CHAPTER 2: ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 describes the management alternatives and management alternative development process. Table 2-5, *Comparison of Alternatives*, and Table 2-6, *Summary Comparison of Impacts by Alternative*, present the alternatives. Table 2-5 is organized into four main categories: *Resources, Resource Uses, Special Designations*, and *Social and Economic Considerations*. Each category includes the program and its goals and objectives, Management Common to all Alternatives, and Management by Alternative. Table 2-6, at the end of this chapter, provides a summary of the impacts of management actions proposed under each alternative. For a full description of the anticipated effects from each alternative, see Chapter 4.

MANAGEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Management goals and objectives were defined for each resource and resource use that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) must address in the planning process. The management goals and objectives are presented in Table 2-5 and apply to all alternatives.

GREATER SAGE-GROUSE (GRSG) HABITAT MANAGEMENT

On December 9, 2011, a Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register to initiate the BLM and U.S. Forest Service Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy across ten western states, including California, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, and Southwest Montana in the Great Basin Region and Northwest Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, and North Dakota in the Rocky Mountain Region. This EIS is one of fifteen separate EISs analyzing the incorporation of specific conservation measures across the range of the GRSG, consistent with BLM policy.

The BLM Washington Office (WO) issued a National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy on December 27, 2011. These policies have been incorporated into the Miles City Field Office Proposed RMP/Final EIS. In August 2011, the BLM convened the Sage-Grouse National Technical Team (NTT), which brought together resource specialists and scientists from the BLM, state fish and wildlife agencies, the USFWS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the U.S. Geological Survey. The NTT developed a series of science-based conservation measures to be considered and analyzed through the land use planning process. BLM WO IM 2012-044 provides direction to the BLM on how to consider the NTT conservation measures in the land use planning process. The WO IM requires that applicable and appropriate conservation measures in the NTT report be analyzed in at least one alternative in the land use planning EIS and that a “hard look” be given to the conservation measures, as applicable to local ecological site variability. Alternative B incorporates the national strategy (WO IM-2012–044).

BLM PROGRAMS FOR ADDRESSING GRSG THREATS

In 2013, the USFWS released their Conservation Objectives Team (COT) Report, which delineates reasonable objectives, based upon the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of its release, for the conservation and survival of GRSG. The report also identified present and widespread and localized threats facing the GRSG and their habitat in specific populations across the west. The ranges of management actions for managing GRSG habitat analyzed in this EIS are directed towards responding to these threats. The USFWS threats do not necessarily align with BLM resource program areas, and are often integrated into several different resource program areas. Table 2-1, USFWS and COT Report Identified Threats to Greater Sage-Grouse and Their Habitat and Applicable BLM Program Areas, provides a cross-walk between each of the USFWS listing decision and COT identified threats and the BLM program areas and shows how those threats were addressed in the BLM’s land use plan.

TABLE 2-1. USFWS AND COT REPORT IDENTIFIED THREATS TO GRSG AND THEIR HABITAT AND APPLICABLE BLM RESOURCE PROGRAM AREAS

USFWS-Identified Threats to GRSG and Its Habitat (2010 warranted but precluded finding)	COT Report-Identified Threats to GRSG and Its Habitat (2013)	Applicable BLM Proposed Plan Resource Program Addressing Threat
Wildland Fire	Fire	Wildland Fire Management (see Fuels Management/Prescribed Fire section and *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix*)
Invasive Species	Nonnative, Invasive Plants Species	Invasive Species (see Invasive Species section)
Oil and Gas For wind energy development, see *Infrastructure – power lines/pipelines, roads (below)*	Energy Development	Fluid Minerals (see Oil and Gas and GRSG section and *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix*).
Prescribed Fire	Sagebrush Removal	Wildland Fire Management (see Fuels Management/Prescribed Fire section and *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix*).
Grazing	Grazing	Range Management (see Livestock Grazing section).
See Grazing Management (above)	Range Management Structures	Range Improvements (see *Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix*)
Conifer Encroachment	Pinyon and/or Juniper Expansion	Vegetation Management (see Vegetation section).
Agriculture & Urbanization	Agricultural Conversion and Ex-Urban Development	Lands & Realty (see Land Tenure Adjustment section).
Hard Rock Mining	Mining	Sage Grouse Habitat (see PHMA).
See Infrastructure, Roads	Recreation	Recreation
Infrastructure - Power lines/pipelines - Roads - Communication sites - Railroads	Infrastructure	Lands and Realty – (see GRSG section) Lands and Realty – Communication Sites (see GRSG section) Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management – Roads (see Travel Management and OHV section). Lands and Realty – Railroads – (this would be *considered* a minor ROW). (see *GRSG Required Design Features)*
Infrastructure – Range Improvements	Range Management Structures	All applicable programs (*Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix*)
Water Developments	No similar threat identified	All applicable programs (see *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix*)
Climate Change	No similar threat identified	There is no BLM resource planning program for addressing this threat to GRSG and its habitat. Proposed climate change management is incorporated in other resource programs throughout Chapter 2.
Weather	No similar threat identified	There is not a resource program in the BLM RMPs for addressing this USFWS-identified threat.
Predation	No similar threat identified	All applicable programs (see *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix*).
Disease	No similar threat identified	All applicable programs (see *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix).*
Hunting	No similar threat identified	There is no resource program in the BLM RMPs for addressing this USFWS-identified threat
Contaminants	No similar threat identified	Public Health and Safety

Source: USFWS 2010a, 2013

BLM PROPOSED PLAN FOR GRSG MANAGEMENT

In developing the Proposed Plan, the BLM made modifications to the Preferred Alternative identified in the Draft RMP/EIS. The modifications are based on public comments received on the Draft RMP/EIS, internal BLM review, new information and best available science, the need for clarification in the plans, and ongoing coordination with stakeholders across the range of the GRSG. As a result, the Proposed Plan provides consistent GRSG habitat management across the range, prioritizes development outside of GRSG habitat, and focuses on a landscape-scale approach to conserving GRSG habitat.

The BLM modified the Preferred Alternative, identified as Alternative E as presented in the Draft RMP/EIS, which is now considered the RMP proposed plan for managing BLM-administered land within the Miles City Field Office.

Since release of the Draft RMP/EIS, the BLM has continued to work closely with a broad range of governmental partners, including Governors, MFWP, the USFWS, Indian tribes, county commissioners and many others. Through this cooperation, the BLM has developed a Proposed Plan that takes into account state, Tribal and local plans, policies, and strategies in accordance with applicable law and contributes to the long-term conservation of the GRSG. The BLM also received many substantive public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS (see *Public Comment Appendix*), which greatly informed the BLM's development of the Proposed Plan.

The BLM's Proposed Plan considers documents related to the conservation of GRSG that have been released since the publication of the Draft RMP/EIS. For example, On October 27, 2014, the USFWS provided the BLM and Forest Service a memorandum titled "*Greater Sage-Grouse: Additional Recommendations to Refine Land Use Allocations in Highly Important Landscapes"*. The memorandum and associated maps provided by the USFWS identify areas that represent recognized "strongholds" for GRSG that have been noted and referenced as having the highest densities of GRSG and other criteria important for the persistence of the species. Within these areas, the BLM identified Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFAs), which are PHMAs with additional management. While there is an area in the Miles City Planning Area recognized by USFWS as a stronghold, that area is already managed as a WSA and is not identified as an SFA.

The BLM has refined the Proposed Plan to provide a layered management approach that offers the highest level of protection for GRSG in the most valuable habitat. Land use allocations in the Proposed Plan would limit or eliminate new surface disturbance in PHMA, while minimizing disturbance in GHMA. In addition to establishing protective land use allocations, the Proposed Plan would implement a suite of management tools such as disturbance limits (see Table 2-5), GRSG habitat objectives and monitoring (see Table 2-5 and *GRSG Monitoring Framework Appendix*), mitigation approaches (see *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix*), adaptive management triggers and responses (see *GRSG Monitoring Framework Appendix*), and lek buffer-distances (see *GRSG Conservation Buffer Appendix*) throughout the range. These overlapping and reinforcing conservation measures will work in concert to improve GRSG habitat condition and provide clarity and consistency on how the BLM will manage activities in GRSG habitat (see Figure 1).

Many of the proposed plan goals, objectives, management actions and allowable uses identified in this section originate from the specific BLM resource/program areas (e.g. Special Status Species) and have been determined to be applicable to the proposed management of GRSG habitat. The action/goal/objective numbers are the same as those presented in the Comparison of Alternatives Table 2-5 of Chapter 2 and have simply been consolidated here to depict how the agency proposes to manage GRSG habitat.

Within the Miles City Field Office planning area, GRSG Priority Habitat Management Areas are not further refined into Biologically Significant Units for GRSG. The GRSG Priority Habitat Management Areas are themselves the biologically significant unit for GRSG. A Biologically Significant Unit for this plan is the summary of all the Priority Habitat Management Areas within a Greater Sage-Grouse population as delineated in the COT report.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

GRSG Habitat

Goal 1 – Provide for the conservation, enhancement, restoration, and connectivity of the Northern Great Plains mixed grass prairie and shrubland, capable of supporting sustainable populations of GRSG and other wildlife species.

Objective 1 – Maintain, improve and increase sagebrush habitats to sustain sagebrush obligates and other sagebrush dependent species.

Objective 2 - Conserve GRSG habitat while promoting movement and genetic diversity

Objective 3 – Priority will be given to leasing and development of fluid minerals outside of PHMA and GHMA. When analyzing leasing and authorizing development of fluid mineral resources in PHMA and GHMA, and subject to applicable stipulations for the conservation of GRSG, priority will be given to development in non-habitat areas first and then in the least suitable habitat for GRSG. The implementation of these priorities will be subject to valid existing rights and any applicable law or regulation, including, but not limited to, 30 U.S.C. 226(p) and 43 CFR 3162.3-1(h).

Objective 4 – Where a proposed fluid mineral development project on an existing lease could adversely affect GRSG populations or habitat, the BLM will work with the lessees, operators, or other project proponents to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to the extent compatible with lessees' rights to drill and produce fluid mineral resources. The BLM will work with the lessees, operators, or other project proponent in developing an APD for the lease to avoid and minimize impacts to greater sage-grouse or its habitat and will ensure that the best information about the GRSG and its habitat informs and helps to guide development of such Federal leases.

Action 1 - In all GRSG habitat, in undertaking BLM management actions, and, consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, in authorizing third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will require and ensure mitigation that provides a net conservation gain to the species including accounting for any uncertainty associated with the effectiveness of such mitigation. This will be achieved by avoiding, minimizing, and compensating for impacts by applying beneficial mitigation actions.

Sage Grouse Habitat – General Habitat Management Areas

Goal 1 - Maintain or increase habitat needed for GRSG through the management of surface disturbing and disruptive activities, including the loss and distribution of sagebrush habitat.

Objective 1 – Conserve GRSG habitat while promoting movement and genetic diversity.

Action 1 – Major ROWs (100 kv and over for high voltage transmission lines and 24 inch in width and over for large pipelines) and renewable energy ROWs would avoid general habitat areas (1,395,000 acres).

Minor ROWs would be allowed with design features to protect breeding, nesting and brood rearing in GRSG General Habitat (1,365,000 acres).

Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited within 0.6 miles of the perimeter of leks (NSO) (61,000 acres).

In addition, surface occupancy and use within 2 miles of leks would be restricted or prohibited. Prior to such activities, a plan to mitigate impacts to nesting GRSG or their habitat would be prepared by the proponent and implemented upon approval, by the AO (CSU) (652,000 acres).

TABLE 2-2.
COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PLAN AND ALTERNATIVES FOR GRSG MANAGEMENT

RESOURCE/ RESOURCE USE	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C	ALTERNATIVE D	BLM PROPOSED PLAN
Oil & Gas Leasing	NO SIMILAR ACTION	(CSU) GHMA: 1,623,000 RHMA: 19,000 (NSO) RHMA: 91,000 (Closed) PHMA: 1,329,000	(CSU) PHMA: 1,329,000 GHMA: 1,223,000 RHMA: 198,000	(CSU) PHMA: 1,329,000 GHMA: 652,000 (Lease Terms) RHMA: 198,000	(NSO) PHMA: 1,329,000 GHMA: 61,000 RHMA: 176,000 (CSU) GHMA: 652,000 RHMA: 22,000
ROWs -Major	NO SIMILAR ACTION	(Allowed) GHMA: 580,000 RHMA: 46,000 (Excluded) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 861,000 RHMA: 40,000	(Allowed) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 799,000 RHMA: 86,000 (Excluded) GHMA: 642,000	(Allowed) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 1,441,000 RHMA: 86,000	(Allowed) RHMA: 87,000 (Avoided) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 1,395,000 (Excluded) GHMA: 46,000 (WSAs & ACECs)
ROWs – Renewable (solar/wind)	NO SIMILAR ACTION	(Allowed) GHMA: 580,000 RHMA: 46,000 (Excluded) PHMA: 817,000 RHMA: 40,000	(Allowed) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 799,000 RHMA: 86,000 (Excluded) GHMA: 642,000	(Allowed) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 1,441,000 RHMA: 86,000	(Avoided) GHMA: 1,395,000 (Excluded) PHMA: 817,000 RHMA: 87,000 GHMA: 46,000 (WSAs & ACECs)
ROWs - Minor ROW	NO SIMILAR ACTION	(Allowed) GHMA: 580,000 RHMA: 46,000 (Excluded) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 861,000 RHMA: 40,000	(Allowed) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 799,000 RHMA: 86,000 (Excluded) GHMA: 642,000	(Allowed) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 1,441,000 RHMA: 86,000	(Allowed) GHMA: 1,365,000 RHMA: 87,000 (Avoided) PHMA: 817,000 GHMA: 30,000 (Excluded) GHMA: 46,000 (WSAs & ACECs)

Figure 1: Sage-grouse Habitat Management Areas

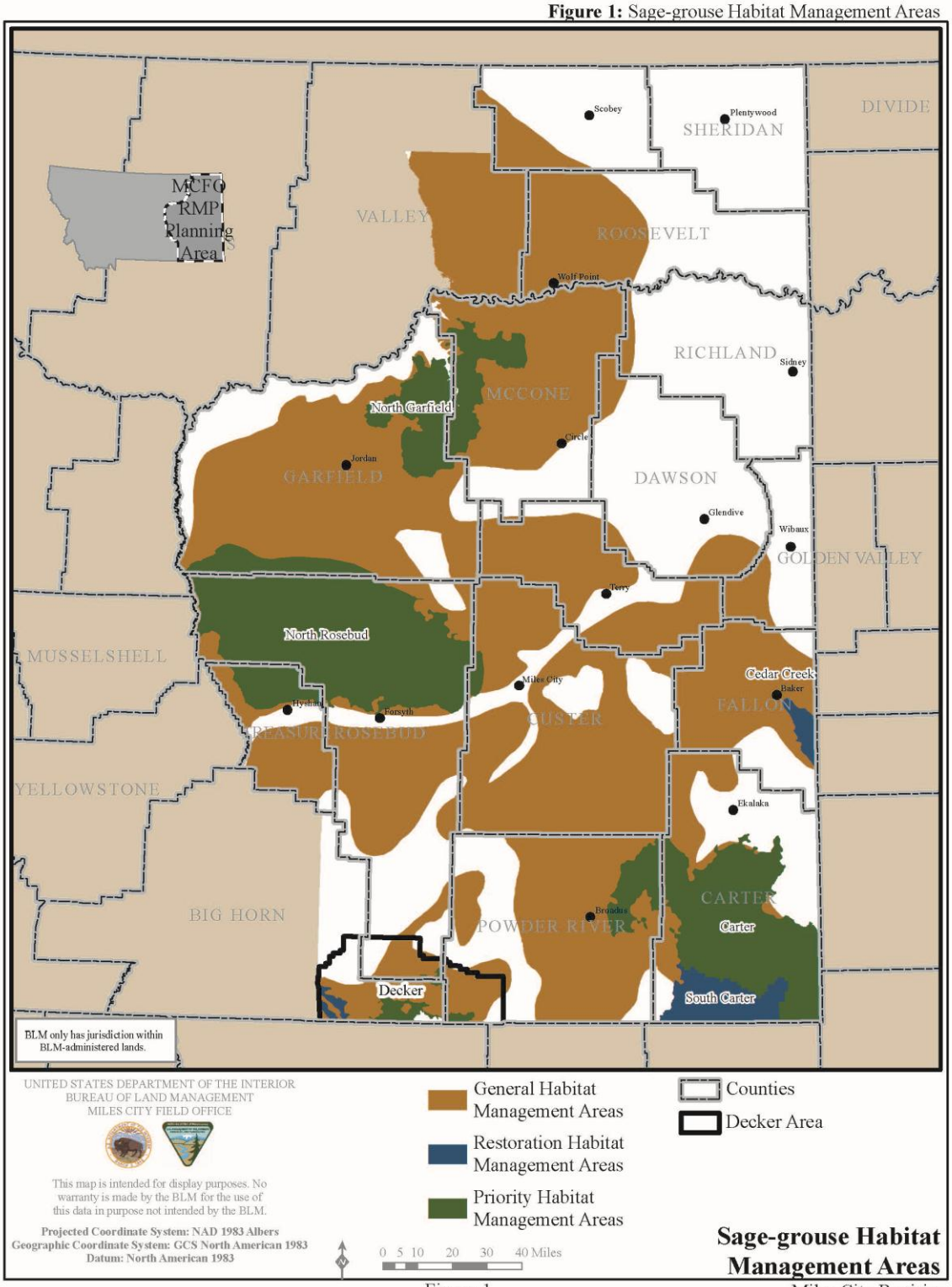

Figure-1 Miles City Revision

In undertaking BLM management actions and consistent with valid and existing rights and applicable law in authorizing third-party actions, the BLM will apply the lek buffer-distances identified in the USGS Report (see *GRSG Conservation Buffer Appendix*).

Sage Grouse Habitat – Priority Habitat Management Areas

Objective 1 - Maintain or increase GRSG habitat over the long-term, recognizing valid existing rights.

Objective 2 - Restore degraded GRSG habitat.

Objective 3 - Manage permitted uses while providing GRSG habitat for the long-term.

Action 1 - Where deemed effective, water developments would be managed to reduce the spread of West Nile virus (see *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix*).

Action 2 – At the time an application for a new coal lease or lease modification is submitted to the BLM, the BLM will determine whether the lease application area is "unsuitable" for all or certain coal mining methods pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.5. PHMA is essential habitat for maintaining GRSG for purposes of the suitability criteria set forth at 43 CFR 3461.5(o)(1).

Action 3 - An ACEC would not be designated for GRSG; rather, PHMA will be managed according to the following prescriptions.

Renewable Energy ROWs would be excluded within GRSG priority areas (817,000 acres). PHMAs are closed to new mineral material sales. However, these areas remain "open" to free use permits and the expansion of existing active pits, only if the following criteria are met:

- The activity is within the PHMA Biologically Significant Unit (BSU) and project area disturbance cap.
- The activity is subject to the provisions set forth in the mitigation framework (*GRSG Regional Mitigation Strategy Appendix*).
- All applicable required design features are applied; and (if applicable) the activity is permissible under the specific sub-regional screening criteria.

Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited within sage grouse priority areas (NSO (1,329,000 acres).

No waivers or modifications to a fluid mineral lease no-surface occupancy stipulation will be granted. The Authorized Officer may grant an exception to a fluid mineral lease no-surface occupancy stipulation only where the proposed action:

i. Would not have direct, indirect, or cumulative effects on GRSG or its habitat; or,
ii. Is proposed to be undertaken as an alternative to a similar action occurring on a nearby parcel, and would provide a clear conservation gain to GRSG.

Exceptions based on conservation gain (ii) may only be considered in (a) PHMAs of mixed ownership where federal minerals underlie less than fifty percent of the total surface, or (b) areas of the public lands where the proposed exception is an alternative to an action occurring on a nearby parcel subject to a valid Federal fluid mineral lease existing as of the date of this RMP revision. Exceptions based on conservation gain must also include measures, such as enforceable institutional controls and buffers, sufficient to allow the BLM to conclude that such benefits will endure for the duration of the proposed action's impacts.

Any exceptions to this lease stipulation may be approved by the Authorized Officer only with the concurrence of the State Director. The Authorized Officer may not grant an exception unless the applicable state wildlife agency, the USFWS, and the BLM unanimously find that the proposed action satisfied (i) or (ii). Such finding shall initially be made by a team of one field biologist or other GRSG expert from each respective agency. In the event the initial finding is not unanimous, the finding may be elevated to the appropriate BLM State Director, USFWS State Ecological Services Director, and state wildlife agency head for final resolution. In the event their finding is not unanimous, the exception will not be granted. Approved exceptions will be made publically available at least quarterly.

Major (high voltage transmission lines and large pipelines) and minor ROWs would avoid GRSG priority areas (817,000 acres).

In undertaking BLM management actions, and consistent with valid and existing rights and law in authorizing third-party actions, the BLM would apply the lek buffer-distances identified in the USGS Report *Conservation Buffer Distance Estimates for Greater Sage-Grouse – A Review (Open File Report 2014-1239)*, in accordance with the *GRSG Conservation Buffer Appendix*.

If the 3% anthropogenic disturbance cap is exceeded on lands (regardless of land ownership) within GRSG PHMAs in any given Biologically Significant Unit, then no further discrete anthropogenic disturbances (subject to applicable laws and regulations, such as the Mining Law of 1872, as amended, valid existing rights, etc.) would be permitted by BLM within GRSG PHMAs in any given Biologically Significant Unit until the disturbance has been reduced to less than the cap.

If the 3% anthropogenic disturbance cap is exceeded on lands (regardless of land ownership) or if anthropogenic disturbance and habitat loss associated with conversion to agricultural tillage or fire exceed 5% within a project analysis area in PHMAs, then no further discrete anthropogenic disturbances (subject to applicable laws and regulations, such as the Mining Law of 1872, valid existing rights, etc.) will be permitted by BLM within PHMA in a project analysis area until the disturbance has been reduced to less than the cap. If the BLM determines that the State of Montana has adopted a GRSG Habitat Conservation Program that contains comparable components to those found in the State of Wyoming's Core Area Strategy including an all lands approach for calculating anthropogenic disturbances, a clear methodology for measuring the density of operations, and a fully operational Density Disturbance Calculation Tool, the 3% disturbance cap will be converted to a 5% cap for all sources of habitat alteration within a project analysis area.

GRSG Habitat – Restoration Areas

Objective 1 – Strive for proponents to develop area-wide Habitat Recovery Plans.

Objective 2 – Strive for no net loss of GRSG habitat.

Objective 3 – Strive for the restoration of previously disturbed landscapes in a manner which increases or improves the quality and quantity of GRSG habitat.

Action 1 - Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed with required design features to minimize disturbance to GRSG habitat (87,000 acres).

Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is subject to design features, to minimize disturbance to GRSG habitat in the Cedar Creek Area (CSU) (22,000 acres).

In the West Decker (11,000 acres) and South Carter Area (164,000 acres) oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO).

Renewable Energy ROWs will be excluded within all Restoration Areas.

VEGETATION

Objective 5 – In all Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMAs), the desired condition is to maintain a minimum of 70% of lands capable of producing sagebrush with 10-30% sagebrush canopy cover. The attributes necessary to sustain these habitats are described in Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (BLM Tech Ref 1734-6).

Action 2 - Remove conifers encroaching into sagebrush habitats. Prioritize treatments closest to occupied GRSG habitats and near occupied leks, and where juniper encroachment is phase 1 or phase 2. Use of site-specific analysis and principles like those included in the FIAT report (Chambers et. al., 2014) and other ongoing modeling efforts to address conifer encroachment will help refine the location for specific priority areas to be treated.

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGY

Fuels Management/Prescribed Fire

Action 3 - If prescribed fire is used in Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, the NEPA analysis for the Burn Plan will address:

- why alternative techniques were not selected as a viable options;
- how greater sage-grouse goals and objectives would be met by its use;
- how the COT Report objectives would be addressed and met;
- a risk assessment to address how potential threats to greater sage-grouse habitat would be minimized.

Prescribed fire as vegetation or fuels treatment shall only be considered after the NEPA analysis for the Burn Plan has addressed the four bullets outlined above. Prescribed fire could be used to meet specific fuels objectives that would protect greater sage-grouse habitat in PHMAs (e.g., creation of fuel breaks that would disrupt the fuel continuity across the landscape in stands where annual invasive grasses are a minor component in the understory, burning slash piles from conifer reduction treatments, used as a component with other treatment methods to combat annual grasses and restore native plant communities).

Prescribed fire in known winter range shall only be considered after the NEPA analysis for the Burn Plan has addressed the four bullets outlined above. Any prescribed fire in winter habitat would need to be designed to strategically reduce wildfire risk around and/or in the winter range and designed to protect winter range habitat quality.

Wildfire Management

Action 1 – The BLM would prioritize fire management activities according to potential risks to life and property across the planning area. Wildfires adjacent to or near wildland urban or industrial interface would have the highest priority for fire suppression. In PHMA, prioritize suppression, after life and property, to conserve the habitat. In GHMA, prioritize suppression where wildfires threaten PHMA.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Action 3 – The BLM will prioritize (1) the review of grazing permits/leases, in particular to determine if modification is necessary prior to renewal, and (2) the processing of grazing permits/leases in PHMAs. In setting workload priorities, precedence will be given to existing permits/leases in these areas not meeting Land Health Standards, with focus on those

containing riparian areas, including wet meadows. The BLM may use other criteria for prioritization to respond to urgent natural resource concerns (ex., fire) and legal obligations.

Action 4 – The NEPA analysis for renewals and modifications of livestock grazing permits/leases that include lands within PHMAs will include specific management thresholds based on GRSG Habitat Objectives Table and Land Health Standards (43 CFR 4180.2) and ecological site potential and one or more defined responses that will allow the authorizing officer to make adjustments to livestock grazing that have already been subjected to NEPA analysis.

Action 5 – Allotments within PHMAs, focusing on those containing riparian areas, including wet meadows, will be prioritized for field checks to help ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the grazing permits. Field checks could include monitoring for actual use, utilization, and use supervision.

Action 6 – At the time a permittee or lessee voluntarily relinquishes a permit or lease, the BLM will consider whether the public lands where that permitted use was authorized should remain available for livestock grazing or be used for other resource management objectives, such as reserve common allotments or fire breaks.

LANDS AND REALTY

Land Tenure

Action 5 - Lands classified as priority habitat and general habitat (or habitat classification appropriate for the sub-region) for GRSG will be retained in federal management unless: (1) the agency can demonstrate that disposal of the lands will provide a net conservation gain to the GRSG or (2) the agency can demonstrate that the disposal of the lands will have no direct or indirect adverse impact on conservation of the GRSG.

MINERALS

Fluid Minerals (oil and gas)

Action 8 - Where the federal government owns the mineral estate in PHMAs and GHMAs, and the surface is in non-federal ownership, apply the same stipulations, COAs, and/or conservation measures and RDFs applied if the mineral estate is developed on BLM-administered lands in that management area, to the maximum extent permissible under existing authorities, and in coordination with the landowner.

Where the federal government owns the surface and the mineral estate is in non-federal ownership in PHMA and GHMA, apply appropriate surface use COAs, stipulations, and mineral RDFs through ROW grants or other surface management instruments, to the maximum extent permissible under existing authorities, in coordination with the mineral estate owner/lessee.

Coal

Action 3 – At the time an application for a new coal lease or lease modification is submitted to the BLM, the BLM will determine whether the lease application area is “unsuitable” for all or certain coal mining methods pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.5. PHMA is essential habitat for maintaining GRSG for purposes of the suitability criteria set forth at 43 CFR 3461.5(o)(1).

COMPREHENSIVE TRAILS AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Objective 7 – The BLM would strive to complete travel management planning using a developed strategy that sets timeframes and prioritizes TMAs. TMAs within the priority GRSG habitat area would strive to be prioritized and completed as funding and staffing allows.

Objective 8 – The BLM would create a developed strategy based on information found in the BLM Handbook H-8342, Travel and Transportation. Areas receiving focus and a higher priority would be

based on priority GRSG habitat areas, heavily used areas, social conflict concerns, resource concerns, consideration of primary travelers, valid existing rights, visitor recreation experiences, and development for administrative or public access.

Action 1 – On BLM administered surface, including PHMA and GHMA, temporary closures will be considered in accordance with 43 CFR subpart 8364 (Closures and Restrictions); 43 CFR subpart 8351 (Designated National Area); 43 CFR subpart 6302 (Use of Wilderness Areas, Prohibited Acts, and Penalties); 43 CFR subpart 8341 (Conditions of Use).

Temporary closure or restriction orders under these authorities are enacted at the discretion of the authorized officer to resolve management conflicts and protect persons, property, and public lands and resources. Where an authorized officer determines that off-highway vehicles are causing or will cause considerable adverse effects upon soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, historical resources, threatened or endangered species, wilderness suitability, other authorized uses, or other resources, the affected areas shall be immediately closed to the type(s) of vehicle causing the adverse effect until the adverse effects are eliminated and measures implemented to prevent recurrence. (43 CFR 8341.2) A closure or restriction order should be considered only after other management strategies and alternatives have been explored. The duration of temporary closure or restriction orders should be limited to 24 months or less; however, certain situations may require longer closures and/or iterative temporary closures. This may include closure of routes or areas.

RECREATION AND VISITOR SERVICES (SRMAS)

Action 1 - In PHMA, do not construct new recreation facilities (e.g., campgrounds, trails, trailheads, staging areas) unless the development would have a net conservation gain to GRSG habitat (such as concentrating recreation, diverting use away from critical areas, etc.), or unless the development is required for visitor health and safety or resource protection.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR GRSG HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Adaptive management is a decision process that promotes flexible resource management decision making that can be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes from management actions and other events become better understood. Careful monitoring of these outcomes both advances scientific understanding and helps with adjusting resource management directions as part of an iterative learning process. Adaptive management also recognizes the importance of natural variability in contributing to ecological resilience and productivity. It is not a 'trial and error' process, but rather emphasizes learning while doing. Adaptive management does not represent an end in itself, but rather a means to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits.

In relation to the BLM National Greater Sage-grouse Planning Strategy, adaptive management will help identify if sage grouse conservation measures presented in this EIS contain the needed level of certainty for effectiveness. Principles of adaptive management are incorporated into the conservation measures in the plan to ameliorate threats to a species, thereby increasing the likelihood that the conservation measure and plan will be effective in reducing threats to that species. The following provides the BLM's adaptive management strategy for the MCFO PRMP/FEIS.

This Proposed RMP/FEIS contains a monitoring framework plan (GRSG Monitoring Framework Appendix) that includes an effectiveness monitoring component. The BLM intends to use the data collected from the effectiveness monitoring to identify any changes in habitat condition related to the goals and objectives of the plan and other range-wide conservation strategies (US Department of the Interior 2004; Striver et al. 2006; US Fish and Wildlife Service 2013). The information collected through the Monitoring Framework Plan outlined in the GRSG Monitoring Framework Appendix would be used by the BLM to determine when adaptive management hard and soft triggers (discussed below) are met. The GRSG adaptive management plan provides regulatory assurance that the means of addressing and responding to unintended negative impacts to greater sage-grouse and its habitat before consequences become

severe or irreversible.

Adaptive Management Triggers

Adaptive management triggers are essential for identifying when potential management changes are needed in order to continue meeting GRSG conservation objectives. The BLM will use soft and hard triggers.

Soft Triggers:

Soft triggers are indicators that management or specific activities may not be achieving the intended results of conservation action. The soft trigger is any negative deviation from normal trends in habitat or population in any given year, or if observed across two to three consecutive years. Metrics include, but are not limited to, annual lek counts, wing counts, aerial surveys, habitat monitoring, and DDCT evaluations. BLM field offices, local Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) offices, and GRSG working groups will evaluate the metrics. The purpose of these strategies is to address localized GRSG population and habitat changes by providing the framework in which management will change if monitoring identifies negative population and habitat anomalies.

Each major project (EIS level) will include adaptive management strategies in support of the population management objectives for GRSG set by the State of Montana, and will be consistent with this GRSG Adaptive Management Plan. These adaptive management strategies will be developed in partnership with the State of Montana, project proponents, partners, and stakeholders, incorporating the best available science.

If the BLM finds that the State of Montana is implementing a GRSG Habitat Conservation Program that is effectively conserving the GRSG, the BLM will review the management goals and objectives to determine if they are being met and whether amendment of the BLM plan is appropriate to achieve consistent and effective conservation and GRSG management across all lands regardless of ownership.

In making amendments to this plan, the BLM will coordinate with the USFWS as BLM continues to meet its objective of conserving, enhancing and restoring GRSG habitat by reducing, minimizing or eliminating threats to that habitat.

