degree of data needed to identify the resource and the operator’s ability to mitigate surface disturbance.

Surface blasting would be allowed on a case-by-case basis, provided the blasts would not interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by the Monument Proclamation. Sensitive areas would require helicopter support.

**Drilling Operations** – Spacing would remain consistent with state spacing requirements and current Board Orders for the Leroy and Sawtooth Mountain Gas Fields. Proposals for increased well densities would be allowed up to one well site per quarter section, subject to siting criteria (i.e., visual resources, sensitive wildlife species and slope/soil concerns). Any more than one well per quarter section would be directionally drilled from an existing active well location in the quarter section.

Drilling operations would follow current regulations, including 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 2 (Drilling operations), API recommended practices and standard operating procedures including surface operating standards for natural gas exploration and development (BLM and FS 1989, referred to as the “Gold Book”).

Only the minimal amount of surface disturbance would be permitted for drilling and production phases. The disturbed

area would be confined to an acceptable (safe) area/space based on the type of operation. The objectives would be to achieve a desired effect on the land with minimum disturbance by using low impact drilling technology, developing multiple wells from one location or staying away from trouble or problem areas. This would include the access to a drilling site. The objectives would be to reduce impacts, avoiding areas that could be subject to high impacts, and locating the operation away from sensitive areas.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site visits.

**Production Facilities and Equipment** – Production facilities and equipment would be required to follow standard operating procedures; 43 CFR 3164.1 Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 3 (Site security), No. 5 (Measurement of gas), and No. 7 (Disposal of produced water); and BMPs ([Appendix G](#)).

Pipeline placement and construction would be restricted to existing disturbance or the least intrusive disturbance (existing roads).

The BLM would require operators to utilize wildlife mitigation and BMPs on all gas compressors for noise control ([Appendix G](#) and [Appendix L.1](#)). Large gas compressors or pumping units (long-term noise producers) should be located outside the Monument, but if they must be located within the Monument, BMPs would be followed ([Appendix G](#)).

Gas compressors, pumping units and production infrastructure would be located where they minimize noise and visual impacts and comply with VRM objectives established for the area. The VRM objectives provide standards for the design and development of projects.

Fencing, meter/well sheds, risers, well head equipment, water disposal pits and netting would be allowed.

Water disposal pits would be sized according to water production with berms into the pit. All containment systems would require wildlife escape ramps and/or netting where necessary. For wells in the Monument, only two trips per month would be authorized to transport water off site. Exceptions would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The operator would have the option to dispose of the water via pipeline to an approved facility, disposal pits including tanks, or in an approved water disposal well if these other options are not viable.

Travel on identified designated roads would be restricted to the minimal vehicle size and type needed for the job. Due to resource issues, timing restrictions may be applied to site

visits. For construction and heavy trucks related to production, this alternative would restrict equipment that exceeds 49db from being within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks between 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. between March 1 and June 15.

**Reclamation** – Reclamation efforts would follow BMPs and standard operating procedures ([Appendix G](#)). In some areas, disturbed surfaces (i.e., current wells with final abandonment notices with less than 100% reclamation) would be allowed to reclaim naturally. The intent of the reclamation standards would be to minimize erosion and establish native vegetation.



# Access and Transportation

The alternatives in this section address the transportation system, including access to and within the Monument and the use of backcountry airstrips by recreationists and commercial users.

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## Access

*The BLM's goal is to manage legal and physical access to and within the Monument to provide opportunities for diverse activities.*

### Alternative A (Current Management)

The BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements with willing landowners for administrative and public use. The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and private landowners to improve recreation access. This may involve participation in block management or developing access agreements with willing private landowners.

New resource roads for natural gas operations would be open to public access.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument manager.

### Alternative B

The BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements with willing landowners where no legal public access exists to or within the Monument or where additional access is needed to meet management objectives (Map D). The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and private landowners to improve recreation access. This may involve participation in block management or developing access agreements with willing private landowners.

The BLM would coordinate with the CMR National Wildlife Refuge to improve recreation access to the east side of the Monument from the James Kipp Recreation Area. The BLM would also coordinate with Blaine County and the Fort Belknap Community Council to improve recreation access across the Cow Island and Timber Ridge roads in the northeast area of the Monument.

New resource roads for natural gas operations would be open to public access.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument manager.

### Alternative C

The BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements with willing landowners where no legal public access exists to or within the Monument (Map D). The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and private landowners to improve recreation access. This may involve participation in block management or developing access agreements with willing private landowners.

The BLM would coordinate with the CMR National Wildlife Refuge to improve recreation access to the east side of the Monument from the James Kipp Recreation Area. The BLM would also coordinate with Blaine County and the Fort Belknap Community Council to improve recreation access across the Cow Island and Timber Ridge roads in the northeast area of the Monument.

The BLM would restrict general public use of new resource roads to natural gas operations. These determinations about public access to specified areas via such roads would be based on resource conditions and made in site-specific environmental assessments. No additional road access would be granted to the public in the Ervin Ridge WSA.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument manager.

### Alternative D

The BLM would not attempt to acquire new or additional public access. The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and private landowners to maintain current recreation access.

On new resource roads to natural gas operations, the BLM would restrict public access to all sensitive areas. The public use and permanent status of new resource roads would be addressed in a site-specific environmental assessment.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument manager. The BLM could designate specific closed roads for use by individuals with disabilities, based on demand or on a case-by-case basis.

### Alternative E

The BLM would not attempt to acquire new or additional public access. The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and private landowners to maintain current recreation access.

New resource roads for natural gas operations would be closed to public access.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument manager. The BLM could designate specific closed roads for use by individuals with disabilities, based on demand or on a case-by-case basis.

## Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

The BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements with willing landowners where no legal public access exists to or within the Monument, or where additional public access is needed to meet management objectives, including dispersed recreation use (Map D). The BLM would consider building or rerouting roads as necessary for additional public access to large blocks of BLM land. The BLM would cooperate with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and private landowners to improve recreation access. This may involve participation in block management programs or developing access agreements with willing private landowners.

The BLM would coordinate with the CMR National Wildlife Refuge to improve recreation access to the east side of the Monument from the James Kipp Recreation Area. The BLM would also coordinate with Blaine County and the Fort Belknap Community Council to improve recreation access across the Cow Island and Timber Ridge roads in the northeast area of the Monument.

New resource roads to natural gas operations would be closed for public access, unless shown to meet management objectives through a site-specific environmental assessment.

Individuals with disabilities could request a permit to travel on closed roads consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Such access would be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Monument manager. If the need arises, the BLM could identify specific designated closed roads as access for individuals with disabilities.

## BLM Road System

*The BLM's goal is to provide access to state and federal land and reasonable access for private landowners while protecting the features of the Monument. This includes access for administrative needs and authorized uses of industry and government agencies.*

*The BLM's goal is to manage legal and physical access to and within the Monument to provide opportunities for diverse recreation activities (motorized and non-motorized) while considering the surrounding regional recreation opportunities in north-central Montana. The Monument is a relatively small but significant part of this region and cannot provide opportunities for all recreational activities on all BLM land while protecting the objects for which it was designated.*

Public use of private roads that provide access to BLM land in the Monument must be negotiated with the individual landowners. Seven road segments which cross state land are currently open for public travel (Chapter 3, Montana DNRC Roads (state land)). All other road segments which cross state land, unless covered by a public access easement (there are five of these), are currently closed to motorized travel.

A road is a linear route segment that can be created by the passage of vehicles (two-track); constructed; improved; or maintained for motorized travel. The following specifications were used to determine which routes would be inventoried for the Monument transportation plan database:

Motorized travel is not considered cross-country (off road) on BLM land when:

- The motorized vehicle uses constructed roads that are maintained by the BLM. Constructed roads are often characterized with cut and fill slopes.
- The motorized vehicle use is clearly evident two-track routes with regular travel and continuous passage of motorized vehicles over a period of years. A two-track is where perennial vegetation is devoid or scarce, or where wheel tracks are continuous depressions in the soil yet evident to the casual observer and are vegetated.

BLM roads are classified into three categories (collector, local and resource roads) and five maintenance levels. The transportation alternatives are based on these BLM classifications and maintenance levels as described in Tables 2.22 and 2.23.

A map showing the transportation system under each alternative is available on the BLM website at [http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/state\\_info/planning.htm](http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/state_info/planning.htm).

<b>Table 2.22 BLM Road Classifications</b>	
Collector Roads	These Bureau roads normally provide primary access to large blocks of land, and connect with or are extensions of a public road system. Collector roads accommodate mixed traffic and serve many uses. They generally receive the highest volume of traffic of all the roads in the Bureau road system. User cost, safety, comfort, and travel time are primary road management considerations. Collector roads usually require application of the highest standards used by the Bureau. As a result, they have the potential for creating substantial environmental impacts and often require complex mitigation procedures.
Local Roads	These Bureau roads normally serve a smaller area than collectors, and connect to collectors or a public road system. Local roads receive lower volumes, carry fewer traffic types, and generally serve fewer uses. User cost, comfort, and travel time are secondary to construction and maintenance cost considerations. Low volume local roads in mountainous terrain, where operating speed is reduced by effect of terrain, may be single-lane roads with turnouts. Environmental impacts are reduced as steeper grades, sharper curves, and lower design speeds than would be permissible on collector roads are allowable.
Resource Roads	These Bureau roads normally are spur roads that provide point access and connect to local or collector roads. They carry very low volume and accommodate only one or two types of use. Use restrictions are applied to prevent conflicts between users needing the road and users attracted to the road. The location and design of these roads are governed by environmental compatibility and minimizing Bureau costs, with minimal consideration for user cost, comfort, or travel time.

<b>Table 2.23 BLM Road Maintenance Levels</b>	
Maintenance Level 1	This level is assigned to roads where minimum maintenance is required to protect adjacent lands and resource values. These roads are no longer needed and are closed to traffic. The objective is to remove these roads from the transportation system.
Maintenance Level 2	This level is assigned to roads where the management objectives require the road to be opened for limited administrative traffic. Typically, these roads are passable by high-clearance vehicles.
Maintenance Level 3	This level is assigned to roads where management objectives require the road to be open seasonally or year-round for commercial, recreation, or high volume administrative access. Typically, these roads are natural or aggregate surfaced, but may include low use bituminous surfaced roads. These roads have defined cross sections with drainage structures (e.g., rolling dips, culverts, or ditches). These roads may be negotiated by passenger cars traveling at prudent speeds. User comfort and convenience are not considered a high priority.
Maintenance Level 4	This level is assigned to roads where management objectives require the road to be open all year (except may be closed or have limited access due to snow conditions) and to connect major administrative features (recreation sites, local road systems, administrative sites, etc.) to county, state, or federal roads. Typically, these roads are single or double lane, aggregate or bituminous surface, with a higher volume of commercial and recreational traffic than administrative traffic.
Maintenance Level 5	This level is assigned to roads where management objectives require the road to be open all year and are the highest traffic volume roads of the transportation system.

## Alternative A (Current Management)

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner, administrative, and public travel.

All existing BLM roads would remain open, unless previously restricted through the West HiLine RMP, the Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP or completed watershed plans.

Existing roads would remain open to all forms of motorized and mechanized use.

**Road System Criteria** – Existing roads would be designated open yearlong, unless they were previously designated open seasonally or closed under a resource management plan or watershed plan (Table 2.24).

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	506
Open Seasonally	73
Closed	15
Total	594

**Road Classification and Maintenance** – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and one of five maintenance levels that reflect the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.25). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

The Cow Island and Knox Ridge roads would remain classified as collector roads. The Bullwhacker, Lower Two Calf, Middle Two Calf and Timber Ridge roads would remain classified as local roads. All other roads would be classified as resource roads.

<i>Road Classification</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	18	0	0	8	10	0
Local	31	0	0	31	0	0
Resource	545	15	505	25	0	0
Total	594	15	505	64	10	0

The Cow Island road would remain at a Level 4 maintenance category. The Knox Ridge, Bullwhacker, Lower Two Calf, Middle Two Calf, Timber Ridge, Butch Camp, DeWeese, Heller Bottom, James Kipp Recreation Area, Spencer Cow Camp, Wood Bottom, Woodhawk Bottom, and Woodhawk Trail roads would remain at a Level 3 maintenance category. All other roads designated as open would remain at a Level 2 maintenance category.

**Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads** – Emergency travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue or law enforcement vehicle.

Administrative use off road and on closed roads would be allowed for federal, state and county agencies, lessees and permittees. Administrative use would remain limited to those activities necessary to administer a permit.

Some examples of administrative use include:

- Gas or electric utilities monitoring a utility corridor for safety conditions or normal maintenance.
- Livestock permittees building or maintaining fences, delivering salt or supplements, moving livestock, or checking wells or pipelines as part of the implementation of a grazing permit or lease.
- Agency personnel involved in prescribed fire, noxious weed control, surveying and monitoring.
- Where possible, agency personnel performing administrative functions would locate a sign or notice in the area they are working to identify for the public the function they are authorized to perform.

Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, for the retrieval of a tagged big game animal. In the WSAs, game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may not pull off existing roads for camping.

**Signing** – Existing directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where needed.

**Table 2.26  
Factors Applied to Existing Roads to Determine if Open Yearlong or Seasonally**

<b>Road System Criteria</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
<i>Vehicle Ways in WSAs</i>	Open.		Vehicle ways that have reclaimed naturally would be closed.	Vehicle ways would be closed.		Vehicle ways that have reclaimed naturally would be closed.
<i>Greater Sage-Grouse</i>	Open.	For resource roads 1/4 mile from an active lek, a seasonal closure would be implemented from March 1 to June 15.	For resource roads 1/4 mile from an active lek, a seasonal closure would be implemented from March 1 to June 15. For resource roads that are located within crucial winter habitat, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31.	For some resource roads that are 2 miles from an active lek, a seasonal closure would be implemented from March 1 to June 15. For some resource roads that are located within crucial winter habitat, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31.	For resource roads that are 1/4 mile from an active lek, a yearlong closure would be implemented. For resource roads that are located within crucial winter habitat, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31.	For some resource roads that are 1/4 mile from an active lek, a seasonal closure would be implemented from March 1 to June 15. For some resource roads that are located within crucial winter habitat, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31.
<i>Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas</i>	Open.	For some resource roads that are located within bighorn sheep lambing areas, a seasonal closure would be implemented from April 1 to June 15 on a case-by-case basis.	For some resource roads that are located within bighorn sheep lambing areas, a seasonal closure would be implemented from April 1 to June 15 on a case-by-case basis.	For some resource and local roads that are located within bighorn sheep lambing areas, a seasonal closure would be implemented from April 1 to June 15 on a case-by-case basis.	For some resource roads that are located within bighorn sheep lambing areas, a seasonal closure would be implemented from April 1 to June 15.	For some resource roads that are located within bighorn sheep lambing areas, a seasonal closure would be implemented from April 1 to June 15.
<i>Big Game Winter Range</i>	Open.		For some resource roads that are located within big game winter range, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31 on a case-by-case basis.	For some resource roads that are located within big game winter range, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to May 15.	For some resource roads that are located within big game winter range, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31 on a case-by-case basis.	For some resource roads that are located within big game winter range, a seasonal closure would be implemented from December 1 to March 31 on a case-by-case basis.

<b>Road System Criteria</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
<b>Wildlife Habitat Security and Game Retrieval</b>	Some roads would have a seasonal road closure during the big game hunting season, but would be available for game retrieval.		Some resource roads could be closed from September 1 to November 30 to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season. Game retrieval would be allowed from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and for 3 hrs. after sunset.	Some resource roads could be closed from September 1 to November 30 to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season. Game retrieval would be allowed from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Some resource roads could be closed from September 1 to November 30 to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season.	Some resource roads could be closed from September 1 to November 30 to provide wildlife habitat security during the fall hunting season. Game retrieval would be allowed from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
<b>Designated Sensitive Species</b>	Open.	A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests. The season would be determined based on the species of raptor.	A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests. The season would be determined based on the species of raptor.	A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource and local roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests. The season would be determined based on the species of raptor.	A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource, local and collector roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests. The season would be determined based on the species of raptor.	A seasonal closure would be implemented on some resource roads that are 1/4 mile from raptor nests that have been active for the last 5 nesting seasons. The season would be determined based on the species of raptor.
<b>Bald Eagle</b>	Open.	A seasonal closure (February 1 to May 31) would be implemented from active bald eagle nests.				A seasonal closure would be implemented from February 1 to May 31 on some resource roads that are 1/2 mile from active bald eagle nests.
<b>Invasive Weeds</b>	Open.		Temporary resource road closures would be implemented in highly infested areas.	Temporary resource and local road closures would be implemented in highly infested areas.		Temporary resource road closures would be implemented in highly infested areas.

## Alternative B

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open to public travel, unless closed to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM’s objectives would be to evaluate roads based on erosion, identified wildlife species habitat and the need for the road (type of use and need for access). This includes closing or rerouting roads that impact wildlife or soils (e.g., highly erosive soils, weeds). The BLM reserves the option to build new roads if necessary to access blocks of BLM land.

Roads that are open year long or seasonally would be open to all forms of motorized and mechanized use. Some closed roads could be designated as mechanized (mountain bike) trails through site-specific planning and environmental review.

**Road System Criteria** – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative B are listed in Table 2.26. These factors were applied to the existing roads to determine the roads that would be open yearlong or seasonally in the Monument (Table 2.27). The road system could be modified if vehicle use patterns or resource conditions change. Modifications to the road system would be based on the management guidance under this alternative and changes would be addressed through a travel plan with public participation.

**Road Classification and Maintenance** – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.28). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

The BLM would install cattleguards as needed or where appropriate on roads that are designated open yearlong.

Closed roads would be reclaimed naturally.

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	444
Open Seasonally	95
Closed	55
Total	594

**Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads** – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue or law enforcement emergency purposes.

Administrative use off road and on closed roads for BLM, other federal, state and county agencies, lessees and permittees would be allowed. Administrative use would remain limited to those activities necessary to administer a permit. Some examples of administrative use are discussed in Alternative A.

Big game retrieval would be allowed on some identified closed roads (administrative roads that may be closed to the public or roads that are seasonally closed). Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, for the retrieval of a tagged big game animal. In the WSAs, game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may pull off designated open roads no more than 300 feet for camping and must use the most direct route to the site to minimize resource damage. Site selection must be completed by non-motorized or non-mechanized means.

<i>Road Classification</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	18	0	0	8	10	0
Local	31	0	0	31	0	0
Resource	545	55	465	25	0	0
Total	594	55	465	64	10	0

**Signing** – Existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to prevent resource damage, safety or visitor confusion. Roads open to motorized and mechanized travel would be signed. Closed roads would not be signed unless necessary to prevent resource damage.

### Alternative C

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open to public travel, unless closed to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM’s objectives would be to retain roads to access recreation sites, gas well sites, major range improvement projects, backcountry airstrips and access to areas commonly used for dispersed recreation (geological areas and trailheads). The BLM would reduce the number of roads in crucial wildlife habitat, in areas considered unsuitable due to erosion and slope, and if unique geologic formations, cultural sites or riparian areas are being degraded. The BLM reserves the option to build new roads if necessary to access blocks of BLM land.

Roads that are open yearlong or seasonally would be open to all forms of motorized and mechanized use. Some closed roads could be designated as mechanized (mountain bike) trails through site-specific planning and environmental review.

**Road System Criteria** – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative C are listed in Table 2.26. These factors were applied to the existing roads to determine the roads that would be open yearlong or seasonally in the Monument (Table 2.29). The road system could be modified if vehicle use patterns or resource conditions change. Modifications to the road system would be based on the management guidance under this alternative and changes would be addressed through a travel plan with public participation.

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	407
Open Seasonally	94
Closed	93
Total	594

**Road Classification and Maintenance** – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.30). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

The BLM would install cattleguards as needed on roads that are designated open year long.

Most closed roads would be reclaimed naturally. On selected sections of the closed road, reclamation may include ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix or a mix approved by the Monument manager.

**Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads** – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement emergency purposes.

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. Permittees and lessees would be allowed to drive off road and on closed roads to administer their livestock grazing permits. Some examples of administrative use are discussed in Alternative A.

Big game retrieval would be allowed on identified closed roads from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and for 3 hours after the legal hunting time. Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, for the

<i>Road Classification</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	18	0	0	8	10	0
Local	31	0	0	31	0	0
Resource	545	93	427	25	0	0
Total	594	93	427	64	10	0

retrieval of a tagged big game animal. In the WSAs, game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may pull off designated open roads no more than 150 feet for camping and must use the most direct route to minimize resource damage. Site selection must be completed by non-motorized or non-mechanized means.

**Signage** – Existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to prevent resource damage, safety or visitor confusion. Roads open to motorized and mechanized travel would be signed. Closed roads would not be signed, unless necessary to prevent resource damage.

**Alternative D**

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open to public travel, unless closed to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM’s objectives would be to retain roads if they serve a specific purpose (accessing recreation sites, gas well sites and major range improvement projects). Most roads that are not collector or local would be closed as would parallel roads. Roads along the middle of ridges would remain open, but most roads along the edge of rims and spur roads would be closed. The BLM reserves the option to build new roads if necessary to access blocks of BLM land.

Some roads could be limited to specific motorized and/or mechanized use through site-specific planning and environmental review.

**Road System Criteria** – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative D are listed in Table 2.26. These factors were applied to the existing roads to determine the roads that would be open yearlong or seasonally in the Monument (Table 2.31). The road system could be modified

if vehicle use patterns or resource conditions change. Modifications to the road system would be based on the management guidance under this alternative and changes would be addressed through a travel plan with public participation.

**Road Classification and Maintenance** – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.32). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	287
Open Seasonally	43
Closed	264
Total	594

Closed roads would be reclaimed with planned/designed reclamation. On selected sections of the closed road, reclamation may include ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix or a mix approved by the Monument manager.

**Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads** – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement emergency purposes.

The BLM, other federal, state and county agencies would be allowed off road and on closed roads for administrative uses. Seasonal use provisions for travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for lessees and permittees as needed to administer the lease, with the development and use of an identification system. Some examples of administrative use are discussed in Alternative A.

<i>Road Classification</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	18	0	0	8	10	0
Local	31	0	0	31	0	0
Resource	545	264	256	25	0	0
Total	594	264	256	64	10	0

Big game retrieval by motorized vehicles would be allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on specific designated closed roads (roads normally open only for administrative use). Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, for the retrieval of a tagged big game animal. In the WSAs, game carts would not be allowed off road.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may pull off designated roads no more than 10 feet for camping.

**Signing** – Existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to prevent resource damage, safety or visitor confusion. Roads open or closed to motorized and mechanized travel would be signed.

### Alternative E

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open to public travel, unless closed to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM’s objectives would be to retain collector and local roads, but most resource roads would be closed. However, resource roads currently maintained would remain open.

Some roads could be limited to specific motorized and/or mechanized use through site-specific planning and environmental review.

**Road System Criteria** – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative E are listed in Table 2.26. These factors were applied to the existing roads to determine the roads that would be open yearlong or seasonally in the Monument (Table 2.33).

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	101
Open Seasonally	4
Closed	489
Total	594

**Road Classification and Maintenance** – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.34). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

Closed roads would be reclaimed with planned/designed reclamation. On selected sections of the closed roads, reclamation may include ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix or a mix approved by the Monument manager.

**Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads** – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement emergency purposes.

Administrative use for BLM, other federal, state and county agencies would be allowed on closed roads. Off-road travel would not be allowed. The BLM would provide permission on a case-by-case basis for administrative use by lessees and permittees. Some examples of administrative use are discussed in Alternative A.

Big game retrieval by motorized vehicles would not be allowed on closed roads. Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed on closed roads to retrieve a tagged big game animal. Game carts would not be allowed off road.

<i>Road Classification</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	18	0	0	8	10	0
Local	31	0	0	31	0	0
Resource	545	489	31	25	0	0
Total	594	489	31	64	10	0

Motorized or mechanized vehicles could not pull off designated roads for camping.