Soft Triggers Response:

Soft triggers require immediate monitoring and surveillance to determine causal factors and may require curtailment of activities in the short- or long-term, as allowed by law. The project level adaptive management strategies will identify appropriate responses where the project's activities are identified as the causal factor. The BLM and the adaptive management group will implement an appropriate response strategy to address causal factors not addressed by specific project adaptive management strategies, not attributable to a specific project, or to make adjustments at a larger regional or state-wide level.

Hard Triggers:

Hard triggers are indicators that management is not achieving desired conservation results. Hard triggers would be considered an indicator that the species is not responding to conservation actions, or that a larger-scale impact is having a negative effect.

Hard triggers are focused on three metrics: 1) number of active leks, 2) acres of available habitat, and 3) population trends based on annual lek counts.

Within the context of normal population variables, hard triggers shall be determined to take effect when two of the three metrics exceeds 60% of normal variability for the BSU in a single year, or when any of the three metrics exceeds 40% of normal variability for a three year time period within a five-year range of analysis. A minimum of three years is used to determine trends, with a five- year period preferred to allow determination of three actual time periods (Y1-2-3, Y2-3-4, Y3-4-5). Baseline population estimates are established by pre-disturbance surveys, reference surveys and account for regional and statewide trends in population levels.

Population count data in Montana are maintained by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP). Estimates of population are determined based upon survey protocols determined by FWP, and are implemented consistently throughout the state. Population counts are tracked for individual leks and are then summarized for each Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA).

Hard Trigger Response:

Hard triggers represent a threshold indicating that immediate action is necessary to stop a severe deviation from GRSG conservation objectives set forth in the BLM plans. As such, the Proposed Plan/Final EIS includes a "hard-wired" plan-level response; that is, it provides that, upon reaching the trigger, a more restrictive alternative, or an appropriate component of a more restrictive alternative analyzed in the EIS will be implemented without further action by the BLM. Specific "hard-wired" changes in management are identified in Table 2-3, Specific Management Responses.

In addition to the specific changes identified in Table 2-3, the BLM will review available and pertinent data, in coordination with GRSG biologists and managers from multiple agencies including the USFWS, NRCS, and the State of Montana, to determine the causal factor(s) and implement a corrective strategy. The corrective strategy would include the changes identified in Table 2-3 and could also include the need to amend or revise the RMP to address the situation and modify management accordingly.

When a hard trigger is hit in a BSU including those that cross state lines, the WAFWA Management Zone Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Team will convene to determine the causal factor, put project-level responses in place, as appropriate and discuss further appropriate actions to be applied. (BSU for this Proposed RMP/Final EIS is the total of all the PHMA within a GESG population delineated in the COT report.) Adoption of any further actions at the plan level may require initiating a plan amendment process.

TABLE 2-3.
SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

Program	Adaptive Management Response
GRSG Management	Areas within and adjacent to PHMA where a hard trigger has been reached would be the top priority for regional mitigation habitat restoration and fuels reduction treatments.
Vegetation Management	PHMA would be the top priority for regional mitigation, habitat restoration and fuels reduction treatments.
Wildland Fire Management	Reassess GRSG habitat needs to determine if priorities for at risk habitats, fuels management areas, preparedness, suppression and restoration have changed.
Livestock Grazing	For areas not achieving the GRSG habitat objectives due to grazing, apply adjustments to livestock grazing to achieve objectives.
Rights of Way – Existing Corridors	Retain the corridors as mapped, but limit the size of new lines within the corridors to same as existing structures, or not larger than 138kV.
Wind Energy Development	No change from Proposed Plan.
Industrial Solar	No change from Proposed Plan.
Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management	If travel management planning has not been completed within GRSG habitat, PHMA areas where the hard trigger was met would be the highest priority for future travel management planning efforts. If travel management has been completed within

Program	Adaptive Management Response
	GRSG habitat in the PHMA where the hard trigger was met, re-evaluate designated routes to determine their effects on GRSG. If routes are found to be causing population-level impacts, revise their designation status to reduce the effect.
Fluid Minerals	No change from Proposed Plan.
Locatable Minerals	No change from Proposed Plan.
Salable Minerals	No change from Proposed Plan.
Non-energy Leasable Minerals	No change from Proposed Plan. Not known to exist in the planning area (see Chapter 1).

MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

Management Common to all Alternatives is existing management that would continue regardless of any alternative selection. Where management actions from the current Big Dry and Powder River resource management plans (RMPs), as amended, were found to meet the BLM's current goals and no issue was raised, alternatives to current management were not developed. In these cases, the decisions from the existing RMPs are still appropriate to meet the goals and objectives for management of the public lands. These nonissue actions are considered in the Management Common to all Alternatives sections of Table 2-5. A key component of Management Common to all Alternatives would be carrying forward 10 existing areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs): Ash Creek Divide, Bug Creek, Hell Creek, and Sand Arroyo paleontological ACECs; Big Sheep Mountain, Hoe , Jordan Bison Kill ACEC, Powder River Depot, Seline, cultural ACECs; and Finger Buttes scenic ACEC.

Lands acquired within the planning area would be managed the same as like adjacent lands. For example, lands acquired by exchange within the Terry Badlands Wilderness Study Area (WSA) have wilderness characteristics and would be managed for their wilderness values. These lands would be managed in accordance with BLM Manual 6330, *Management of Wilderness Study Areas*. The area would be managed per Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I, oil and gas leasing would be closed, and surface-disturbing activities in general would not be allowed.

Vehicle routes available for motorized use within WSAs would be continued on a conditional basis. Vehicle routes that were identified in the original wilderness inventory may remain open to public use to the extent that the physical impacts of the primitive route are no greater than existed on October, 21, 1976 (prior to designation), and the routes have not been otherwise closed through subsequent travel planning decisions. If monitoring indicates that use or non-compliance is impairing the area's suitability for wilderness designation, the BLM will take further action to limit use of the routes or close them. The continued use of these routes, therefore, would be based on user compliance and non-impairment of wilderness values. Oil and gas leasing would be closed in all WSAs.

When a resource or value will be degraded or lost due to a land-use authorization, the BLM will consider and when deemed necessary, implement restoration, enhancement, creation, and/or preservation (mitigation) outside the area of impact. Mitigation will be analyzed in the project National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document and shall include stakeholder engagement.

DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives were developed to resolve the issues identified during scoping. The alternatives do not constitute management decisions; instead, they represent varying approaches to managing public lands. The development of the alternatives was guided by provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and NEPA as well as the planning criteria listed in Chapter 1. Other laws, as well as BLM planning regulations and policy, also directed alternative considerations. BLM identified Alternative E as its Preferred Alternative in the

Draft RMP/EIS. Based on comments received during the public comment period on the Draft RMP/EIS, Alternative E was revised. As modified, Alternative E is now BLM's Proposed RMP.

RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES FOR GRSG MANAGEMENT

The action alternatives (Alternatives A, B, C, D and E) in the Proposed RMP/EIS offer a range of management approaches to maintain or increase GRSG abundance and distribution of GRSG by conserving, enhancing, or restoring the sagebrush ecosystem upon which GRSG populations depend in collaboration with other conservation partners. The relative emphasis given to particular resources and resource uses differs as well, including allowable uses, restoration measures, and specific direction pertaining to individual resource programs. When resources or resource uses are mandated by law or are not tied to planning issues, there are typically few or no distinctions between alternatives.

The meaningful differences among the alternatives are described in the Chapter 2-5 Table. This section also provides a complete description of the goals, objectives, and management actions for each alternative. In some instances, varying levels of management of Priority and General Habitat Management Areas overlap a single area, or polygon, due to management prescriptions from different resource programs. In instances where varying levels of management prescriptions overlap a single polygon, the stricter of the management prescriptions would apply.

GRSG HABITAT OBJECTIVES

These habitat objectives in Table 2-4 summarize the characteristics that research has found represent the seasonal habitat needs for Greater Sage-Grouse. The specific seasonal components identified in the Table were adjusted based on local science and monitoring data to define the range of characteristics used in this subregion. Thus, the habitat objectives provide the broad vegetative conditions we strive to obtain across the landscape that indicate the seasonal habitats used by sage-grouse. These habitat indicators are consistent with the rangeland health indicators used by the BLM.

The habitat objectives will be part of the sage-grouse habitat assessment to be used during land health evaluations (see Monitoring Framework Appendix). These habitat objectives are not obtainable on every acre within the designated GRSG habitat management areas. Therefore, the determination on whether the objectives have been met will be based on the specific site's ecological ability to meet the desired condition identified in the table.

All BLM use authorizations will contain terms and conditions regarding the actions needed to meet or progress toward meeting the habitat objectives. If monitoring data show the habitat objectives have not been met nor progress being made towards meeting them, there will be an evaluation and a determination made as to the cause. If it is determined that the authorized use is a cause, the use will be adjusted by the response specified in the instrument that authorized the use.

TABLE 2-4
MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE RMP GRSG HABITAT OBJECTIVES

ATTRIBUTE	INDICATOR	DESIRED CONDITION
BREEDING, NESTING AND EARLY BROOD-REARING (Seasonal Use Period March 1-June 15)		
Lek Security	Proximity of trees[1]	.65– Km2 (.388 miles) avoidance of coniferous habitats
	Proximity of sagebrush to leks[2]	Adjacent protective sagebrush cover within 328 ft. (100 m) of an occupied lek
Cover	% of seasonal habitat meeting desired conditions[2, 3]	80% of the nesting habitat within 3.1 miles of GRSG leks meets the recommended vegetation characteristics, where appropriate (relative to ecological site potential, etc.)
	Sagebrush canopy cover[4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11]	5-25%
	Sagebrush height[5, 8, 9, 12, 13]	6-31 inches (15-50cm)
	Predominant sagebrush shape[2]	Predominately spreading shape

ATTRIBUTE	INDICATOR	DESIRED CONDITION
BREEDING, NESTING AND EARLY BROOD-REARING (Seasonal Use Period March 1-June 15)		
	Perennial grass cover[6, 7, 8, 9, 13]	≥10%
	Perennial grass and forb height[14]	Adequate nest cover based on ecological site potential and seasonal precipitation; 4.4-11.3 inches (11.4-29 cm)
	Perennial forb canopy cover[6, 7, 8, 9, 13]	≥3%
BROOD-REARING/SUMMER[1] (Seasonal Use Period June 16-October 31)		
Cover	% of Seasonal habitat meeting desired condition[2]	>40% of the brood-rearing/summer habitat meets recommended brood habitat characteristics where appropriate, relative to site potential and seasonal precipitation.
	Sagebrush canopy cover[4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]	5-25%
	Sagebrush height[8, 9, 12, 13]	6-31 inches (15-50cm)
	Perennial grass canopy cover and forbs[6, 7, 8, 9, 13]	≥10%
	Riparian areas/mesic meadows[15, 16, 17]	Proper Functioning Condition
	Upland and riparian perennial forb availability[2, 8, 9]	Preferred forbs are common with several preferred species present.
WINTER[1] (Seasonal Use Period November 1-February 28)		
Cover and Food	% of seasonal habitat meeting desired conditions[2]	>80% of wintering habitat meets winter habitat characteristics where appropriate (relative to ecological site, etc.)
	Sagebrush canopy cover above snow[5,10,12]	>10%
	Sagebrush height above snow[8, 9, 12]	6-31 inches (15-50cm)

[1]**Doherty, K.E. 2008. *Sage-grouse and Energy Development: Integrating Science with Conservation Planning to Reduce Impacts*. Doctoral dissertation, the University of Montana (Missoula). Available at: http://etd.lib.umt.edu/theses/available/etd-03262009-132629 /unrestricted /doherty.pdf.**

[2]**Stiver, S. J., E. T. Rinkes, D. E. Naugle, 2010. *Sage-Grouse Habitat Assessment Framework.* U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office, Boise, Idaho.**

[3]**Knick, S.T. and J.W. Connelly, 2011. *Greater Sage-grouse, Ecology and Conservation of a Landscape Species and its Habitats*. Studies in Avian Biology No. 38. A Publication of the Cooper Ornithological Society, University of California Press. Berkeley. pp. 1–9.**

[4]**Herman – Brunson, K.M. 2007. *Nesting and Brood-rearing success and habitat selection of Greater Sage-Grouse and associated survival of hens and broods at the edge of their historic distribution.* M.S. thesis, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD.**

[5]**Swanson, C.C. 2009. *Ecology of Greater Sage-grouse in the Dakotas.* Doctor of Philosophy, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD.**

[6]**Doherty, K.E., Naugle, D.E., Walker, B.L. 2010. *Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Habitat: The Importance of Managing at Multiple Scales.* The Journal of Wildlife Management 74 (7):1544-1553. 2010**

[7]**Hagen, C.A., Connelly, J.W., Schroedeer, M.A. *A Meta-analysis of Greater Sage-grouse Centrocercus urophasianus Nesting and Brood-rearing Habitats.* Wildlife Biology, 13 (sp1):42-50. 2007**

[8]**Doherty, K.E., Beck, J.L., Naugle, D.E. 2011. *Comparing Ecological Site Descriptions to Habitat Characteristics Influencing Greater Sage-Grouse Nest Site Occurrence and Success.* Rangeland Ecol Management 64:344-341 1 July 2011 1 DOI:10.2111?REM-D-10-00120.1**

[9]**USDA, NRCS, Montana, *Ecological Site Descriptions.* Accessed January 28, 2014. Available at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mt/technical/landuse/pasture/?cid=nrcs144p2_057024**

[10]**Foster, M.A, Ensign, J.T., Davis, W.N., Tribby, D.C. 2014. *Greater Sage-Grouse in the Southeast Montana Sage-Grouse Core Area.* Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) in Partnership with USDI Bureau of Land Management. Miles City, MT.**

[11]**Wright, P. and Wegner, D. 2008. *Mapping Land Cover to Estimate Sage Grouse Habitat Within the Cedar Creek Anticline and Surrounding Study Area.* Contract with Bureau of Reclamation. Technical Memorandum No. 86-68211-09-02. Remote Sensing and GIS Team, Technical Service Center, Bureau of Reclamation. Denver, CO.**

[12]**Schroeder et al. 1999. *Greater Sage-Grouse (Centrocercus urophasianus*) [Website], The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Accessed February 22, 2011. Available at: Birds of North America Online: http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna /species/425/articles/introduction**

[13]**Holloran, M.J., Heath, B.J., Lyon, A.G. 2005. *Greater Sage-Grouse Nesting Habitat Selection and Success in Wyoming.* Journal of Wildlife Management 69 (2):638-649. 2005**

[14] **K.E. Doherty, K.E. Naugle, J.D. Tack, B.L.Walker, J.M.Graham and J.L. Beck.** ***Linking conservation actions to demography: grass height explains variation in greater sage-grouse nest survival.*** **Wildlife Biology 20 (6):320-326. 2014**

[15] **BLM, 1997c.** ***Record of Decision for Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Final Environmental Impact Statement for Montana and North and South Dakota.*** **August 7, 1997. BLM, Montana State Office. Billings.**

[16] **Prichard, D., F. Berg, S. Leonard, M. Manning, W. Hagenbuck, R. Krapf, C. Noble, J. Staats, and R. Leinard. 1999.** ***Riparian Area Management A User Guide to Assessing Proper Functioning Condition and the Supporting Science for Lentic Areas (TR 1737-16).*** **Prepared for the United States Department of the Interior and the United States Department of Agriculture. BLM, National Applied Resource Sciences Center. Denver, CO.**

[17] **Prichard, D., 1998.** ***Riparian Area Management, A User Guide to Assessing Proper Functioning Condition and the Supporting Science for Lotic Areas (TR 1737-15).*** **Prepared for the United States Department of the Interior and the United States Department of Agriculture. BLM, National Applied Resource Sciences Center. Denver, CO.**

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN DETAIL

Five alternatives (A through E) were developed to offer a range of management options for resolving issues. Each alternative provides for varying levels of compatible resource use and development opportunities and each is consistent with law, regulation, and policy. Detailed management directions are provided for each alternative and in Table 2-5. A summary of the alternatives is provided below.

Alternative A (No Action) would continue present management in the planning area. Alternative A provides baseline information which is used to compare the other alternatives. If selected, this management option would follow the existing RMPs.

Alternative B would focus on natural processes and other unobtrusive methods for natural resource use and management, conserve most areas for their sensitive and fragile resources, and propose greater opportunities for dispersed non-motorized recreation while offering fewer motorized and developed recreation opportunities. This alternative would emphasize the improvement and protection of wildlife habitat and sensitive plant and animal species, improvement of riparian areas, and implementation of management actions that improve water quality and enhance protection of historic and cultural sites by limiting surface disturbance and development. In addition, Alternative B incorporates the national strategy of considering applicable and appropriate conservations measures in the NTT report in at least one alternative.

Alternative C would allow resource use (for example (e.g.), energy and mineral development and other commodity uses) while providing protection to sensitive resources. Management actions for GRSG habitats provide higher level of protections than those identified for Alternative A.

Alternative D provides a wide range of uses, emphasizing recreation, mineral, and energy development, and identifies areas most appropriate for these uses. Restrictions to protect resources would be implemented to the extent necessary to meet legal requirements.

Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified from Draft RMP/EIS) would allow resource use (e.g., energy and mineral development and other commodity uses) while providing protection to sensitive resources. Management actions for GRSG habitats provide higher level of protections than those identified for Alternative A. The BLM's Proposed Alternative contains both land use planning-level and implementation-level decisions for recreation and visitor services.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

The proposed alternative was selected in consideration of anticipated effects of management actions and available scientific information and studies. However, conditions may change over time, and management actions already implemented can be improved as new technology and information become available. It is also possible that changes in land use would require different management actions in order to protect the resource. To provide management flexibility and address changing conditions using Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions , the Miles City Field Office (MCFO) will monitor and evaluate the approved plan (ROD) using a process that provides optimum methods for evaluating effectiveness of management actions.

This process will measure the effectiveness of existing actions by monitoring these actions and applying the results of new scientific research when a threshold met. (See the *Monitoring Appendix* for items monitored and management options if a threshold is reached.)

MITIGATION GUIDELINES AND MITIGATION MEASURES AND CONSERVATION ACTIONS

Mitigation measures and conservation actions are operating procedures, or design features that have been developed to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for potentially significant adverse environmental impacts associated with surface-disturbing or disruptive activities. For the purposes of applying mitigation measures, surface-disturbing and disruptive activities are defined as described below.

Surface-disturbing activities are the physical disturbance or removal of land surface and vegetation. Some examples of surface-disturbing activities include, but are not limited to, construction of roads, well pads, pipelines, power lines, reservoirs, facilities, recreation sites, and mining. Vegetation renovation treatments that involve soil penetration or substantial mechanical damage to plants (plowing, chiseling, chopping, and other activities) are also surface-disturbing activities. Some authorized uses are not considered surface-disturbing activities. For example, emergency activities (fire suppression, search and rescue, and other activities) or rangeland monitoring, routine maintenance associated with an approved authorization, some dispersed recreational activities (e.g., hunting and hiking), and livestock grazing are not considered surface-disturbing activities.

Disruptive activities are those uses and activities that are likely to alter the behavior of, displace, or cause excessive stress to wildlife populations occurring at a specific location or time. In this context, disruptive activities refer to those actions that alter behavior or cause the displacement of wildlife such that reproductive success is negatively affected or the physiological ability to cope with environmental stress is compromised. This term does not apply to the physical disturbance of the land surface, vegetation, or features. Examples of disruptive activities may include fence construction, noise, vehicle traffic, or other human presence regardless of the activity. The term is used in conjunction with protecting wildlife during crucial life stages (e.g., breeding, nesting, birthing, and other activities) although it could apply to any resource value. Some authorized uses are not considered disruptive actions. For example, emergency activities (fire suppression, search and rescue, and other activities), or rangeland monitoring, routine maintenance associated with an approved authorization, some dispersed recreational activities (e.g., hunting and hiking), and livestock grazing are not considered disruptive activities.

Mitigation measures and conservation actions addressing surface-disturbing and/or disruptive activities are found in the *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix.* The BLM may add additional mitigation measures as deemed necessary by further environmental analysis and as developed through consultation with other federal, state, and local regulatory and resource agencies.

The BLM will apply appropriate mitigation practices and conservation actions to BLM-authorized activities to minimize impacts if an evaluation of the project area indicated the presence of important wildlife species, seasonal wildlife habitat or other resource concern.
The sequence of mitigation actions will be as described below in three steps.

- Avoid: adverse impacts to resources are to be avoided and no action shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative with less adverse impacts.
- Minimize: if impacts to resources cannot be avoided, appropriate and practicable steps to minimize adverse impacts must be taken.
- Compensate: appropriate and practicable compensatory mitigation is required for unavoidable adverse impacts that remain. The amount and quality of compensatory mitigation may not substitute for avoiding and minimizing impacts.

Even after avoiding and minimizing impacts, projects that will cause adverse impacts to resources typically require some type of compensatory mitigation. Compensatory mitigation refers to the restoration, establishment,

enhancement, or, in certain circumstances, preservation of resources for the purpose of offsetting unavoidable adverse impacts. The BLM will determine the appropriate form and amount of compensatory mitigation required. Methods of compensatory mitigation include restoration, establishment, enhancement, and conservation.

- Restoration: reestablishment or rehabilitation of a resource with the goal of returning natural or historic functions and characteristics to a currently degraded area. Restoration may result in a gain in function, acres, or both.
- Establishment (creation): the development of a resource in areas in which that resource did not previously exist through manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of the site. Successful establishment results in a net gain in acres and function.
- Enhancement: activities conducted within existing resource that heighten, intensify, or improve one or more functions. Enhancement is often undertaken for a specific purpose such as to improve water quality, floodwater retention, or wildlife habitat. Enhancement results in a gain in function, but does not result in a net gain in acres.
- Preservation: the permanent protection of ecologically important resources through the implementation of appropriate legal and physical mechanisms (i.e., conservation easements, title transfers, or other methods). Preservation may include protection of areas adjacent to resource location as necessary to ensure protection or enhancement of the ecosystem. Preservation does not result in a net gain of acres and may only be used in certain circumstances, including when the resources to be preserved contribute significantly to ecological sustainability.

There are times when mitigating project impacts through on-site mitigation alone may not be possible or sufficient to adequately mitigate impacts and achieve resource objectives; in these cases, it may be appropriate to consider compensatory mitigation as a feature of one or more of the alternatives in the impact analysis (see *GRSG Effects Analysis Process Appendix)*. Compensatory mitigation is generally appropriate when the Authorized Officer (AO) determines that impacts cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level onsite and it is expected that the land use authorization as submitted would not be consistent with the BLM's resource objectives. The BLM may expressly condition its approval of an action on the applicant's commitment to take actions, and the BLM may, if necessary, seek appropriate enforcement action to ensure the terms of the contract are met.

Because of site-specific circumstances, some mitigation measures and conservation actions may not apply to some activities (e.g., a resource or conflict is not present on a given site) or may require slight variations from measures and actions described in the *Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix*. Proposed variations will be addressed as site-specific mitigation applied in the permitting process. All variations in mitigation measures and conservation actions will require appropriate analysis and disclosure as part of activity authorization. It is anticipated that variations in the mitigation measures and conservation actions will be approved in very limited circumstances and only in coordination with state wildlife management agencies. Mitigation measures and conservation actions selected for implementation will be identified in the ROD or decision record for those activities. The proponent must implement those identified mitigations because they are commitments made as part of the BLM decision. Because these decisions create a clear obligation for the BLM to ensure any proposed mitigation adopted in the environmental review process is performed, there is assurance that mitigation will lead to a reduction of environmental impacts in the implementation stage and include

binding mechanisms for enforcement (CEQ 2011). The determination of adequate application of the mitigation measures and conservation actions for specific projects will remain with the BLM's AO.

Regional Mitigation for GRSG

Consistent with the proposed plan's goal outlined in Table 2-5, Comparison of Alternatives, the intent of the Miles City Field Office PRMP/FEIS is to provide a net conservation gain to the GRSG species. To do so, in all sage-grouse habitats, in undertaking BLM management actions, and, consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, in authorizing third party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will require and assure mitigation that provides a net conservation gain to the species including accounting for any uncertainty associated with the effectiveness of such mitigation. Actions which result in habitat loss and

degradation include those identified as threats which contribute to Greater Sage-Grouse disturbance as identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in its 2010 listing decision (75 FR 13910) and shown in Table 2 in the GRSG Monitoring Framework Appendix. This will be achieved by avoiding, minimizing, and compensating for impacts by applying beneficial mitigation actions. This is also consistent with BLM Manual 6840 – Special Status Species Management, Section .02B, which states "to initiate proactive conservation measures that reduce or eliminate threats to Bureau sensitive species to minimize the likelihood of the need for listing of these species under the ESA."

Mitigation Standards: In all in undertaking BLM management actions, and, consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, in authorizing third party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will require and assure mitigation that provides a net conservation gain to the species including accounting for any uncertainty associated with the effectiveness of such mitigation. Actions which result in habitat loss and degradation include those identified as threats which contribute to Greater Sage-Grouse disturbance as identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in its 2010 listing decision (75 FR 13910) and shown in Table 2 in the GRSG Monitoring Framework Appendix. This will be achieved by avoiding, minimizing, and compensating for impacts by applying beneficial mitigation actions. Mitigation will follow the regulations from the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR 1508.20; e.g. avoid, minimize, and compensate), hereafter referred to as the mitigation hierarchy. If impacts from BLM management actions and authorized third party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation remain after applying avoidance and minimization measures (i.e. residual impacts), then compensatory mitigation projects will be used to provide a net conservation gain to the species. Any compensatory mitigation will be durable, timely, and in addition to that which would have resulted without the compensatory mitigation (see the concepts of durability, timeliness, and additionality as described further in the *GRSG Regional Mitigation Strategy Appendix*.

Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Team. The BLM will establish a WAFWA Management Zone Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Team (hereafter, Team) to help guide the conservation of GRSG, within 90 days of the issuance of the Record of Decision. This Team will develop a WAFWA Management Zone Regional Mitigation Strategy (hereafter, Regional Mitigation Strategy). The Team will also compile and report on monitoring data (including data on habitat condition, population trends, and mitigation effectiveness) from States across the WAFWA Management Zone (see Monitoring section). Subsequently, the Team will use these data to either modify the appropriate Regional Mitigation Strategy or recommend adaptive management actions (see Adaptive Management section).

The BLM will invite governmental and Tribal partners to participate in this Team, including the State Wildlife Agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in compliance with the exemptions provided for committees defined in the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the regulations that implement that act. The BLM will strive for a collaborative and unified approach between Federal agencies (e.g. USFWS, BLM, and USFS), Tribal governments, state and local government(s), and other stakeholders for GRSG conservation. The Team will provide advice, and will not make any decisions that impact Federal lands. The BLM will remain responsible for making decisions that affect Federal lands.

Developing a Regional Mitigation Strategy: The Team will develop a Regional Mitigation Strategy to inform the mitigation components of NEPA analyses for BLM management actions and third party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation. The Strategy will be developed within one year of the issuance of the Record of Decision. The BLM's Regional Mitigation Manual MS-1794 will serve as a framework for developing the Regional Mitigation Strategy. The Regional Mitigation Strategy will be applicable to the States/Field Offices/Forests within the WAFWA Management Zone's boundaries.

Regional mitigation is a landscape-scale approach to mitigating impacts to resources. This involves anticipating future mitigation needs and strategically identifying mitigation sites and measures that can provide a net conservation gain to the species. The Regional Mitigation Strategy developed by the Team will elaborate on the components identified above (i.e. avoidance, minimization, and compensation; additionality, timeliness, and durability) and further explained in the *GRSG Regional Mitigation Strategy Appendix*].

In the time period before the Strategy is developed, BLM will consider regional conditions, trends, and sites, to the greatest extent possible, when applying the mitigation hierarchy and will ensure that mitigation is consistent with the standards set forth in the first paragraph of this section.

Incorporating the Regional Mitigation Strategy into NEPA Analyses: The BLM will include the avoidance, minimization, and compensatory recommendations from the Regional Mitigation Strategy in one or more of the NEPA analysis' alternatives for BLM management actions and third party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation and the appropriate mitigation actions will be carried forward into the decision.

Implementing a Compensatory Mitigation Program: Consistent with the principles identified above, the BLM need to ensure that compensatory mitigation is strategically implemented to provide a net conservation gain to the species, as identified in the Regional Mitigation Strategy. In order to align with existing compensatory mitigation efforts, this compensatory mitigation program will be implemented at a State-level (as opposed to a WAFWA Management Zone or a Field Office), in collaboration with our partners (e.g. Federal, Tribal, and State agencies).

To ensure transparent and effective management of the compensatory mitigation funds, the BLM will enter into a contract or agreement with a third-party to help manage the State-level compensatory mitigation funds, within one year of the issuance of the Record of Decision. The selection of the third-party compensatory mitigation administrator will conform to all relevant laws, regulations, and policies. The BLM will remain responsible for making decisions that affect Federal lands.

MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR GRSG HABITAT MANAGEMENT

The BLM's planning regulations, specifically 43 CFR 1610.4-9, require that land use plans establish intervals and standards for monitoring based on the sensitivity of the resource decisions. Land use plan monitoring is the process of tracking the implementation of land use plan decisions (implementation monitoring) and collecting data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use plan decisions (effectiveness monitoring). For GRSG, these types of monitoring are also described in the criteria found in the Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts When Making Listing Decisions (50 CFR Vol. 68, No. 60). One of the Policy for Evaluation of Conservation Efforts When Making Listing Decisions criteria evaluates whether provisions for monitoring and reporting progress on implementation (based on compliance with the implementation schedule) and effectiveness (based on evaluation of quantifiable parameters) of the conservation effort are provided.

A guiding principle in the BLM National Sage-grouse Conservation Strategy (US Department of the Interior 2004) is that "the Bureau is committed to GRSG and sagebrush conservation and will continue to adjust and adapt our National Sage-grouse Strategy as new information, science, and monitoring results evaluate effectiveness over time." In keeping with the WAFWA Sage-grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy (Stiver et al. 2006) and the Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Objectives: Final Report (USFWS 2013), the BLM will monitor implementation and effectiveness of conservation measures in GRSG habitats.

On March 5, 2010, USFWS' 12-Month Findings for Petitions to List the Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) as Threatened or Endangered were posted as a Federal Register notice (75 Federal Register 13910-14014, March 23, 2010). This notice stated:

> "…the information collected by BLM could not be used to make broad generalizations about the status of rangelands and management actions. There was a lack of consistency across the range in how questions were interpreted and answered for the data call, which limited our ability to use the results to understand habitat conditions for Greater Sage-grouse on BLM lands."

Standardization of monitoring methods and implementation of a useful monitoring approach (within and across jurisdictions) will resolve this situation. The BLM, Forest Service, and other conservation partners use the resulting information to guide implementation of conservation activities.

Monitoring strategies for GRSG habitat and populations must be collaborative, as habitat occurs across jurisdictional boundaries (52 percent on BLM-administered lands, 31 percent on private lands, 8 percent on National Forest System lands, 5 percent on state lands, 4 percent on tribal and other federal lands) (75 *Federal Register* 13910, March 23, 2010), and state fish and wildlife agencies have primary responsibility for population level wildlife management, including population monitoring. Therefore, population efforts will continue to be conducted in partnership with state fish and wildlife agencies. The BLM has finalized a monitoring framework, which can be found in the *GRSG Monitoring Framework Appendix*. This framework describes the process that the BLM will use to monitor implementation and effectiveness of RMP decisions. The monitoring framework includes methods, data standards, and intervals of monitoring at broad and mid scales; consistent indicators to measure and metric descriptions for each of the scales; analysis and reporting methods; and the incorporation of monitoring results into adaptive management. The need for fine-scale and site-specific habitat monitoring may vary by area depending on existing conditions, habitat variability, threats, and land health. Indicators at the fine and site scales will be consistent with the Habitat Assessment Framework; however, the values for the indicators could be adjusted for regional conditions.

More specifically, the framework discusses how the BLM will monitor and track implementation and effectiveness of planning decisions (e.g., tracking of waivers, modifications, site-level actions). The BLM will monitor the effectiveness of RMP decisions in meeting management and conservation objectives. Effectiveness monitoring will include monitoring disturbance in habitats, as well as landscape habitat attributes. To monitor habitats, the BLM will measure and track attributes of occupied habitat, priority habitat, and general habitat at the broad scale, and attributes of habitat availability, patch size, connectivity, linkage/connectivity habitat, edge effect, and anthropogenic disturbances at the mid-scale. Disturbance monitoring will measure and track changes in the amount of sagebrush in the landscape and changes in the anthropogenic footprint, including change energy development density. The framework also includes methodology for analysis and reporting for field offices, states, ranger districts, BLM districts, National Forests, and Forest regions, including geospatial and tabular data for disturbance mapping (e.g., geospatial footprint of new permitted disturbances) and management actions effectiveness.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

The following alternative(s) were considered, but not carried forward for detailed analysis because (1) they would not fulfill requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) or other existing laws or regulations, (2) they did not meet the purpose and need, (3) they were already part of an existing plan, policy, or administrative function, or (4) they did not fall within the limits of the planning criteria.