**Signing** – New or existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. No open or closed road signs would be allowed.

**Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)**

All BLM roads providing motorized access to the boundary of private or state land would remain open for private landowner and administrative travel. These roads would also be open for public travel, if shown to meet Monument objectives.

The BLM’s objectives would be to retain roads to access recreation sites, gas well sites, major range improvement projects, backcountry airstrips and access to areas commonly used for dispersed recreation (geological areas and trailheads). The BLM would reduce the number of parallel and spur roads and roads in crucial wildlife habitat, in areas considered unsuitable due to erosion and slope, and if unique geologic formations, cultural sites or riparian areas are being degraded. The BLM reserves the option to build new roads if necessary to access blocks of BLM land.

Roads that are open year long or seasonally would be open to all forms of motorized and mechanized use consistent with management objectives. Some closed roads could be designated as mechanized (e.g., mountain bike) trails through site-specific planning and environmental review.

**Road System Criteria** – Along with the objectives discussed above, the factors used to identify the overall road system under Alternative F are listed in Table 2.26. These factors were used to determine which roads in the Monument would be open yearlong or seasonally (Map 3 and Table 2.35). The road system could be modified if vehicle use patterns or resource conditions change. Modifications to the road system would be based on the management guidance under this alternative and changes would be addressed through a travel plan with public participation.

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Road Miles</i>
Open Yearlong	207
Open Seasonally	171
Closed	216
Total	594

**Road Classification and Maintenance** – Each road segment would be assigned to one of three classifications and a maintenance level that reflects the appropriate management objectives (Table 2.36). The classification or maintenance level could be changed if vehicle use patterns change or if resource damage occurs.

The Cow Island, Knox Ridge, Wood (Muir) Bottom and James Kipp Recreation Area roads would be classified as collector roads. The Timber Ridge, Bullwhacker, Middle Two Calf, Lower Two Calf, Woodhawk Bottom and Woodhawk Trail roads would be classified as local roads. All other roads would be classified as resource roads.

The Cow Island, James Kipp Recreation Area and Wood (Muir) Bottom roads would be assigned to a Level 4 maintenance category. The Knox Ridge, Timber Ridge, Bullwhacker, Middle Two Calf, Lower Two Calf, Spencer Cow Camp and Woodhawk Trail roads would be assigned to a Level 3 maintenance category. The remaining open roads would fall under the Level 2 maintenance category.

The BLM would install cattleguards as needed or where appropriate on roads that are designated open yearlong.

Most closed roads would be reclaimed naturally. On selected sections of closed roads, reclamation may include ripping, scarifying and seeding with a native seed mix or a mix approved by the Monument manager.

<i>Road Classification</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Maintenance Level (miles)</i>				
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Collector	21	0	0	8	13	0
Local	40	0	4	36	0	0
Resource	533	216	310	7	0	0
Total	594	489	314	51	13	0

**Exceptions for Travel Off Road and on Closed Roads** – Travel off road and on closed roads would be allowed for any military, fire, search and rescue, or law enforcement vehicle used for emergency purposes.

Administrative and emergency use would be allowed off road and on closed roads for BLM, other federal, state and county agencies, lessees and permittees. Administrative use would be limited to those activities necessary to administer the permit. Some examples of administrative use are discussed in Alternative A.

Big game retrieval by motorized vehicles would be allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on specific designated closed roads (roads that are seasonally closed). Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts would be allowed off road, except in the WSAs, to retrieve a tagged big game animal. Game carts would not be allowed off road in the WSAs.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles may pull off designated roads no more than 300 feet for camping and must use the most direct route to minimize resource damage. Site selection must be completed by non-motorized or non-mechanized means and camping would be encouraged at previously used sites to reduce the number of new campsites.

In the WSAs, motorized or mechanized vehicles would not be allowed to pull off designated roads for camping. However, parallel camping along roads would be allowed.

**Signage** – Existing traffic control and directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to enhance safety or prevent resource damage or visitor confusion. Roads open to motorized and mechanized travel would be signed (small road number signs). Closed roads would not be signed unless necessary to prevent resource damage.

## Aviation

*The BLM's goal is to provide access for diverse recreation opportunities while protecting the features in the Monument.*

### Alternative A (Current Management)

The 10 existing backcountry airstrips would remain open (Table 2.37).

Commercial aircraft such as planes, helicopters, hot air balloons or ultralights would be allowed to land on the airstrips in the Monument. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

### Alternative B

The existing airstrips would remain open (authorized) and additional airstrips could be allowed after environmental review (Table 2.37).

Commercial aircraft (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be allowed to land in the Monument. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

### Alternative C

Seven airstrips would remain open (Table 2.37). Three of these airstrips would be restricted seasonally, based on wildlife habitat requirements or values for which the Monument was established. The Cow Creek, Left Coulee, Bullwhacker and Knox Ridge backcountry airstrips would be open yearlong. The Black Butte North and Woodhawk backcountry airstrips would be closed from December 1 to March 31. The Ervin Ridge backcountry airstrip would be closed from December 1 to June 15.

Any commercial aircraft landing in the Monument (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be required to utilize only authorized backcountry airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply to the commercial use of airstrips. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

### Alternative D

Six airstrips (selected to avoid clusters) would remain open (Table 2.37). Four of these airstrips would be restricted seasonally, based on wildlife habitat requirements or values for which the Monument was established. The Cow Creek and Knox Ridge backcountry airstrips would be open yearlong. The Left Coulee, Bullwhacker and Black Butte North backcountry airstrips would be closed from December 1 to March 31. The Ervin Ridge backcountry airstrip would be closed from December 1 to June 15.

Any commercial aircraft landing in the Monument (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be required to utilize only specific authorized backcountry airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply to the commercial use of airstrips. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

### Alternative E

No airstrips would remain open (Table 2.37).

No commercial aircraft (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be allowed to land in the Monument.

## Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)

Six airstrips (selected to avoid clusters) would remain open (Table 2.37 and Map 3). Four of these airstrips would be restricted seasonally, based on wildlife habitat requirements or values for which the Monument was established. The Cow Creek and Knox Ridge backcountry airstrips would be open yearlong. The Left Coulee, Bullwhacker and Black Butte North backcountry airstrips would be closed from December 1 to March 31. The Ervin Ridge backcountry airstrip would be closed from December 1 to June 15.

The BLM would allow minimal hand maintenance of airstrips without prior approval, but maintenance would be limited to the area previously disturbed. The emphasis would be to keep the airstrips as backcountry airstrips, only suitable for landing aircraft equipped to use primitive airstrips. Mechanized maintenance, improvements, facilities or infrastructure (tie downs, wind socks, airstrip delimiters, etc.) would require prior approval by the authorized officer.

All commercial aircraft landing in the Monument (planes, helicopters, hot air balloons, or ultralights) would be required to utilize specific authorized backcountry airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply to the commercial use of these airstrips. Commercial use would require prior authorization.

## Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail

The following alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed study because they did not meet the vision, goals and management guidance provided by the Proclamation or were outside of the technical or legal constraints of developing a land use plan for BLM land and resources in the Monument.

### Class I Airshed

An alternative to designate and manage the Monument as a Class I airshed was considered but eliminated from detailed study because the State of Montana has delegated responsibility for management of the Clean Air Act, including classification of airsheds. The Monument is within Airshed 9 and is a Class II airshed. The BLM will comply with national and state air quality standards under all alternatives.

### Reinventory the Monument Roadless Areas with Wilderness Character (Bullwhacker)

An alternative to reinventory the Bullwhacker area for wilderness characteristics was considered but eliminated from detailed study because a formal wilderness inventory of this Bullwhacker area was completed in 1979 and 1980. The BLM has no information to suggest that this inventory needs revision. The public does have the opportunity to help provide information to the BLM concerning wilderness characteristics and inventory.

**Table 2.37**  
**Airstrips Open Yearlong, Seasonally, or Closed (by Alternative)**

<i>Airstrip</i>	<i>Alternative A (Current Management)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Alternative D</i>	<i>Alternative E</i>	<i>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</i>
Black Butte North	Open	Open	Seasonal	Seasonal	Closed	Seasonal
Black Butte South	Open	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Bullwhacker	Open	Open	Open	Seasonal	Closed	Seasonal
Cow Creek	Open	Open	Open	Open	Closed	Open
Ervin Ridge	Open	Open	Seasonal	Seasonal	Closed	Seasonal
Knox Ridge	Open	Open	Open	Open	Closed	Open
Left Coulee	Open	Open	Open	Seasonal	Closed	Seasonal
Log Cabin	Open	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Roadside	Open	Open	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Woodhawk	Open	Open	Seasonal	Closed	Closed	Closed

## Livestock Grazing

An alternative to identify lands as not available for livestock grazing was considered but eliminated from detailed study because under the Proclamation, the “[l]aws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument.” Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management practices will be followed to protect rangeland resources and, where necessary, to mitigate conflicts with other Monument uses and values. Administrative actions will be implemented under existing regulations to ensure compliance with existing permit/lease requirements. These actions include monitoring and supervision of grazing use and enforcement in response to unauthorized use.

## Oil and Gas

An alternative to prohibit any further oil and gas exploration and development was considered but eliminated from detailed study because the 43 federal oil and gas leases in the Monument are considered to have valid existing rights based upon the Proclamation, wherein it states, “The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights. The Secretary of Interior shall manage development on existing oil and gas leases within the monument, subject to valid existing rights, so as not to create any new impacts that would interfere with the proper care and management of the objects protected by this proclamation.” Specific management for oil and gas is addressed under the range of alternatives for Natural Gas Exploration and Development consistent with the Proclamation.

## Comparison of Alternatives

A summary comparison of all the alternatives discussed in Chapter 2 follows in Table 2.38. The topics are presented in the same order as above, under the four categories of Health of the Land and Fire; Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure; Natural Gas Exploration and Development; and Access and Transportation.

A summary comparison of the environmental consequences discussed in Chapter 4 also follows in Table 2.39. The summary tables provide a comparative form for defining the differences among the alternatives.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Health of the Land and Fire**