Reevaluate Wilderness Study Area Recommendations

The BLM received a proposal requesting the reevaluation of suitability of existing WSAs for wilderness designation. This alternative was considered but not analyzed in detail because Section 603 wilderness recommendations for WSAs are now before Congress and cannot be changed by the BLM.

Non-energy Leasable Minerals

Development of non-energy leasable minerals, such as sodium and potash, has never been proposed or permitted in the planning area, and, because the development potential for these resources is minimal to non-existent in the planning area, these actions were considered but not analyzed in detail in the RMP.

Geothermal Resources

The potential for geothermal resources in the planning area was identified in a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Geothermal Resources that amended several RMPs, including Big Dry and Powder River (BLM 2008h). A more current evaluation of geothermal resources in the 2013 Draft Miles City Draft RMP/EIS recognized the development of geothermal resources as being very limited and likely to not occur with the planning area (See Draft RMP/EIS page 4-264). Since the development of geothermal resources has

never been proposed or permitted in the planning area and since the development potential is basically non-existent, the Draft RMP/EIS did not contain a reasonably foreseeable development potential for geothermal resources or have any assumptions providing that disturbance would occur within the planning area from the development of geothermal resources.

Because the development potential for the resource is minimal to non-existent and because there is no quantitative analysis contained in the Draft RMP/EIS, geothermal development is considered but not analyzed in detail in the PRMP/FEIS. Since it is not analyzed in detail in the PRMP/FEIS, any future proposals for geothermal development received may require an amendment in order to consider the proposal. See Chapter 1 under "Planning Process" for discussion on circumstances for amending plans.

Designating Major Transportation and Energy Corridors

Major transportation and energy corridors were considered but not analyzed in detail. Because federal lands are scattered in a checkerboard land pattern interspersed with private and state lands in most of the planning area, a major transportation or energy corridor would not be feasible to implement. However, in consideration of corridors, the RMP does have a Mitigation Measure and Conservation Action which states that “Whenever possible, ROWs would be constructed within or next to compatible existing ROWs, such as roads, pipelines, communications sites, and railroads." Also, the following Assumption is included in the Lands and Realty Assumptions Section of Chapter 4: “It is assumed that new Major ROWs would be located within or next to compatible existing Major ROWs, for example within or next to the Bison Pipeline ROW area (MTM-98321) and the Bridger-Butte Pipeline (MTM-018460)/WBI Grasslands Pipeline (MTM-91539) ROWs area in Carter County.”

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership Sportsmen Area

An area within the northern portion of Garfield County bordering the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (approximately 949,000 acres) was identified by 30 sportsmen’s clubs as a high quality fishing and hunting area and named the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership Sportsmen Area. The groups designating the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership Sportsmen Area are concerned about the potential effects to hunting and fishing from oil and gas leasing and potential exploration in the area.

Designation of such an area is substantially similar to other alternatives in the EIS. The PRMP/FEIS Alternative E (proposed alternative) for oil and gas leasing in the sportsmen’s area proposes approximately 361,000 acres closed to oil and gas leasing (38%), approximately 491,000 acres (52%) managed with No Surface Occupancy stipulations, and approximately 97,000 acres (10%) managed with Control Surface Use stipulations or lease terms. In addition, the baseline unconstrained reasonably foreseeable development scenario, for all ownership in Garfield County (approximately 3.1 million acres), projects 294 oil and gas wells in the next 20 years. This would include 110 BLM administered oil and gas wells. The oil and gas occurrence potential illustrates the sportsmen’s area is in low development potential for oil and gas.

The acres closed to oil and gas leasing and proposed with no surface occupancy within the sportsmen’s area have been considered and analyzed in the RMP under other sections of the PRMP/FEIS (see Proposed Alternative E under the GRSG Priority Habitat Management Areas; Wilderness; Lewis and Clark Trail SRMA etc.) Because development is not likely to occur and the PRMP/Alternative E is providing either a no surface occupancy or closure to approximately 90% of the sportsmen’s area, a specific alternative closing the entire sportsmen’s area was considered but eliminated from detailed analysis.

Analyzing an Alternative that makes all Lands in the Planning Area Unavailable for Livestock Grazing (No Grazing Alternative)

NEPA requires that agencies study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal that involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. No issues or conflicts have been identified during this land use planning effort that require the complete elimination of livestock grazing within the planning area for their resolution (BLM Washington Office [WO] Instruction Memorandum [IM] 2012-069, WO Handbook H1601-1) and such an alternative. Where appropriate livestock

removals and use adjustments have been incorporated in this planning effort. Because the BLM has considerable discretion through its grazing regulations to determine and adjust stocking levels, seasons-of-use, and grazing management activities and to allocate forage to uses of the public lands, the analysis of an alternative to entirely eliminate grazing is not needed.

Livestock grazing is a well-established use within the BLM's multiple use and sustained yield mandate. The BLM considered but did not analyze in detail an alternative that would make all 2.8 million acres of public lands in the planning area unavailable for livestock grazing because such an alternative is not reasonable, viable, or necessary.

The planning area is located in the northern portion of the Great Plains Ecoregion (USEPA 2012a) and the rangelands in the planning area are classified as mixed-grass prairie. The rangelands of the Great Plains have a long evolutionary history of grazing and grazing is accepted by grassland ecologists as a keystone process of the grassland ecosystem (Fuhlendorf and Engle 2001; Milchunas, Sala, and Lauenroth 1988; Knapp et al. 1999).

There is also agreement among many scientists and natural resource managers that some level of grazing is necessary to assure the ecological integrity of the mixed-grass prairie ecosystem (Parks Canada 2002).

From 1956 through 1972, the BLM conducted a classification of public lands to estimate the amount of available forage within the planning area. These are typically referred to as the "Missouri River Basin Surveys". From this effort, multiple sub-basin reports were generated, which provided the carrying capacities by animal unit months (AUMs) for all BLM-administered lands at the time of survey.

The measurement of the available forage for livestock grazing was conducted by trained professionals and involved intensive vegetation sampling (clipping, weighing, and ocular estimation). The BLM, in cooperation with grazing advisory boards, used the information to make adjustments to the AUMs allocated to a grazing permit. This cooperative effort resulted in implementation of appropriate changes to grazing permits in the planning areas. These changes were implemented in a timely manner and completed prior to 1975.

These historical grazing allocations have been included in the existing RMPs and allocation of vegetation generally ranges from 25 to 40 percent for livestock and 75 to 60 percent for other uses (e.g. wildlife, soil protection, and other uses).

Current resource conditions on BLM-administered land, including range vegetation, watershed, and wildlife habitat, as reflected in land health assessments, do not warrant prohibition of livestock grazing throughout the entire planning area. Following initial surveyed forage allocations, land health evaluations, inventories, and monitoring data (vegetative and levels of use) have been the basis for increasing or decreasing permitted use. Through this process the planning area has changed the grazing allocations on allotments to ensure that the healthy ecological systems are provided for future generations.

In accordance with the BLM's H-1601-1 *Land Use Planning Handbook* and BLM WO IM No. 2012-169, the BLM considered a range of alternatives with respect to both areas that were available or unavailable for livestock grazing and the amount of forage allocated to livestock on an area-wide basis. The range of alternatives considered includes a meaningful reduction in livestock grazing, both through a reduction in areas available to livestock grazing and forage allocation.

The BLM's approach to livestock grazing is described in detail in the *Livestock Grazing Appendix*, which complies with BLM's IM 2012-069 as well as the BLM's *Land Use Planning Handbook*. The BLM developed a range of alternatives that sharply defines the issues and provides a clear basis for choice among options by the decision maker. The BLM analyzed closing 390,000 acres to sheep and goat grazing and 210,000 acres to all livestock grazing under Alternative B, in which the BLM identified unresolved conflicts for various uses of available resources (such as between livestock grazing and proposed ACECs).

The BLM also analyzed a range of alternatives that varied the amount of forage allocated to livestock. In areas available for livestock grazing, Alternative B allocates approximately one-third less forage to sheep and goats than Alternative A, existing management. Alternative B also reduces AUMs where livestock grazing practices

contributed to not meeting rangeland health standards. Alternative B also includes other reductions in livestock grazing through the use of forage reserves, limitations on livestock grazing near cultural or recreation sites, and limitations on the use of salt and supplements as well as prohibiting any new range infrastructure.

Livestock grazing is and has been an important use of the public lands in the planning area for many years and is a continuing government program. The Council of Environmental Quality guidelines for compliance with NEPA require that agencies analyze the No Action Alternative in all EISs (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1502.14(d)). For the purposes of this NEPA analysis, the No Action Alternative is to continue the status quo, which includes livestock grazing. For this reason and those stated above, a no grazing alternative for the entire planning area was dismissed from further consideration in the RMP. See the *Livestock Grazing* section in Table 2-5 for alternatives considering a reduction in livestock grazing.

Conservation Groups Alternative

During the range-wide scoping effort for GRSG, several conservation organizations submitted scoping comments and proposed management actions and alternatives for GRSG conservation (referred to here as the Conservation Groups Alternative). In summary, the primary intent of these proposed alternatives and management actions was to:

- include additional specific measures (in addition to those conservation measures specifically identified in *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures*, produced by the Sage-grouse National Technical Team) (BLM 2011a) in order to maintain and increase GRSG abundance and,
- designate two additional habitat types, the GRSG ACEC and GRSG Habitat – Restoration Areas.

These proposed actions and alternatives submitted by these organizations were determined to be substantially similar to those actions and habitat areas considered within the range of alternatives for this planning effort, and which were analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS. As described in the *Fish, Aquatic and Wildlife Habitat, Special Status Species* section in Chapter 2, this RMP delineates three types of GRSG habitat areas as part of the planning process, including GRSG Habitat – General Habitat Areas, GRSG Habitat –Priority, and GRSG Habitat – Restoration Areas. Varying degrees of management are considered and analyzed as part of the range of alternatives within each of these proposed habitat areas in order to achieve the goals or objectives for each GRSG habitat area, as well as address the conservation measures and management practices to conserve greater GRSG consistent with *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures*, produced by the GRSG National Technical Team (BLM 2011a). Additionally, this RMP includes Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions for GRSG (see the *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix)*. The appendix identifies best practices, design features, and proactive management activities to conserve GRSG that would be applied during project-specific activities through subsequent environmental review and analysis.

Specific to the organizations' proposed alternative to designate GRSG ACECs and Restoration Areas, this RMP does include, within the range of alternatives for detailed study, a GRSG ACEC (Alternative B) and Restoration Areas for GRSG. Table 2-5 provides a summary of the range of acreages for General, Priority, and Restoration Habitat Areas for GRSG and provides a summary of the range of alternatives for GRSG habitat management in general (e.g., allowable uses, constraints, and other actions). This range of alternatives is adequate to compare impacts to GRSG from different conservation measures as well as the size of habitat classifications. The effects of designation as an ACEC depends upon the management prescriptions associated with that designation. If the management prescriptions are identical to those associated with a particular scheme for GRSG habitat management, then the effects are likewise identical.

In summary, the additional alternatives and actions proposed through the Conservation Groups Alternative were determined to have substantially similar effects to the actions and habitat areas considered within the range of alternatives identified above.

HOW TO READ TABLE 2-5

Each alternative plan is presented in table format by column. The PRMP appears as Alternative E, and is the

Preferred Alternative, modified from how it was presented in the Draft RMP/EIS. To learn about an alternative and potential management actions, read down the table. To compare alternatives, read across the table. All acreage numbers in the table are approximate. All of the management actions considered apply to **BLM-administered lands and minerals only**. Acre figures may overlap and adding these figures will not result in accurate total acreage. For example, if an action reads "the BLM would make significant cultural sites available for scientific study" this action would apply to BLM-administered lands only. If conflicting management actions are proposed for the same acreage (and the resources for that action are present) within an alternative, then the most restrictive action would be implemented (unless a safety hazard was identified or the action were to conflict with existing law and regulation). For example, if an alternative prohibits surface-disturbing activities in a 200-acre area of crucial winter range but a later action in the same alternative allows a surface-disturbing activity (and crucial winter range is present), the activity would not be allowed. This would also apply if an alternative prohibits surface-disturbing activities but hazards to the public were found on the same acreage; in this case, the BLM would allow the removal or elimination of the hazard, including any necessary surface disturbance.

Some management actions have additional details, which are included in footnotes at the end of the table. All stipulations for oil and gas leasing are found in the *Minerals Appendix*.

Where acres are provided in Table 2-5, the data for that resource have been collected; where data are incomplete, an assumption is made regarding the acre numbers (and is found in the *Assumptions to the Analyses* section of Chapter 4). For example, although the BLM is aware that there are sensitive soils in the 2.8 million-acre planning area, not all of these areas are mapped. Where field data have not been collected, the BLM provides acreage assumptions for analysis based on agency professionals' expertise and judgment. More detailed analysis would be conducted, if appropriate, during environmental review of site-specific proposed action.

Upon plan approval (ROD), valid existing rights would not be changed by the decisions in this document. In the event that an existing permit or lease expired, the area would be subject to the decisions reached in this document. However, the BLM will continue to coordinate with private surface owners before approving minerals activities under their private surface. Surface owner requirements can be incorporated as conditions of approval prior to approving an action.

For a description of Resources, Resource Uses, Special Designations, and Social and Economic by alternative, see the table below or, for electronic drafts, click on the following link to take you to a specific resource:

RESOURCES: Air Resources and Climate, Cultural Resources, Fish and Wildlife (Aquatics and Terrestrial) Including Special Status Species, Invasive Species, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, Paleontological Resources, Riparian and Wetland, Soils, Vegetation, Visual Resources, Water Resources, and Wildland Fire Management and Ecology.

RESOURCE USES: Forestry and Woodland Products, Lands and Realty, Livestock Grazing, Minerals, Recreation, SRMAs, Renewable Energy, Travel Management and OHV.

SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS: National Trails, Special Designation Areas, Wilderness Study Areas.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMICS: Economic, Social.

HOW TO READ TABLE 2-6

Table 2-6 *Summary Comparison of Impacts by Alternative*, presents a brief summary of the potential impacts that would occur under each alternative. In Table 2-6, each alternative plan is presented in table format by column. To compare impacts by alternative, read across the table. See Chapter 4, *Environmental Consequences* for complete analysis of each alternative.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
RESOURCES					
AIR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE ***Goal 1*** *– Maintain or enhance air quality and air quality related values (AQRVs) in the planning area and at sensitive areas (e.g., Class I areas) in and near the planning area.* ***Goal 2*** *– Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions when feasible.* ***Goal 3*** *– Evaluate the observed and anticipated long-term dynamic of climate change and minimize the impact of GHGs from projects to the degree practicable and reasonably foreseeable.* ***Goal 4*** *– Provide for flexible, adaptable management that allows for timely responses to changing climatic conditions.* ***Goal 5*** *– Maintain or improve the ability of BLM-administered lands to reduce (sequester) atmospheric GHGs.*					
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Air Resources and Climate	**Action 1** – Air resource and climate change monitoring would be conducted as described in the *Monitoring Appendix* and in the *Air Resources and Climate Appendix* (see also Map 6).				
	Action 2 – Emission reduction mitigation measures and conservation actions would be considered during project-level planning.[2]				
	Action 3 – Actions that reduced or mitigated GHG emissions such as enhanced energy efficiency, use of lower GHG-emitting technologies, capture or beneficial use of methane emissions, and/or sequestration of carbon dioxide through enhanced oil recovery or other means would be prioritized.				
	Action 4 – The BLM would promote vegetative capture and storage of carbon, with consideration for resource objectives, by using Standards for Rangeland Health and Montana forestry and rangeland mitigation measures and conservation actions guidelines at the project-planning and implementation level.				
	Action 5 – The BLM would adjust the timing of BLM-authorized activities as needed to accommodate long-term changes in seasonal weather patterns while considering the impacts to other resources and resource uses.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Air Resources and Climate	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms.	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation for each diesel-fueled non-road engine with greater than 200 hp. design rating.[1]			
SOILS ***Goal 1*** *– Maintain or improve the chemical, physical, and biotic properties of soil.*					
SOILS	**Objective 1** – Prevent or limit accelerated soil loss, minimize degradation of soils, and control sedimentation.				
	Objective 2 – Maintain or improve adequate vegetation and ground cover (including biological soil crusts and litter) to promote soil health, productivity, and stability.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Soils	**Action 1** – Reclamation measures for surface-disturbing activities would be implemented as described in the *Reclamation Appendix*.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Soils	**Action 2** – Mechanical treatment of vegetation on slopes greater than 15% would be avoided (BLM 1996). Use of ground-based harvest and slash-treating equipment would be limited to 40% slopes and less (BLM 2003k). Surface-disturbing activities on slopes 30% or greater would be avoided unless the activity can be mitigated (43,780 acres) (BLM 1996). Oil and gas leasing would be offered with a CSU stipulation on slopes over 30% (BLM 1985c).[1]	**Action 2 -** Surface-disturbing activities that did not benefit the functionality of sensitive soils would not be allowed.[2, 3] Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation on sensitive soils (1,840,000 acres).[1]	**Action 2 -** Surface-disturbing activities on sensitive soils would be allowed with specialized design features to maintain or improve the stability of the site.[2, 3] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed on sensitive soils with a CSU stipulation (1,874,000 acres).[1]		

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Mechanical treatment of vegetation on highly erodible soils would be avoided (BLM 1996) (160,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing on sensitive soils would be offered with lease terms.				
Badlands and Rock Outcrop	**Action 3 -** Oil and gas leasing on badlands and rock outcrop would be offered with lease terms (260,000 acres).	**Action 3 -** Surface disturbing activities on badlands and rock outcrop would not be allowed. Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation on badlands and rock outcrop (234,000 acres).[1]	**Action 3 -** Surface disturbing activities on badlands and rock outcrop would be allowed with specialized design features to maintain or improve the stability of the site. [2, 3] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation on badlands and rock outcrop (234,000 acres). [1]		**Action 3 -** Surface disturbing activities on badlands and rock outcrop would be allowed with specialized design features to maintain or improve the stability of the site. [2, 3] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited on badlands and rock outcrop (NSO) (234,000 acres).[1]
WATER RESOURCES ***Goal 1*** *– Maintain or enhance the beneficial uses of surface water and groundwater.*					
WATER	**Objective 1** – Support natural surface water flow regimes.				
	Objective 2 – Protect water resources from point source and nonpoint source pollution.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Water	**Action 1** – The BLM activities conducted would meet or exceed Montana water quality standards.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
100-year Floodplains	**Action 2** – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation on 100-year floodplains of major rivers (100,000 acres).[1]	**Action 2** – Surface-disturbing activities that did not benefit the functionality of the floodplain would not be allowed on 100-year floodplains. Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation on 100-year floodplains (96,000 acres).[1]	**Action 2** – Surface-disturbing activities that did not benefit the functionality of the floodplain would be avoided on 100-year floodplains unless no other practicable alternative existed, in which case the activities would only be allowed with measures to minimize impacts.[2, 4] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation on 100-year floodplains (96,000 acres).[1]		**Action 2** – Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed in 100-year floodplains with specialized design features to minimize impacts to the functionality and resiliency of the floodplain in compliance with Executive Order 11988.[4] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited on 100-year floodplains (NSO) (96,000 acres).[1]
Waterbodies and Streams	**Action 3** – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation on waterbodies and streams (55,000 acres).[1]	**Action 3** – Surface-disturbing activities that did not benefit the functionality of the waterbody or stream would not be allowed on waterbodies and streams.	**Action 3** – Surface-disturbing activities that did not benefit the functionality of the waterbody or stream would be avoided on waterbodies and streams and only allowed with measures to minimize	**Action 3 –** Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed on waterbodies and streams with measures to minimize impacts.[2, 3]	**Action 3 –** Surface-disturbing activities that did not benefit the functionality of the perennial or intermittent stream lake, pond, or reservoir would be allowed with specialized design features to ensure that

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
		Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation on waterbodies and streams (39,000 acres).[1]	impacts.[2, 5] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation on waterbodies and streams (39,000 acres).[1]	Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation on waterbodies and streams (39,000 acres).[1]	all state water quality standards are met and that all beneficial uses remain fully supported.[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited on perennial or intermittent streams, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs (NSO) (39,000 acres).[1]
Water Impoundments	**Action 4** – Surface water impoundments would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Surface water impoundments would not be allowed.	**Action 4 –** Surface water impoundments would be allowed with measures designed to maintain the natural flow regime and watershed functionality.[2]		**Action 4 –** Surface water impoundments would be allowed with measures designed to maintain water quality, and riparian and watershed functionality and resiliency.[2]
Source Water Protection Areas	**Action 5 -** Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed within State-designated Source Water Protection Areas. Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms	**Action 5 -** Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within State-designated Source Water Protection Areas. Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation	**Action 5 -** Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed within State-designated Source Water Protection Areas with measures to minimize impacts to surface or groundwater quality. Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation within State- designated Source Water Protection Areas (3,400 acres).[1]		**Action 5 -** Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed within State-designated Source Water Protection Areas with specialized design features to minimize impacts to surface or groundwater quality. Oil and gas leasing

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	within State-designated Source Water Protection Areas (3,400 acres).	within State-designated Source Water Protection Areas (3,400 acres).[1]			would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited within State-designated Source Water Protection Areas (NSO) (3,400 acres).[1]
VEGETATION ***Goal 1*** *– Manage vegetation communities to restore, maintain, or enhance vegetation community health, connectivity, resiliency, and diversity.*					
VEGETATION (including Hardwood Draws and Special Status Species Plants)	**Objective 1** – Provide native plant communities that exist in a diversity of plant associations, including trees, shrubs and understory vegetation with sufficient diversity in structure, age class, and species composition, to support nutrient cycling and energy flows.				
	Objective 2 – Maintain shrub overstory in a variety of spatial arrangements and sizes across landscapes.				
	Objective 3 – Provide plant communities that reflect the potential natural community or the desired plant community appropriate for the ecological site.				
	Objective 4 – Provide adequate organic matter (ground litter and standing dead material) in sufficient quantities to control erosion, replenish nutrients, and maintain soil health.				
	Objective 5 – In all Greater Sage-grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMAs), the desired condition is to maintain a minimum of 70% of lands capable of producing sagebrush with 10-30% sagebrush canopy cover. The attributes necessary to sustain these habitats are described in Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (BLM Tech Ref 1734-6).				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Vegetation	**Action 1 –** Special status species plant conservation efforts and vegetative manipulation (or prescriptive) treatments (chemical, fire, biological, manual, and mechanical) would be consistent with the guidelines stated in the *Final and ROD Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (BLM 2007d and 2007g), *Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report* (BLM 2007c),http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/veg_eis.html Chapter 2. Table 2-8.				
	Action 2 - Remove conifers encroaching into sagebrush habitats. Prioritize treatments closest to occupied GRSG habitats and near occupied leks, and where juniper encroachment is phase 1 or phase 2. Use of site-specific analysis and principles like those included in the FIAT report (Chambers et. al., 2014) and other ongoing modeling efforts to address conifer encroachment will help refine the location for specific priority areas to be treated.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Haying	**Action 3** – Harvesting of nonnative hay would be allowed when consistent with allotment objectives. The BLM would have the option to reduce AUMs during the year the hay is cut if the cutting of hay would result in a reduction of the carrying capacity for the allotment.	**Action 3** – Unless the actions were warranted for fuel reduction, harvesting of native and nonnative hay would not be allowed in the planning area.	**Action 3** – Harvesting of native and nonnative hay would not be allowed in GRSG habitat but would be allowed in the remainder of the planning area. Livestock grazing would be excluded and AUMs suspended only in the areas in which harvesting of nonnative hay or seed occurs. The hay would be sold on a per acre basis according to fair market value as established by the Montana Department of Agricultural Statistics.	**Action 3 -** Harvesting of native and nonnative hay would be allowed when consistent with allotment objectives. The BLM would have the option to reduce AUMs during the year the hay was cut if the cutting of hay resulted in a reduction of the carrying capacity for the allotment.	**Action 3** –Harvesting of native and nonnative hay would be allowed to meet fuels, vegetation or habitat objectives.
RIPARIAN AND WETLAND AREAS ***Goal 1*** *– Manage riparian and wetland systems to be healthy, diverse, and functional.*					
RIPARIAN AND WETLAND AREAS	**Objective 1** – Improve riparian and wetland areas toward Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) or a higher ecological status.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Riparian and Wetland Areas	**Action 1** – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within riparian areas (174,000 acres).[1]	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in riparian and	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would avoid riparian and wetland areas. If avoidance were not possible, surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be authorized in riparian and wetland areas with approved specialized design features to		**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed in and within 300 feet of the boundary of riparian and wetland

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	Linear underground facilities crossing wetlands, perennial streams, intermittent streams, or riparian areas would be allowed.	wetland areas. Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed within 300 feet of the boundary of riparian and wetland areas with approved design features to maintain or improve functionality and resiliency. Oil and gas leasing would not be open in riparian and wetland areas (147,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed within 300 feet of the boundary of riparian and wetland areas with a CSU stipulation (1,193,000 acres).[1]	improve or maintain PFC.[2, 6] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in riparian and wetland areas (147,000 acres).[1]		areas with approved design features to maintain or improve functionality and resiliency.[2, 7] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited in riparian and wetland areas (NSO) (147,000 acres).[1] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed within 300 feet of the boundary of riparian and wetland areas with a CSU stipulation (1,193,000 acres).[1]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	Action 2 – New spring developments would be authorized and fenced.	**Action 2** – New spring developments would not be authorized in riparian and wetland areas.	**Action 2 –** New spring developments would not be authorized in riparian and wetland areas.	**Action 2** – New spring developments would be designed to maintain or improve the integrity, functionality, and resiliency (including water quality and habitat for fisheries and wildlife) of the associated wetland, riparian area, stream, or creek.	**Action 2 –** New spring developments would be allowed with specialized design features to maintain or improve the integrity, functionality, and resiliency of the associated wetland, riparian area, stream, or creek.
	Action 3 – No trough or tank would be installed in areas containing important riparian and wetland vegetation unless no possible alternative site exists (BLM 1996). Troughs or tanks would be installed in riparian and wetland areas on a case-by-case basis (BLM 1985c).	**Action 3** – New livestock water developments (troughs or tanks) would be located at least 0.25 miles from riparian and wetland areas, waterbodies, and streams.	**Action 3** – New livestock water developments (troughs or tanks) would be located at least 0.25 miles from perennial and intermittent streams. This would not include ephemeral streams or reservoirs. Approved deviations would be allowed if the water development benefited resources.		**Action 3** – New livestock water developments (e.g. troughs, tanks, etc.) would be located and designed to maintain or improve the integrity, functionality, and resiliency of the associated wetland or riparian area.
INVASIVE SPECIES ***Goal 1*** *– Manage for healthy native plant communities and aquatic systems by reducing, preventing expansion of, or eliminating the occurrence of invasive species.*					
INVASIVE SPECIES	**Objective 1** – Plant communities that reflect the potential natural community or the desired plant community appropriate for the ecological site.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Invasive Species	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed on BLM- administered lands in areas of invasive species infestations.	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed on BLM-administered lands in areas of invasive species infestations.	**Action 1 –** Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed on BLM-administered lands in areas of invasive species infestation only with approved mitigation measures in place.		
	Action 2 – There would be no priority treatment areas identified. Invasive species would continue to be treated on a case-by-case basis.	**Action 2** – Priority treatment areas would be any areas in which Montana-designated invasive species were present.	**Action 2** – Using Early Detection Rapid Response, priority treatment areas would be designated in publicly accessible areas, riparian areas, and special status species habitat areas.	**Action 2** – Priority treatment areas would be areas in which the surrounding private lands were within an active invasive species treatment area and in which the respective private landowners were actively controlling invasive species.	**Action 2** – Using Early Detection Rapid Response, treatment areas would be prioritized in publicly accessible areas, riparian areas, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation areas, and special status species habitat areas.
FISH, AQUATIC AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, INCLUDING SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES ***Goal 1*** *– Provide habitats for well-distributed and diverse fish and wildlife.* ***Goal 2*** *– Maintain, enhance, or restore habitats for special status fish and wildlife species to ensure BLM actions do not contribute to the need to list these species.*					
FISH, AQUATIC AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, INCLUDING SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES	**Objective 1 –** Maintain or enhance plant communities and habitat needed to maintain or restore fish, aquatic or wildlife populations.				
	Objective 2 - Provide sufficient habitat for native wildlife species in order to support viable native wildlife populations.				
	Objective 3 – Implement habitat improvement projects to restore and/or improve unsatisfactory or declining fish, aquatic and wildlife habitat.				
	Objective 4 - Continue to gather habitat data while concurrently monitoring human and natural disturbance dynamics to improve habitat management.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Objective 5 – Minimize fragmentation of large intact blocks of important wildlife habitat, particularly habitat areas for GRSG and grassland birds.				
	Objective 6 – Maintain, improve and increase sagebrush habitats to sustain sagebrush obligates and other sagebrush dependent species.				
	Objective 7 – Maintain or reestablish connectivity between and within sagebrush habitats with emphasis on communities occupied by BLM priority species for management.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Fish and Wildlife	**Action 1 -** BLM-authorized activities associated with all resource and resource use programs would be subject to mitigation or minimization guidelines as defined in the *Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix*.				
	Action 2 – The MCFO would work with the Montana Black-footed Ferret and Prairie Dog Working Groups to identify potential black-footed ferret reintroduction sites in the planning area.				
	Action 3 – For migratory bird conservation and to restore, enhance, and maintain habitats for all birds, the BLM would follow the *Fish, Aquatic and Wildlife Habitat, Including Special Status Species Appendix*, which outlines the recommended strategies for migratory birds.				
	Action 4 – Predator control would be allowed on a case-by-case basis with required design features to achieve resource goals and objectives.[2]				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Fish and Wildlife, Terrestrial	**Action 5 –** Power lines would not be required to be buried (BLM 1996). Within the Powder River RMP area, low-voltage power lines associated with oil and gas would be buried if feasible (BLM 2008i).	**Action 5** – The BLM would not authorize low voltage, above-ground power lines unless burying the power lines was not technologically feasible.	**Action 5** – Low voltage above ground powerlines (less than 69 kilovolt [kV]) would be allowed with specialized design features.[2]		
Big Game Crucial Winter Range	**Action 6** – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with a timing restriction from December 1 to March	**Action 6** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in Big	**Action 6** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed in Big Game Crucial Winter Range areas with design features which maintain the functionality of the crucial winter range habitat (760,000 surface acres).[2]		

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	31 within Big Game Crucial Winter Range areas (1,191,000 oil and gas acres).[1] Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on those acres during that same period (760,000 geophysical acres).	Game Crucial Winter Range areas (760,000 surface acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in Big Game Crucial Winter Range areas (1,191,000 acres).[1]	Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in Big Game Crucial Winter Range areas (1,191,000 acres).[1]		
Sharp-tailed Grouse (lek sites and nesting habitat)	**Action 7 -** Surface disturbance (other than water developments and fences) would not be authorized within 0.25 miles of sharp-tailed grouse leks (21,000 acres) (BLM 1996). Disturbance would not be authorized within 2 miles of a lek from March 1 to June 15 (1,893,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within	**Action 7 –** Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed on and within 4 miles of sharp-tailed grouse leks with specialized design features to maintain the functionality of the sharp-tailed grouse nesting habitat and lek site (1,500,000 surface).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation on and within 4 miles of sharp-	**Action 7 -** Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed on and within 2 miles of sharp-tailed grouse lek sites with design features to protect breeding, nesting, and brood-rearing habitats at a level capable of supporting the long-term populations associated with the lek (800,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be subject to design features on or within 2 miles of sharp-tailed grouse lek sites to protect breeding, nesting, and brood-rearing habitats at a level capable of supporting the long-term populations associated with the lek (CSU). (1,393,000 acres).		

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	0.25 miles of sharp-tailed grouse leks (42,000 acres) (BLM 1996).[1]	tailed grouse leks (2,774,000 acres).[1]			
Colonial Nesting Waterbirds	**Action 8** – Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed within 1,000 feet of Double-crested Cormorant and Great Blue Heron rookeries (160 acres) (BLM 1996). Oil and gas leasing would be allowed with lease terms (50 acres).	**Action 8** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in or within 0.25 miles of waterbird nesting colonies unless the project proponent submitted a plan that showed that the effects could be minimized (250 acres). Oil and gas leasing would not be open in or within 0.25 miles of waterbird nesting colonies (270 acres).[1]	**Action 8** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed with specialized design features to minimize disturbance to waterbird nesting colonies (10 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in waterbird nesting colonies (50 acres).[1]		**Action 8** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed within 0.5 miles of waterbird nesting colonies, with design features to maintain functionality of the waterbird nesting colonies habitat (650 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited within 0.25 miles of waterbird nesting colonies (NSO) (270 acres).[1] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited within 0.5 miles of waterbird nesting colonies from April 1 through July 15 (Timing stipulation) (1,100 acres).[1]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
Bighorn Sheep Habitat	**Action 9 –** Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within the designated Bighorn Sheep Range. (98,000 acres).[1]	**Action 9** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in bighorn sheep habitat (70,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open in bighorn sheep habitat with an NSO stipulation (98,000 acres).[1]	**Action 9** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed in bighorn sheep habitat with design features to maintain functionality of the bighorn sheep habitat (70,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed in bighorn sheep habitat with a CSU stipulation (98,000 acres).[1]		
	Action 10 – Grazing permits for domestic sheep or goats would be renewed on a case-by-case basis within the Bighorn Sheep Range (70,000 acres).	**Action 10** – Grazing permits for domestic sheep or goats would not be renewed and grazing applications for domestic sheep or goats would not be approved in or within 14.3 miles of the Bighorn Sheep Range (400,000 acres).	**Action 10** – Grazing permits for domestic sheep or goats would not be renewed and grazing applications for domestic sheep or goats would not be approved in or within 14.3 miles of the Bighorn Sheep Range where the BLM administers 51% or more of the pasture.	**Action 10** – Grazing permits for domestic sheep or goats would be renewed and grazing applications for domestic sheep or goats would be approved in and within 14.3 miles of the Bighorn Sheep Range.	**Action 10** – Domestic sheep and goat grazing, including for invasive species control would be available in and within a 14.3 mile buffer area (400,000 acres) with management features to minimize interactions between domestic sheep/goats and bighorn sheep.
Bald Eagles	**Action 11 -** Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within 0.5 miles of known bald	**Action 11 –** Surface disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed within 0.5 miles of bald eagle nest sites active within the preceding 5 years with design features which would minimize disturbance to the nest site and maintain functionality of the bald eagle habitat (2,000 acres).[2]			

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	eagle nest sites active within the past 7 years and within bald eagle nesting habitat in riparian areas (3,000 acres).[1]	Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited within 0.5 miles of bald eagle nest sites active within the preceding 5 years (NSO) (1,849 acres).[1]			
Raptor Nest Sites: **Burrowing Owl** **Golden Eagle** **Ferruginous Hawk** **Swainson's Hawk** **Prairie Falcon** **Northern Goshawk**	**Action 12** – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within 0.5 miles of ferruginous hawk nest sites active within the past 2 years (50,000 acres) (BLM 1996).[1] Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation in peregrine falcon nesting sites and within 1 mile of identified peregrine falcon nesting sites (0 acres).[1] Oil and gas leasing would be offered with a timing stipulation from March 1 to August 1 within .5 miles of raptor nest sites	**Action 12** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of raptor nest sites active within the past 7 years (110,000 surface acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of nest sites active within the past 7 years (179,000 acres).[1]	**Action 12** – Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed in and within 0.5 miles of raptor nest sites active within the past 7 years with specialized design features to minimize disturbance to the nest site and maintain functionality of the habitat (110,000 surface acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of nest sites active within the past 7 years (179,000 acres).[1]	**Action 12** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed in and within 0.5 miles of raptor nest sites active within the past 2 years with specialized design features to minimize disturbance to the nest site and maintain functionality of the habitat (110,000 surface).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of nest sites active within the past 2 years (50,000 acres).[1]	**Action 12** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed within 0.5 miles of raptor nest sites active within the past 7 years with design features which maintain the functionality for the raptor nest site and nesting habitat.[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited within 0.25 miles of raptor nest sites active within the preceding 7 years (NSO) (52,000 acres).[1] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface use is prohibited within 0.5 miles of active raptor nest sites from March 1

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	active within 2 years (179,000 acres).				to July 31 (Timing stipulation) (179,000 acres).[1]
Piping Plover Habitat	**Action 13** – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within 0.25 miles of wetlands identified as piping plover habitat (7,000 acres).[1]	**Action 13** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in or within 0.25 miles of piping plover habitat (4,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.25 miles of piping plover habitat (7,000 acres).[1]	**Action 13** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed in or within 0.25 miles of piping plover habitat with design features which maintain the functionality of the piping plover habitat (4,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in and within piping plover habitat (7,000 acres).[1]		**Action 13** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed within 0.25 miles of piping plover habitat with design features which maintain the functionality of the piping plover habitat (4,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited within 0.25 miles of piping plover habitat (NSO) (7,000 acres).[1]
Interior Least Tern Habitat	**Action 14** – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within 0.25 miles of wetlands identified as interior least tern habitat (11,000 acres).[1]	**Action 14** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in or within 0.25 miles of interior least tern habitat (10,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open with	**Action 14** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed in or within 0.25 miles of interior least tern habitat with design features which maintain the functionality of the habitat (10,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in and within 0.25 miles of interior least tern habitat (11,000).[1]		**Action 14** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed within 0.25 miles of interior least tern habitat with design features which maintained the functionality of the least tern habitat (10,000 acres).[2]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
		an NSO stipulation in and within 0.25 miles of interior least tern habitat (11,000 acres).[1]			Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited within 0.25 miles of interior least tern habitat (NSO) (11,000 acres).[1]
Black-footed Ferrets	**Action 15 –** Oil and gas leasing would be offered with a CSU stipulation on potential black-footed ferret habitat (prairie dog colonies and complexes 80 acres or more in size) (CSU) (0 acres).[1] Oil and gas leasing would be offered with a CSU stipulation on prairie dog towns with potential black-footed ferret reintroduction areas that have been determined to be essential for black-footed ferret recovery (CSU) (0 acres).[1]	**Action 15 -** Surface occupancy and use is prohibited within ¼ mile of black-footed ferret habitat (complex of prairie dog towns within 1.5 km of each other comprising a total of at least 1,500 acres) (NSO) (0 acres).			
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Black-tailed Prairie Dogs	**Action 16 –** Control options of black-tailed prairie dog colonies on public lands would be subject to the *Conservation Plan for Black-tailed and White-tailed Prairie Dogs in Montana* (Montana Prairie Dog Working Group 2002).				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Black-tailed Prairie Dogs	**Action 17 –** In the absence of black footed ferrets, oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms (29,000 acres).1	**Action 17** – In the absence of black-footed ferrets, surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of black-tailed prairie dog colonies (150,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of black-tailed prairie dog colonies (297,000 acres).[1]	**Action 17** – In the absence of black-footed ferrets, surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in or within 0.25 miles of black-tailed prairie dog colonies (70,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.25 miles of black-tailed prairie dog colonies (127,000 acres).[1]	**Action 17** – In the absence of black-footed ferrets, surface-disturbing activities would be allowed in black-tailed prairie dog colonies with design features to maintain the functionality of the habitat (11,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in black-tailed prairie dog colonies (29,000 acres).[1]	**Action 17** – In the absence of black-footed ferrets, surface-disturbing activities would be allowed within black-tailed prairie dog colonies active within the past 10 years with design features which maintain the functionality of the black-tailed prairie dog habitat (11,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use on prairie dog colonies active within the past 10 years is allowed subject to design features that maintain the functionality of the black-tailed prairie dog habitat (CSU) (29,000 acres).[1]
Pallid Sturgeon Habitat	**Action 18 –** Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation on waterbodies, streams, and 100-year	**Action 18 –** Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of river and stream centerline identified as pallid sturgeon habitat (15,000 acres).		**Action 18 –** Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of river	**Action 18 –** Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed within 0.25 miles of the water's edge of the

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	floodplains of major rivers (500 acres).[1]	Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of river and stream centerline identified as pallid sturgeon habitat (15,000 acres).[1]		and stream centerline identified as pallid sturgeon habitat with design features that maintain the functionality of the habitat (15,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of river and stream centerline identified as pallid sturgeon habitat (15,000 acres).[1]	Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers with design features which maintain the functionality of the pallid sturgeon habitat (11,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use prohibited within 0.25 miles of the water's edge of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. (NSO) (10,000 acres).[1]
GRSG HABITAT ***Goal 1*** *– Provide for the conservation, enhancement, restoration, and connectivity of the Great Plains mixed grass prairie and shrubland, capable of supporting sustainable populations of GRSG and other wildlife species.*					
GRSG HABITAT	**Objective 1** – Maintain, improve and increase sagebrush habitats to sustain sagebrush obligates and other sagebrush dependent species. **Objective 2 -** Conserve GRSG habitat while promoting movement and genetic diversity. **Objective 3 –** Priority will be given to leasing and development of fluid minerals outside of PHMA and GHMA. When analyzing leasing and authorizing development of fluid mineral resources in PHMA and GHMA, and subject to applicable stipulations for the conservation of GRSG, priority will be given to development in non-habitat areas first and then in the least suitable habitat for GRSG. The implementation of these priorities will be subject to valid existing rights and any applicable law or regulation, including, but not limited to, 30 U.S.C. 226(p) and 43 CFR 3162.3-1(h). **Objective 4** – Where a proposed fluid mineral development project on an existing lease could adversely affect GRSG populations or habitat, the BLM will work with the lessees, operators, or other project proponents to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to the extent compatible with lessees' rights to drill and produce fluid mineral resources.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	The BLM will work with the lessees, operators, or other project proponent in developing an APD for the lease to avoid and minimize impacts to greater sage-grouse or its habitat and will ensure that the best information about the GRSG and its habitat informs and helps to guide development of such Federal leases.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
	Action 1 - In all GRSG habitat, in undertaking BLM management actions, and, consistent with valid existing rights and applicable law, in authorizing third-party actions that result in habitat loss and degradation, the BLM will require and ensure mitigation that provides a net conservation gain to the species including accounting for any uncertainty associated with the effectiveness of such mitigation. This will be achieved by avoiding, minimizing, and compensating for impacts by applying beneficial mitigation actions.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
GRSG Habitat	**Action 2 –** GRSG habitat would be managed uniformly throughout the planning area.	**Action 2 –** The BLM would designate the areas described below (see Map 4). General Habitat Areas would include approximately 1.5 million surface acres and 2.7 million oil and gas acres. Priority Areas would include approximately 817,000 surface acres and 1.32 million oil and gas acres: • North Garfield Area (approximately 218,000 surface acres and 321,000 oil and gas acres); • North Rosebud Area (approximately 171,000 surface acres and 238,000 oil and gas acres); and • North Carter Area (approximately 423,000 surface acres and 714,000 oil and gas acres). • East Decker Area (approximately 5,000 surface acres and 56,000 oil and gas acres). Restoration Areas would include approximately 87,000 surface acres and 198,000 oil and gas acres: • West Decker area (approximately 2,800 surface acres and 11,000 oil and gas acres); • Cedar Creek Area (approximately 20,000 surface acres and 22,000 oil and gas acres); and • South Carter Area (approximately 64,000 surface acres and 165,000 oil and gas acres).				
GRSG HABITAT – GENERAL HABITAT AREAS ***Goal 1*** *– Maintain or increase habitat needed for GRSG through the management of surface disturbing and disruptive activities, including the loss and distribution of sagebrush habitat.*					
GRSG HABITAT – GENERAL HABITAT AREAS	**Objective 1** – Conserve GRSG habitat while promoting movement and genetic diversity.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
GRSG Habitat – General Habitat Areas (see the *Livestock Grazing Management* section for more information about livestock grazing management actions for GRSG habitat)	**Action 1** – Surface disturbance (other than water developments and fences) would not be authorized within 0.25 miles of GRSG leks (10,320 acres) (BLM 1996). Disturbance would not be authorized within 2 miles of a lek from March 1 to June 15 (220,000 acres) (BLM 1996). Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within 0.25 miles of GRSG leks (11,000 acres) (BLM 1996).[1] Oil and gas leasing would be offered with a timing stipulation from March 1 to June 15 in GRSG nesting habitat within 2 miles of a lek (540,000 acres).[1]	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities (including ROWs) would not be allowed on or within 4 miles of leks except when the activity maintained GRSG habitat functionality (861,000 acres).[8] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation on and within 4 miles of leks (1,623,000 acres).[1]	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities (including ROWs) would not be allowed on or within 3.1 miles of leks except when the activity maintained GRSG habitat functionality (642,000 acres).[8] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation on and within 3.1 miles of leks (1,223,000 acres).[1]	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities (including ROWs) would be allowed on or within 2 miles of leks with design features which maintain the functionality of the GRSG habitat (341,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation on and within 2 miles of leks (652,000 acres).[1]	**Action 1** – Major ROWs (High voltage transmission lines and large pipelines) and renewable energy ROWs would avoid general habitat areas. (1,395,000 acres). Minor ROWs would be allowed with design features (Map 17) to protect breeding, nesting and brood-rearing GRSG habitat (1,365,000 acres).[2] Other surface-disturbing and disruptive activities (including Mineral Material Sales) would be allowed with design features to protect breeding, nesting, and brood-rearing GRSG habitat (1,365,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	Locatable mineral entry and location would be open (BLM 1985c). Mineral material sales and permits would be allowed (BLM 1985c). Renewable energy would be open (solar or wind) (BLM 1985c). ROWs would be allowed (BLM 1985c). Season-of-use and livestock numbers for grazing permits would be determined on a case-by-case basis. No continuous noise restrictions would be applied except for programmatic guidance as outlined in the *Supplement to the Montana Statewide Oil and Gas Environmental*				prohibited within 0.6 miles of the perimeter of leks (NSO) (61,000 acres).[1] In addition surface occupancy and use within 2 miles of leks would be restricted or prohibited. Prior to such activities, a plan to mitigate impacts to nesting GRSG or their habitat would be prepared by the proponent and implemented upon approval, by the AO (CSU) (652,000 acres).[1] In undertaking BLM management actions and consistent with valid and existing rights and applicable law in authorizing third-party actions, the BLM will apply the lek buffer-distances identified in the USGS Report (see the *GRSG Conservation Buffer Appendix*).

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Impact Statement and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plans (e.g., restrict noise levels from production facilities to 50 decibels; 4,100,000 acres) (BLM 2008i). There would be no noise restrictions in the remainder of the planning area. Use of heavy equipment that exceeds 50 decibels would be restricted within 2 miles of a lek from 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. during April 1 to June 30 (300,000 acres) (BLM 2008i).				
GRSG HABITAT –PRIORITY AREAS					
GRSG HABITAT –PRIORITY AREAS	**Objective 1** – Maintain or increase GRSG habitat over the long-term, recognizing valid existing rights.				
	Objective 2 – Restore degraded GRSG habitat.				
	Objective 3 - Manage permitted uses while providing GRSG habitat for the long-term.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
GRSG Habitat –Priority Areas	**Action 1** – Where deemed effective, water developments would be managed to reduce the spread of West Nile virus (see *GRSG Required Design Features Appendix*).				
	Action 2 – At the time an application for a new coal lease or lease modification is submitted to the BLM, the BLM will determine whether the lease application area is "unsuitable" for all or certain coal mining methods pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.5. PHMA is essential habitat for maintaining GRSG for purposes of the suitability criteria set forth at 43 CFR 3461.5(o)(1).				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
GRSG Habitat –Priority Areas (see the *Livestock Grazing Management Actions* for more information about livestock grazing management actions for GRSG.)	**Action 3 –** An ACEC would not be designated for GRSG. Disturbance would not be authorized within 2 miles of a lek from March 1 to June 15 (260,000 acres) (BLM 1996). Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within 0.25 miles of GRSG leks (29,000 acres) (BLM 1996). [1] Oil and gas leasing would be offered with a timing stipulation from March 1 to June 15 in GRSG nesting habitat within 2 miles of a	**Action 3** – Priority Areas would be designated an ACEC. Surface disturbing and disruptive activities (including ROWs) would not be allowed (817,000 acres). Oil and gas leasing would not be open (1,329,000 acres).[1] Locatable mineral entry would be recommended for withdrawal subject to valid existing rights.	**Action 3** – An ACEC would not be designated for GRSG. The BLM would authorize 1 surface disturbance per 640 acres with a cumulative, direct, and indirect disturbance of no more than 3% of the sagebrush habitat per 640 acres from the point of the disturbance, as long as functional GRSG habitat and the associated populations were maintained at the same levels as trend areas. Disturbed areas would have to be fully reclaimed to pre-disturbance conditions or to a desired plant community before	**Action 3** – An ACEC would not be designated for GRSG. The BLM would authorize surface disturbance with a cumulative, direct, and indirect disturbance of no more than 10% of the sagebrush habitat per 640 acres from the point of the disturbance, as long as functional GRSG habitat and the associated populations were maintained at the same levels as trend areas. Disturbed areas would have to be fully reclaimed to pre-disturbance	**Action 3** – An ACEC would not be designated for GRSG. Renewable Energy ROWs would be excluded within sage grouse priority areas (817,000 acres). PHMAs are closed to new mineral material sales. However, these areas remain "open" to free use permits and the expansion of existing active pits, only if the following criteria are met: - The activity is within the PHMA Biologically Significant Unit (BSU) and project area disturbance cap

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	lek (timing; 1,000,000 acres) (BLM 1996).[1] Locatable mineral entry and location would be open (BLM 1985c). Mineral material sales and permits would be allowed (BLM 1985c). Renewable energy would be open (solar or wind) (BLM 1985c). ROWs would be allowed (BLM 1985c). Season-of-use and livestock numbers for grazing permits would be determined on a case-by-case basis. No continuous noise restrictions would be applied except for programmatic		additional disturbance would be approved.[8] Oil and gas leasing would be allowed with a CSU stipulation (1,329,000 acres).[1] Locatable mineral entry and location would be open.	conditions or to a desired plant community before additional disturbance would be approved.[8] Oil and gas leasing would be allowed with a CSU stipulation (1,329,000 acres).[1] Locatable mineral entry and location would be open.	-The activity is subject to the provisions set forth in the mitigation framework (*GRSG Regional Mitigation Strategy Appendix* -All applicable required design features are applied; and (if applicable) the activity is permissible under the specific sub-regional screening criteria Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited within sage grouse priority areas. (NSO) (1,329,000 acres).[1] Major (High voltage transmission lines and large pipelines) and minor ROWs would avoid GRSG priority areas (817,000 acres). The remaining surface-disturbing and disruptive activities

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	guidance as outlined in the SEIS (e.g., restrict noise levels from production facilities to 50 decibels) (BLM 2008i). Use of heavy equipment that exceeds 50 decibels would be restricted within 2 miles of a lek from 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. 10:00 p.m. during April 1 to June 30 (580,000 BLM-administered surface acres) (BLM 2008i). Power lines would not be required to be buried (BLM 1996). Oil and gas low-voltage power lines would be buried if feasible (BLM 2008i).				would avoid GRSG priority areas (817,000 acres). In undertaking BLM management actions, and consistent with valid and existing rights and applicable law in authorizing third-party actions, the BLM will apply the lek buffer-distances identified in the USGS Report (see the *GRSG Conservation Buffer Appendix)* If the 3% anthropogenic disturbance cap is exceeded on lands (regardless of land ownership) within GRSG PHMAs in any given Biologically Significant Unit, then no further discrete anthropogenic disturbances (subject to applicable laws and regulations, such as the Mining Law of 1872,

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
					as Amended, valid existing rights, etc.) would be permitted by BLM within GRSG PHMAs in any given Biologically Significant Unit until the disturbance has been reduced to less than the cap. If the 3% anthropogenic disturbance cap is exceeded on lands (regardless of land ownership) or if anthropogenic disturbance and habitat loss associated with conversion to agricultural tillage or fire exceed 5% within a project analysis area, then no further discrete anthropogenic disturbances (subject to applicable laws and regulations, such as the Mining Law of 1872 , valid existing rights, etc.) will be permitted by BLM within a project analysis area

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
					until the disturbance has been reduced to less than the cap. If the BLM determines that the State of Montana has adopted a Program that contains comparable components to those found in the State of Wyoming's Core Area Strategy including an all lands approach for calculating anthropogenic disturbances, a clear methodology for measuring the density of operations, and a fully operational Density Disturbance Calculation Tool, the 3% disturbance cap will be converted to a 5% cap for all sources of habitat alteration within a project analysis area.
GRSG HABITAT - RESTORATION AREAS **WEST DECKER AREA** **CEDAR CREEK AREA** **SOUTH CARTER AREA** ***Goal 1 –*** *Continue to allow for authorization of surface disturbing activities while improving GRSG habitat over the long term.* ***Goal 2 –*** *Maintain or expand habitats to promote GRSG movement and genetic diversity.*					

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
GRSG HABITAT – RESTORATION AREAS	**Objective 1** – Strive for proponents to develop area wide Habitat Recovery Plans.				
	Objective 2 – Strive for no net loss of GRSG habitat.				
	Objective 3 – Strive for the restoration of previously disturbed landscapes in a manner which increases or improves the quality and quantity of GRSG habitat.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
GRSG Restoration Areas **West Decker Area** **Cedar Creek Area** **South Carter Area** (see the *Livestock Grazing Management Actions* for more information about livestock grazing management actions for GRSG.)	**Action 1** – Surface disturbance (other than water developments and fences) would not be authorized within 0.25 miles of GRSG leks (92 acres) (BLM 1996). Disturbance would not be authorized within 2 miles of a lek from March 1 to June 15 (50,000 acres) (BLM 1996). Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within 0.25 miles of GRSG leks (4,500 acres) (BLM 1996).[1] Oil and gas leasing would be offered with a timing stipulation from March 1 to June 15 in grouse nesting habitat	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities (including ROWs) would be prohibited in sections within 1 mile of a lek that contained 3 or fewer wells (40,000 acres). Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed in sections within 1 mile of a lek that contained 4 or more wells subject to GRSG habitat functionality being maintained. (8,800 acres).[8] Oil and gas leasing for sections within 1 mile of a lek that	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities (including ROWs) would be allowed subject to maintenance of GRSG habitat functionality (86,000 acres).[8] Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation that maintained GRSG habitat functionality (198,000 acres).[1]	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities (including ROWs) would be allowed subject to timing and distance (60 days/200 meters) (870 acres). Oil and gas leasing would be open with lease terms (198,000 acres).[1]	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed with design features to minimize disturbance to GRSG habitat (87,000 acres).[2] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is subject to design features, to minimize disturbance to GRSG habitat. (CSU) (22,000 acres) in the Cedar Creek Area.[1] In the West Decker (11,000 acres) and South Carter Area (164,000 acres) oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO).[1]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	within 2 miles of a lek (140,000) (BLM 1996).[1] Locatable mineral entry and location would be open (BLM 1985c). Mineral material sales and permits would be allowed (BLM 1985c). Renewable energy would be open (solar or wind) (BLM 1985c). ROWs would be allowed (BLM 1985c). Season-of-use and livestock numbers for grazing permits would be determined on a case-by-case basis. No continuous noise restrictions except for programmatic guidance as outlined in the SEIS (e.g., restrict noise levels	contained 3 or fewer wells would be open with an NSO stipulation (91,000 acres).[1] Sections within 1 mile of a lek that contained 4 or more wells would be open for leasing with a CSU that maintained greater sage-grouse habitat functionality (19,000 acres).[1]			Renewable Energy ROWs will be excluded within all Restoration Areas (87,000 acres). Major ROWs (high voltage transmission lines and large pipelines) would be avoided (87,000 acres). Minor ROWs would be allowed with design features to protect breeding, nesting and brood-rearing GRSG habitat (87,000 acres).

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	from production facilities to 50 decibels) (BLM 2008i). Use of heavy equipment that exceeds 50 decibels would be restricted within 2 miles of a lek from 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. during April 1 to June 30 (89,000 acres) (BLM 2008i). Power lines would not be required to be buried (BLM 1996). Oil and gas low-voltage power lines would be buried if feasible (BLM 2008i).				
GRSG COMPENSATION					
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
GRSG Compensation	**Action 1** – Habitat compensation would not be required.	**Action 1** – For surface-disturbing activities that did not improve GRSG habitat, habitat	**Action 1** – For surface-disturbing activities that did not improve GRSG habitat, habitat	**Action 1** – For surface-disturbing activities that did not improve GRSG habitat, habitat	**Action 1** – In instance where impacts onsite cannot be mitigated, offsite compensation would be required in

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
		compensation would be required. Compensation are as follows: GRSG Habitat – General Habitat Areas would include: • 1:1 Habitat Compensation Ratio. Priority ACEC and Restoration Areas would include: • 5:1 Habitat Compensation Ratio.	compensation would be required. Compensation are as follows: GRSG Habitat – General Habitat Areas would include: • 1:1 Habitat Compensation Ratio. Priority and Restoration Areas would include: • 5:1 Habitat Compensation Ratio.	compensation would be required. Compensation are as follows: GRSG Habitat – General Habitat Areas would include: • 1:1 Habitat Compensation Ratio. Priority and Restoration Areas would include: • 5:1 Habitat Compensation Ratio.	accordance to BLM guidance.
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGY **Fuels Management/Prescribed Fire** ***Goal 1*** *– Provide for firefighter and public safety by reducing hazardous fuel loads (risk) within the wildland urban interface.* ***Goal 2*** *–Protect or sustain the ecological health and function of fire-adapted ecosystems; reduce the risk of high severity wildfires to watersheds and ecosystems; and benefit, protect, maintain, sustain, and enhance natural and cultural resources.*					
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Fuels Management/ Prescribed Fire	**Action 1** –Mechanical thinning of vegetation, biomass removal, and chemical and biological treatments would be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels or improve land health.				
	Action 2 – Fuel treatment projects would be allowed in areas with high social or natural resource values as well as areas adjacent to wildland urban interface areas considered a priority area for treatment.				
	Action 3 - If prescribed fire is used in Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, the NEPA analysis for the Burn Plan will address: • why alternative techniques were not selected as a viable options; • how Greater Sage-Grouse goals and objectives would be met by its use; • how the COT Report objectives would be addressed and met;				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	• a risk assessment to address how potential threats to Greater Sage-Grouse habitat would be minimized. Prescribed fire as vegetation or fuels treatment shall only be considered after the NEPA analysis for the Burn Plan has addressed the four bullets outlined above. Prescribed fire could be used to meet specific fuels objectives that would protect Greater Sage-Grouse habitat in PHMAs (e.g., creation of fuel breaks that would disrupt the fuel continuity across the landscape in stands where annual invasive grasses are a minor component in the understory, burning slash piles from conifer reduction treatments, used as a component with other treatment methods to combat annual grasses and restore native plant communities). Prescribed fire in known winter range shall only be considered after the NEPA analysis for the Burn Plan has addressed the four bullets outlined above. Any prescribed fire in winter habitat would need to be designed to strategically reduce wildfire risk around and/or in the winter range and designed to protect winter range habitat quality.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Fuels Management/ Prescribed Fire	**Action 4** – Prescribed fire would be allowed in Category B and C Fire Management Categories (BLM 2003k).	**Action 4** – Prescribed fire would not be allowed on approximately 2,200,000 acres and allowed in the remainder of the planning area.	**Action 4** – Prescribed fire would not be allowed on approximately 169,000 acres and allowed in the remainder of the planning area.	**Action 4 –** Prescribed fire would not be allowed on approximately 109,000 acres and allowed in the remainder of the planning area.	**Action 4 –** Prescribed fire would be allowed in the planning area with required design features to meet resource goals and objectives.
	Action 5 – Sites in Condition Class 3 (53,000 acres) would have pre-commercial and commercial material removed or treated prior to prescribed fire activities (BLM 2003k).		**Action 5 –** Sites in Condition Class 3 (53,000 acres) would not be required to have pre-commercial and commercial material removed or treated prior to prescribed fire activities.		
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT ***Goal 1*** *– Place public and firefighter safety first in any wildfire management action.* ***Goal 2*** *– Manage wildfire (unplanned ignitions) for the protection of public health, safety, property, and resource values while implementing cost-containment strategies that result in minimum suppression costs.* ***Goal 3*** *– Use a naturally occurring event such as wildfire to enhance vigor, vegetation production, reduce hazardous fuels, and maintain a desired mix of seral stages within the following communities: sagebrush (silver and Wyoming species), forest and woodlands, grasslands, riparian and wetland areas, and native species communities.*					

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
Goal 4 *– Create and maintain landscape-level fuel breaks using fire management, grazing, range improvements, transportation corridors, terrain features, and vegetation communities to provide suppression opportunities.*					
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT	**Objective 1 –** Identify areas where fire as a resource benefit could achieve the resource management goals.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Wildfire Management	**Action 1 –** The BLM would prioritize fire management activities according to potential risks to life and property across the planning area. Wildfires adjacent to or near wildland urban or industrial interface would have the highest priority for fire suppression. In PHMA, prioritize suppression, after life and property, to conserve the habitat. In GHMA, prioritize suppression where wildfires threaten PHMA.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Wildfire Management	**Action 2 –** The BLM would use the management response consistent with Fire Management Categories A through D for all human-caused and natural fires. The BLM would retain the current fire management zones delineated and managed in the *MCFO Fire Management Plan* (BLM 2004g).	**Action 2 –**Fire management units and fire workload areas would be consistent with current wildfire management guidance and delineated and developed based on vegetation types and condition, predominate historical fire regime groups, and management constraints, objectives, and strategies.			
	Action 3 – Management of wildland fire to meet multiple objectives would not be authorized in the planning area unless	**Action 3 –** Management of wildfire to meet multiple objectives would be authorized throughout the planning area.			

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	it falls within management categories C (310,000 acres) and D (0 acres) (BLM 2003k).				
CULTURAL RESOURCES (see management for Cultural ACECS under *Special Designation Areas)* ***Goal 1*** *– Identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources on BLM-administered lands.* ***Goal 2*** *- Ensure cultural resources are available to present and future generations for appropriate uses such as scientific studies, public education and traditional cultural values.*					
CULTURAL RESOURCES	**Objective 1** – Allocate all cultural properties in the planning area to one of the following categories: scientific use, conservation for future use, traditional use, public use, experimental use, or discharged from management (see cultural resource use categories and definitions in Chapter 3, Cultural Resources section.)				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Cultural Resources	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed within the planning area.	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of sites if the activities affected or had an impact on the quality and setting of designated sites or areas or sites or areas that met the criteria for allocation for designation.	**Action 1 –** Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of sites if the activities affected or had an impact on the quality and setting of designated sites or areas or sites or areas that met the criteria for allocation for designation. Surface-disturbing activities that would not degrade the values of the sites and that provided for the improvement or maintenance of ecosystem	**Action 1 –** Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed with an attached stipulation that would state that, prior to surface disturbance, a Surface Use Plan of Operations (SUPO) and a cultural site mitigation plan, which must be approved by the AO, would be required for all surface-disturbing activities in the cultural resource or designated site and for those within 300	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed in significant cultural sites as long as the activities would not have an adverse effect.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
			functionality (e.g., erosion control or reseeding), enhance the values of the sites, and have beneficial outcomes would be allowed.	feet of boundaries of cultural resources or designated sites or areas or sites or areas that meet the criteria for allocation for designation. Surface-disturbing activities would be avoided whenever possible. If the surface-disturbing activity could not be avoided, approved measures would be applied to minimize the impact to the cultural resource.	
	Action 2 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms.[1]	**Action 2** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation that restricted surface-disturbing activities in the site and within 0.5 miles of site boundaries if the activities affected or had an impact on the quality and setting of	**Action 2 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation that restricted surface-disturbing activities in the site and within 300 feet of site boundaries if the activities affected or had an impact on the quality and setting of designated sites or areas or sites or areas	**Action 2 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation that stated that, prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and a cultural site mitigation plan, which must be approved by the AO, would be required for all surface-disturbing	**Action 2** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited with an NSO stipulation that restricts surface-disturbing activities in significant cultural sites.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
		designated sites or areas or sites or areas that met the criteria for allocation for designation (including cultural resources, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible properties and districts, and Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) (except for those sites in *Action 3* below).[1] See Chapter 3, *Cultural Resources*, and the *Glossary* for a definition of designated site or area. This action includes the area surrounding the existing cultural ACECs.	that met the criteria for allocation for designation (including cultural resources, NRHP-eligible properties and districts, and TCPs).[1] See Chapter 3, *Cultural Resources*, and the *Glossary* for a definition of designated site or area. This action includes the area surrounding the existing cultural ACECs.	activities in the cultural resource or designated site and for those within 300 feet of boundaries of cultural resources or designated sites or areas or sites or areas that met the criteria for allocation for designation (including cultural resources, NRHP-eligible properties and districts, and TCPs).[1] See Chapter 3, *Cultural Resources*, and the *Glossary* for a definition of a designated site or area.	
	Action 3 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms, except in areas in which oil and gas leasing would be	**Action 3 –** Oil and gas leasing would not be open in or within 3.5 miles of the Fort Union Historic Site	**Action 3 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within the visible area within 3.5 miles of the	**Action 3 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation that would state that prior to surface	**Action 3 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited in NHLs and historic battlefields

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	offered with an NSO stipulation.	National Historic Landmark (NHL) or in or within 0.5 miles of NHLs and historic battlefields (11,500 acres).	Fort Union Historic Site NHL and in and within 300 feet of NHLs and historic battlefields (6,400 acres).[1]	disturbance or use, a SUPO and a cultural site mitigation plan must be approved by the AO for all activities in or within the visible area within 3.5 miles of the Fort Union Historic Site NHL and in or within 300 feet of NHLs and historic battlefields (6,400 acres).[1]	(NSO) (4,600 acres).[1]
PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES (for management of Paleontological ACECs, see *Special Designation Areas*, the ACEC section) ***Goal 1*** *– Identify, preserve, and protect significant paleontological resources on BLM-administered lands.* ***Goal 2*** *- Ensure that paleontological resources are available to present and future generations for appropriate uses such as scientific studies and public education.*					
PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES	**Objective 1 –** Ensure that proposed land uses initiated or authorized by the BLM avoid inadvertent damage to significant paleontological resources.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Paleontological Resources	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed except for 171 acres of paleontological locality special management areas where geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of the localities if the activities would impact the paleontological localities, future paleontological localities, or areas that meet the	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of localities if the activities would impact the paleontological localities, future paleontological localities, or areas that meet the criteria for designation.	**Action 1** – Surface-disturbing activities would be allowed as long as the activities would not impact the quality of significant paleontological localities.	