Topic	Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i>	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i>
<b>Fish and Wildlife - Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat</b>	Maintain and enhance sage-grouse habitat.	Guidance and direction from the Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage-Grouse in Montana – Final.				Mechanical treatment the primary method and prescribed fire a secondary method to remove conifers that encroach on sage-grouse habitat.
	Specify locations for salt and other supplements.	No supplemental feeding, mineral placement or other livestock congregating function in identified active crucial sage-grouse habitat during sensitive seasonal times.				Placement of salt or mineral supplements avoided (or not allowed) near leks during the breeding season (March 1- June 15). Supplemental winter feeding of livestock avoided, where practical, on sage-grouse winter habitat and around leks.
	Maintain sagebrush stands.	Acres of sagebrush habitat increased through conversion of crested wheatgrass in selected areas in or near nesting habitat, and native sagebrush reseeded in areas that have been disturbed (e.g., wildland fire).				Sage planting promoted, where appropriate. Areas disturbed by treatments reclaimed and/or reseeded when necessary.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Health of the Land and Fire**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
	Adjust livestock grazing densities and/or change season of use (end by Oct. 31).	High livestock densities not allowed in identified active nesting habitat from March 1 to June 15. When conditions are required for sage-grouse security, livestock grazing would not occur in identified active crucial winter habitat.			Livestock grazing not allowed in identified sage-grouse nesting habitat from March 1 to June 15. Livestock grazing not allowed in identified crucial winter habitat from Dec. 1 to March 31.	Concentration of livestock near leks or key sage-grouse habitat discouraged to avoid potential disturbance or displacement of sage-grouse.
<b>Fish and Wildlife - Black-tailed Prairie Dog Towns</b>	Towns smaller than 10 acres not actively managed (Blaine County).	Guidance and direction from the Conservation Plan for Black-Tailed and White-Tailed Prairie Dogs in Montana. Regional plans utilized when completed.				
	Towns managed based on values or problems (Fergus and Chouteau Counties)  Towns maintained at the 1988 level (Phillips County).	Towns allowed to expand only to the point they adversely impact other resources or affect Standards for Rangeland Health.			Towns allowed to expand.	Towns allowed to expand only to the point they adversely impact other resources or affect Standards for Rangeland Health.
<b>Fish and Wildlife - Mitigation Measures for Surface-Disturbing Activities</b>						
<b>Greater Sage-Grouse</b>						
<b>Lek</b>	No surface disturbance within 500 feet.	No surface disturbance within 1/4 mile.			No surface disturbance within 2 miles.	No surface disturbance within 1/4 mile.
<b>Nesting Area</b>	No surface disturbance within strutting grounds from March 1 to June 30.	No surface disturbance within 2 miles of a lek from March 1 to June 15.			No surface disturbance within 2 miles of a lek.	No surface disturbance within 2 miles of a lek from March 1 to June 15.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Health of the Land and Fire**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
<b><i>Crucial Winter Habitat</i></b>	No surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to May 15.	No surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31.			No surface disturbance.	No new surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31.
<b><i>Black-tailed Prairie Dog Towns</i></b>	No surface disturbance within 1/4 mile of identified essential habitat.	No surface disturbance.	Surface-disturbing activities avoid, or minimize, disturbance.	No surface disturbance within 1/4 mile, if an activity adversely impacts prairie dogs and/or associated species.		No new surface disturbance within 1/4 mile, if an activity adversely impacts prairie dogs and/or associated species.
<b><i>Designated Sensitive Species</i></b>	Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days within identified crucial habitat or active nests.		Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded within identified crucial habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests.	Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded within identified crucial habitat or within 1/4 mile of active nests.  Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded from March 1 to Aug. 1 within 1/2 mile of active nests.	Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded within identified crucial habitat or within 1/2 mile of active nests.	Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of the activity or the activity delayed 90 days within identified crucial habitat or active nests.  Surface-disturbing activities controlled or excluded from March 1 to Aug. 1 within 1/2 mile of ferruginous hawk nests.
<b><i>Bald Eagle</i></b>	Surface disturbance controlled or excluded within 1/4 mile of identified essential habitat.	No surface disturbance within 1 mile of active winter roosting areas from Nov. 15 to Feb. 29, if disturbance could cause an adverse effect.	No surface disturbance within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years.	No surface disturbance within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years and within riparian area nesting habitat.		No new surface disturbance within 1/2 mile of a nest that has been active in the last 7 years, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Health of the Land and Fire**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i></b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i></b>
		No surface disturbance within 1 mile of active bald eagle nest sites from Feb. 1 to July 31, if disturbance could cause nest abandonment or failure.				
<b><i>Big Game Winter Range (Elk, Mule Deer, and Antelope)</i></b>	No surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to May 15.	No surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31.		No surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to May 15.	No surface disturbance.	No new surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31 (timeframe shortened if conditions warrant).
<b><i>Bighorn Sheep Distribution</i></b>	Surface disturbance controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days.		No surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31.		No surface disturbance.	No new surface disturbance from Dec. 1 to March 31.
<b><i>Bighorn Sheep Lambing Areas</i></b>	Surface disturbance controlled or excluded within 200 meters of the activity or the activity delayed 60 days.	No surface disturbance from April 1 to June 15, if activities adversely impact lamb survival.		No surface disturbance, if activities adversely impact lamb survival.	No surface disturbance within a 1-mile line of sight, if activities adversely impact lamb survival.	No new surface disturbance from April 1 to June 15, if activities adversely impact lamb survival.
<b>Vegetation</b>	Restore or establish native riparian vegetation.	Activity plan updates emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. If the opportunity is available, establish resource reserve allotments.			Activity plan updates emphasize riparian habitat protection. No resource reserve allotments.	Activity plan updates emphasize riparian habitat restoration and protection. If the opportunity is available, establish resource reserve allotments (e.g., Hay Coulee).

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Health of the Land and Fire**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i></b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i></b>	
		Restore priority non-native vegetation sites to a native species community (control highly invasive non-native species).		Restore all non-native vegetation sites to a native species community.		Restore priority non-native vegetation sites to a native species community (control highly invasive non-native species).	
		To achieve vegetation goals in an activity plan (watershed plan), livestock grazing strategies used to manage vegetation communities.					
		Rehabilitate surface-disturbed areas with native and non-native grasses, forbs and shrubs.	Rehabilitate surface-disturbed areas with native grasses, forbs and shrubs. Non-native plants used under special circumstances.	Rehabilitate surface-disturbed areas with native and non-native grasses, forbs and shrubs.		Rehabilitate surface-disturbed areas with native grasses, forbs and shrubs. Non-native plants used under special circumstances.	
<b><i>Reclamation</i></b>	Previously disturbed sites allowed to reclaim naturally.	Reclamation standards to minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. In some areas disturbed surfaces allowed to reclaim naturally.		Reclamation standards based on leaving no trace. Surface recontoured to a natural repose and sites revegetated where disturbance exceeds 1/10 acre.		Reclamation standards to minimize erosion and establish native vegetation. In some areas disturbed surfaces allowed to reclaim naturally.	
		Non-functional reservoirs, pits and water developments allowed to reclaim naturally, if feasible.		Non-functional reservoirs, pits and water developments in WSAs, or where there is viewshed infringement, removed and rehabilitated, if feasible.			
		For previously disturbed sites a reclamation plan completed as needed.					
<b>Range Improvements</b>							
<b><i>Barbed Wire and Electric Fences</i></b>	Standard specifications for fence installation to mitigate risk to wildlife.	Standard specifications with allowances for certain classes or types of livestock. Four-wire fences authorized if the class or kind of livestock necessitates the need.			Standard specifications followed but four-wire fences not allowed.	Standard specifications with allowances for certain classes or types of livestock.	

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Health of the Land and Fire**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
		Modify existing fences, if creating barriers to wildlife movement. In isolated cases, relocate fences to better fit with topography and management needs.			Modify all existing fences to standard.  Relocate fences that do not fit with the landscape.	Four-wire fences authorized if the class or kind of livestock necessitates the need.  Modify existing fences, if creating barriers to wildlife movement. In isolated cases, relocate fences to better fit with topography and management needs.
<b>Water Developments</b>	Water developments limited on some terminal ridges.	Water developments considered on a site-specific basis, based on the benefits/detriment to all resources to improve the health of the land. Water developments based on the grazing practices within a specific area and other resources.				
<b>Visual Resource Management (VRM)</b>						
<b>VRM Class I</b>	Surface-disturbing activities may require special design to blend with the natural surroundings.		Reduce visual contrast by site selection, reduced disturbance, color, and reclamation.	Surface-disturbing activities may be prohibited in VRM Class I areas.		
<b>VRM Class II, III or IV</b>	Surface-disturbing activities may require special design to blend with the natural surroundings.			Reduce visual contrast by site selection, reduced disturbance, color, and reclamation.	Surface-disturbing activities may be prohibited in VRM Class II areas.	Reduce visual contrast by site selection, reduced disturbance, color, and reclamation.
<b>VRM Classes</b>	<i>No. Acres</i>	<i>No. Acres</i>	<i>No. Acres</i>	<i>No. Acres</i>	<i>No. Acres</i>	<i>No. Acres</i>
<b>Class I</b>	61,700	111,480	111,480	111,480	111,480	111,480
<b>Class II</b>	118,800	44,520	161,560	263,520	263,520	161,560
<b>Class III</b>	8,200	105,000	101,960	0	0	24,770
<b>Class IV</b>	186,300	114,000	0	0	0	77,190

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Health of the Land and Fire**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i></b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i></b>
<b>Forest Products</b>	Product sales available outside of the WSAs and UMNWSR.  Designate areas for personal use. Limited to dead-and-down material in the UMNWSR.	Product sales associated with other projects/activities and vegetative goals or objectives. Minimal harvest techniques where forest health is in jeopardy.  Designate areas for personal use.		Minimal harvest techniques where forest health is in jeopardy.  Designate areas for personal use. With a permit, individuals can utilize material from wildland fires.	Product sales and incidental personal use prohibited.	Minimal harvest techniques where forest health is in jeopardy.  Designate areas for personal use. With a permit, individuals can utilize material from wildland fires.
<b>Rights-of-Way (ROWS)</b>						
<b><i>Corridors</i></b>	Seven corridors across the Missouri River: U.S. 191, State #236, Lloyd/Stafford Ferry road, DY Trail/Power Plant Ferry road, Fort Benton, Loma and Virgelle.	Three corridors across the Missouri River: Fort Benton, Loma and Virgelle.  Five corridors with defined boundaries (BLM land within 1/2 mile of the centerline): U.S. 191, State #236, Lloyd/Stafford Ferry road, DY Trail/Power Plant Ferry road, and Klabzuba pipeline.				
<b><i>Avoidance Areas</i></b>	Recreational and scenic sections of the UMNWSR.	Scenic sections of the UMNWSR.				
	Cow Creek ACEC and riparian areas.	Bodmer Landscapes, Cow Creek ACEC, cultural/historic sites, riparian and wetland areas, and areas containing unique geologic formations.				
	Areas containing highly erosive soils (sedimentary Breaks soils).					Areas considered unsuitable due to erosion and slope.
	Stafford and Ervin Ridge WSAs, and Cow Creek WSA (Blaine County).					

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Health of the Land and Fire**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>		<b>Alternative B</b>		<b>Alternative C</b>		<b>Alternative D</b>		<b>Alternative E</b>		<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>	
<b>Exclusion Areas</b>	Wild sections of the UMNWSR and Woodhawk, Dog Creek, and Antelope Creek WSAs.											
	Cow Creek WSA (Phillips County).		Cow Creek, Stafford, and Ervin Ridge WSAs.									
	WSAs not designated as wilderness and released by Congress managed like adjacent BLM land.				WSAs not designated as wilderness and released by Congress are avoidance areas.		WSAs not designated as wilderness and released by Congress are exclusion areas.				WSAs not designated as wilderness and released by Congress are avoidance areas.	
<b>Land Ownership Adjustment</b>	No BLM land identified for disposal.		Eighty acres of BLM land identified for disposal (exchange for 70 acres of private land).									
<b>Fire</b>	State Director's Interim Guidance.		Aggressive fire suppression and limited use of prescribed fire.		Aggressive fire suppression and use of prescribed fire.		Responsiveness with a wide range of available fire management tools and flexibility.		Maximize the natural process with a minimum of intervention.		Responsiveness with a wide range of available fire management tools and flexibility.	
<b>Fire Management Unit</b>	<i>Wildland</i>	<i>Prescribed</i>	<i>Wildland</i>	<i>Prescribed</i>	<i>Wildland</i>	<i>Prescribed</i>	<i>Wildland</i>	<i>Prescribed</i>	<i>Wildland</i>	<i>Prescribed</i>	<i>Wildland</i>	<i>Prescribed</i>
<b>Wild and Scenic River</b>	F2	RX2	F1	RX1	F1	RX1	F1	RX2	F2	RX2	F2	RX2
<b>Wilderness Study Areas</b>	F2	RX2	F1	RX2	F2	RX2	F2	RX3	F3	RX3	F2	RX3
<b>North Monument</b>	F2	RX2	F1	RX1	F1	RX2	F2	RX3	F3	RX3	F2	RX3
<b>South Monument</b>	F2	RX2	F1	RX1	F1	RX2	F2	RX3	F3	RX3	F2	RX3
<p><i>F1 = Suppress all fires aggressively using all available methods</i>      <i>RX1 = No prescribed fire</i>  <i>F2 = Appropriate suppression response considering the natural role of fire</i>      <i>RX2 = Prescribed fire based on public safety and resources</i>  <i>F3 = Identify areas where wildland fire would be used under prescription</i>      <i>RX3 = Prescribed fire based on the natural role of fire</i></p>												
<b>Wild &amp; Scenic Rivers (Cow Creek, Eagle Creek and Dog Creek)</b>	No recommendation on suitability.		Three eligible streams are non-suitable.						Three eligible streams are suitable.		Three eligible streams are non-suitable.	