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
		criteria for designation. Surface-disturbing activities that did not degrade the locality and that provided for the improvement or maintenance of ecosystem functionality (e.g., erosion control or reseeding), enhanced the values of the paleontological localities (or areas), and had beneficial outcomes would be allowed.	Surface-disturbing activities that did not degrade the locality and that provided for the improvement or maintenance of ecosystem functionality (e.g., erosion control or reseeding), enhanced the values of the paleontological localities (or areas), and had beneficial outcomes would be allowed.		
	Action 2 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation.[1]	**Action 2** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation that restricted surface-disturbing activities in and within 0.5 miles of significant localities or localities that meet the criteria for significance as such.[1]	**Action 2 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation that restricted surface-disturbing activities in and within 300 feet of significant localities or localities that meet the criteria for significance as such.[1]	**Action 2 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation that stated that, prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and a paleontological site mitigation plan, which must be approved by the AO, would be required for all surface-disturbing	**Action 2 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited with an NSO stipulation that restricted surface-disturbing activities in significant paleontological localities.[1]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
				activities in and within 300 feet of significant localities.[1]	
VISUAL RESOURCES ***Goal 1*** *– Maintain scenic qualities consistent with the management of resources and uses.*					
VISUAL RESOURCES	**Objective 1** – Manage visual resources according to established guidelines for VRM class objectives.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
(See *Recreation* and *Special Designation Areas* sections for VRM in specific areas)	**Action 1** –The visual contrast rating system would be used during project-level planning to determine mitigation measures and conservation actions (see *Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix*).				
	Action 2 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited in VRM Class 1 (NSO).*				
	Action 3 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be restricted or prohibited in VRM II (CSU).*				
***ACEC/SRMAs may have different oil and gas requirements**					
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Visual Resources	**Action 4 –** VRM would be managed according to VRM Class I (97,000 acres), VRM Class II (400,000 acres), VRM Class III (375,000 acres), and VRM Class IV (1,890,000 acres) objectives.[1]	**Action 4 –** VRM would be managed according to VRM Class I (126,000 acres), VRM Class II (573,000 acres), VRM Class III (631,000 acres), and VRM Class IV (1,432,000 acres).[1]	**Action 4 –** VRM would be managed according to VRM Class I (97,000 acres), VRM Class II (405,000 acres), VRM Class III (695,000 acres), and VRM Class IV (1,565,000 acres).[1]	**Action 4 –** VRM would be managed according to VRM Class I (97,000 acres), VRM Class II (382,000 acres), VRM Class III (726,000 acres), and VRM Class IV (1,557,000 acres).[1]	**Action 4 –** VRM would be managed according to VRM Class I (83,000 acres), VRM Class II (414,000 acres), VRM Class III (695,000 acres), and VRM Class IV (1,570,000 acres) (Map 7).[1]
LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS ***Goal 1*** *– Protect, preserve, and maintain areas' with wilderness characteristics.*					
LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS	**Objective 1 –** Maintain a high degree of naturalness and provide for outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive, unconfined recreation				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	**Action 1** – Lands acquired by exchange within WSAs, such as the Terry Badlands WSA, would be managed the same as the WSA (see the narrative portion of Chapter 2 for more information).				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	**Action 2** – No similar action.	**Action 2** – Manage LWC in the following areas (28,841 acres): -Devils Creek 5,236 acres, -Wrangler 5,309 acres, -Rough 5,302 acres, -Ridge 8,184 acres, and -Whitetail 4,809 acres.	**Action 2** – Manage LWC in the following areas (5,236 acres): -Devils Creek 5,236 acres. Do not manage LWC in the following areas due to area manageability (23,605 acres): -Wrangler 5,309 acres, -Rough 5,302 acres, -Ridge 8,184 acres, and -Whitetail 4,809 acres.	**Action 2** – Do not manage for LWC in the following areas (28,841 acres): -Devils Creek 5,236 acres, -Wrangler 5,309 acres, -Rough 5,302 acres, -Ridge 8,184 acres, and -Whitetail 4,809 acres.	**Action 2** – Manage LWC in the following areas (5,236 acres): -Devils Creek 5,236 acres. Do not manage LWC in the following areas due to conflicts with resource values and uses (23,605 acres): -Ridge 8,184 acres, -Whitetail 4,809 acres, -Wrangler 5,309 acres, and -Rough 5,302 acres
	Action 3 – Oil and gas leasing would be in accordance with Alternative A for all resources (28,841 acres).	**Action 3** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited within the LWC area (NSO) (28,841 acres).[1]	**Action 3** –The areas managed for LWCs, oil and gas leasing would be allowed with a CSU stipulation (5,236 acres).[1]	**Action 3** – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms (28,841 acres).[1]	**Action 3** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use is prohibited within the LWC area (NSO) (5,236 acres).[1]
	Action 4 – ROWs would be allowed (28,841 acres).	**Action 4** – ROWs would be excluded (28,841 acres).	**Action 4** – ROWs would be avoided (5,236 acres).	**Action 4** – ROWs would be allowed (28,841 acres).	**Action 4** – ROWs would be avoided (5,236 acres).
	Action 5 – Surface disturbing activities would be allowed	**Action 5** – Surface disturbing activities would not be	**Action 5** – Surface disturbing activities would be allowed if	**Action 5** – Surface disturbing activities would be allowed	**Action 5** – Surface disturbing activities would be allowed if

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	(28,841 acres).	allowed (28,841 acres).	compatible with the retention or enhancement of the area's wilderness characteristics. (5,236 acres).	(28,841 acres).	compatible with the retention or enhancement of the area's wilderness characteristics. (5,236 acres).
	Action 6 – VRM management would be in accordance with Alternative A for all resources (28,841 acres).	**Action 6** – The areas would be managed according to VRM Class I (28,841 acres).	**Action 6** – The areas managed for LWCs would be managed according to VRM Class II (5,236 acres).		
	Action 7 – Mineral material sales and permits would be allowed in accordance with Alternative A for all other resources.	**Action 7** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.	**Action 7** – Mineral material sales and permits would be allowed.		**Action 7** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed (5,236 acres).
	Action 8 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 8** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed (5,236 acres).	**Action 8** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed (28,841 acres).		**Action 8** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed (5,236 acres).
	Actions 9 – OHV use would be limited to the existing roads and trails.	**Actions 9** – Designated lands managed for wilderness characteristics as OHV closed areas.	**Action 9 –** OHVs would be limited to designated routes.		
RESOURCE USES					
FORESTRY AND WOODLAND PRODUCTS (see also *vegetation for cottonwood management.*) ***Goal 1*** *– Promote healthy, resilient, and vigorous forestland communities. Forestland mosaics would be managed for diversity of stand structures and species*					

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
components that complemented other resource values, including (but not limited to) recreation, wildlife, rangelands, fisheries, and wood production.					
FORESTRY AND WOODLAND PRODUCTS	**Objective 1** – Provide woody and non-woody biomass consistent with other resource uses as part of an ecologically healthy system and consistent with the principles of multiple use.				
	Objective 2 – Develop management strategies and implement treatments to improve the health, sustainability, resiliency, and productivity of forests, woodlands, and the desired vegetative community based on scientifically sound principles and an environmentally responsible level of timber sales.				
	Objective 3 – Manage forest vegetation structure, species composition, patch size, pattern, and distribution in a manner that reduced the occurrence of severe wildfires and forest insect and disease outbreaks.				
	Objective 4 –Manage forest resources to maintain and enhance their ability for the long-term sequestration of carbon.				
	Objective 5 – Maintain and promote forest stand structures with large trees appropriate to forest types and successional stages.				
	Objective 6 – Promote forest and woodland vegetation regeneration and recovery on forested lands after management treatments, insect and disease outbreaks, and wildfire events.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Forestry and Woodland Products	**Action 1 –** All management activities that removed dead or live trees would take into consideration other resources values (such as wildlife habitat, watershed health, soils stability, snag recruitment and large tree retention, local economic opportunities, public safety, hazardous fuels, visual integrity, and any other relevant concerns).				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Forestry and Woodland Products	**Action 2 –** Forestlands in the planning area with 10% or more canopy cover per acre would be managed for the enhancement of other resources, not for the production of forest products or sawtimber (BLM 1996).	**Action 2 –** Forestlands would not be managed for forest products or sawtimber, except for trees deemed safety hazards.	**Action 2** – Forestlands would be managed to enhance the health and resiliency of forest and woodland resources and for a diversity of forest products.		
	Action 3 – Wood product sales for post and poles, Christmas trees, and firewood	**Action 3 –** Wood product sales for post and poles, Christmas trees,	**Action 3** – Sales of forest products would be allowed in all areas that supported these products and met management objectives.		

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	would be allowed in the Knowlton, Pine Unit, Missouri Breaks, and all other areas allowed under the *Fire/Fuels Management Plan Environmental Assessment/Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas* (BLM 2003k).	and firewood would not be allowed in the planning area.			
Forestry and Woodland Products	**Action 4** – Sales for sawtimber would not be allowed except for salvage harvest of ponderosa pine affected by insects, fire, or other natural causes (BLM 1996).	**Action 4** – Sales for sawtimber would not be allowed except salvage harvest of ponderosa pine affected by insects.	**Action 4** – Sales for sawtimber would be allowed for sustainable resource health and forest products production. Probable sale quantity (PSQ) for commercial sawtimber would be allowed up to 650 thousand board feet per year (mbf/year).	**Action 4** – Sales for sawtimber would be allowed for sustainable resource health and forest products production. PSQ for commercial sawtimber would be allowed up to 1100 mbf/year.	
LIVESTOCK GRAZING ***Goal 1*** *– Provide forage for livestock grazing consistent with other resources and uses as part of an ecologically healthy system consistent with multiple use and sustained yield.* ***Goal 2*** *– Utilize grazing activities to manage for the biological integrity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems to sustain vegetation, fish, and special status species, while providing for multiple uses of BLM-administered lands.* ***Goal 3*** *– Provide opportunities for livestock grazing to support and sustain local communities while providing habitat for native plants, fish, and animals (including special status species) and meeting or exceeding PFC for uplands and riparian areas and Montana's air and water quality standards.*					

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
LIVESTOCK GRAZING	**Objective 1** – Maintain sustainable forage levels for livestock.				
	Objective 2 – Meet rangeland health objectives by using Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, such as grazing use, grazing activity plans and systems, range improvements, and vegetation treatments (see *Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix).*				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Livestock Grazing	**Action 1** – Allotment management and permit administration would use criteria found in Handbook 1740-1 and WO IM 2009-018 (BLM 2008d) and new criteria outlined in the *Livestock Grazing Appendix and Monitoring Appendix*.				
	Action 2 - The BLM would follow the BLM's 1997 *Record of Decision for Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Final Environmental Impact Statement for Montana and North and South Dakota*.				
	Action 3 – The BLM will prioritize (1) the review of grazing permits/leases, in particular to determine if modification is necessary prior to renewal, and (2) the processing of grazing permits/leases in PHMAs. In setting workload priorities, precedence will be given to existing permits/leases in these areas not meeting Land Health Standards, with focus on those containing riparian areas, including wet meadows. The BLM may use other criteria for prioritization to respond to urgent natural resource concerns (ex., fire) and legal obligations.				
	Action 4 – The NEPA analysis for renewals and modifications of livestock grazing permits/leases that include lands within PHMAs will include specific management thresholds based on GRSG Habitat Objectives Table 2-4 and Land Health Standards (43 CFR 4180.2) and defined responses that will allow the authorizing officer to make adjustments to livestock grazing without conducting additional NEPA.				
	Action 5 – Allotments within PHMAs, focusing on those containing riparian areas, including wet meadows, will be prioritized for field checks to help ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the grazing permits. Field checks could include monitoring for actual use, utilization, and use supervision.				
	Action 6 – At the time a permittee or lessee voluntarily relinquishes a permit or lease, the BLM will consider whether the public lands where that permitted use was authorized should remain available for livestock grazing or be used for other resource management objectives, such as reserve common allotments or fire breaks.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Livestock Grazing Authorization	**Action 7** – Approximately 2,700,000 acres and an estimated 546,508 AUMs would be available for livestock grazing (see Table 2 in the	**Action 7** – Approximately 2,500,000 acres and an estimated 502,706 AUMs would be available for all livestock grazing except	**Action 7** – Approximately 2,700,000 acres and an estimated 545,770 AUMs would be available for livestock grazing, except domestic sheep and	**Action 7 –** Approximately 2,700,000 acres and an estimated 546,506 AUMs would be available for livestock grazing.	**Action 7** – 2,700,000 acres and an estimated 546,496 AUMS would be available for livestock grazing.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Livestock Grazing Appendix).	domestic sheep and goats. From the available acres, 2,100,000 acres and an estimated 422,903 AUMs would be available for domestic sheep and goats.	goats. From the available acres, 2,700,000 acres and 544,578 AUMs would be available for domestic sheep and goats.		
	Action 8 – Livestock grazing would be unavailable on approximately 240 acres (62 AUMs).	**Action 8** – Approximately 210,000 acres (43,000 AUMs) would be unavailable from all livestock grazing. Domestic sheep and goat grazing would be unavailable on 390,000 acres (79,803 AUMs).	**Action 8** – Approximately 3,760 BLM-administered acres (738 AUMs) would be unavailable from all livestock grazing. Domestic sheep and goat grazing would be unavailable on 8,300 acres (611 AUMs).	**Action 8** – Livestock grazing would be unavailable on approximately 100 acres (2 AUMs).	**Action 8** – Livestock grazing would be unavailable on approximately 140 (12 AUMs).
	Action 9 – In the allotments in which the Standards for Rangeland Health were not met and livestock grazing was a causal factor and site-specific analyses demonstrated that Standards for Rangeland Health could be achieved,	**Action 9** – The allotments in which the Standards for Rangeland Health were not met (including GRSG Habitat), and livestock grazing was a causal factor in the failure to meet these standards, would	**Action 9** – For allotments in which the Land Health standards were not met (including GRSG Habitat), livestock grazing was a causal factor in the failure to meet these standards, and there was no progress towards meeting the Standards in the allotments within 5 years of making management changes, use would be suspended and not re-authorized until Land Health Standards including habitat objectives were attained. Once standards and habitat objectives were met, use would be re-authorized at levels to maintain resource objectives.		

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	grazing permits would be issued with specific grazing seasons and livestock numbers and other terms and conditions designed to make progress toward meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health.	be unavailable for livestock grazing.			
Livestock Grazing Authorization – Locatable Mining, Oil and Gas, and Coal	**Action 10** – Livestock grazing would continue to be allowed within areas with active locatable mining.	**Action 10** – Livestock grazing would be excluded in areas with active locatable mining for the life of the activity.	**Action 10** – Livestock grazing would be suspended or cancelled in areas with active locatable mining. Grazing would be reactivated as areas were reclaimed and Standards for Rangeland Health were met.		
	Action 11 – Livestock grazing would continue to be allowed within areas with oil and gas development if Standards for Rangeland Health were being met.	**Action 11** – In grazing allotments with oil and gas development, AUMs would be suspended commensurate with the direct loss of AUMs.	**Action 11** – In grazing allotments with oil and gas development, grazing would be suspended or cancelled on affected areas. Grazing would be reactivated as areas were reclaimed and Standards for Rangeland Health were met.		
	Action 12 – Livestock grazing would be cancelled during coal development for the life of the mine (BLM 1996).	**Action 12** – Livestock grazing would be suspended during coal development for the life of the mine.	**Action 12** – Livestock grazing would be suspended or cancelled during coal development on affected acres. Grazing would be reactivated as areas were reclaimed and Standards for Rangeland Health were met.		

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	Livestock grazing would be allowed within areas with coal development (BLM 1985c).				
Livestock Grazing Authorization – Land Treatments	**Action 13** – Livestock grazing would be deferred on a case-by-case basis with permittee or lessee cooperation to ensure adequate fuel is present to carry a prescribed fire.	**Action 13** – Livestock grazing would be suspended until vegetative conditions allowed for adequate fuel for a prescribed fire.		**Action 13 –** Livestock grazing would be deferred on a case-by-case basis with permittee or lessee cooperation to ensure adequate fuel to carry a prescribed fire.	**Action 13** – Livestock grazing would be deferred or suspended in identified fuels treatment areas until vegetative conditions allowed for adequate fuel for a prescribed fire.
	Action 14 – BLM-administered lands would be temporarily unavailable for at least 1 growing season after a prescribed or wildfire (BLM 1996). Grazing would be deferred or temporarily unavailable on a case-by-case basis (BLM 1985c).	**Action 14** – BLM-administered lands would be temporarily unavailable to grazing after wildfire, prescribed fire, or non-fire vegetative treatments for at least 2 growing seasons.	**Action 14** – BLM-administered lands would be unavailable to livestock grazing after wildfire, prescribed fire, or non-fire vegetative treatments until the area attained identified vegetative objectives.	**Action 14** – BLM-administered lands would be unavailable for grazing after wildfire, prescribed fire, or non-fire vegetative treatments until established seed set the next growing season.	**Action 14** Livestock grazing use would be suspended after wildfire, prescribed fire or non-fire vegetative treatments until grazing could continue as Standards for Rangeland Health were met.
Livestock Grazing Authorization – Reserve Common Allotments (RCAs)	**Action 15** – There would be no RCAs.	**Action 15** – RCAs would be designated and managed according to the criteria listed	**Action 15** – RCAs would be designated and managed to ensure grazing authorizations were available only to	**Action 15 –** RCAs would not be designated in the planning area.	**Action 15** – RCAs would be designated and managed according to the criteria listed in the

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
		in the *Livestock Grazing Appendix*.	those permittees who were legal residents of the county in which the RCA was located.		*Livestock Grazing Appendix*.
Livestock Grazing – Permit/Lease Renewals and Transfers	**Action 16** – Grazing preference for permits or leases would be transferred or renewed on a case-by-case basis.	**Action 16** – Grazing preference for permits or leases would be transferred or renewed for C category grazing allotments in which the new grazing permit or lease contained the same kind of livestock and the active use previously authorized was not exceeded. These allotments would be documented to be meeting Rangeland Health Standards (see the *Livestock Grazing Appendix* for a screening criteria checklist).	**Action 16** – Grazing preference for permits or leases would be transferred or renewed for C and M category grazing allotments in which the new grazing permit or lease contained the same kind of livestock and the active use previously authorized was not exceeded. These allotments would be documented to be meeting Rangeland Health Standards (see the *Livestock Grazing Appendix* for a screening criteria checklist).	**Action 16** – Grazing preference for permits or leases would be transferred or renewed for all grazing allotments in which the new grazing permit or lease contained the same kind of livestock and the active use previously authorized was not exceeded. These allotments would be documented to be meeting Rangeland Health Standards (see the *Livestock Grazing Appendix* for a screening criteria checklist).	**Action 16** – Grazing preference for permits or leases would be transferred or renewed for grazing allotments meeting Rangeland Health Standards in which the new grazing permit or lease contained the same mandatory terms and conditions previously authorized. (see the *Livestock Grazing Appendix* for a screening criteria checklist).
Alternatives considering closing specific allotments to livestock grazing or changing the season of use are addressed in the *Recreation*, *Special Designations*, and the *Fish, Aquatic and Wildlife Habitat, Including Special Status Species* sections.					
MINERALS ***Goal 1*** *– Provide opportunities for mineral use in an environmentally responsible manner.*					

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Coal	**Action 1** – Areas identified in the Big Dry and Powder River RMPs (BLM 1996 and 1985c) as acceptable for further consideration for coal leasing would be carried forward: • Powder River RMP: "Future development will come from current leases covering 39,391 acres (3.43 billion tons) those unleased areas determined acceptable for further consideration in the 1979 MFP Update and 1982 Amendment covering 91,700 acres (7.83 billion tons) and unleased areas determined acceptable for further consideration from new planning covering 869,600 acres (54.37 billion tons). The combined total is 1,000,691 acres (65.63 billion tons). Emergency leases will be issued to maintain production or avoid a bypass situation on a case-by-case basis. Exchanges will be considered for existing leases, by direction of legislation, and for leases located in alluvial valley floors. Other exchanges will be considered on a case-by-case basis" (BLM 1985c, p. 2); and • Big Dry RMP: "Pending application of the surface-owner consultation screen, coal will be acceptable for further consideration for leasing or exchange on 580,547 public mineral acres containing 6.18 billion tons of coal" (BLM 1996, p. 12).				
	Action 2 – All coal leasing and coal exchange proposals would be evaluated for their suitability for leasing or exchange.				
	Action 3 – At the time an application for a new coal lease or lease modification is submitted to the BLM, the BLM will determine whether the lease application area is "unsuitable" for all or certain coal mining methods pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.5. PHMA is essential habitat for maintaining GRSG for purposes of the suitability criteria set forth at 43 CFR 3461.5(o)(1).				
Oil & Gas	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing and development would be open with an NSO stipulation within existing coal leases with approved mining plans (38,503 acres).[1]				
	Action 5 – BLM-administered oil and gas mineral acres within WSAs would be unavailable for leasing (nondiscretionary closures). See the *Lands and Realty-Renewable Energy Appendix* for Withdrawals (83,000 acres).				
	Action 6 – To resolve drainage situations, lands closed to leasing or unavailable for leasing would be leased with an NSO stipulation. See the *Minerals Appendix* for more information.				
	Action 7 – BLM-administered oil and gas mineral acres in Makoshika State Park would be leased with an NSO stipulation (5,394 acres). [1]				
	Action 8 - Where the federal government owns the mineral estate in PHMAs and GHMAs, and the surface is in non-federal ownership, apply the same stipulations, COAs, and/or conservation measures and RDFs applied if the mineral estate is developed on BLM-administered lands in that management area, to the maximum extent permissible under existing authorities, and in coordination with the landowner. Where the federal government owns the surface and the mineral estate is in non-federal ownership in PHMA and GHMA, apply appropriate surface use COAs, stipulations, and mineral RDFs through ROW grants or other surface				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	management instruments, to the maximum extent permissible under existing authorities, in coordination with the mineral estate owner/lessee.				
	Action 9 – Except for greater sage grouse, coal bed natural gas (CBNG) development would be conducted in accordance with the BLM's 2008 *Record of Decision for the Final Supplement to the Montana Statewide Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Amendment of the Powder River and Billings RMP*s. All other management, including leasing and GRSG, is found in this table.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Oil & Gas	**Action 10** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited with an NSO stipulation on approximately 566,000 mineral acres.	**Action 10** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited with an NSO stipulation on approximately 2,311,000 acres.	**Action 10** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited with an NSO stipulation on approximately 240,000 acres.	**Action 10** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited with an NSO stipulation on approximately 60,000 acres.	**Action 10** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited with an NSO stipulation on approximately 1,850,000 acres.
	Action 11 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed with a timing stipulation or a CSU stipulation on approximately 555,000 (CSU) 3,466,000 (Timing) acres.	**Action 11** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed with a CSU stipulation on approximately 3,075,000 acres.	**Action 11** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed with a CSU stipulation on approximately 4,565,000 acres.	**Action 11** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed with a CSU stipulation on approximately 4,524,000 acres.	**Action 11** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed with a CSU or timing stipulation on approximately 3,645,000 (CSU) 179,000 (Timing) acres.
	Action 12 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed	**Action 12** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be	**Action 12** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed with	**Action 12** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed	**Action 12** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be allowed with

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	with lease terms on approximately 1,316,000 acres.	allowed with lease terms on approximately 432,000 acres.	lease terms on approximately 818,000 acres.	with lease terms on approximately 889,000 acres.	lease terms on approximately 987,000 acres.
	Action 13 – BLM-administered mineral acres within WSAs would be closed to oil and gas leading and development (87,000 acres).	**Action 13** – Oil and gas leasing and development would be closed on approximately 1,481,000 acres.	**Action 13** – BLM-administered mineral acres within WSAs would be closed to oil and gas leasing and development (83,000 acres).		
	Action 14 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on approximately 148,000 acres and allowed in the remainder of the planning area.	**Action 14** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on approximately 1,260,000 acres and allowed in the remainder of the planning area.	**Action 14** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on approximately 92,000 acres and allowed in the remainder of the planning area.	**Action 14** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on approximately 111,000 acres and allowed in the remainder of the planning area.	**Action 14** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on approximately 151,000 acres and allowed in the remainder of the planning area.
Proposed Carter Area (139,000 surface; 283,200 oil and gas acres)	**Objective 1** – See the Fish, Aquatic and Wildlife Habitat, including Special Status Species, GRSG section; Water Resources, Soil Resources, and Finger Buttes ACEC Special Designation sections for resource condition objectives.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Proposed Carter Area	**Action 15** – No areas are identified for the development of an MLP.		**Action 15** – One area in the planning area would be identified as meeting the criteria for an MLP (Carter MLP).	**Action 15** – No areas are identified for the development of an MLP.	
	Action 16 – Oil and gas leasing would not be phased. Oil and gas leasing would be in	**Action 16** – Oil and gas leasing would not be phased in the GRSG Habitat-Priority ACEC.	**Action 16** – Oil and gas leasing would be phased beginning in the western portion of the MLP. If production were	**Action 16** – Oil and gas leasing would not be phased. Oil and gas leasing would be in accordance with the resource actions within the respective alternative as identified in this Table.	

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	accordance with the resource actions within the respective alternative as identified in this Table.	Oil and gas leasing would be in accordance with the resource actions within the respective alternative as identified in this Table.	occurring, the BLM would wait to lease the remainder of the MLP until production ceased and the area returned to GRSG habitat. The eastern portion of the MLP would then be open for oil and gas leasing with a CSU stipulation. The general Mitigation Guidelines in the *Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix* would be considered during project implementation.		
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Locatable Minerals	**Action 17 –** Approximately 2.18 million acres would remain open to mineral location.	**Action 17 –** Approximately 1.04 million acres would be withdrawn from operation of the mining law.	**Action 17 –** Approximately 2.18 million acres would remain open to mineral location.	**Action 17 –** Approximately 2.18 million acres would remain open to mineral location.	**Action 17 –** Approximately 2.18 million acres would remain open to mineral location.
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Mineral Material	**Action 18 –** Approximately 2,500,000 acres would be available to mineral material sales	**Action 18 –** Approximately 300,000 acres would be available to mineral material	**Action 18 –** Approximately 1,100,000 acres would be available to mineral material sales and	**Action 18 –** Approximately 1,100,000 acres would be available to mineral material	**Action 18 –** Approximately 2,500,000 acres would be available to mineral material sales and

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	and permits. Approximately 236,000 acres would not be allowed or closed to mineral material sales and permits.	sales and permits. Approximately 3.5 million acres would not be allowed or closed to mineral material sales and permits.	permits. Approximately 302,000 acres would not be allowed or closed to mineral material sales and permits.	sales and permits. Approximately 143,000 acres would not be allowed or closed to mineral material sales and permits.	permits with restrictions applied. Approximately 169,000 acres would not be allowed or closed to mineral material sales and permits.
RECREATION ***Goal 1*** *– Provide a diverse array of quality resource-based recreation opportunities while protecting and interpreting the resource values, providing educational opportunities, minimizing recreational use conflicts, and promoting public safety.* ***Goal 2*** *– Establish, manage, and maintain quality recreation sites and facilities to balance public demand and protection of public land resources.* ***Goal 3*** *– Manage recreation opportunities and experiences to provide a sustained flow of local economic benefits and protect non-market economic values.*					
Reservoirs with Fisheries	**Objective 1 –** Manage reservoirs with fisheries in a manner to provide for quality recreational experiences while minimizing conflicts and conserve resources.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Reservoirs with Fisheries	**Action 1 –** Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation within 0.25 miles of designated reservoirs with fisheries (4,000 acres).[1] Geophysical exploration would be allowed within those acres.	**Action 1 –** Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of designated sport-fish reservoirs unless the activities were beneficial to aquatic wildlife habitat (10,000 acres).[2,7] Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation	**Action 1 –** Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be avoided in and within 0.25 miles of designated sport-fish reservoirs and would only be approved with design features to minimize impacts (3,800 acres).[2,4] Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and	**Action 1 –** Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities would be allowed adjacent to designated sport-fish reservoirs with BLM-approved design features (170 acres).[2,4] Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use in and within 0.25 miles of designated sport-fishing reservoirs is allowed subject to specialized design features to minimize impacts (CSU) (2600 acres).[1]	

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
		in and within 0.50 miles of designated sport-fish reservoirs (12,700 acres).[1]	within 0.25 miles of designated sport-fish reservoirs (2,600 acres).[1]		
Special Recreation Permits	**Objective 2** – Manage special recreation permits (SRPs) to regulate visitor use, minimize user conflict and conserve resources.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Special Recreation Permits	**Action 2 –** The BLM would issue SRPs as appropriate for commercial, competitive, special events and/or organized group activities, subject to guidelines in BLM Handbook 2930 resource capabilities, social conflict concerns, professional qualifications, public safety, and public needs. Changes in demand for permits and resulting impacts would be monitored and future thresholds identified that could lead to limits in the number of permits to	**Action 2 –** No SRPs would be issued.	**Action 2 –** The BLM would issue SRPs as appropriate for commercial, competitive, special events and/or organized group activities, subject to guidelines in BLM Handbook 2930 resource capabilities, social conflict concerns, professional qualifications, public safety, and public needs. Changes in demand for permits and resulting impacts would be monitored and future thresholds identified that could lead to limits in the number of permits to minimize impacts to the resource, public safety, and overall visitor satisfaction. All SRP applications and renewals would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and issued as tools to achieve area specific planning goals, objectives and decisions.		