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i></b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i></b>
<b>Recreation</b>						
<b>Recreation Management Areas (RMAs)</b>	Four existing RMAs: South Phillips, Judith, North Missouri Breaks, and Upper Missouri River.	Four existing RMAs consolidated into 2: Upper Missouri River and Uplands.				
<b>Fees</b>	Continue with the \$6 per vehicle fee for overnight camping at James Kipp Recreation Area.	Discontinue the fee at James Kipp Recreation Area and no additional fee sites.	Fee for overnight camping in developed recreation sites (Level 1).	Fee for overnight camping in developed recreation sites (Level 1) and to boat/camp on the Missouri River.		Fee for use of some existing structures (cabins and corrals).
			Fees collected for camping used for site maintenance and visitor services improvements.			
	Fees used for site maintenance and visitor services improvements.		Fees to boat the Missouri River to cover management costs. Fees also be used to support county emergency services and to purchase short-term campsite easements or leases from willing private landowners.			
	After the RMP is completed, with public input, develop a business plan to determine the fee amounts charged.					
<b>Coordination with Gateway Communities</b>	Encourage private sector initiatives to develop visitor opportunities.	Partner with gateway communities or provide a staffed site for visitor information.		Provide visitor information to local communities.	Partner with gateway communities or provide a staffed site for visitor information.	
<b>Research, Collection, and Special Event Activities</b>	Archaeological and historical investigations and paleontological research allowed.			Archaeological and historical investigations (except for 106 permits) and paleontological research not allowed.	Archaeological and historical investigations and paleontological research allowed.	
	Personal collection of plant material allowed.	Personal collection of plant material allowed in specified areas.		Personal collection of plant material prohibited.	Personal collection of plant material allowed.	

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
	Personal collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood allowed.	Personal collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood allowed in identified areas.			Personal collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood prohibited.	Personal collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood allowed in identified areas.
	Use of metal detectors by permit only.	Use of metal detectors authorized in certain areas. By permit only in other areas.			Use of metal detectors prohibited.	Use of metal detectors by permit only.
	SRPs required for all special activities. Large group events authorized subject to restrictions.		May limit the size of a group or specific activities. Large group events authorized on a case-by-case basis.		Large group events not allowed.	May limit the size of a group or specific activities. Large group events authorized on a case-by-case basis.
<b>Recreation Activities in Sensitive Wildlife Habitat</b>	Personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) allowed. A seasonal restriction may apply.	Personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) allowed from April 1 to Nov. 30.	Personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) allowed from May 16 to Nov. 30.	Personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) not allowed.	Personal collection of shed antlers (horn hunting) allowed. A seasonal restriction may apply (Dec. 1 to March 31).	
	Camping on islands discouraged from April 1 to July 31.	Camping on islands allowed.		Camping on islands not allowed from April 1 to July 31.	Camping on islands not allowed.	Camping on islands not allowed from April 1 to July 31.
<b>Interpretive Sites (Cultural and Geological)</b>	Interpretation on a case-by-case basis.	Interpretation with signs, exhibits and trails.	Small, low-key interpretive signs that blend in with the surroundings. Simple markers at some sites. Portable interpretation available.		Interpretation at sites not provided.	Small, low-key interpretive signs that blend in with the surroundings. Simple markers at some sites. Portable interpretation available.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
<b>Upper Missouri River SRMA</b>						
<i>Special Recreation Use Permits (SRPs)</i>	SRPs limited to 23.	SRPs not limited.	SRPs limited to 30.		SRPs not limited but user days limited based on an allocation system.	SRPs limited to 23.
<i>Opportunities For Boaters</i>	The number of boaters not limited.		Standards and indicators used to manage visitor use: when reached or exceeded, actions taken to reduce impacts without limiting the number of boaters.		Develop and implement an allocation system upon completion of the RMP.	Standards and indicators used to manage visitor use: when reached or exceeded, actions taken to reduce impacts without limiting the number of boaters.
				If necessary, implement an allocation system.		
	Groups larger than 50 require an SRP.	No restriction on group size.	From June 15 to Aug. 1, groups larger than 20 could launch at Coal Banks or Judith Landing on Wed., Thurs. and Fri.	Groups larger than 30 require an SRP.	Groups larger than 16 require an SRP.	From June 15 to Aug. 1, groups larger than 20 could launch at Coal Banks or Judith Landing on Wed., Thurs. and Fri. Groups larger than 30 require an SRP.
<b>Camping Facilities</b>						
<i>Camping</i>	Recreation facilities and campsites include five Level 1 sites, four Level 2 sites, and twelve Level 3 sites.	Additional Level 1, 2 and 3 sites provided as needed to address use demands or resolve visitor use issues.	Additional Level 1 sites only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Improvements to Level 1 and 2 sites to address visitor use issues. Additional Level 2 sites between Fort Benton and Judith Landing as necessary.	No additional Level 1 sites. Improvements to existing Level 1 and 2 sites to address visitor use issues. Additional Level 2 sites only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Additional Level 3 sites as needed.	Recreation facilities and campsites remain at the current number and location.	Additional Level 1 sites only in the recreation segments of the UMNWSR. Improvements to Level 1 and 2 sites to address visitor use issues. Additional Level 2 sites between Fort Benton and Judith Landing as necessary.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
			Additional Level 3 sites as needed.			Additional Level 3 sites as needed.
		Agreements with willing private landowners to develop alternative campsites.				Seek to purchase short-term easements or leases from willing private landowners for alternative or additional campsites.
<b><i>Length of Stay at One Campsite</i></b>	14-night limit.		From June 15 to Aug. 1, a 2-night limit at Level 2 sites. 14-night limit at other sites.		From June 15 to Aug. 1, a 2-night limit at Level 2 and 3 sites. 14-night limit at other sites.	From June 15 to Aug. 1, a 2-night limit at Level 2 sites. 14-night limit at other sites.
<b><i>Camp Stoves, Fire Pans, or Fire Mats at Level 4 Opportunities</i></b>	Camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats not required.		Camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats required.			
<b><i>Signing</i></b>	Level 1 sites contain a full range of signs as necessary to provide for safety. International signs to mark Level 2 and 3 sites.	Signs as necessary at all levels of facility development (Levels 1-4) and not necessarily associated with a developed site.	Signs in Level 1 sites as needed to safely direct traffic and provide information. Signs to identify Level 1, 2 and 3 sites.	Signs in Level 1 sites commensurate with surroundings and development. Signs as necessary at Level 2 sites. No other signs.	Signs limited to Level 1 sites commensurate with surroundings and development. No other signs.	Signs in Level 1 sites as needed to safely direct traffic and provide information. Signs to identify Level 1, 2 and 3 sites.
<b>Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Missouri River</b>						
<b><i>Fort Benton – Pilot Rock (River Mile 0 to 52 - Recreation Segment)</i></b>	Open.	Open.	Open, except personal watercraft and floatplanes only allowed on river miles 0 to 3.	Open, except personal watercraft not allowed from June 15 to Sept. 15 and floatplanes only allowed on river miles 0 to 3.	No motorized watercraft.	Open, except personal watercraft and floatplanes only allowed on river miles 0 to 3.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
<b><i>Pilot Rock to Deadman's Rapids (River Mile 52 to 84.5 – Wild and Scenic Segment)</i></b>	Seasonal restriction: Sat. before Memorial Day through the Sun. after Labor Day, downstream travel only at no-wake speed.	Open	Seasonal restriction: June 15 to Sept. 15, downstream travel only at no-wake speed.	Seasonal restriction: May 1 to Dec. 1, downstream travel only at no-wake speed.	No motorized watercraft.	Seasonal restriction: June 15 to Sept. 15, downstream travel only at no-wake speed.
			No personal watercraft or floatplanes yearlong.			
<b><i>Deadman's Rapids to Holmes Council Island (River Mile 84.5 to 92.5 – Recreation Segment)</i></b>	Open.	Open.	Open, except no personal watercraft yearlong and floatplanes only allowed from Sept. 16 to June 4.	Open, except personal watercraft not allowed from June 15 to Sept. 15 and floatplanes not allowed yearlong.	No motorized watercraft.	Open, except no personal watercraft or floatplanes yearlong.
<b><i>Holmes Council Island to Fred Robinson Bridge (River Mile 92.5 to 149 - Wild and Scenic Segment)</i></b>	Seasonal restriction: Sat. before Memorial Day through the Sun. after Labor Day, downstream travel only at no-wake speed.	Open.	Seasonal restriction: June 15 to Sept. 15, downstream travel only at no-wake speed.	Seasonal restriction: June 15 to Sept. 15, no motorized watercraft; Sept. 16 to Dec. 1, downstream travel only at no-wake speed.	No motorized watercraft.	Seasonal restriction: June 5 to Sept. 15, no motorized watercraft.
			No personal watercraft or floatplanes yearlong.			
<b>Administrative Use of Motorized Watercraft on the Missouri River</b>	Administrative use not restricted.		Designate days when agencies use upstream travel (avoid peak use days).	BLM (and special use authorizations) follow no-wake downstream travel restrictions.	Agency motorized watercraft (and special use authorizations) follow the same restrictions as public.	Initiate a cooperative effort among agencies operating on the Missouri River to achieve uniform standard operating procedures to minimize impacts to boaters.
			Administrative use agreements outline guidelines for motorized use.			
			Livestock grazing permittees allowed upstream travel to administer a grazing permit with prior notification (verbal or letter).			

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i></b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i></b>
<b>Uplands SRMA</b>						
<b>Special Recreation Use Permits</b>						
<b><i>Commercial Hunting</i></b>	No limit on the number of SRPs.		Limit the number of SRPs to the current level (14).	No limit on the number of SRPs.		Limit the number of SRPs to the current level (14).
	Permits assigned to specific areas (requested or assigned hunting area).	Permits assigned to the entire Monument.		Permits assigned to areas with limited public access.	Permits assigned to areas with public access.	Permits assigned to existing use areas (2004).
<b><i>Commercial Motorized Tours</i></b>	Tours allowed on all roads.	Tours restricted to local and collector roads and some resource roads.	Tours restricted to local and collector roads.	Tours limited to 2 vehicles per operator per day on local, collector and some resource roads.	Tours not allowed.	Tours limited to 2 vehicles per operator per day on local, collector and some resource roads.
<b>Camping Facilities</b>						
<b><i>Camping</i></b>	In some areas, do not construct developed or undeveloped sites unless a partnership is realized through local service organizations.	Level 1 and 2 sites confined to fishing reservoirs, overlooks, historic sites, etc.	Level 1 sites at the beginning of public access roads. Level 2 sites (park and explore) where people walk from parking areas.	Level 1 sites not allowed. Level 2 sites only on main artery roads.	Level 1 and 2 sites not allowed.	Level 1 sites at the beginning of public access roads. Level 2 sites (park and explore) where people walk from parking areas.
		Level 3 sites (pullouts) adjacent to the road. Fire rings are the only improvement.			Level 3 sites not allowed.	Level 3 sites (pullouts) adjacent to local and collector roads or on some closed spur roads (within 300 feet). Fire rings are the only improvement.
<b><i>Camp Stoves, Fire Pans, or Fire Mats at Level 4 Opportunities</i></b>	Camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats not required.		Camp stoves, fire pans or fire mats required.			