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	minimize impacts to the resource, public safety, and overall visitor satisfaction. All SRP applications and renewals would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and issued as tools to achieve area specific planning goals, objectives and decisions.				
	Action 3 – On 2.8 million acres, requests for SRPs for outfitters and guides for hunting would be considered on a case-by-case basis throughout the planning area, subject to environmental, social, and public health and safety concerns.	**Action 3 –** Requests for SRPs by outfitters and guides for hunting would not be allowed on 2.8 million acres.	**Action 3 –** On 2.8 million acres, requests for SRPs for outfitters and guides for hunting would be considered on a case-by-case basis throughout the planning area, subject to environmental, social, and public health and safety concerns.	**Action 3 –** On 2.8 million acres, requests for SRPs for outfitters and guides for hunting would be considered on a case-by-case basis throughout the planning area, subject to environmental, social, and public health and safety concerns.	**Action 3 –** SRPs for outfitters and guides for hunting would be allowed where these permits would not conflict with other BLM permitted uses and BLM Special Designation Area's or Recreation Area's Goals and Objectives. Only 1 permit for outfitters and guides for hunting would be allowed on any given parcel of BLM administered public land.
SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREAS (SRMAS), EXTENSIVE RECREATION	**Objective 1 –** Manage SRMAs to enhance a targeted and/or specific set of activities, experiences, benefits, and desired recreation setting characteristics in response to visitor demand to sustain or enhance recreation settings characteristics.				
	Objective 2 – Manage ERMAs to support and sustain the principal recreation activities and opportunities with the				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
MANAGEMENT AREAS (ERMAs) AND PUBLIC LANDS NOT DESIGNATED	associated quality and conditions as necessary to achieve planning objectives and to address recreation-tourism issues, activities, conflicts and/or particular recreation settings.				
	Objective 3 – Manage Public Lands not Designated as Recreation Management Areas to meet basic Recreation and Visitor Services and resource stewardship needs.				
	Objective 4 – Increase awareness, understanding and a sense of stewardship in recreational activity participants so their conduct safeguards cultural and natural resources.				
	Objective 5 – Ensure that visitors are not exposed to unhealthy or unsafe human created condition.				
	Objective 6 – Achieve a minimum level of conflict between recreation participants and other resource/resource uses sufficient to enable the achievement of identified land use plan goals, objectives, and actions for a diversity of recreation activity participation.				
	Objective 7 – Manage to provide a diversity of recreation opportunities and settings; management actions and allowable uses may be necessary to protect resources or investments.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
	Action 1 - In PHMA, do not construct new recreation facilities (e.g., campgrounds, trails, trailheads, staging areas) unless the development would have a net conservation gain to GRSG habitat (such as concentrating recreation, diverting use away from critical areas, etc.), or unless the development is required for visitor health and safety or resource protection.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
SRMAS, ERMAS AND PUBLIC LANDS NOT DESIGNATED	**Action 2 –** The planning area would be managed with the following designated acres: SRMAs – 16,583 Acres; ERMAs – 28,884 acres; Public land not designated – 2,706,063 acres.	**Action 2 –** The planning area would be managed with the following designated acres: SRMAs – 43,869 Acres; ERMAs – 0 acres; Public land not designated – 2,707,661 acres.	**Action 2 –** The planning area would be managed with the following designated acres: SRMAs – 43,869 Acres; ERMAs – 0 acres; Public land not designated – 2,707,661 acres.	**Action 2 –** The planning area would be managed with the following designated acres: SRMAs – 0 Acres; ERMAs – 43,869 acres; Public land not designated – 2,707,661 acres.	**Action 2 –** The planning area would be managed with the following designated acres: SRMAs – 21,948 Acres; ERMAs – 2,200 acres; Public land not designated – 2,727,382 acres.
POWDER RIVER DEPOT SRMA (162 acres)	The Powder River Depot SRMA is located within the Powder River Depot ACEC and Lewis & Clark Trail SRMA. For management of the ACEC, see the alternative table under *Special Designations* for the Powder River Depot ACEC. Management for the Lewis & Clark Trail SRMA is found further in this section.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Powder River Depot SRMA (162 acres)	**Action 1** – Powder River Depot would	**Action 1 –** Powder River Depot SRMA would remain and be managed for local and		**Action 1** – Powder River Depot would	**Action 1 –** Powder River Depot SRMA

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	continue to be designated a SRMA.	regional public demand.		be managed as an ERMA.	would not be designated a SRMA. These lands are located within the Lewis & Clark Trail SRMA and Powder River Depot ACEC. Management would be in accordance to those designations.
CALYPSO SRMA (71 acres) (no federal mineral ownership)	**Objective 1** – Identify experiences available and differences of the great diversity of topographic, geologic, vegetation, and scenic phenomenon in proximity to the Calypso Trail and Terry Badlands (in relationship to the Calypso SRMA due to the close proximity of the two). **Objective 2** – Provide users with opportunities to view, experience, and appreciate examples of cultural and historic use of nearby Calypso Trail, and examples of the ways the resources on public lands are being managed in harmony with the environment, as an asset to the existing scenic character of the Terry Badlands. **Objective 3** – Ensure the SRMA will have a minimum adverse effect on adjacent natural scenic, historical and cultural environments and harmonize with the management objectives of land and resource uses which are now or may be occurring on the lands.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Calypso SRMA (71 acres) (no federal mineral ownership)	**Action 1** – Calypso would continue to be designated a SRMA.	**Action 1** – Calypso SRMA would remain and be managed for local and regional public demand.		**Action 1** – Calypso would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 1** – Calypso SRMA would continue to be designated a SRMA.
	Action 2 – A portion of the Hines Allotment (#01669), consisting of 71 acres and 11 AUMs (T. 12 N., R. 50 E., sec. 22), would be unavailable for livestock grazing.		**Action 2 –** A portion of the Hines Allotment (#01669), consisting of 71 acres and 11 AUMs (T. 12 N., R. 50 E., sec. 22), would be unavailable for livestock grazing except for a grazing authorization for	**Action 2** – A portion of the Hines Allotment (#01669), consisting of 71 acres and 11 AUMs (T. 12 N., R. 50 E., sec. 22), would be available for livestock grazing.	

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
			vegetation management (e.g., invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).		
	Action 3 – Range improvements would be excluded on 69 acres.	**Action 3 –** Range improvements would be allowed.			
	Action 4 – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be excluded.	**Action 45 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.	**Action 4** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.		**Action 5 –** Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.
	Action 6 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (71 acres) objectives.			**Action 6 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (71 acres) objectives.	**Action 6 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (71 acres) objectives.
LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL SRMA	**Objective 1** – Manage for public use and enjoyment, while preserving the historic and cultural resources related to the events that occurred during the Lewis and Clark Expedition. **Objective 2** – Maintain and enhance recreation opportunities for residents and visitors along the trail to accommodate camping, scenery & wildlife viewing, hunting, picnicking, boating, fishing, hiking, and other compatible and dispersed recreational uses in prescribed settings so visitors are able to realize experiences and benefits. **Objective 3** – Pursue opportunities for partnership and cooperative management with adjacent property owners and other interested parties.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Lewis and Clark Trail SRMA	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the SRMA if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Lewis and Clark Trail SRMA	**Action 2** – Lewis and Clark Trail would continue to be designated a SRMA and the boundary would be at 16,350 acres (BLM 1996).	**Action 2 –** The Lewis and Clark Trail would continue to be designated a SRMA and the boundary would be modified to total 14,499 acres. (See also Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail).		**Action 2** – Lewis and Clark Trail would be managed as an ERMA and the boundary would be modified to total 14,499 acres.	**Action 2** – Lewis and Clark Trail would continue to be designated a SRMA and the boundary would be modified to total 14,499 acres.
	Action 3 – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.		**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be allowed for purposes of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resources being managed.	**Action 3 –** Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 3** – Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed only when they meet the SRMA objectives.
Lewis and Clark Trail SRMA	**Action 4** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would	**Action 4** – ROWs and other land use authorizations	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	be allowed.	would be excluded.	be avoided.	would be allowed.	be avoided.
	Action 5 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation (24,000 acres).[1]	**Action 5 –** Oil and gas leasing would not be open (12,270 acres).	**Action 5 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation (12,270 acres).[1]	**Action 5 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation (12,270 acres).[1]	**Action 5 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (12,270 acres).[1]
	Action 6 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 6 –** Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 6 –** Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	
	Action 7 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (1,147 acres, overlap with WSAs) and VRM Class II (15,203 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (1,026 acres, overlap with WSAs) and VRM Class II (13,473 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (1,029 acres, overlap with WSAs), VRM Class II (9,079 acres), and VRM Class III (4,391 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (1,029 acres, overlap with WSAs), VRM Class III (411 acres), and VRM Class IV (13,059 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (14,499 acres) objectives.
HOWREY ISLAND ACEC (592 acres) (no federal mineral ownership)	**Objective 1** – Maintain, restore or enhance the area for river-related recreation activities, fisheries, wildlife viewing, hiking, camping, hunting and existing dispersed recreational activities for local residents and visitors to the area. **Objective 2** – Manage conflicts with other resource values and uses in coordination and cooperation with affected interests.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Howrey Island ACEC (592 acres) (no federal mineral ownership)	**Action 1** – Howrey Island would continue to be designated an ACEC.	**Action 1** – Howrey Island would be designated a SRMA and managed for local and regional public demand. Howrey Island would be removed from ACEC designation.		**Action 1** – Howrey Island would be managed as an ERMA. Howrey Island	**Action 1** – Howrey Island would be designated a SRMA. Howrey Island would be removed from

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
				would be removed from ACEC designation.	ACEC designation.
	Action 2 – The Howrey Island Allotment (#10111), consisting of 592 acres and 200 AUMs, would be available for livestock grazing from May 15 to September 12.	**Action 2 –** The Howrey Island Allotment (#10111), consisting of 592 acres and 200 AUMs, would be unavailable for livestock grazing, except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g., invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).	**Action 2 –** A portion of the Howrey Island Allotment (#10111), consisting of 117 acres and 37 AUMs (T. 6 N., R. 35 E., sec. 21 and 22), would be unavailable for livestock grazing, except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g., invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).	**Action 2 –** The Howrey Island Allotment (#10111), consisting of 592 acres and 200 AUMs, would be available for livestock grazing from December 1 to March 1.	**Action 2 –** The Howrey Island Allotment (#10111), consisting of 592 acres and 200 AUMs, would be available for livestock grazing in accordance with the SRMA and resource objectives.
	Action 3 – Range improvements would be allowed when they would not degrade the values of the ACEC.	**Action 3 –** Range improvements would not be allowed.	**Action 3 –** Range improvements would be allowed.		
	Action 4 – ROWs and other land use authorizations would not be allowed.	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be excluded.	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.	**Action 4** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.
	Action 5 – Geophysical	**Action 5 –** Geophysical	**Action 5 –** Geophysical	**Action 5** – Geophysical	**Action 5** – Geophysical

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	exploration would be allowed.	exploration would not be allowed.	exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	exploration would be allowed.	exploration would not be allowed.
	Action 6 – OHV use on the existing road would be allowed yearlong from Highway 311 to the Myers Bridge fishing access site. OHV use past this point would be closed from February 15 to June 1.	**Action 6 –** OHV use on the existing road would be allowed yearlong from Highway 311 to the Myers Bridge fishing access site. Any OHV use past this point would be closed.	**Action 6 –** OHVs would be limited to designated routes.		**Action 6** –OHV use on the existing road would be allowed yearlong from Highway 311 to the Myers Bridge fishing access site. OHV use past this point would be closed, except for authorized administrative and permitted uses.
	Action 7 – Firearm use would be closed from December 16 through August 31 except for shotgun discharge during the State of Montana's spring turkey season.	**Action 7** – Firearm use would be closed.	**Action 7** –No restrictions on firearm use.	**Action 7** – Firearm use would be restricted and allowed only during the State of Montana's hunting seasons.	**Action 7** – Closed to the discharge of firearms (rifles, pistols and shotguns) from December 16th through August 31st annually, except that shotguns *would be allowed* during the spring turkey hunting season.
	Action 8 - Wood product sales would be allowed with restrictions.	**Action 8 -** Wood product sales would not be allowed	**Action 8 -** Wood product sales would be allowed.	**Action 8 -** Wood product sales would be allowed.	**Action 8 –** Wood product sales would be allowed to meet resource or recreation goals and objectives.
	Action 9 – The area would be managed according to VRM	**Action 9 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (592 acres) objectives.		**Action 9 –** The area would be managed according to VRM	**Action 9 –** The area would be managed according to VRM

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Class II objectives (592 acres) objectives.			Class III (592 acres) objectives.	Class II (592 acres) objectives.
MATTHEWS RECREATION AREA (91 acres) (no federal mineral ownership)	**Objective 1** – Maintain, restore or enhance the area for water-related recreation activities, fisheries, scenery & wildlife viewing, hiking, camping, hunting, running, bird watching, picnicking, exercising pets, Yellowstone River access, and existing dispersed recreational activities for local residents and visitors to the area. **Objective 2** – Manage conflicts with other resource values and uses in coordination and cooperation with affected interests without risking health and safety.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Matthews Recreation Area (91 acres) (no federal mineral ownership)	**Action 1 -** The discharge or use of all firearms or weapons is prohibited within the developed areas.				
	Action 2 – Areas outside the developed areas would allow shotgun or archery use only.				
	Action 3 – The discharge or use of pistols or rifles is prohibited within the entire area (91 acres).				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Matthews Recreation Area (91 acres) (no federal mineral ownership)	**Action 4** – Matthews Recreation Area would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 4** – Matthews Recreation Area would be designated a SRMA.		**Action 4** – Matthews Recreation Area would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 4** – Matthews Recreation Area would be designated a SRMA.
	Action 5 – Matthews Recreation Area would be unavailable for livestock grazing.		**Action 5 –** Matthews Recreation Area would be unavailable for livestock grazing except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g. Invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).		
	Action 6 – Range improvements would not be allowed.	**Action 6 –** Range improvements would be allowed.			
	Action 7 – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be excluded.	**Action 7 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.	**Action 7** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 7 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.
	Action 8 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.		**Action 8 –** Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 8** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 8** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Action 9 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (91 acres) objectives.	**Action 9 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (91 acres) objectives.		**Action 9 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (91 acres) objectives.	**Action 9 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (91 acres) objectives.
DEAN S. RESERVOIR (162 acres)	**Objective 1** – Maintain, restore or enhance the area for recreational activities that include fishing, wildlife viewing, camping, hiking, hunting, camping, sledding, running, exercising pets, picnicking and other dispersed uses. **Objective 2** – Manage conflicts with other resource values and uses in coordination and cooperation with affected interests while in a healthy and safe manner.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Dean S Reservoir (162 acres)	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the SRMA if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Dean S. Reservoir (162 acres)	**Action 2** – Dean S. Reservoir would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 2** – Dean S. Reservoir would be designated a SRMA.		**Action 2** – Dean S. Reservoir would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 2** – Dean S. Reservoir would be designated a SRMA.
	Action 3 – Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 3** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.	**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be allowed for purposes of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the	**Action 3 –** Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 3** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
			removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resources being managed.		
	Action 4 – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be excluded.	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.	**Action 4** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 4 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.
	Action 5 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms (162 oil and gas acres).[1]	**Action 5 –** Oil and gas leasing would not be open (162 oil and gas acres).	**Action 5 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation (162 oil and gas acres).[1]	**Action 5 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation (162 oil and gas acres).[1]	**Action 5 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (162 oil and gas acres).[1]
	Action 6 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 6 –** Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 6 –** Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.
	Action 7 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV objectives.		**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II objectives.
PUMPKIN CREEK	**Objective 1** – Maintain, restore, or enhance recreation opportunities to accommodate existing and future uses, for a primitive recreational site. **Objective 2** – Maintain or enhance a diversity of recreational opportunities and benefits. **Objective 3** – Manage conflicts with other resource values and uses in coordination and cooperation with affected interests in a healthy and safe manner.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Pumpkin Creek	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the SRMA if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Pumpkin Creek	**Action 2** – Pumpkin Creek would be managed as public land not designated (21,206 acres).	**Action 2** – Pumpkin Creek would be designated a SRMA (21,206 acres).		**Action 2** – Pumpkin Creek would be managed as an ERMA (21,206 acres).	**Action 2** – The Pumpkin Creek Side, north and east of Highway 59 (approximately 2,200 acres), would be managed as an ERMA. The remaining lands would be managed as public land not designated (approximately 19,006 acres).
	Action 3 – The Rogers Allotment (#00509), contained within Pumpkin Creek, consists of 19,475 acres of public lands. These lands would be available for livestock grazing.	**Action 3 –** The Rogers Allotment (#00509), contained within Pumpkin Creek (19,475 acres), would be unavailable for livestock grazing except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g., invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).	**Action 3 –** The Rogers Allotment (#00509), contained within Pumpkin Creek (on the Pumpkin Creek Side, north and east of Highway 59; approximately 2,200 acres), and a limited OHV area (up to 640 acres) would be unavailable for livestock grazing except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g., the control of invasive species or a hazardous fuels reduction). A	**Action 3 –** The Rogers Allotment (#00509), contained within Pumpkin Creek (19,475 acres), would be available for livestock grazing. A management plan would be developed to describe the grazing activities.	**Action 3 –** The Rogers Allotment (#00509), contained within Pumpkin Creek (19,475 acres), would be available for livestock grazing in accordance with resource objectives.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
			site-specific management plan would further designate the specific area.		
	Action 4 –Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.	**Action 4 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be allowed for purposes of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resources being managed.	**Action 4 –** Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Limited approvals for mineral material permits and sales would be allowed for purposes of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects.
	Action 5 – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be excluded.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.	**Action 5** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.
	Action 6 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would not be open (7,373	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with an	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	terms.[1]	acres).	NSO stipulation (7,373 acres).[1]	CSU stipulation (7,373 acres).[1]	and use would be prohibited (NSO) (7,373 acres).[1]
	Action 7 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 7 –** Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 7 –** Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 7** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 7** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (5,585 acres), VRM Class III (1,199 acres), and VRM Class IV (14,422 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (21,206 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (18,463 acres), and VRM Class IV (2,743 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (18,463 acres) and VRM Class IV (2,743 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (21,206 acres) objectives.
GLENDIVE SHORT PINE OHV	**Objective 1** – Communicate riding ethics and regulations, promoting designated areas for OHV practice and skill development. **Objective 2** – Maintain, restore, and enhance areas within the OHV SRMA to manage the area for a front and middle country setting. **Objective 3** – Maintain or enhance a diversity of recreational and OHV experiences and benefits. **Objective 4** – Provide OHV trail riding opportunities for all levels of experience in a safe manner that co-exists with other resource uses as well as other dispersed recreational activities.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Glendive Short Pine OHV	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the SRMA if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Glendive Short Pine OHV	**Action 2** – The Glendive Short Pine OHV area would be managed as an ERMA (3,092 acres).	**Action 2** – The Glendive Short Pine OHV Area would be designated a SRMA (2,753 acres).		**Action 2** – The Glendive Short Pine OHV area would be managed as an ERMA (2,753 acres).	**Action 2** – The Glendive Short Pine OHV Area would be designated a SRMA (2,272 acres).

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	Action 3 – The Nemitz Individual L Allotment (#01415), consisting of 2,143 acres and 341 AUMs, would be available for livestock grazing from May 1 to January 1.	**Action 3 –** A portion of the Nemitz Individual L Allotment (#01415), consisting of 2,269 acres and 354 AUMs (T. 14 N., R. 55 E., sec 3; sec. 9, E½; sec. 10; and sec. 15), would be unavailable for livestock grazing, except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g., invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).	**Action 3 –** A portion of the Nemitz Individual L Allotment (#01415), consisting of 330 acres and 52 AUMs (T. 14 N., R. 55 E., sec. 3, W½), would be unavailable for livestock grazing except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g., invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).	**Action 3** – The Nemitz Individual L Allotment (#01415), consisting of 2,143 acres and 341 AUMs, would be available for livestock grazing from November 1 to March 1.	**Action 3** – A portion of the Nemitz Individual L Allotment (#01415), consisting of 2,272 acres and 354 AUMs (T. 14 N., R. 55 E., sec 3; sec. 9, E½; sec. 10; and sec. 15) would be available for livestock grazing; Sec 21 E½ (outside the SRMA) would be available for livestock grazing.
	Action 4 – Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.[1]	**Action 4 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be allowed for purposes of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or	**Action 4 –** Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
			technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resources being managed.		
	Action 5 – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be excluded.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.	**Action 5** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.
	Action 6 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms (3,092 acres).[1]	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would not be open (2,753 acres).	**Action 6** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation (2,753 acres).[1]	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation (2,753 acres).[1]	**Action 6** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (2,272 acres).[1]
	Action 7 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 7 –** Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 7** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.		
	Action 8 – OHV boundary would be T. 14 N., R. 55 E., sec. 3; sec. 9. E½; sec. 10; sec. 14, N½ and SE/SE; sec. 15; and sec. 21, E½.	**Action 8 –** Modify the OHV boundary to T. 14N., R. 55E., sec. 3; sec. 9, E½; sec. 10; sec 14, N½ and SE/SE; and sec. 15 (exclude sec. 21, E½).			
	Action 9 – Open OHV use would be allowed on 2,300	**Action 9** – OHVs would be limited to designated routes	**Action 9** – Open OHV use on sec. 3 (640 acres) and OHVs	**Action 9** – Open OHV use on 1,900 acres and OHVs	**Action 9** – OHVs would be limited to designated routes on

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	acres in accordance with the guidelines found in the *Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix.*	on 2,753 acres (drop sec. 21, E½).	would be limited to designated routes on 2,100 acres (drop sec. 21, E½).	would be limited to designated routes on 810 acres (drop sec. 21, E½.	all sections; T. 14N. R. 55E. sec. 3; sec. 9, E½; sec 10; sec. 14, N½ and SE/SE; sec. 15.
	Action 10 – No restrictions on shooting.	**Action 10** – The shooting area would be closed.	**Action 10** – No restrictions on shooting.		**Action 10** – Firearm use would be restricted and allowed only during the State of Montana hunting seasons. The designated shooting area would be removed. Firearm use would not be allowed at any time in the parking/ramp areas.
	Action 11 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (3,092 acres) objectives.	**Action 11 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (2,753 acres) objectives.	**Action 11 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (165 acres) and VRM Class III (2,588 acres) objectives.	**Action 11 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (165 acres) and VRM Class IV (2,588 acres) objectives.	**Action 11 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (2,272 acres) objectives.
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
TERRY OHV AREA	**Action 1** – The Terry OHV area would be managed as an ERMA (72 acres).	**Action 1** – The Terry OHV Area would be designated a SRMA (72 acres).		**Action 1** – The Terry OHV area would be managed as an ERMA (72 acres).	**Action 1** – The Terry OHV Area would be Public Lands Not Designated as Recreation Management Areas.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
Terry OHV Area	**Action 2** – Open OHV use on 72 acres (sec. 10).	**Action 2** – OHVs would be limited to designated routes on 72 acres (sec. 10).		**Action 2** – Open OHV use on 72 acres (sec. 10).	**Action 2** – OHVs would be limited to designated routes on 72 acres (sec. 10).
STRAWBERRY HILL RECREATION AREA (4,248 acres	**Objective 1** – Maintain, restore, or enhance recreation opportunities to accommodate existing and future uses, including hiking, mountain biking, running, geo-caching, equestrian use, hunting, camping, wildlife viewing, OHV use on existing roads and trails, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, sledding, and other dispersed use at a primitive site. **Objective 2** – Maintain or enhance a diversity of recreational opportunities and benefits. **Objective 3** – Manage conflicts with other resource values and uses in coordination and cooperation with affected interests in a healthy and safe manner.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Strawberry Hill Recreation Area (4,248 acres)	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the SRMA if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Strawberry Hill Recreation Area (4,248 acres)	**Action 2** – Strawberry Hill Recreation Area would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 2** – Strawberry Hill Recreation Area would be designated a SRMA.		**Action 2** – Strawberry Hill Recreation Area would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 2** – Strawberry Hill Recreation Area would be designated a SRMA.
	Action 3 – The Hay Creek Allotment (#10330), consisting of 3,616 acres and 292 AUMs, would be available for livestock grazing from May 15 to October 15.	**Action 3 –** The Hay Creek Allotment (#10330), consisting of 3,616 acres and 292 AUMs, would be unavailable for livestock grazing, except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g., invasive species	**Action 3 –** The Hay Creek Allotment (#10330), consisting of 3,616 acres and 292 AUMs, would be available for livestock grazing from December 1 to May 1.	**Action 3 –** The Hay Creek Allotment (#10330), consisting of 3,616 acres and 292 AUMs, would be available for livestock grazing from May 15 to October 15.	**Action 3 –** The Hay Creek Allotment (#10330), consisting of 3,616 acres and 292 AUMs, would be available to livestock grazing.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
		control or hazardous fuels reductions).			
	Action 4 – Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.	**Action 4 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be allowed for purposes of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resources being managed.	**Action 4 –** Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.
	Action 5 – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be excluded.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.	**Action 5** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.
	Action 6 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would not be open (2,319	**Action 6** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU	**Action 6 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	terms (2,319 acres).[1]	acres).	stipulation (2,319 acres).[1]	stipulation (2,319 acres).[1]	and use would be prohibited (NSO) (2,319 acres).[1]
	Action 7 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 7 –** Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 7 –** Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 7** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 7** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,348 acres) and VRM Class IV (2,900 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (4,248 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (339 acres), VRM Class III (216 acres), and VRM Class IV (3,693 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (339 acres) and VRM Class IV (3,909 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (4,248 acres) objectives.
MOORHEAD RECREATION AREA (13 acres)	**Objective 1** – Maintain or enhance the current campground and facilities as needed or demand arises and funding allows. **Objective 2** – Pursue future opportunities for recreation development as demand arises. **Objective 3** – Mitigate conflict with other resource values and uses as appropriate, in coordination and cooperation with affected interests in a healthy and safe manner.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
	Action 1 – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the SRMA if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Moorhead Recreation Area (13 acres)	**Action 2** – Moorhead Recreation Area would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 2** – Moorhead Recreation Area would be designated a SRMA.		**Action 2** – Moorhead Recreation Area would be managed as an ERMA.	**Action 2** – Moorhead Recreation Area would be designated a SRMA.
	Action 3 – A portion of the Sam's Allotment (#10526),	**Action 3 –** A portion of the Sam's Allotment (#10526), consisting of 10 acres and 3 AUMs (T. 9 S., 48 E., sec. 17 and 18), would be		**Action 3** – A portion of the Sam's Allotment (#10526),	**Action 3 –** A portion of the Sam's Allotment (#10526), consisting of

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	consisting of 10 acres and 3 AUMs (T. 9 S., R. 48 E., sec. 17 and 18), would be available for livestock grazing. Grazing occurs in accordance with the Sam's Allotment Management Plan.	unavailable for livestock grazing except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g., invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).		consisting of 10 acres and 3 AUMs (T. 9 S., R. 48 E., sec. 17 and 18), would be available for livestock grazing from December 1 to March 1.	10 acres and 3 AUMs (T. 9 S., 48 E., sec. 17 and 18), would be unavailable for livestock grazing except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g. Invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).
	Action 4 – Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.	**Action 4 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be allowed for purposes of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resources being managed.	**Action 4 –** Mineral material permits and sales would be allowed.	**Action 4** – Mineral material permits and sales would not be allowed.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	Action 5 – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be excluded.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.	**Action 5** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would be allowed.	**Action 5 –** ROWs and other land use authorizations would be avoided.
	Action 6 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 6 –** Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 6 –** Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 6 –** Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.
	Action 7 – No restrictions on firearm use.	**Action 7** – Firearm use would be closed.	**Action 7** – No restrictions on firearm use.		**Action 7** –Firearm use would be closed.
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (13 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (13 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (13 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (13 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (13 acres) objectives.
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AND OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE USE ***Goal 1*** *– Provide a balanced approach to travel management that offers a sustained flow of local economic benefits and minimizes or mitigates user conflict, safety concerns, and resource impacts while taking into consideration the unique attributes and values of the various travel management planning areas.*					
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AND OHV	**Objective 1 –** Designate areas as Open, Closed, or Limited for motorized and non-motorized, including over snow vehicles (OSV) travel to minimize resource impacts and conflicts of use.				
	Objective 2 – Utilize an interdisciplinary approach to address resource and administrative access needs for completion of Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management planning. Consider and address the full range of various modes of travel on public lands, motorized and non-motorized, including over snow vehicles (OSV), as well as recreational opportunities and the demands for such uses.				
	Objective 3 – Travel management areas and planning would be conducted in a manner that would meet, or move toward meeting, Rangeland Health Standards.				
	Objective 4 – The BLM objective for route-specific travel planning within individual Travel Management Areas (TMAs) would be to use a systematic process that considered the unique resource issues and social environments of each TMA.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Objective 5 – The BLM would emphasize management of the transportation system to reduce impacts to natural resources from designated roads, primitive roads, and trails. The BLM would also stress closing and restoring unauthorized user-created roads and trails to prevent resource damage. Ecologically sensitive areas within 300 feet of roads and trails would be closed to dispersed camping if resource damage was occurring in these areas.				
	Objective 6 – Areas within the planning area would be evaluated and given the highest priority for travel management planning and remaining lands in the planning area in which resource damage or user conflicts needed to be addressed. An implementation plan for 14 TMAs would be initiated. (See *Recreation Appendix* for Travel Management Areas)				
	Objective 7 – The BLM would strive to complete travel management planning using a developed strategy that sets timeframes and prioritizes TMAs. TMAs within the priority GRSG habitat area would strive to be prioritized and completed as funding and staffing allows.				
	Objective 8 – The BLM would create a developed strategy based on information found in the BLM Handbook H-8342, *Travel and Transportation*. Areas receiving focus and a higher priority would be based on priority GRSG habitat areas, heavily used areas, social conflict concerns, resource concerns, consideration of primary travelers, valid existing rights, visitor recreation experiences, and development for administrative or public access.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Travel Management and OHV	**Action 1** – On BLM administered surface, including PHMA and GHMA, temporary closures will be considered in accordance with 43 CFR subpart 8364 (Closures and Restrictions); 43 CFR subpart 8351 (Designated National Area); 43 CFR subpart 6302 (Use of Wilderness Areas, Prohibited Acts, and Penalties); 43 CFR subpart 8341 (Conditions of Use). Temporary closure or restriction orders under these authorities are enacted at the discretion of the authorized officer to resolve management conflicts and protect persons, property, and public lands and resources. Where an authorized officer determines that off-highway vehicles are causing or will cause considerable adverse effects upon soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, historical resources, threatened or endangered species, wilderness suitability, other authorized uses, or other resources, the affected areas shall be immediately closed to the type(s) of vehicle causing the adverse effect until the adverse effects are eliminated and measures implemented to prevent recurrence. (43 CFR 8341.2) A closure or restriction order should be considered only after other management strategies and alternatives have been explored. The duration of temporary closure or restriction orders should be limited to 24 months or less; however, certain situations may require longer closures and/or iterative temporary closures. This may include closure of routes or areas.				
	Action 2 – Except for site-specific TMAs, the BLM's 2003 *Record of Decision, Off-Highway Vehicle Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota* would be followed in the interim for all lands.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Travel Management and OHV	**Action 3** – Approximately 2,372 acres would be designated as OHV Open Area.	**Action 3** – There would be no acres designated as OHV Open Area.	**Action 3** – Approximately 640 acres would be designated as OHV Open Area.	**Action 3** – Approximately 1,972 acres would be designated as OHV Open Area.	**Action 3** – There would be no acres designated as OHV Open Area.
	Action 4 – Approximately 2,749,078 acres would be designated as OHV Limited Area.	**Action 4** – Approximately 2,687,689 acres would be limited OHV area designation.	**Action 4** – Approximately 2,750,340 acres would be limited OHV area designation.	**Action 4** – Approximately 2,749,558 acres would be limited OHV area designation.	**Action 4** – Approximately 2,748,730 acres would be limited OHV area designation.
	Action 5 – Approximately 80 acres would be designated as OHV Closed Area. (See *Special Designation Areas:* Smoky Butte ACEC).	**Action 5** – Approximately 63,841 acres would be designated as OHV Closed Area. (See *Special Designation Areas:* Smoky Butte, Cedar Creek Battlefield, Flat Creek, Powderville Paleontological Area, Long Medicine Wheel, Walstein, and Yonkee ACECs and *Recreation*: Strawberry Hill and portions of Howrey Island).	**Action 5** – Approximately 550 acres would be designated as OHV Closed Area. (See S*pecial Designation Areas:* Flat Creek ACEC).	**Action 5** – There would be no acres designated as OHV Closed Area.	**Action 5** – Approximately 2,800 acres would be designated as OHV Closed Area except for authorized administrative and permitted uses.(See S*pecial Designation Areas:* Long Medicine Wheel, and Walstein ACECs and *Recreation*: portions of Howrey Island).
	Action 6 – Motorized wheeled cross-country travel for big game retrieval is not		**Action 6** – Big game retrieval would be	**Action 6** – Big game retrieval would be	**Action 6** – Motorized wheeled cross-country

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	allowed.		allowed, in the current hunting districts between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. if the hunter has a Montana permit to hunt from the vehicle (PTHV), on publicly accessible BLM-administered lands during the big game hunting season. Game retrieval would occur in a minimum timeframe, using the shortest route, and minimizing resource damage.	allowed, in the current hunting districts between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., on publicly accessible BLM-administered lands during the big game hunting season. Game retrieval would occur in a minimum timeframe, using the shortest route, and minimizing resource damage.	travel for big game retrieval is not allowed.
LANDS AND REALTY ***Goal 1*** *– Provide public lands, interests in land, and authorizations for public and private uses while maintaining and improving resource values.* ***Goal 2*** *– Adjust public land and mineral ownership to acquire significant resources and consolidate surface or mineral estates to improve management efficiency and accessibility, obtain special designation area inholdings, and enhance significant recreational values.* ***Goal 3*** *– Use withdrawal actions with the least restrictive measures and minimum size necessary to accomplish the required purposes of the withdrawal.* ***Goal 4*** *– Strive to increase and diversify the nation's sources of both traditional and alternative energy resources, improve the energy transportation network, and ensure sound environmental management.*					
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Rights-of-Way, Section 302 FLPMA Leases and Permits, and Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP)	**Action 1** – Nine of the communication sites with management plans listed on Table 3-35 would be designated as communication sites where applicants for communication site ROWs would be encouraged to locate compatible facilities, with the Fort Peck site being the one exception due to limited space and it is adjacent to a larger communication site nearby on private land.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Rights-of-Way, Section 302 FLPMA Leases and Permits and R&PP Leases	**Action 2** – ROWs and other land use authorizations would	**Action 2** – ROWs and other realty-related land use	**Action 2** – ROWs and other realty-related land use authorizations	**Action 2** – ROWs and other realty-related land use	**Action 2** – Major and Minor ROWs and other realty-related