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Visitor Use, Services and Infrastructure**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i></b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i></b>
<b><i>Signs</i></b>	Level 1 sites contain a full range of signs as necessary to provide for safety. International signs to mark Level 2 and 3 sites.	Signs as necessary at all levels of facility development (Levels 1-4) and not necessarily associated with a developed site.	Signs in Level 1 sites as needed to safely direct traffic and provide information. Signs to identify campsites of minimum size.	Signs in Level 1 sites commensurate with surroundings and development. Signs as necessary at Level 2 sites. No other signs except for transportation.	Signs limited to Level 1 sites commensurate with surroundings and development. No other signs.	Signs in Level 1 sites commensurate with surroundings and development. Signs as necessary at Level 2 sites. No other signs except for transportation.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Natural Gas Exploration and Development**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
<b>Oil and Gas Stipulations and Conditions of Approval (see Table 2.21)</b>						
<b>Natural Gas Operations</b>						
<b>Seismic</b>	Seismic operations consistent with the State Director's Interim Guidance.		Vehicle activity restricted to designated roads. Exceptions on a case-by-case basis.		Helicopter-supported seismic activities in specific areas. Gravitation methods on designated roads.	Vehicle activity restricted to designated roads. Exceptions on a case-by-case basis.  Surface blasting on a case-by-case basis. Sensitive areas require helicopter support.
<b>Spacing Requirements</b>	One well per half section in the Leroy Gas Field and 1 well per section in the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field.  Exceptions apply.	No more than 4 well locations/sites per section.	One well per half section in the Leroy Gas Field and 1 well per section in the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field.  Exceptions apply.	One well per half section in the Leroy Gas Field and 1 well per section in the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field.  Exceptions do not apply.	Spacing reduced in specific areas from 2 wells per section to 1 well per section.	One well per half section in the Leroy Gas Field and 1 well per section in the Sawtooth Mountain Gas Field.  Increased well densities up to 1 well site per quarter section, subject to siting criteria.
<b>Drilling Operations</b>	Follow standard operating procedures.	Minimal amount of surface disturbance permitted with the use of BMPs. Confine the operation to an acceptable (safe) area/space. Use low impact drilling technology, develop multiple wells from one location, or stay away from problem areas. This includes access to a drilling site.				
<b>General Production Facilities and Equipment</b>	Follow standard operating procedures.	Wildlife mitigation and BMPs on all gas compressors for noise control.				
		Compression facilities requiring more than 1/10 acre not allowed. Pumping units allowed provided noise is at an acceptable level.				Large gas compressors or pumping units located outside the Monument if possible.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Natural Gas Exploration and Development**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
						If located in the Monument, follow BMPs.
<b>Administrative Access on Existing and New Resource Roads</b>	Access allowed.		Travel restricted to the minimal vehicle needed for the job. Timing restrictions may apply.			
<b>Pipelines</b>	Follow standard operating procedures.		Restricted to existing or least intrusive disturbance.	Restricted to existing disturbance or access roads.		Restricted to existing or least intrusive disturbance.
<b>Water Disposal</b>	Follow standard operating procedures.	Pits sized according to water production with berms (wildlife escape ramps where necessary). Two trips per month allowed to transport water off site; exceptions on a case-by-case basis.		Pits sized according to water production with no berms (wildlife escape ramps required). Each well is limited to no more than 5 barrels of water per day. No water transported via tanker.		Pits sized according to water production with berms (wildlife escape ramps and/or netting where necessary). Two trips per month allowed to transport water off site; exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
		Option to dispose of the water via pipeline, disposal pits including tanks, or in a water disposal well.				

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Access and Transportation**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
<b>Access</b>						
<b>Public Access</b>	Easements considered only with willing sellers.					
	Public access easements for administrative use and for the public.	Public access easements where no legal access exists or where additional access is needed.	Public access easements where no legal access exists.	No public access easements.		Public access easements where no legal access exists or where additional access is needed.
	Cooperate with agencies and landowners to maintain access (block management or access agreements).			Cooperate with agencies and landowners to improve access.		Cooperate with agencies and landowners to maintain access (block management or access agreements).
<b>Public Access on New Resource Roads Used for Natural Gas Operations</b>	Open for public travel.		Public travel restricted to specified areas. No additional access in the Ervin Ridge WSA.	Public travel restricted in sensitive areas.	Closed for public travel.	Closed for public travel unless to meet management objectives.
<b>Access for Individuals with Disabilities</b>	Individuals with disabilities can request a permit to travel on closed roads.					
		Closed roads open for individuals with disabilities.		Identify closed roads (access) for individuals with disabilities, case-by-case basis.		If needed, identify closed roads (access) for individuals with disabilities.
<b>BLM Road System</b>						
<b>BLM Roads to State and Private Land</b>	BLM roads to state and private land open for administrative, private landowner, and public travel.	BLM roads to state and private land open for administrative and private land access. These roads also open for public travel unless closed to meet Monument objectives.				BLM roads to state and private land open for administrative and private land access. These roads also open for public travel if shown to meet Monument objectives.



**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Access and Transportation**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A Current Mgmt</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F Preferred Alternative</b>
		Cattleguards installed as needed or where appropriate.				Cattleguards installed as needed or where appropriate.
		Closed roads allowed to reclaim naturally.	Closed roads allowed to reclaim naturally and on selected sections reclamation may include ripping, scarifying, and seeding.	Closed roads reclaimed with planned/designed reclamation. On selected sections of the closed road reclamation may include ripping, scarifying, and seeding.		Closed roads allowed to reclaim naturally and on selected sections reclamation may include ripping, scarifying, and seeding.
<b>Exceptions</b>						
<b>Administrative Use Off Road and on Closed Roads</b>	Administrative use off road and on closed roads by BLM and other agencies allowed.				Administrative use on closed roads by BLM and other agencies. No off-road travel.	Administrative use off road and on closed roads by BLM and other agencies.
	Administrative use off road and on closed roads by lessees and permittees limited to activities necessary to administer a lease or permit.			Lessees and permittees allowed seasonal use provisions as needed to administer a lease or permit.		Permission provided on a case-by-case basis for lessees and permittees to drive off road and on closed roads to administer a lease or permit.
<b>Game Retrieval</b>		Big game retrieval allowed on some identified closed roads.	Big game retrieval allowed on identified closed roads from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and for 3 hours after the legal hunting time.	Big game retrieval allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on specific designated closed roads.	Big game retrieval not allowed on closed roads.	Big game retrieval allowed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on specific designated closed roads.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Access and Transportation**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i></b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i></b>
	Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts allowed off road, except in the WSAs.				Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts allowed on closed roads. Game carts not allowed off road.	Non-motorized/non-mechanized game carts allowed off road, except in the WSAs.
	Game carts not allowed off road in the WSAs.					
<b>Camping Along Roads</b>	Motorized or mechanized vehicles are not allowed to pull off designated routes for camping.	Motorized or mechanized vehicles are allowed to pull off designated routes no more than 300 feet for camping.	Motorized or mechanized vehicles are allowed to pull off designated routes no more than 150 feet for camping.	Motorized or mechanized vehicles are allowed to pull off designated routes no more than 10 feet for camping.	Motorized or mechanized vehicles are not allowed to pull off designated routes for camping.	Motorized or mechanized vehicles are allowed to pull off designated routes no more than 300 feet for camping. In WSAs, motorized or mechanized vehicles are not allowed to pull off designated routes for camping.
<b>Signs</b>	Existing signs maintained. New signs where needed.	Existing signs maintained. New signs to enhance safety or prevent resource damage.			New or existing traffic control and directional signs maintained.	Existing signs maintained. New signs to enhance safety or prevent resource damage.
		Open roads signed, closed roads only signed if necessary.	Open and closed roads signed.	Open and closed roads not signed.	Open roads signed, closed roads only signed if necessary.	
<b>Aviation</b>						
<b>Backcountry Airstrips</b>	Ten airstrips open yearlong.		Seven airstrips: 4 open yearlong and 3 open seasonally.	Six airstrips: 2 open yearlong and 4 open seasonally.	No airstrips.	Six airstrips: 2 open yearlong and 4 open seasonally.

**Table 2.38 Summary Comparison of Alternatives  
Access and Transportation**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Alternative A <i>Current Mgmt</i></b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F <i>Preferred Alternative</i></b>
<b>Commercial Scenic Flight Landings</b>	Commercial scenic aircraft landings allowed.		Commercial scenic aircraft landings only on authorized airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply.	Commercial scenic aircraft landings only on specific authorized airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply.	Commercial scenic aircraft landings not allowed.	Commercial scenic aircraft landings only on specific authorized backcountry airstrips. Seasonal restrictions may apply.

**Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<b><i>Air Quality</i></b>	Natural gas operations and smoke from wildland and/or prescribed fires could cause air quality to deteriorate in the local area. Dust generation from vehicle traffic on unpaved roads would add to the particulates contributed by natural gas operations and smoke. These effects are short-term and normally quickly dispersed by winds.					
<b><i>Cultural Resources</i></b>	Natural processes would impact archaeological and historical sites. These sites may also be subject to human-induced impacts such as vandalism and damage from over-visitation.	May have an increase in the impacts to cultural properties and the area's setting.	Similar to Alternative A, but with fewer human-induced impacts from roads, as 93 miles would be closed.	Similar to Alternative A, but with fewer human-induced impacts from roads, as 264 miles would be closed.	May cause the loss of the Monument's cultural resources from further field research and knowledge of the historic associations.	Similar to Alternative A, but with fewer human-induced impacts from roads, as 216 miles would be closed.
<b><i>Fish and Wildlife</i></b>	Management would improve habitat for sage-grouse, prairie dogs, many designated sensitive species, and in some important big game habitats.					
<b>Mitigation</b>	<i>Wildlife Habitat within Areas of Proposed Mitigation (acres)</i>					
Sage-Grouse Lek	0	141	141	141	141	141
Nesting Area	Unknown	21,366	21,366	21,366	21,366	21,366
Winter Habitat	6,866	6,866	6,866	6,866	6,866	6,866
Prairie Dogs	3,932	507	507	3,932	3,932	3,932
Sensitive Species	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Bald Eagle	37	436	133	133	133	133
Deer and Elk Range	31,885	231,885	231,885	231,885	231,885	231,885
Antelope Range	26,700	26,700	26,700	26,700	26,700	26,700
Bighorn Sheep Distribution	Unknown	Unknown	134,639	134,639	134,639	134,639
Lambing Areas	Unknown	49,193	49,193	49,193	49,193	49,193
<b>Natural Gas</b>	Big game, sage-grouse and other wildlife species could be impacted by existing and potential natural gas development and infrastructure in crucial habitat.					

**Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<i>Wildlife Habitat within Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations or Proposed Conditions of Approval (acres)</i>						
Sage-Grouse Lek	0	31	31	31	It is reasonably foreseeable no new natural gas wells would be drilled.	31
Nesting Area	Unknown	5,774	5,774	5,774		5,774
Winter Habitat	441	441	441	441		441
Prairie Dogs	72	72	72	Unknown		Unknown
Sensitive Species	3	Unknown	535	2,188		Unknown
Deer and Elk Range	6,986	26,123	26,123	26,123		26,123
Antelope Range	2,561	6,149	6,149	6,149		6,149
Bighorn Sheep Distribution	14,244	14,244	14,244	14,244		14,244
Lambing Areas	6,563	6,563	6,563	13,550		6,563
Transportation	Big game, sage-grouse, and other wildlife species could be impacted by the use of roads in important wildlife habitat.					
<i>Wildlife Habitat within 1/4 mile of BLM Roads Open Yearlong and Seasonally (acres)</i>						
Elk Distribution	106,121	100,482	93,968	65,205	16,140	75,102
Deer and Elk Range	98,935	91,286	85,316	60,205	11,218	68,900
Antelope Range	13,653	13,628	12,883	9,779	1,914	10,799
Bighorn Sheep Distribution	42,161	39,981	35,722	25,567	9,980	31,798
Lambing Areas	12,446	12,238	9,543	6,641	2,051	8,468
Sage-Grouse Winter	4,018	4,018	3,933	2,856	972	3,047
Prairie Dog Towns	107	72	72	72	72	72
<b>Geology and Paleontology</b>	The flexibility to gather and interpret more information about geologic and paleontologic resources in the Monument would prevent the loss of this information due to erosion.				The opportunity to develop information about geologic and paleontologic resources would be eliminated. Some information would be lost as sites erode.	The impacts would be the same as Alternatives A through D.
<b>Soils</b>	Surface-disturbing activities could contribute to increased soil compaction, surface runoff and a subsequent increase in soil erosion and sedimentation. Guidance from BMPs, Standards for Rangeland Health and design standards would be followed to minimize and mitigate soil impacts.					
	Within the next 15 to 20 years, 35 natural gas wells	Within the next 15 to 20 years, 44 natural gas wells	Within the next 15 to 20 years, 28 natural gas wells	Within the next 15 to 20 years, 13 natural gas wells	Overall, this alternative would allow the fewest soil	Within the next 15 to 20 years, 34 natural gas wells

*Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences*

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
	could be drilled, which would result in 71 acres of soil disturbances. Interim reclamation would reduce this to 13 acres.	could be drilled, which would result in 104 acres of soil disturbances. Interim reclamation would reduce this to 18 acres.	could be drilled, which would result in 56 acres of soil disturbances. Interim reclamation would reduce this to 11 acres.	could be drilled, which would result in 15 acres of soil disturbances. Interim reclamation would reduce this to 6 acres.	impacts from surface-disturbing activities. No additional natural gas wells would be drilled.	could be drilled, which would result in 73 acres of soil disturbances. Interim reclamation would reduce this to 14 acres.
<b><i>Vegetation – Native Plants</i></b>	Localized vegetation disturbances would occur as a function of gas production activity, roads and recreation activities. These activities would likely impact less than 1,000 acres (in terms of total vegetation removal or damage to the health of plants).	Conversion of some non-native vegetation communities to native could occur. Mitigation measures would be adequate to ensure the impacts to vegetation are minimal (less than 1,000 acres).	Specific actions to manage sage-grouse habitat by conserving native vegetation communities would facilitate restoration in some native communities (small in acreage).		Minimizing roads and surface-disturbing activities would create minimum impacts to vegetation. Allowing prairie dogs to expand without controls could jeopardize vegetation in the localized area of the prairie dog town.	Localized vegetation disturbances would occur as a function of gas production activity, roads and recreation activities. These activities would likely impact less than 1,000 acres.
<b><i>Vegetation – Riparian</i></b>	The construction and operation of dams on the Missouri River has a dramatic impact on the flow regime of the river and has reduced the regeneration of woody riparian species, especially cottonwoods and willows. Livestock grazing has also impacted riparian regeneration, but can be partially mitigated by the management prescriptions contained in the Decisions Common to All Alternatives. The impacts to riparian regeneration from dams and livestock grazing would persist in both the short and long terms. Campers would continue to degrade riparian resources in small, localized areas at campsites. This degradation would persist into the long term. Planting native species in campgrounds would eventually result in more overstory species like cottonwood and green ash. Understory species, especially native shrubs and grasses, would continue to decline due to human impacts. Once the shrub understory has been eliminated, an understory dominated by introduced herbaceous species persists. The prospect of the site returning to a natural shrub-dominated understory is lost.					
<b><i>Vegetation – Noxious and Invasive Plants</i></b>	The management of invasive and noxious plants would continue as prescribed by the 2001 Guidelines for Integrated Weed Management. Invasive and noxious plants would be treated aggressively using integrated management principles as resources allow. This should result in a		The risk of new introductions of invasive and noxious plants and movement within the Monument would be mitigated to the extent possible. Other than natural causes such as wildlife, flooding, and ice scour, invasive species would have limited opportunity to colonize.		The impacts would be the same as Alternatives A and B.	

*Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences*

Resource	Alternative A (Current Management)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)						
	<p>significant decline in the amount and distribution of invasive and noxious plant populations in the next 10 to 20 years.</p> <p>Other activities and resource uses would continue the risk of introducing and moving invasive and noxious plant material to and within the Monument. These activities are unavoidable, but the risk could be reduced through proper mitigation and education of public land users. New introductions, when found, would be aggressively managed.</p>		<p>Management practices may be limited on the Missouri River that are needed to continue aggressive treatment of infestations not accessible by land. These infestations could grow unchecked in some areas.</p>									
<i>Visual Resources</i>	<p>There would be the potential for minor visual impacts on 61,700 acres of VRM Class I of which 2% could be related to natural gas activity.</p> <p>Visual impacts could potentially occur on 313,300 acres of VRM Class II, III and IV of which 13% could be related to natural gas activity.</p>	<p>There would be the potential for minor visual impacts on 111,480 acres of VRM Class I of which 1% could be related to natural gas activity.</p> <p>Visual impacts could potentially occur on 263,520 acres of VRM Class II, III and IV of which 16% could be related to natural gas activity.</p>	<p>There would be the potential for minor visual impacts on 111,480 acres of VRM Class I of which 3% could be related to natural gas activity.</p> <p>Visual impacts could potentially occur on 263,520 acres of VRM Class II and III of which 15% could be related to natural gas activity.</p>	<p>The visual impacts would be similar Alternative C.</p> <p>Visual impacts could potentially occur on 263,520 acres of VRM Class II of which 15% could be related to natural gas activity.</p>	<p>There would be the potential for minor or no visual impacts on 111,480 acres of VRM Class I and 263,520 acres of VRM Class II.</p>	<p>There would be the potential for minor or no visual impacts on 111,480 acres of VRM Class I of which 3% could be related to natural gas activity.</p> <p>Visual impacts could potentially occur on 263,520 acres of VRM Class II, III and IV of which 15% could be related to natural gas activity.</p>						
VRM Class	<i>Visual Resource Management Classes in the Monument (acres)</i>											
		%		%		%		%		%		%
Class I	61,700	16	111,480	30	111,480	30	111,480	30	111,480	30	111,480	30
Class II	118,800	32	44,520	12	161,560	43	263,520	70	263,520	70	161,560	43
Class III	8,200	2	105,000	28	101,960	27	0	0	0	0	24,770	7
Class IV	186,300	50	114,000	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	77,190	20

**Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
VRM Class and Oil and Gas Leases	<i>Visual Resource Management Classes within Existing Oil and Gas Leases (acres)</i>					
Class I	1,478	1,478	2,936	2,936	2,936	2,936
Class II	20,259	20,259	32,575	39,869	39,869	32,575
Class III	0	0	7,294	0	0	4,040
Class IV	21,068	21,068	0	0	0	3,254
VRM Class and Natural Gas Wells	<i>Reasonable Foreseeable Natural Gas Wells within Visual Resource Management Classes (number)</i>					
Class I	0	1	1	0	0	0
Class II	20	23	21	13	0	24
Class III	0	0	6	0	0	3
Class IV	15	20	0	0	0	7
<b>Water</b>	Increased potential for large, catastrophic fires; making them the least attractive for protecting water resources. The impacts, if these fires occur, could degrade water quality, infiltration and ground water recharge for the short term.		A gradual improvement in watershed conditions in the long term. Implementation of the completed watershed plans would have both short and long-term positive impacts to water resources.			
<b>Forest Resources</b>	The impacts would be very similar for all of these alternatives. Forest products sales would be incidental and so scattered that they would be relatively insignificant, unless associated with a much larger project adjoining another ownership.				No forest treatments would increase the possibility of a stand-replacing event such as wildland fire.	The impacts would be the same as Alternatives A through D.
<b>Lands and Realty</b>	Seven corridors would cross the Missouri River.	Eight corridors would cross the Missouri River and five of these would have defined boundaries within 1/2 mile of a road or pipeline in the Monument (21,004 acres).				
<b>Livestock Grazing</b>	Management of habitat for sage-grouse and other wildlife species could cause some inconvenience to livestock grazing.	Management of habitat for sage-grouse and other wildlife species could cause some inconvenience to livestock grazing. Recreational activities could cause conflicts between livestock grazing and other uses. Establishment of resource reserve allotments would add flexibility to livestock grazing management.		Management of wildlife habitat could reduce available forage on select allotments. Without resource reserve allotments the flexibility in grazing activities would not be		The establishment of resource reserve allotments would allow added flexibility in livestock grazing management. Management of wildlife habitat and recreation would

*Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences*

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
					available and this could have the impact of short-term reductions that could not be mitigated for an individual operator.	have minor, inconvenient impacts to livestock grazing.
<b>Minerals – Oil and Gas</b>	Natural gas exploration and development would occur over most of the existing leased area.	Natural gas exploration and development would occur over most of the leased area.	Natural gas exploration and development would occur over much of the leased area, but less than Alternative A.	Natural gas exploration and development would be almost half of the activity allowed under Alternative B.	Most restrictive level for natural gas exploration and development.	Natural gas production could occur over much of the leased area, but less than Alternatives A and B.
<b>Stipulations or Conditions</b>	<i>Oil and Gas Leases Affected by the Stipulations or Proposed Conditions of Approval (acres)</i>					
Sage-Grouse Lek	31	31	31	31	No new natural gas wells are expected to be drilled on federal leases in the Monument.	31
Nesting Area	5,774	5,774	5,774	5,774		5,774
Winter Habitat	441	441	441	441		441
Prairie Dogs	72	72	72	72		72
Sensitive Species	535	0	535	2,188		535
Deer and Elk Range	26,123	26,123	26,123	26,123		26,123
Antelope Range	6,149	6,149	6,149	6,149		6,149
Bighorn Sheep						
Distribution	14,244	14,244	14,244	14,244		14,244
Lambing Areas	6,563	6,563	6,563	13,550		6,563
Streams/Wetlands	8,921	0	16,510	20,751		8,921
Soils/Slopes						
20% & Severe	14,081	0	14,081	14,081		14,081
30%	7,035	7,035	7,035	7,035		7,035
40%	0	0	3,152	3,152		3,152
VRM Class						
Class I	1,478	1,478	2,936	2,936		2,936
Class II	20,259	20,259	32,575	39,869	32,575	
Class III	0	0	0	0	4,040	
Class IV	21,068	21,068	7,294	0	3,254	

*Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences*

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
	<i>Reasonable Foreseeable Natural Gas Wells</i>					
	<p>35 wells could be drilled in the Monument along with another 21 wells within 1/2 mile of the Monument on federal leases.</p> <p>With a success rate of 35% this alternative could allow an additional 8.3 BCF of gas could be produced.</p>	<p>44 wells could be drilled in the Monument along with another 23 wells within 1/2 mile of the Monument on federal leases.</p> <p>With a success rate of 35% an additional 9.8 BCF of gas could be produced.</p>	<p>28 wells could be drilled in the Monument along with another 21 wells within 1/2 mile of the Monument on federal leases.</p> <p>With a success rate of 35% an additional 7.4 BCF of gas could be produced.</p>	<p>13 wells could be drilled in the Monument along with another 20 wells within 1/2 mile of the Monument on federal leases.</p> <p>With a success rate of 35% an additional 5.2 BCF of gas could be produced.</p>	<p>No wells would be drilled in the Monument but 18 wells could be drilled on federal leases within 1/2 mile of the Monument.</p> <p>With a success rate of 35% an additional 3.1 BCF of gas could be produced.</p>	<p>34 wells could be drilled in the Monument along with another 21 wells within 1/2 mile of the Monument on federal leases.</p> <p>With a success rate of 35% an additional 8.2 BCF of gas could be produced.</p>
<b>Recreation</b>	<p>Visitors would enjoy mostly unrestricted opportunities to participate in recreation pursuits.</p>	<p>Visitors would enjoy mostly unrestricted freedom to access recreation opportunities and participate in recreation pursuits.</p>	<p>Visitors would enjoy mostly unrestricted opportunities to participate in recreation pursuits.</p>	<p>Visitors would enjoy mostly unrestricted opportunities to participate in recreation pursuits.</p>	<p>Visitor use opportunities would be restricted under this alternative. An allocation system would be initiated that may possibly reduce the freedom to access the UMNWSR.</p>	<p>Visitors would enjoy mostly unrestricted opportunities to participate in recreation pursuits.</p>