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	be avoided on approximately 35,830 surface acres; excluded on approximately 128,960 surface acres; and allowed on the remaining 2,586,740 surface acres in the planning area.	authorizations (including testing for pilot projects for carbon geo-sequestration, see the *Lands and Realty-Renewable Energy Appendix*) would be excluded on approximately 2,218,280 surface acres; avoided on approximately 50 surface acres; and allowed on the remaining 533,200 surface acres in the planning area.	(including testing for pilot projects for carbon geo-sequestration, see the *Lands and Realty-Renewable Energy Appendix)* would be avoided on approximately 833,680 surface acres; excluded on approximately 682,550 BLM-administered surface acres; and allowed on the remaining 1,235,300 surface acres in the planning area.	authorizations (including testing for pilot projects for carbon geo-sequestration, see the *Lands and Realty-Renewable Energy Appendix*) would be avoided on approximately 617,320 surface acres; excluded on approximately 111,210 surface acres; and allowed on the remaining 2,023,000 surface acres in the planning area.	land use authorizations (including testing for pilot projects for carbon geo-sequestration, see the *Lands and Realty-Renewable Energy Appendix)* would be excluded on approximately 83,659 surface acres (3%) of the planning area. Major ROWs would be avoided on 2,222,701 surface acres (81%) and Minor ROWs and other realty-related land use authorizations would be avoided on 858,073 surface acres (31%). On the remaining surface acres in the planning area, Major ROWs would be allowed on 445,170 surface acres (16%) and Minor ROWs would be allowed on 1,809,798 surface acres (66%).
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Land Tenure (Ownership) Adjustment	**Action 3** – Lands or interests in lands would be acquired, from willing parties, by purchase, exchange, revocation of another agency's withdrawal, administrative transfer from another agency, cooperative agreement, or donation. Acquired lands would be managed for the highest potential purpose and greatest benefit for which they were acquired				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	and/or managed as similar, surrounding, or adjacent lands are under the approved RMP. This would include any parcels discovered through land status updates, corrections, or updated surveys.				
	Action 4 – Before acquiring land or interest through purchase, exchange, donation, or withdrawal relinquishment, the area would be inventoried for hazardous substances or hazardous contamination in accordance with United States Department of Interior (USDI) policy. The BLM would not acquire contaminated real estate except at the direction of Congress, or for good cause with the approval of the Secretary.				
	Action 5 – Land tenure adjustments would be considered on a case-by-case basis based on retention, acquisition, and disposal criteria that can be found in the *Lands and Realty-Renewable Energy Appendix*. The land base is categorized for management into three categories: • Category 1 retention lands – include 83,160 acres in WSAs which will not be transferred from BLM management by any method during the life of the plan (unless the plan is amended). • Category 2 retention lands with limited disposal (includes greater sage grouse general and priority habitat management areas) – manage the remaining 2,585,535 acres of retention lands which are available to be considered for limited disposal through all disposal authorities and methods except by sale under Section 203 of FLPMA (unless the plan is amended); and • Category 3 disposal lands –82,835 acres which are available to be considered for disposal through all disposal methods including sale. Land identified for disposal under Sections 203 and 206 of FLPMA and identified as such in this plan would be classified for disposal under Section 7 of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, as amended; under Executive Order 6910 (November 26, 1934); and under 43 CFR 2400. Lands classified as priority habitat and general habitat for GRSG will be retained in federal management unless: (1) the agency can demonstrate that disposal of the lands will provide a net conservation gain to the GRSG or (2) the agency can demonstrate that the disposal of the lands will have no direct or indirect adverse impact on conservation of the GRSG.				
	Action 6 – The BLM would acquire conservation easements to protect important resources or to meet management objectives and based on the criteria found in the *Lands and Realty-Renewable Energy Appendix*.				
	Action 7 – Easement acquisition, using criteria for acquisition in the *Lands and Realty-Renewable Energy Appendix*, would be the predominant method of obtaining legal access; reciprocal ROWs would also be a tool for obtaining legal access; condemnation would be a last resort.				
Withdrawals	**Action 8** –Approximately 56,000 acres, previously identified in the Big Dry RMP and Powder River RMP areas, would be recommended for withdrawal revocation, the remaining withdrawals would be continued. (See Table 3-35 for more information on withdrawals in the planning area.)				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Action 9 – The BLM would consider other agency requests and internal proposals (including temporary segregation for wind and solar ROW applications) for new withdrawals and withdrawal relinquishments, extensions, or modifications on a case-by-case basis.				
RENEWABLE ENERGY ***Goal** 1 – Provide opportunities for the development of renewable energy resources (from sources such as wind and solar) while minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values.*					
RENEWABLE ENERGY	**Objective 1 –** Provide opportunities for renewable energy development to the extent consistent with other goals, objectives, and requirements of this plan.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Renewable Energy	**Action 1** – Wind and solar projects would be excluded from lands that are part of the National Landscape Conservation System.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Renewable Energy	**Action 2 -** Renewable energy ROWs would be avoided on approximately 60,000 surface acres (2%); excluded on approximately 125,700 surface acres (5%); and allowed on the remaining 2,566,000 surface acres (93%) in the planning area. Renewable energy ROWs would be excluded on approximately 12,700 Wind Power Class 4 and above surface acres (2%), avoided on approximately 6,400 Wind Power	**Action 2** – Renewable energy ROWs would be excluded on approximately 2,616,000 acres (95%), avoided on approximately 32,000 surface acres (1%), and allowed on the remaining 103,000 surface acres (4%) in the planning area. Renewable energy ROWs would be excluded on approximately 431,000 Wind Power Class 4 and above surface acres (53%) and	**Action 2** –Renewable energy ROWs would be avoided on approximately 1,400,000 surface acres (51%); excluded on approximately 987,000 surface acres (36%); and allowed on the remaining 364,000 surface acres (13%) in the planning area. Renewable energy ROWs would be avoided on approximately 159,000 Wind Power Class 4 and above surface acres (52%); excluded on approximately 89,000 Wind Power Class 4	**Action 2** – Renewable energy ROWs would be avoided on approximately 1,500,000 surface acres (55%); excluded on approximately 667,000 surface acres (24%); and allowed on the remaining 584,000 surface acres (21%) in the planning area. Renewable energy ROWs would be avoided on approximately 96,000 Wind Power Class 4 and above surface acres (54%);	**Action 2** –Renewable energy ROWs would be avoided on approximately 1,400,514 surface acres (51%); excluded on approximately 1,002,687 surface acres (36%); and allowed on the remaining 348,329 surface acres (13%) in the planning area (see Map 18). Renewable energy ROWs would be avoided on 227,727 Wind Power Class 4 and above surface acres (42%); excluded on 282,401 Wind Power Class 4 and above surface acres

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	Class 4 and above surface acres (1%), and allowed on the remaining 528,000 open Wind Class 4 and above surface acres (97%) in the planning area.	allowed on the remaining 117,000 open Wind Class 4 and above surface acres (47%) in the planning area.	and above surface acres (25%); and allowed on the remaining 299,000 open Wind Class 4 and above acres (23%) in the planning area.	excluded on approximately 4,500 Wind Power Class 4 and above surface acres (16%); and allowed on the remaining 447,000 open Wind Class 4 and above acres (30%) in the planning area.	(51%); and allowed on the remaining 37,028 open Wind Class 4 and above acres (7%) in the planning area. Designate the 37,028 acres of open acres in Class 4 and above as Potential Wind Development Areas. At the discretion of the AO, areas designated as Potential Wind Development Areas could be open for competitive leasing with stipulations from other resources.
SPECIAL DESIGNATION AREAS, ACECs (See the *Special Designation Areas Appendix* for more information about proposed and current ACECs.) ***Goal 1*** *– Identify and manage ACECs to protect life and safety from natural hazards or to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, paleontological, or scenic values; fish and wildlife resources; and other natural systems or processes.*					
Ash Creek Divide ACEC (7,921 acres), Bug Creek ACEC (3,837 acres), Hell Creek ACEC (19,373 acres), and Sand Arroyo ACEC (9,052 acres)	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse paleontological resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Ash Creek Divide ACEC (7,921 acres), Bug Creek ACEC (3,837 acres), Hell Creek ACEC (19,373 acres), and Sand Arroyo ACEC (9,052 acres)	**Action 1** – The Ash Creek Divide, Bug Creek, Hell Creek, and Sand Arroyo sites would continue to be designated ACECs.				
	Action 2 – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) on the ACEC and surrounding lands.[1]				
	Action 5 – Livestock grazing would be allowed.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Ash Creek Divide ACEC (7,921 acres), Bug Creek ACEC (3,837 acres), Hell Creek ACEC (19,373 acres), and Sand Arroyo ACEC (9,052 acres)	**Action 6 –** ROWs would be allowed in Ash Creek, Bug Creek and Sand Arroyo ACECs.	**Action 6 –** ROWs would be avoided in Ash Creek, Bug Creek and Sand Arroyo ACECs.			
	Action 7 – ROWs would be allowed in the Hell Creek ACEC.				**Action 7** – Major ROWs would be avoided and Minor ROWs would be allowed in the Hell Creek ACEC.
	Action 8 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.		**Action 8** – Geophysical exploration for oil and gas would be allowed on existing roads and trails (approximately 135 miles).	**Action 8** – Geophysical exploration would be prohibited in and within 300 ft. of paleontological localities or localities that meet the criteria for designation within the boundaries of the ACEC (CSU).	**Action 8** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.
Big Sheep Mountain ACEC (363 acres)	**Objective 1** – Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Big Sheep Mountain ACEC (363 acres)	**Action 1** – The Big Sheep Mountain site would continue to be designated an ACEC.				
	Action 2 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.				
	Action 3 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO).[1]				
	Action 4 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.				
	Action 5 – ROWs would be avoided.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Big Sheep Mountain ACEC (363 acres)	**Action 6** – Livestock grazing would be available within the Pasture 8 Common East allotment (#00926) and Allotment (#01269), consisting of 363 acres and 98 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 47 E., sec. 28 through 29 and 32 through 33 (BLM 1996).	**Action 6** – Livestock grazing would be unavailable in 363 acres (96 AUMs). This would include the following grazing allotments: • The Pasture 8 Common East Allotment (#00926) for 162 acres and 39 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 20); • Allotment #01225 for 121 acres and 34 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 28 and 33); and • Allotment #01269 for 80 acres and 25 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 32).	**Action 6** – A portion of the ACEC, consisting of 194 acres (51 AUMs), would be unavailable for livestock grazing. This would include the following grazing allotments: • The Pasture 8 Common East Allotment (#00926) for 87 acres and 22 AUMS (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 29); • Allotment #01225 for 78 acres and 21 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 28 and 33); and • Allotment #01269 for 29 acres and 9 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 32).	**Action 6** – A portion of the ACEC, consisting of 66 acres (17 AUMs), would be available for livestock grazing. This would include the following grazing allotments: • The Pasture 8 Common East (#00926) for 36 acres and 9 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 29); • Allotment #01225 for 29 acres and 7 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 28 and 33); and • Allotment #01269 for 1 acre and 1 AUM (T. 15 N., R. 48 E., sec. 32).	**Action 6** – Livestock grazing would be available within the Pasture 8 Common East Allotment (#00926) and Allotment #01269, consisting of 363 acres and 98 AUMs (T. 15 N., R. 47 E., sec. 28 through 29 and 32 through 33).
	Action 7 – The area would be managed according to VRM	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Class II (268 acres), VRM Class III (15 acres), and VRM Class IV (80 acres) objectives.	to VRM Class II (363 acres) objectives.	Class III (363 acres) objectives.	Class IV (363 acres) objectives.	Class II (363 acres) objectives.
Hoe ACEC (145 acres)	**Objective 1** – Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Hoe ACEC (145 acres)	**Action 1** – The Hoe site would continue to be designated an ACEC.				
	Action 2 – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.				
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO).[1]				
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.				
	Action 6 – ROWs would be avoided.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Hoe ACEC (145 acres)	**Action 7** – Livestock grazing would continue to be available within the Hoe site ACEC within the Tenmile Creek Allotment (#01312) on 145 acres and 31 AUMs of the Hoe site ACEC (T.10N. R. 51 E., sec. 3).	**Action 7** – Livestock grazing would be unavailable in 145 acres (31 AUMs).	**Action 7** – A portion of the ACEC would be unavailable for livestock grazing in 19 acres (4 AUMs).	**Action 7** – A portion of the ACEC would be unavailable for livestock grazing in a portion of the Hoe site ACEC consisting of 8 acres and 2 AUMs.	**Action 7** – A portion of the ACEC would be unavailable for livestock grazing in 19 acres (4 AUMs).
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (145 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (145 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (145 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (145 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (145 acres) objectives.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
Jordan Bison Kill ACEC (160 acres)	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Jordan Bison Kill ACEC (160 acres)	**Action 1** – Jordan Bison Kill site would continue to be designated an ACEC.				
	Action 2 – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.				
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO).[1]				
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.				
	Action 6 – ROWs would be avoided.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Jordan Bison Kill ACEC (160 acres)	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (160 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (160 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (13 acres) and VRM Class IV (147 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (160 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (160 acres) objectives.
Powder River Depot ACEC (1,401 acres)	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Powder River Depot ACEC (1,401 acres)	**Action 1** – Powder River Depot would continue to be designated an ACEC.				
	Action 2 The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.				
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO).[1]				
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.				
	Action 6 – ROWs would be avoided.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Powder River Depot ACEC (1,401 acres)	**Action 7** – Livestock grazing would be allowed except on 171 acres (BLM 1996).	**Action 7** – A portion of the ACEC consisting of 171 acres and 51 AUMs (T. 11 N., R. 50 E., sec. 4; and T. 12 N., R. 50	**Action 7** – A portion of the ACEC consisting of 19 acres and 5 AUMs (T. 11 N., R. 50 E., sec. 4) would be unavailable for livestock grazing.	**Action 7** – The entire ACEC would be available for livestock grazing.	**Action 7** – A portion of the ACEC consisting of 19 acres and 5 AUMs (T. 11 N., R. 50 E., sec. 4) would be unavailable for livestock grazing

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
		E.; sec. 27 and 33), would be unavailable for livestock grazing.			except for a grazing authorization for vegetation management (e.g. Invasive species control or hazardous fuels reductions).
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (overlap with WSA, 532 acres) and VRM Class II (869 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (overlap with WSA, 522 acres) and VRM Class II (879 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (overlap with WSA, 522 acres), VRM Class II (661 acres), and VRM Class III (218 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (overlap with WSA, 522 acres), VRM Class III (661 acres), and VRM Class IV (218 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class I (overlap with WSA, 522 acres) and VRM Class II (879 acres) objectives.
Seline ACEC (80 acres)	**Objective 1** – Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Seline ACEC (80 acres)	**Action 1** – The Seline site would continue to be designated an ACEC.				
	Action 2 – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.				
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited with an NSO stipulation.[1]				
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.				
	Action 6 – ROWs would be avoided.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Seline ACEC (80 acres)	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (50 acres) and VRM Class IV (30 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (80 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (80 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (80 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (80 acres) objectives.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
Battle Butte Battlefield ACEC	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Battle Butte Battlefield ACEC	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Battle Butte Battlefield ACEC	**Action 2** – 121 acres of the Battle Butte Battlefield would continue to be designated an ACEC. The BLM would protect relevant and important resource values with special management and ACEC designation. The agency would apply special management where standard or routine management would be inadequate to protect the resource values from risks and threats of damage or degradation or to protect public safety when faced with natural hazards.	**Action 2** – An additional 116 acres of proposed ACEC, plus the existing 121 acres (for a total of 237 acres) of the Battle Butte Battlefield, would be designated an ACEC and managed as a cultural resource.			**Action 2** – An additional 199 acres of proposed ACEC, plus the existing 121 acres (for a total of 320 acres) of the Battle Butte Battlefield, would be designated an ACEC and managed as a cultural resource.
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed on the 121-acre ACEC (BLM	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed in and within 0.5 miles of	**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be open (allowed) in 237 acres	**Action 3 –** Mineral material sales and permits would be open.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed on the 320-acre ACEC.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	1985c).	the NHL site boundary.	of this special use lands area only for the purpose of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects, only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere, and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resource for which the subject lands were managed.		
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation on 121 acres currently designated NSO (BLM 1999a). [1]	**Action 4 –** Oil and gas leasing would not be open in and within 0.5 miles of the NHL site boundary (3,176 acres).	**Action 4 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of the boundary of the ACEC (831 acres). [1]	**Action 4 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation. Prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and an archaeological site mitigation plan must be approved by the AO for all surface-disturbing activities in and within 300 feet of the ACEC	**Action 4 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (320 acres). [1]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
				(267 acres). [1]	
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on 121 acres (BLM 1999a).[1]	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of the NHL site boundary.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration for oil and gas would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of the ACEC.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be open on 320 acres.
	Action 6 – ROWs would be excluded (BLM 1999a).	**Action 6 –** ROWs would be excluded in and within 0.5 miles of the NHL site boundary.	**Action 6 –** ROWs would be avoided.	**Action 6 –** ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 6 –** ROWs would be excluded.
	Action 7 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (121 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (237 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (237 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (237 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (320 acres) objectives.
Reynolds Battlefield ACEC	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Reynolds Battlefield ACEC	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Reynolds Battlefield ACEC	**Action 2** – The Reynolds Battlefield would continue to be designated an ACEC (324 surface acres). BLM would protect relevant and important resource values with special management and	**Action 2** – An additional 598 acres plus the 324 acres of the existing ACEC (for a total of 922 acres) would be designated an ACEC and managed as a cultural resource.			

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	ACEC designation. The agency would apply special management where standard or routine management would be inadequate to protect the resource values from risks and threats of damage or degradation, or to protect public safety when faced with natural hazards.				
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed on the 324 acres in existing ACEC (BLM 1985c).	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed in the NRHP-nominated site and within 0.5 miles of the NRHP-nominated site boundary.	**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be open (allowed) in 922 acres of this special use lands area (only for the purpose of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects) only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and	**Action 3 –** Mineral material sales and permits would be open on 922 acres.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed on the 922-acre ACEC.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
			reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resource for which the subject lands were managed.		
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation (BLM 1999a) (288 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would not be open in or within 0.5 miles of the NRHP-nominated site boundary (2,709 acres).	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of the boundary of the 922-acre ACEC (2,419 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open. Prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and an archeological site mitigation plan must be approved by the AO for all surface-disturbing activities in and within 300 feet of the ACEC boundary (CSU) (994 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (869 acres).[1]
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on 324 acres currently designated NSO (BLM 1985c).	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of the NRHP-nominated site boundary.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration for oil and gas would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of the boundaries of the ACEC.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed on 922 acres.
	Action 6 – ROWs would be avoided (BLM 1985c).	**Action 6** – ROWs would be excluded in and within 0.5 miles of the NRHP-nominated site boundary.	**Action 6** – ROWs would be avoided.	**Action 6** – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 6** – ROWs would be avoided.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Action 7 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (324 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (922 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (922 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (922 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (922 acres) objectives.
Finger Buttes ACEC	**Objective 1 –** Protect the unique landscape and scenic characteristics.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Finger Buttes ACEC	**Action 1** – Finger Buttes would continue to be designated an ACEC.				
	Action 2 – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.				
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO).[1]				
	Action 5 – ROWs would be avoided.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Finger Buttes ACEC (1,520 acres)	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed on designated roads and trails with restrictions.	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would not be open.	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would be open.	**Action 6** – Geophysical exploration would not be open.
	Action 7 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,520 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,520 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,520 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (1,520 acres) objectives.	**Action 7 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,520 acres) objectives.
Piping Plover ACEC	**Objective 1 –** Evaluate the potential threats and needed management actions to protect the piping plover habitat.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Piping Plover ACEC (15 acres) (See Fish, Aquatic, and Wildlife Habitat and Special	**Action 1** – The Piping Plover area would continue to be designated an ACEC.				**Action 1** – The Piping Plover area would not

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
Status Species, Piping Plover Habitat section for oil and gas leasing and the *Special Designation Areas Appendix*)					be designated an ACEC.
	Action 2 – Livestock grazing would not be available from May 1 through July 15 (BLM 1996).			**Action 2** – Livestock grazing would be available.	
Howrey Island ACEC	See the *Recreation* section, under *SRMAs* and *ERMAs*, and *Howrey Island and the Special Designation Areas Appendix*				
Smoky Butte ACEC	**Objective 1 –** Protect the unique geologic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Smoky Butte ACEC	**Action 1 –** The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
	Action 2 – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed on the ACEC.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Smoky Butte ACEC	**Action 3 –** Smoky Butte would continue to be designated an ACEC (80 acres).				**Action 3 –** Smoky Butte would continue to be designated an ACEC and size would be reduced to 40 acres.
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be open on the ACEC (80 acres) and surrounding 40 acres (west) with an NSO stipulation.[1]				**Action 4 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited on the ACEC (40 acres) and surrounding 40 acres (west) (NSO).[1]
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed on 80 acres (BLM 1996).	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails (approximately 2 miles).		**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed in accordance with the resource actions within this alternative.
	Action 6 – OHV use would be closed (BLM 1996).		**Action 6** – OHVs would be limited to designated routes.		**Action 6** – OHVs would be limited to designated routes.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Action 7 – ROWs would be excluded subject to prior existing authorization (BLM 1996).		**Action 7** – ROWs would be avoided.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be allowed in accordance with the resource actions within this alternative.
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV objectives (80 acres).	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (80 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (80 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (80 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (40 acres) objectives.
Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction ACEC	**Objective 1 –** Evaluate the area's potential as a black-footed ferret reintroduction site.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction ACEC (11,221 acres) (See Fish, Aquatic, and Wildlife Habitat, Including Special Status Species, Black-footed Ferret Habitat section for oil and gas leasing and the *Special Designation Areas Appendix*)	**Action 1** – The Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Area would continue to be designated an ACEC.	**Action 1** – The Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Area would continue to be designated an ACEC.	**Action 1** – The Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Area would not be designated an ACEC.		
Cedar Creek Battlefield Area (1,022 acres)	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Cedar Creek Battlefield Area (1,022 acres)	**Action 1 –** The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Cedar Creek Battlefield Area (1,022 acres)	**Action 2 –** Cedar Creek Battlefield would not be designated an ACEC and would be managed as part of the planning area.	**Action 2 –** Cedar Creek Battlefield area would be designated an ACEC (1,022 acres).			
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and	**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral	**Action 3 –** Mineral material sales and	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	permits would be allowed.	permits would be closed in and within 1.5 miles of the NRHP-nominated site boundary.	material development would be open in 1,022 acres of this special use lands area (only for the purpose of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects) only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resource for which the subject lands were managed.	permits would be open.	permits would be closed in the ACEC (1,022 acres).
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms (1,022 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would not be open in or within 1.5 miles of the NRHP-nominated site boundary (2,260 acres).	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of the 1,022-acre ACEC boundary (1,884 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open. Prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and an archeological site mitigation plan must be approved by the AO for all surface-disturbing activities in and within 300	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (1,022 acres).[1]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
				feet of the ACEC boundary (CSU) (1,124 acres).[1]	
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed on 1,022 acres.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 1.5 miles of the NRHP-nominated site boundary.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration for oil and gas would be allowed on existing roads and trails (approximately 4 miles).	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of the boundaries of the ACEC.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in the ACEC (1,022 acres).
	Action 6 – OHV use would be limited to the existing roads and trails (approximately 4 miles).	**Action 6 –** OHV use would be closed.	**Action 6 –** OHVs would be limited to designated routes (approximately 4 miles).		**Action 6 –** OHVs would be limited to designated routes (approximately 4 miles).
	Action 7 – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be excluded.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be avoided.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be avoided.
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (1,022 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,022 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (1,022 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (1,022 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,022 acres) objectives.
Flat Creek Paleontological Area (339 acres)	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse paleontological resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Flat Creek Paleontological Area (339 acres)	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Flat Creek Paleontological Area (339 acres)	**Action 2** – Flat Creek Paleontological area (339 acres) area	**Action 2 –** Flat Creek Paleontological area (339 acres) would be designated an ACEC.			

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	would not be designated an ACEC.				
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be open (339 acres).	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed (339 acres).	**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be open within 339 acres of this special use lands area (only for the purpose of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects) only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resource for which the subject lands were managed.	**Action 3 –** Mineral material sales and permits would be open except for the 50 acres designated no surface-disturbing activities.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed (339 acres).
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms except on 50 acres designated NSO for oil and gas (289 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would not be open on the 339 acres of the proposed ACEC (339 acres).	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of the ACEC boundary (1,668 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation. Prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and a paleontological	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (339 acres).[1]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
				localities mitigation plan must be approved by the AO for all surface-disturbing activities in and within 300 feet of paleontological localities within the ACEC boundary (339 acres).[1]	
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed except on 50 acres designated NSO.[1]	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration for oil and gas would be allowed on existing roads and trails (approximately 2 miles) except on 50 acres designated no surface-disturbing activities allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of paleontological localities within the boundaries of the ACEC except on 50 acres designated no surface-disturbing activities allowed.[1]	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.
	Action 6 – ROWs would be allowed except on 50 acres designated no surface-disturbing activities allowed.	**Action 6** – ROWs would be excluded.	**Action 6** – ROWs would be avoided except on 50 acres designated no surface-disturbing activities allowed.	**Action 6** – ROWs would be allowed except on 50 acres designated no surface-disturbing activities allowed.	**Action 6** – ROWs would be avoided.
Powderville Paleontological Area	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse paleontological resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Powderville Paleontological Area	**Action 1 –** The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Powderville Paleontological Area	**Action 2** – Powderville Paleontological Area would not be designated an ACEC and would be managed as part of the planning area (29,571 acres).	**Action 2 –** Powderville Paleontological Area would be designated an ACEC (27,151 acres).			**Action 2 –** Powderville Paleontological Area would be designated an ACEC (9,518 acres).
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be open.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.	**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be open within 27,151 acres of this special use lands area (only for the purpose of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects) only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere, and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resource for which the	**Action 3 –** Mineral material sales and permits would be open.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
			subject lands were managed.		
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms (29,571 oil and gas acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would not be open on the ACEC and surrounding lands (23,695 acres).	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation on the ACEC and surrounding lands (23,695 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open. Prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and a paleontological localities mitigation plan must be approved by the AO for all surface-disturbing activities in or within 300 feet of paleontological localities within the boundaries of the ACEC (CSU) (78 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (9,310 acres).[1]
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration for oil and gas would be allowed on existing roads and trails (approximately 86 miles).	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of paleontological localities within the boundaries of the ACEC.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.
	Action 6 – OHV use would be limited to the existing roads and trails (approximately 86 miles).	**Action 6 –** OHV use would be closed.	**Action 6 –** OHVs would be limited to designated routes (approximately 86 miles).		**Action 6 –** OHVs would be limited to designated routes.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Action 7 – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be excluded.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be avoided.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be avoided.
Long Medicine Wheel Area (179 acres)	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Long Medicine Wheel Area (179 acres)	**Action 1 –** The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Long Medicine Wheel Area (179 acres)	**Action 2 –** Long Medicine Wheel area (179 acres) would not be designated an ACEC and would be managed as part of the planning area.	**Action 2** – 179 acres of the Long Medicine Wheel area would be designated an ACEC.			
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be allowed.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed in the 179 acres of proposed ACEC and within 0.5 miles of the site boundary.	**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be open within 179 acres of this special use lands area (only for the purpose of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects) only if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not	**Action 3 –** Mineral material sales and permits would be open.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
			impair the special qualities of the resource for which the subject lands were managed.		
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms (179 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would not be open in or within 0.5 miles of the ACEC boundary (1,056 acres).	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of the boundary of the 179-acre ACEC (1,056 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open. Prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and an archeological site mitigation plan must be approved by the AO for all surface-disturbing activities in or within 300 feet of archeological sites and paleontological localities within the boundaries of the ACEC (CSU) (44 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (179 acres).[1]
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 0.5 miles of the site boundary.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration for oil and gas would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of archeological sites and paleontological localities within the boundaries of the ACEC.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Action 6 – OHV use would be limited to the existing roads and trails.	**Action 6** – OHV use would be closed.	**Action 6** – OHVs would be limited to designated routes.		**Action 6** – OHV use would be closed except for authorized administrative and permitted uses.
	Action 7 – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be excluded.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be avoided.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be excluded.
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (179 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (179 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (179 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (179 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (179 acres) objectives.
Walstein Area	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Walstein Area	**Action 1** – The BLM may conduct a validity examination for any mining claim, including those within the ACEC if surface disturbing operations are proposed on the subject mining claim.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Walstein Area	**Action 2 –** Walstein Area would not be designated an ACEC and would be managed as part of the planning area.	**Action 2** – Walstein Area would be designated an ACEC (1,519 acres).			
	Action 3 – Mineral material sales and permits would be open.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.	**Action 3 –** Limited approvals for mineral material development would be open in 2,054 acres of this special use lands area (only for the purpose of constructing and maintaining public roads or projects) only	**Action 3 –** Mineral material sales and permits would be open.	**Action 3** – Mineral material sales and permits would be closed.

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
			if it could be demonstrated that it would not be economically or technologically feasible to obtain the materials elsewhere and only if the removal and reclamation would not impair the special qualities of the resource for which the subject lands were managed.		
	Action 4 – Oil and gas leasing would be offered with lease terms (2,017 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would not be open (2,017 1518 acres).	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation in and within 0.5 miles of the boundary of the ACEC (2761 acres).[1]	**Action 4** – Oil and gas leasing would be open. Prior to surface disturbance, a SUPO and an archeological site mitigation plan must be approved by the AO for all surface-disturbing activities in and within 300 feet of archeological sites and paleontological localities within the boundaries of the ACEC (CSU) (236 acres).[1]	**Action 4 –** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO) (1518 acres).[1]

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
	Action 5 – Geophysical exploration would be allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would be allowed on existing roads and trails.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed in or within 300 feet of archeological sites and paleontological localities within the boundaries of the ACEC.	**Action 5** – Geophysical exploration would not be allowed.
	Action 6 – OHV use would be limited to the existing roads and trails.	**Action 6** – OHV use would be closed.	**Action 6** – OHVs would be limited to designated routes.		**Action 6** – OHV use would be closed except for authorized administrative and permitted uses.
	Action 7 – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be excluded.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be avoided.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be allowed.	**Action 7** – ROWs would be avoided.
	Action 8 – The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (1,519 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,519 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class III (440 acres) and VRM Class IV (1,079 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class IV (1,519 acres) objectives.	**Action 8 –** The area would be managed according to VRM Class II (1,519 acres) objectives.
Yonkee Area	**Objective 1 –** Protect the diverse cultural and historic resource values.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Yonkee Area	**Action 1** – See Cultural section for management on the Yonkee Area. Also see *Special Designation Areas Appendix* for relevance and importance.				
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
Yonkee Area	**Action 2 –** Yonkee area would not be designated an ACEC.	**Action 2 –** Yonkee area would be designated an ACEC			**Action 2 –** Yonkee area would not be designated an ACEC.
GRSG Area	**Objective 1 –** Protect GRSG priority habitat.				