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<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
	Visitors would not be subjected to further recreation use fees than currently charged to camp at the James Kipp Recreation Area.	There would be no recreation use fees charged in the Monument.	A fee would be charged to camp overnight in developed recreation sites (Level 1 facilities).	A fee would be charged to float the river and camp overnight in developed recreation sites (Level 1 facilities).	A fee would be charged to float the river and camp overnight in developed recreation sites (Level 1 facilities).	A fee would be charged to float the river and camp overnight in developed recreation sites (Level 1 facilities).
	<i>Upper Missouri River</i>					
<b><i>Recreation Upper Missouri River</i></b>	Limiting the number of SRPs would reduce opportunities for additional commercial use but lessens the competition for campsites and conflicts with other boaters.	Issuing unlimited SRPs could increase competition for campsites and conflicts with other boaters.	An additional seven permits could increase competition for campsites and conflicts with other boaters.	An additional seven permits could increase competition for campsites and conflicts with other boaters.	With an allocation system commercial river guiding businesses would have little or no opportunity for growth.	Limiting the number of SRPs would reduce opportunities for additional commercial use but lessens the competition for campsites and conflicts with other boaters.
	Facility development (Level 1, 2, and 3 sites) could detract from the visual quality and primitive setting of the UMNWSR.	Facility development (Level 1, 2, and 3 sites) and signing could detract from the visual quality and primitive setting of the UMNWSR.	Facility development (Level 2 sites) could detract from the visual quality and primitive setting of the UMNWSR.	The primitive nature of the UMNWSR would be protected from the visual impact of additional facility development.	Construction of facilities that may detract from the primitive nature of the UMNWSR would not occur.	Facility development would not detract from the wild and scenic river classification standards, and would ensure boaters have a range of opportunities.
	Motorized use on the river would continue with seasonal restrictions. As use by floaters increases	There would be no restrictions for motorized use on the river (149 miles). There would be unlimited	Leaving some sections of the river open (60 miles) for upstream and downstream travel would provide an	Leaving some sections of the river open (60 miles) for upstream and downstream travel would provide an	Leaving some sections of the river open (60 miles) for upstream and downstream travel would provide an	There would be no motorized use of the river (149 miles). The ability of many hunters and anglers to use motorized

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<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
	so may conflicts of use.	opportunities for access and use by motorized boaters and few opportunities for floaters to experience the primitive nature of the river free from the sight and sound of motorized craft.	<p>opportunity for visitors preferring to use motorboats.</p> <p>A seasonal restriction in the White Cliffs section (32 1/2 miles) would provide boaters an opportunity to experience a more primitive setting during the summer.</p> <p>A seasonal restriction in the lower section of the river (56 1/2 miles) would provide boaters an opportunity to experience a more primitive setting during the summer.</p> <p>Opportunities for the use of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be greatly diminished.</p>	<p>opportunity for visitors preferring to use motorboats.</p> <p>A seasonal restriction in the White Cliffs section (32 1/2 miles) would provide boaters an opportunity to experience a more primitive setting during the summer and fall.</p> <p>A seasonal restriction in the lower section of the river (56 1/2 miles) would provide boaters an opportunity to experience a more primitive setting during the summer and fall.</p> <p>Opportunities for the use of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be greatly diminished.</p>	<p>watercraft to access fishing and hunting opportunities would be eliminated.</p> <p>Opportunities for the use of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be eliminated.</p>	<p>opportunity for visitors preferring to use motorboats.</p> <p>A seasonal restriction in the White Cliffs section (32 1/2 miles) would provide boaters an opportunity to experience a more primitive setting during the summer.</p> <p>A seasonal closure in the lower section of the river (56 1/2 miles) would provide a recreation opportunity for boaters seeking solitude and primitive experience but motorized use opportunities would decrease during the summer.</p> <p>Opportunities for the use of personal watercraft and landing of floatplanes would be greatly diminished.</p>

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<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
<b><i>Recreation Uplands</i></b>	<i>Uplands</i>					
	With no limit on the number of commercial SRPs issued for hunting in the uplands, the potential for conflicts between commercial and public hunters exists.	With no limit on the number of commercial SRPs, the potential for conflicts of use exists.	Limiting the number of commercial SRPs decreases the potential for conflicts of use.	With no limit on the number of commercial SRPs, the potential for conflicts of use exists, but issuing permits in areas with limited access would reduce the potential.	With no limit on the number of commercial SRPs and issuing permits in areas with public access, the potential for conflicts of use increases.	Limiting the number of commercial SRPs decreases the potential for conflicts of use.
	With additional signing, the primitive nature of the uplands may be visually compromised in some areas.	With additional signing, the primitive nature of the uplands may be visually compromised in some areas.	The primitive nature of the uplands may be visually compromised depending on the level of facility development.	Signing commensurate with the visual surroundings would reduce the potential for visual impairment to the primitive nature.	Limited signing would ensure the visual integrity of the area but it would eliminate the use of signs for information and education.	Signing commensurate with the visual surroundings would reduce the potential for visual impairment to the primitive nature.
<b><i>Transportation</i></b>	Under this alternative, 506 miles of BLM roads would be open yearlong for public motorized travel (includes portions of 442 BLM roads).  About 90% of the Monument is within 1 mile of an open BLM road (yearlong or seasonally) with .99 miles per square mile.	Under this alternative, 444 miles of BLM roads would be open yearlong for public motorized travel (includes portions of 431 BLM roads).  About 88% of the Monument would be within 1 mile of an open BLM road (yearlong or seasonally) with .92 miles per square mile.	Under this alternative, 407 miles of BLM roads would be open yearlong for public motorized travel (includes portions of 324 BLM roads).  About 85% of the Monument would be within 1 mile of an open BLM road (yearlong or seasonally) with .86 miles per square mile.	Under this alternative, 287 miles of BLM roads would be open yearlong for public motorized travel (includes portions of 221 BLM roads).  About 76% of the Monument would be within 1 mile of an open BLM road (yearlong or seasonally) with .56 miles per square mile.	Under this alternative, 101 miles of BLM roads would be open yearlong for public motorized travel (includes portions of 30 BLM roads).  About 31% of the Monument would be within 1 mile of an open BLM road (yearlong or seasonally) with .18 miles per square mile.	Under this alternative, 207 miles of BLM roads would be open yearlong for public motorized travel (includes portions of 96 BLM roads).  About 90% of the Monument would be within 1 mile of an open BLM road (yearlong or seasonally) with .65 miles per square mile.

**Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences**

Resource	Alternative A (Current Management)		Alternative B		Alternative C		Alternative D		Alternative E		Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)	
	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%
Designated Roads												
Open Yearlong	506	85	444	75	407	68	287	49	101	17	207	35
Open Seasonally	73	12	95	16	94	16	43	7	4	1	171	29
Closed	15	3	55	9	93	16	264	44	489	82	216	36
<b>BLM Road Maintenance Levels</b>												
Maintenance Levels	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%	Miles	%
Level 1: Min/Closed	15	3	55	10	93	16	264	45	489	83	216	36
Level 2: Limited	505	85	465	78	427	72	256	43	31	5	314	53
Level 3: High Vol	64	11	64	11	64	11	64	11	64	11	51	9
Level 4: Higher Vol	10	1	10	1	10	1	10	1	10	1	13	2
<b>Fire</b>	There are approximately 35,000 acres of possible prescribed fire projects.		Prescribed fire projects would depend on ecological need to introduce fire.		The emphasis for prescribed fire would be on reducing hazardous fuel buildup where wildland fire would threaten private and public structures and improvements.		Prescribed fire projects would include the projects proposed in the existing watershed plans and new projects based on fire regime conditions class. Could result in a substantial number of additional prescribed fire projects would be expected.		Overall, prescribed fire acres would be similar to Alternative D, less the fire regime conditions class.		Overall, prescribed fire acres would be similar to Alternative D, less the fire regime conditions class.	
Fire Management Unit	Potential Prescribed Fire Projects (acres)											
Wild and Scenic WSAs	There are approximately 35,000 acres of possible projects.		0	Limited	Limited	Limited	Less than 10,000.	Less than 10,000.				
North Monument			30,000	5,200	6,200 to 45,000	6,200 plus	6,200 plus	6,200 plus				
South Monument			0	6,600	5,000 to 100,000	5,000 plus	5,000 plus	5,000 plus				
			0	8,200	20,000 to 105,000	20,000 plus	20,000 plus	20,000 plus				
	There would be no anticipated changes from the historical average number of fires or acres under this alternative.		This alternative would reduce the estimated acreages that could be subject to wildland fire.		Fire suppression acreage figures would be similar to Alternative B.		Suppression would be based on appropriate response and fires would be allowed to burn to natural barriers if		Overall, fire management in would emphasize a maximum return of fire on the landscape.		There would be no anticipated changes from the historical average number of fires or acres under this alternative.	

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<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
				the fire is not a threat to life, property or resource values.		
Fire Management Unit	Fire History 15 years	Potential Wildland Fire Impacts				
Wild and Scenic WSAs	27 fires 1,337 acres	- 10%	- 10%	- 10%	Potentially a significant increase in wildland fires.	Similar to Alternative A.
North Monument	37 fires 4,219 acres	No change	No change	+ 50%		
South Monument	45 fires 5,023 acres	- 20%	- 20%	+ 50%		
	44 fires 2,979 acres	- 20%	- 20%	+ 40%		
<b>Wilderness Study Areas</b>	<p>The WSAs are in good condition, with some exceptions where vehicles and/or boating traffic have affected the resource.</p> <p>Fifty-six miles of vehicle ways would remain open yearlong.</p>		<p>The impacts would be similar to those in Alternative A, except restricting travel on some WSA vehicle ways would protect the sensitive vegetation and soil resources.</p> <p>Fifty miles of vehicle ways would remain open yearlong and six miles would be closed.</p>	<p>The impacts would be similar to those in Alternative A, except closing all WSA vehicle ways would protect the sensitive vegetation and soil resources.</p>	<p>The impacts would be similar to Alternative D, except not allowing the use of game carts on closed vehicle ways protects the landscape from other potential future mechanical or mechanized trends in recreation.</p>	<p>The impacts would be similar to those in Alternative A, except restricting spring and fall use of WSA vehicle ways would protect the sensitive vegetation and soil resources.</p> <p>Forty miles of vehicles ways would remain open yearlong, 2 miles would be open seasonally, and 14 miles would be closed.</p>
<b>Social</b>	<p>Alternatives A, B, and parts of C are most responsive to the desires of individuals and groups who feel Monument management should continue as it has in the past. They address the concerns of those who want to maintain roaded access, and those who would give a high priority to resource use, and could enhance the social wellbeing of all these groups and individuals. Individuals and groups who desire a primitive, quiet recreation experience would not feel these opportunities are available. They may also feel these</p>			<p>This alternative is less responsive to the desires of individuals who feel management should continue as it has in the past. The social wellbeing for these</p>	<p>This alternative is least responsive to the desires of individuals who feel Monument management should continue as it has in the past. The social</p>	<p>The impacts would be the same as Alternative D.</p>

*Table 2.39 Summary Comparison of the Environmental Consequences*

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Alternative A (Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>	<b>Alternative F (Preferred Alternative)</b>
	alternatives do not offer the ability to address current or future problems. Social wellbeing for these groups and individuals may decline.			groups and individuals could decline.  Opportunities for motorized recreation would decline and opportunities for primitive, quiet experiences would be enhanced. Individuals and groups who would give a high priority to resource protection would feel this is accomplished, which could enhance their social wellbeing.	wellbeing for these groups and individuals could decline. Individuals and groups who want a primitive, quiet experience, would feel these opportunities are available. However, they may also feel that the proposed restrictions would be too extreme.	
<b>Economics</b>	Changes in forage availability would not create a measurable effect on ranching in the study area, but some individuals with grazing allotments within the Monument may have to make minor adjustments in their operation in response to some of the direction in the alternatives.					
	In the uplands section of the Monument, the supply of recreational activities exceeds the current and near future demand for these opportunities. The changes in management direction in the alternatives would not materially affect this relationship. However, some changes in management direction for the wild and scenic river portion could affect river users, including outfitters and guides and recreationists. Natural gas operations would affect output, employment, and labor income in the regional economy but the change only represents a very small fraction of the economy.					
<i>Change in output, employment, and labor income in the regional economy for Alternatives B, C, E, and F (Preferred Alternative)</i>						
Output (\$)	No change.	+ 1,400,000	- 700,000	- 2,100,000	- 3,500,000	- 90,000
Employment (jobs)		+ 9	- 4	- 14	- 22	- 1
Labor Income (\$)		+ 190,000	- 120,000	- 390,000	- 650,000	- 20,000
Royalties (\$)		+ 91,000	- 58,000	- 191,000	- 316,000	- 8,000
Disbursements (\$)		+ 46,000	- 29,000	- 96,000	- 158,000	- 4,000