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)**
MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE					
GRSG Area	**Action 1 –** No areas would be designated an ACEC for GRSG.	**Action 1 –** GRSG Habitat –Priority Areas would be designated an ACEC (1,300,000 acres) to protect priority habitat for GRSG. See *GRSG Habitat –Priority Areas* for specific management to protect habitat and minimize fragmentation in these areas.	**Action 1 –** GRSG Habitat –Priority Areas would not be designated an ACEC. These areas would be managed according to actions described under *GRSG Habitat – Priority Areas.*	**Action 1 –** GRSG Habitat –Priority Areas would not be designated an ACEC. These areas would be managed according to actions described under *GRSG Habitat – Priority Areas.*	**Action 1 –** GRSG Habitat –Priority Areas would not be designated an ACEC. These areas would be managed according to actions described under *GRSG Habitat – Priority Areas.*
NATIONAL TRAILS ***Goal 1*** *– Conserve, protect, and restore National Trail resources, qualities, values, associated settings and primary use or uses of national trails.*					
NATIONAL TRAILS	**Objective 1 –** Sustain and enhance the Lewis and Clark Trail to complement its status as a national historic trail emphasizing natural and historical interpretation as part of the National Trail Management Corridor. Effective inventory, planning, management, and monitoring of the trail corridor will occur through management as the Lewis and Clark SRMA.				
	Objective 2 – Safeguard the Nature and Purposes; and conserve, protect, and restore the National Trail resources, qualities, values, and associated settings and the primary use or uses of the Lewis and Clark Trail.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
National Trails	**Action 1** – See the *Lewis and Clark SRMA* section for additional management actions and delineation of the Lewis and Clark National Trail Management Corridor (Map 16).				
	MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVES				
	Action 2 - Oil and gas leasing would be offered with an NSO stipulation (14000 acres),[1] managed	**Action 2 -** Oil and gas leasing would be closed (23,484 acres).	**Action 2 -** Oil and gas leasing would be open with an NSO stipulation (23,484 acres).[1]	**Action 2 -** Oil and gas leasing would be open with a CSU stipulation (23,484 acres).[1]	**Action 2 -** Oil and gas leasing would be open and surface occupancy and use would be prohibited (NSO)

TABLE 2-5. COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

Resource or Resource Use	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan, Preferred Alternative, as modified)
	under the Lewis and Clark SRMA.				(23,484 acres).[1]
WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS ***Goal 1*** *– Manage WSAs so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness until Congress either designates them as wilderness or releases them from further study.*					
WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS	**Objective 1 –** Manage WSAs in accordance with BLM Manual 6330, *Management of Wilderness Study Areas* until Congress either designates these lands as Wilderness or releases them for other purposes.				
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Wilderness Study Areas	**Action 1** – Under BLM guidance, the BLM does not have the authority to designate new WSAs nor does BLM have the authority to reverse, repeal, or amend existing WSAs.				
	Action 2 – As provided under the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987 (30 U.S.C. §181), oil and gas leasing within WSAs would be closed (83,000 acres).				
	Action 3 - Should any WSA, in whole or in part, be released from wilderness consideration, such released lands will be managed in accordance with the goals, objectives, and management prescriptions established in this RMP, unless otherwise specified by Congress in its releasing legislation.				
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATION ***Goal 1*** *– Provide for a diverse array of stable economic opportunities in an environmentally sound manner.* ***Goal 2*** *– Identify and correct or revise, to the extent possible, disproportionate negative effects to minority or low-income populations in accordance with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994).* ***Goal 3*** *– Protect humans and the environment from exposure to hazardous materials.*					
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES					
Social and Economic	**Action 1 -** Analyze impacts on socioeconomic, environmental justice and hazardous material resources from the implementation of projects in the planning through the NEPA process.				

[1] See the *Minerals Appendix*, Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations.
[2] See the *Mitigation Measures and Conservation Actions Appendix*.
[3] Site productivity maintained or restored, surface runoff and sedimentation adequately controlled, on- and off-site areas protected from accelerated erosion by wind or water, and surface-disturbing activities prohibited during extended wet periods.
[4] No other practicable alternative exists; the unique biological and hydrological features associated with floodplains would be protected or restored; natural and beneficial values of floodplains would be preserved or enhanced; human safety, health, and welfare (associated with the risk of flood loss) would not be adversely affected; floodplains, streambanks, and waterbodies would be protected from accelerated erosion (such as rilling, gullying, piping, and mass wasting) and sedimentation; impacts to water quality and quantity would be at acceptable levels and in conformance with state and federal laws; native woody riparian species would be protected or restored in areas in which they existed prior to disturbance; and surface-disturbing activities would be prohibited during extended wet periods.
[5]Waterbodies could not be avoided; the unique biological and hydrological features associated with waterbodies would be protected or restored; floodplains, streambanks, and waterbodies would be protected from accelerated erosion (such as downcutting, rilling, gullying, piping, and mass wasting) and sedimentation; channel morphology would not be adversely affected; impacts to water quality and quantity would be at acceptable levels and in conformance with state and federal laws; native woody riparian species would be protected or restored in areas in which they existed prior to disturbance; and surface-disturbing activities would be

prohibited during wet periods.

[6]The unique biological and hydrological features associated with riparian areas and wetlands would be protected or restored; surface-disturbing activities prohibited during extended wet periods; riparian areas, wetlands, streambanks, and waterbodies would be protected from accelerated erosion (such as rilling, gullying, piping, and mass wasting) and sedimentation; water quality and quantity would be in conformance with state and federal water quality laws; and woody species would be protected or restored in areas in which they existed prior to disturbance.

[7]Noise (measured at sport-fish reservoirs) from permanent facilities would not exceed a maximum of 49 decibels. Methods to accomplish this may include but are not limited to the following: mufflers on gas-powered pumpjacks; and electric-powered pumpjacks. Permanent facilities would apply mitigating measures to minimize the visual contrast within the landscape of the sport-fish reservoir. Methods to accomplish this may include, but are not limited to, using topographic or vegetative screening, matching color tones of facilities with the surrounding topographic features, orienting the well pad or facilities to minimize size and movement, and using only standard size production facilities. Impacts to water quality and quantity would be at acceptable levels and comply with state and federal laws, streambanks (tributaries to the reservoir, which includes ephemeral and intermittent channels) and reservoir banks would be protected from erosion and sedimentation; and native woody riparian species would be protected or restored in areas in which they existed prior to disturbance.

[8]The disruptive or disturbance activity would not impact the functionality of habitat when the proponent illustrates through scientific evidence it would not agitate or bother individual species to a degree that cause or likely to cause: (1) Physical injury; (2) Decreased productivity through interfering with normal breeding, feeding or sheltering behavior; (3) Displacement or abandonment of the identified habitat (e.g. nesting, wintering, breeding, etc.)

[9] The BLM's Proposed Alternative contains both land use planning-level and implementation-level decisions for recreation and visitor services.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
AIR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE					
Air Resources and Climate	Alternative A would allow new oil and gas development and potentially result in the greatest criteria air pollutant and HAP emissions, as well as the greatest impacts to ambient air pollutant concentrations and AQRVs. However, impacts in specific areas of the planning area would depend on the location of fluid mineral activity. Alternative A would potentially result in the greatest carbon dioxide and methane emissions. Cumulative impacts under Alternative A would be larger than for each of the other alternatives.	Alternative B would allow new oil and gas development and would potentially result in the lowest criteria air pollutant and HAP emissions, as well as the smallest impacts to ambient air pollutant concentrations and AQRVs. However, impacts in specific areas of the planning area would depend on the location of fluid mineral activity. Alternative B would potentially result in the lowest carbon dioxide and methane emissions. Cumulative impacts under Alternative B would be less than those for any other alternative.	Alternative C would allow new oil and gas development and would potentially result in relatively low criteria air pollutant and HAP emissions, as well as lower impacts to ambient air pollutant concentrations and AQRVs than for alternatives A, D, and E. However, impacts in specific areas of the planning area would depend on the location of fluid mineral activity. Under Alternative C, carbon dioxide equivalent emissions would be less than alternatives A, E, and D, respectively. Alternative C carbon dioxide equivalent emissions would be more than Alternative A	Alternative D would allow new oil and gas development and would potentially result in greater criteria air pollutant and HAP emissions than under all other alternatives, except for Alternative A. Impacts to ambient air pollutant concentrations and AQRVs would generally be less than Alternative A. Under Alternative D, carbon dioxide equivalent emissions would be more than alternatives B, C, and E, respectively. Alternative D carbon dioxide equivalent emissions would be less than Alternative A emissions. Alternative D cumulative impacts	Alternative E would allow new oil and gas development and would potentially result in greater criteria air pollutant and HAP emissions than under alternatives B and C, and less than for alternatives A and D. Impacts to ambient air pollutant concentrations and AQRVs would be slightly less than those for Alternative D. However, impacts in specific areas of the planning area would depend on the location of fluid mineral activity. Under Alternative E, carbon dioxide equivalent emissions would be more than alternatives B and C, respectively. Alternative E carbon dioxide equivalent emissions would be less than Alternative A and Alternative D

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
			emissions. Cumulative impacts under Alternative C would be less than under alternatives A, D, and E, but more than under Alternative B.	would be greater than those under each alternative, except for Alternative A.	emissions, respectively. Alternative E cumulative impacts would be greater than those under alternatives B and C, and less than those under alternatives A and D.
SOILS					
Soils	Alternative A would not contribute to a predicted cumulative increase in soil resource health and conservation in the planning area. Historically, management actions proposed under Alternative A have led to allotments that failed to meet Rangeland Health Standards or that contained downward trend riparian or wetland areas, ecosystems with moderate to high departures from natural fire regimes, and disturbed lands with insufficient reclamation.	Alternative B would contribute to a cumulative increase in soil resource health and conservation. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative B would better maintain soil resources.	Alternative C would contribute to the continuing increase in soil resource health and conservation because many actions under this alternative would require controlled management of surface uses and ground-disturbing actions (including those aimed toward ecological improvement). Compared to Alternative A, Alternative C would better maintain soil resources and provide for soil conservation.	Alternative D would contribute to the continuing increase in soil resource health and conservation because many actions under this alternative would require controlled management of surface uses and ground-disturbing actions (including those aimed toward ecological improvement). Alternative D would conserve soil resources. Compared to Alternative A, alternatives D would better	Alternative E would contribute to the continuing improvement in soil resource health and conservation because many actions under this alternative would require controlled management of surface uses and ground-disturbing actions (including those aimed toward ecological improvement). Compared to Alternative A, Alternative E would better conserve soil resources.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
				maintain soil resources.	
WATER RESOURCES					
Water	Management actions would meet Montana State Water Quality Standards and support beneficial uses. Surface disturbance in waterbodies, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas, the absence of buffers, and minimal restrictions on water developments would reduce water quality and result in long-term to permanent increases in sedimentation.	Management actions would meet Montana State Water Quality Standards and support beneficial uses. Prohibiting surface disturbance in waterbodies, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas, placing restrictions on water developments, and limiting surface disturbance within 300 feet of riparian and wetland areas would maintain water quality. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative B would better maintain water resources.	Management actions would meet Montana State Water Quality Standards and support beneficial uses. Surface disturbance in waterbodies, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas (when not avoided) and the absence of buffers would reduce water quality. Placing restriction on water developments would maintain water quality. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative C would better maintain water resources.	Management actions would meet Montana State Water Quality Standards and support beneficial uses. Surface disturbance in waterbodies, floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas (when not avoided) and the absence of buffers would reduce water quality. Placing restriction on water developments would maintain water quality. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative D would better maintain water resources.	Management actions would meet Montana State Water Quality Standards and support beneficial uses. Surface disturbance in floodplains would reduce water quality. Placing restriction on water developments would maintain water quality. Limiting surface disturbance in waterbodies, wetlands, and riparian areas would maintain water quality. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative E would better maintain water resources.
VEGETATION					
Vegetation	Equipment movement, sheep	Sheep grazing restrictions under	Surface-disturbing activities under this	Surface-disturbing activities under this	Surface-disturbing activities under this

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
	grazing restrictions, and case-by-case treatment of invasive weed species under this alternative would threaten the ecological status of vegetation through the spread of invasive species. OHV use in the short and long term would cause physical damage to vegetation.	this alternative would threaten the ecological status of vegetation through the spread of invasive species. OHV use in the short and long term would cause physical damage to vegetation.	alternative would be mitigated to reduce threats to the ecological status of vegetation through the spread of invasive species. OHV use in the short and long term would cause physical damage to vegetation.	alternative would be mitigated to reduce threats to the ecological status of vegetation through the spread of invasive species. Invasive species would continue to spread. OHV use in the short and long term would cause physical damage to vegetation.	alternative would be mitigated to reduce threats to the ecological status of vegetation through the spread of invasive species. OHV use in the short and long term would cause physical damage to vegetation. Early Detection Rapid Response would be the most cost-efficient, effective method for recovering vegetation to its native state.
Riparian And Wetland Areas	Surface-disturbing activities would increase erosion and sedimentation to riparian and wetland areas. Changes in vegetation composition would increase runoff, alter stream bank and channel structure, cause nutrient losses, and increase sedimentation. An NSO stipulation for oil and gas leasing	Prohibiting surface-disturbing activities and oil and gas development would decrease stream bank erosion, sedimentation, and vegetation removal and maintain riparian and wetland areas. A CSU stipulation for oil and gas leasing and development which provided a 300 foot buffer	Avoiding surface-disturbing activities in riparian and wetland areas or allowing them with specialized design features to improve or maintain PFC would maintain riparian and wetland areas. A CSU stipulation for oil and gas leasing and development would conserve riparian and wetland areas	Avoiding surface-disturbing activities in riparian and wetland areas or allowing them with specialized design features to improve or maintain PFC would maintain riparian and wetland areas. A CSU stipulation for oil and gas leasing and development would conserve riparian and	Requiring that surface-disturbing activities maintain or improve riparian or wetland function would maintain these areas. An NSO stipulation for oil and gas leasing and development would also maintain riparian and wetland areas. A CSU stipulation for oil and gas leasing and development which

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
	and development would prevent soil compaction and vegetation removal, which would subsequently maintain riparian and wetland areas. Limiting diversions from springs would reduce soil moisture in overflow areas and increase flows from the source to the natural drainage, enhancing the vigor and type of riparian vegetation. Avoiding placement of troughs and tanks in areas containing important riparian and wetland vegetation would increase species vigor and composition.	adjacent to riparian and wetland areas would maintain the vegetative, soil, and hydrologic functions of these sensitive areas. Prohibiting new spring developments would ensure that riparian and wetland areas around springs continued to maintain species vigor and composition without disturbance. Locating new livestock water developments at least 0.25 mile from riparian and wetland areas would maintain the hydrologic function, soils, and vegetation of these areas. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative B would better	by mitigating vegetation removal and soil compaction. Prohibiting new spring developments would ensure that riparian and wetland areas around springs continued to maintain species vigor and composition without disturbance. Locating new livestock water developments at least 0.25 mile from riparian and wetland areas would maintain the hydrologic function, soils, and vegetation of these areas. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative C would better maintain riparian and wetland areas.	wetland areas by mitigating vegetation removal and soil compaction. Designing spring developments to maintain or improve the integrity and functionality of riparian and wetland areas would maintain these areas. Locating new livestock water developments at least 0.25 mile from riparian and wetland areas would maintain the hydrologic function, soils, and vegetation of these areas. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative D would better maintain riparian and wetland areas.	provided a 300 foot buffer adjacent to riparian and wetland areas would maintain the vegetative, soil, and hydrologic functions of these sensitive areas. Designing spring developments to maintain or improve the integrity, functionality, and resiliency of riparian and wetland areas would maintain these areas. Designing new livestock water developments to maintain or improve the integrity, functionality, and resiliency of riparian and wetland areas would maintain these areas. Compared to Alternative A, Alternative E would better maintain riparian and wetland areas.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
		maintain riparian and wetland areas.			
Invasive Species	Equipment movement, sheep grazing restrictions, and case-by-case treatment of invasive weed species under this alternative would increase invasive species. This alternative would be 40-percent less cost efficient than Alternative E because of the lack of scientific, methodical prioritization of invasive species treatments.	Prohibiting disruptive activities would preclude weed control. Sheep grazing restrictions in the Bighorn Sheep Range under this alternative would increase invasive species. This alternative would be the most restrictive, which would aid in limiting invasive species spread through development but there would still be new infestations through natural paths (wildlife, wind, and water sources). However, because treatment is not prioritized, this alternative is 40% less productive than Alternative E.	Prohibiting disruptive activities would also preclude weed control. Early Detection Rapid Response would be the most cost-efficient, effective method for recovering vegetation to its native state. Allowing sheep grazing to treat invasive species in the Bighorn Sheep Range would support vital weed control in those areas. This alternative would increase in comparison to Alternative A, the percentage of infestations treated in the planning area.	Invasive species would increase if priority treatment areas were areas in which the surrounding private lands were within an active invasive species treatment area and in which the respective private landowners were actively controlling invasive species. Allowing sheep grazing to treat invasive species in the Bighorn Sheep Range would support vital weed control in these areas. The lack of methodology and scientific approach to treatments of invasive species under this alternative would decrease the percentage of acres treated by 40% in	Surface-disturbing activities under this alternative would be mitigated to reduce threats to the ecological status of vegetation. Early Detection Rapid Response would be the most cost-efficient, effective method for recovering vegetation to its native state. Allowing sheep grazing to treat invasive species in the Bighorn Sheep Range would support vital weed control in these areas. Alternative E would increase the productivity of invasive species treatments similarly to Alternative C, but would allow invasive species treatments across the entire planning area.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
				comparison to Alternative A.	
FISH, AQUATIC AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, INCLUDING SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES					
Fish And Wildlife, Aquatics	There would be a general declining trend in habitat conditions of prairie streams and rivers under this alternative. Designations of sensitive aquatic wildlife species, species included under the ESA or state and federally listed species would increase.	Prairie stream and river habitat conditions would plateau or improve under this alternative. Actions under this alternative would help protect endangered and sensitive fish, amphibians, and reptiles.	Habitat conditions of prairie streams and rivers would plateau under this alternative. Riparian vigor would increase and soil erosion and sedimentation of aquatic wildlife habitat would decrease.	There would be a general declining trend in habitat conditions of prairie streams and rivers under this alternative. Designations of sensitive aquatic wildlife species, species included under the ESA or state and federally listed species would increase.	Prairie stream and river habitat conditions would be variable under this alternative. Habitat conditions would plateau or even improve in areas in which fish passage were required and strict 300-foot buffers applied to riparian areas and water-bodies. Prairie stream and river habitat conditions would decline in areas in which these conditions were not applied.
Fish And Wildlife, Terrestrial	Wildlife habitat conditions would slowly degrade in the future, which would result in long-term declines in a number of wildlife and special status wildlife species habitats through increased individual mortality, displacement,	Although habitat conditions would continue to be affected, overall conditions would be most improved under this alternative. Management would cause long-term improvements in a number of wildlife and special status	Wildlife habitat conditions would improve in the planning area in the future. This alternative would cause few impacts to endangered and threatened species habitats and slow degradation, ensure protection of these habitat and species,	This alternative would improve fewer acres of habitats than alternatives B or C but more than those improved under Alternative A. This alternative would cause few impacts to endangered and threatened species habitats and slow	Alternative E would provide improvements similar to those under alternatives C and D. Additional acres of protection would depend on species habitats (such as big game, raptors, and prairie dogs) that included habitats for other

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
	increased habitat fragmentation, and wildlife avoidance of affected areas or important habitats.	wildlife species habitat through increased individual recruitment and decreased displacement and habitat fragmentation. This alternative would cause few impacts to endangered and threatened species habitats and slow degradation, ensure protection of these habitat and species, and possibly enhance important habitat for these species.	and possibly enhance important habitat for these species. Although this alternative would provide more protection than alternatives D and E for certain species habitats, it would provide less protection than Alternative B.	degradation, ensure protection of these habitat and species, and possibly enhance important habitat for these species.	special status wildlife species. In some cases such as GRSG Priority Areas, Alternative E results in greater beneficial effects than alternatives A, C and D.
Fish and Wildlife, Terrestrial	This alternative would contribute to long-term declines in GRSG abundance and potential losses of sagebrush habitat.	Habitat compensation and restrictions for surface-disturbing activities in GRSG habitats under this alternative would provide the most protection (except for those areas included in Restoration Areas under this alternative) of any of the alternatives.	Habitat compensation and restrictions for surface-disturbing activities in GRSG habitats under this alternative would provide protection for fewer acres of habitat than those protected under Alternative B. Habitat compensation would minimize disturbances within	This alternative would provide comparable to fewer habitat compensation protections for GRSG, depending on the GRSG area. This alternative would contribute to long-term declines in GRSG abundance and potential loss of sage brush habitat. Habitat compensation	Habitat compensation is required in instances where impacts onsite cannot be mitigated. Surface-disturbing activities in GRSG habitats under this alternative would provide protection for equal or less acres of habitat than those protected under alternatives B, C and D, but more than Alternative A

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
		Habitat compensation would minimize disturbances within the habitat areas or provide incentives for project proponents to prevent new disturbances. Habitat conditions would improve in the planning area in the future.	the habitat areas or provide incentives for project proponents to prevent new disturbances.	would minimize disturbances within the habitat areas or provide incentives for project proponents to prevent new disturbances.	depending on activity and location. This alternative would include more protection for Restoration Areas than would other alternatives. Because this alternative would include compensation, habitat disturbances would be minimized.
Fish and Wildlife, Terrestrial	This alternative would cause direct and indirect habitat loss and overall decreased densities and abundances of prairie dogs. Impacts would include potential abandonment or displacement of the prairie dog colony. Allowing energy development in prairie dog colonies would also impact numerous species associated with prairie dogs (i.e., burrowing owls and ferruginous hawks)	This alternative would ensure that prairie dog colonies were maintained or expanded in the planning area. Prohibiting surface-disturbing and disruptive activities and oil and gas leasing in and within 0.5 miles of black-tailed prairie dog colonies would provide the most protection for prairie dog colonies.	This alternative would ensure that prairie dog colonies were maintained or expanded in the planning area. Prohibiting surface-disturbing and disruptive activities and oil and gas leasing in and within 0.25 miles of black-tailed prairie dog colonies would provide protection for prairie dog colonies.	This alternative would provide less protection than alternatives B and C for prairie dogs because it would allow surface-disturbing and disruptive activities and oil and gas leasing in black-tailed prairie dog colonies (with mitigation to minimize direct and indirect habitat loss). This alternative would ensure that some prairie dog habitat remained in the	This alternative would provide less protection than alternatives B and C for prairie dogs because it would allow surface-disturbing and disruptive activities and oil and gas leasing in black-tailed prairie dog colonies (with mitigation to minimize direct and indirect habitat loss). This alternative would ensure that some prairie dog habitat remained in the

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
	depending on the species' tolerance to disturbance.			planning area.	planning area and provides more protections than Alternative A.
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGY					
Fuels Management/ Prescribed Fire	Alternative A would contribute to the anticipated impacts.	Same as Alternative A: Alternative B would contribute to the anticipated impacts.	Alternative C would contribute to the anticipated impacts. Mitigation measures required for project planning and implementation would reduce effective fuels management for hazardous fuels reduction or wildlife habitat improvement, which would cause resource competition and increase vegetative stress across the landscape.	Alternative D would contribute to the anticipated impacts. Mitigation measures required for project planning and implementation would reduce effective fuels management for hazardous fuels reduction or wildlife habitat improvement, which would cause resource competition and increase vegetative stress across the landscape.	Alternative E would result in less restrictions than alternatives A and B for project planning and implementation of effective fuels management for hazardous fuels reduction or wildlife habitat improvement.
Wildland Fire Management	Alternative A would be less restrictive for wildland fire management activities than Alternative B.	Alternative B would be the most restrictive to wildland fire management actions, which would cause larger fire perimeters, higher costs to suppress wildfire, and increases in burned area	Alternative C would require fewer restrictions to wildland fire management and provide more options to manage wildland fire within the ecosystem than alternatives A and B.	Alternative D would require fewer restrictions to wildland fire management and provide more options to manage wildland fire within the ecosystem than alternatives A and B.	Alternative E would require fewer restrictions to wildland fire management and provide more options to manage wildfire within the ecosystem than alternatives A and B.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
		rehabilitation and emergency stabilization (resulting from the impacts of wildfire).			
CULTURAL RESOURCES					
Cultural Resources	Acres and sites would be disturbed and impacts to significant sites would need to be mitigated.	The fewest acres and sites would be disturbed under this alternative. The fewest number of significant sites would be affected, needing mitigation.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres and sites disturbed, needing mitigation.	The most acres and significant sites would be disturbed, needing mitigation, under this alternative.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres and sites disturbed, needing mitigation.
PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES					
Paleontological Resources	Acres and paleontological resources would be disturbed under this alternative.	The fewest acres and paleontological resources would be disturbed.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be more acres and paleontological resources disturbed.	The most acres and paleontological resources would be disturbed.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres and paleontological resources disturbed.
FORESTRY AND WOODLAND PRODUCTS					
Forestry and Woodland Products	Forest and woodlands would continue to decline in health and be at risk for extensive resource damage or loss due to landscape-level insect outbreaks or high-intensity wildfires.	Same as Alternative A: Forest and woodland areas would continue to decline in health and be at risk for extensive resource damage or loss due to landscape-level insect outbreaks or high-intensity wildfires.	Alternative C would allow sales of special forest products (e.g., firewood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees) and provide a moderate volume of commercial forest products, with PSQs up to 650 mbf /year, contributing to long-	Alternative D would allow sales of special forest products (e.g., firewood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees) and provide a moderate to high volume of commercial forest products, with PSQs up to 1,100	Alternative E would allow sales of special forest products (e.g., firewood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees) and provide a moderate to high volume of commercial forest products, with PSQs up to 1,100 mbf/year,

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
			term forest health improvement. Proactive silvicultural treatments would help restore conditions characteristic with the Historical Range of Variability, enhancing the overall vigor, productivity, and resiliency of forest and woodland vegetation. Risk for extensive resource damage from insects, diseases, or high-intensity wildfire would be reduced.	mbf/year, contributing to long-term forest health improvement. Proactive silvicultural treatments would help restore conditions characteristic with the Historical Range of Variability, enhancing the overall vigor, productivity, and resiliency of forest and woodland vegetation. Risk for extensive resource damage from insects, diseases, or high-intensity wildfire would be reduced.	contributing to long-term forest health improvement. Proactive silvicultural treatments would help restore conditions characteristic with the Historical Range of Variability, enhancing the overall vigor, productivity, and resiliency of forest and woodland vegetation. Risk for extensive resource damage from insects, diseases, or high-intensity wildfire would be reduced.
LIVESTOCK GRAZING					
Livestock Grazing	Acres and AUMs would be available for all livestock grazing.	The least amount of acres and AUMs would be available for livestock grazing.	Compared to Alternative A, fewer AUMs would be available for livestock grazing.	Compared to Alternative A, fewer AUMs would be available for livestock grazing.	Compared to Alternative A, fewer AUMs would be available for livestock grazing.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
MINERALS					
Oil and Gas	This alternative would not contribute to cumulative impacts to the mineral estate. It would allow drilling and development to continue at a slow, irregular pace with numerous restrictions for resource protection.	This alternative would contribute to cumulative impacts to the mineral estate. It would be the most restrictive for drilling and development. The increased number of closures and restricted acres would considerably limit, and possibly eliminate development in the planning area. Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer oil and gas wells drilled. The increased amount of restrictions under this alternative compared to Alternative A would raise the cost of drilling on federal minerals and make some ventures uneconomical or unapprovable,	This alternative would contribute to cumulative impacts to the mineral estate. It would restrict and limit drilling and development through an increased number of restricted acres. Compared to Alternative A, there would be more oil and gas wells drilled. The increased amount of restrictions under this alternative compared to Alternative A would raise the cost of drilling on federal minerals and make some ventures uneconomical or unapprovable, thereby increasing the amount of drainage compared to Alternative A.	This alternative would contribute to cumulative impacts to the mineral estate and reduce and slow drilling and development. It would allow drilling and development with restrictions for resource protection. Compared to Alternative A, there would be more oil and gas wells drilled. The increased amount of restrictions under this alternative compared to Alternative A would raise the cost of drilling on federal minerals and make some ventures uneconomical or unapprovable, thereby increasing the amount of drainage compared to Alternative A.	This alternative would contribute to cumulative impacts to the mineral estate. This alternative would restrict and limit drilling and development on BLM-administered minerals through an increased number of restricted acres. Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer oil and gas wells drilled. The increased amount of restrictions under this alternative compared to Alternative A would raise the cost of drilling on federal minerals and make some ventures uneconomical or unapprovable, thereby increasing the amount of drainage compared to Alternative A.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
		thereby increasing the amount of drainage compared to Alternative A. Impacts to oil and gas development from other resource restrictions are greater under Alternative B than under any other alternative.			
Locatable Minerals	Some land use management actions requiring special design, avoidance, or habitat functionality would cause changes to mining POs and NOIs if these actions complied with the mining laws and surface management regulations.	Same as Alternative A: Some land use management actions requiring special design, avoidance, or habitat functionality would cause changes to mining POs and NOIs if these actions complied with the mining laws and surface management regulations.	Same as Alternative A: Some land use management actions requiring special design, avoidance, or habitat functionality would cause changes to mining POs and NOIs if these actions complied with the mining laws and surface management regulations.	Same as Alternative A: Some land use management actions requiring special design, avoidance, or habitat functionality would cause changes to mining POs and NOIs if these actions complied with the mining laws and surface management regulations.	Same as Alternative A. Some land use management actions requiring special design, avoidance, or habitat would cause changes to mining POs and NOIs if these actions complied with the mining laws and surface management regulations.
Mineral Materials	Mineral material sales and permits would be available for use in the majority of the planning area.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres available for mineral material sales and permits.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres available for mineral material sales and permits.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres available for mineral material sales and permits.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres available for mineral material sales and permits.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
RECREATION (VRM, LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS, TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AND OHV)					
Recreation (VRM)	Alternative A would maintain current trends in recreation, with no net increase or decrease in recreational use.	Under Alternative B, increased recreational demand for developed recreation opportunities would conflict with approved land uses, such as activities that would alter recreational settings with facilities. However, because fewer acres would be available for mineral development and surface-disturbing activities, resource protection would increase under this alternative, therefore, visitor experiences would be enhanced and more opportunities created for recreationists. Constraints identified to protect LWC would result in minimal surface disturbance and	Under Alternative C, most programs would increase in overall net recreational use through the maintenance or improvement of recreational settings in the planning area. Alternative C would enhance economic development and visitor experiences and create more opportunities for recreationists. In the long term, the designation of VRM classes under this alternative would result in more beneficial impacts to visual resources than Alternative A because more acres would be managed to preserve relatively undeveloped high quality scenic landscapes. This acreage is similar to	A decrease in protective measures under this alternative would reduce fish and wildlife habitat, which would alter fish- and wildlife-related activities such as hunting and fishing, recreational settings, opportunities, and experiences. By allowing more resource development, Alternative D would decrease recreational experiences, which would decrease recreational use. This alternative focuses on accommodating priorities of other programs rather than visitor demand. Compared to Alternative A, B, and C; Alternative D would have more	Under Alternative E, most programs would increase in overall net recreational use the maintenance or improvement of recreational settings in the planning area. More acres would be managed as Class II VRM management objective than in Alternative A and Alternative D, but less acres than in Alternative B. This will result in more beneficial impacts within the MCFO as more lands will be managed to preserve the scenic landscapes. All key visual features would be managed as VRM Class I or II. This alternative would protect more visual landscapes than Alternative A, and would provide

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
		visual intrusions. These lands would be managed to preserve and enhance the apparent naturalness and the opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation (wilderness characteristics). Because more acres would be designated VRM Class II under this alternative than any of the other alternatives, which would be more protective of the visual and scenic qualities within the planning area. Alternative B has the least amount of VRM Class IV acres, which would allow the least amount of moderate to major surface disturbing modifications to the characteristic	the visual resource inventory. However, more acres would be designated as Class VRM III and IV (compared to Alternative B) with long-term impacts occurring in those areas containing high scenic quality but managed at lower classes.	long-term impacts to VRM because more acres would be managed at lower classes of scenic quality protection, as this alternative has the least amount of VRM Class II acres. This would subject a greater amount of land to surface-disturbing activities as it would have the least amount of protections in place for surface disturbing projects. This alternative would provide the least amount of protection for visual resources.	improved protection of key visual features in the planning area. Under this alternative, more acres would be designated as Class III and IV, which would manage more acres at lower classes. Alternative E would, in the long term, permit areas with higher scenic quality to develop the characteristics of lower VRM classes through increased permitted surface disturbances and visual intrusions, and so would be less protective of visual resources than Alternative B.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
		landscape within the planning area.			
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	No areas would be managed for wilderness characteristics.	Alternative B would have the most acres considered for LWC management.	Compared to Alternative A, more acres would be considered for LWC management.	No areas would be managed for wilderness characteristics.	Compared to Alternative A, more acres would be considered for LWC management.
Travel Management and OHV	The majority of the planning area would be Limited OHV use; very few areas would be Open or Closed to OHV use.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres Open, fewer acres Limited and more acres Closed to OHV use.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres Open, more acres Limited and more acres Closed to OHV use.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres Open, more acres Limited and fewer acres Closed to OHV use.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer acres Open, fewer acres Limited and more acres Closed to OHV use.
SRMAS	An emphasis on recreation management activities would be prioritized in SRMAs, ensuring that quality recreation opportunities and experiences would be provided.	Recreation management activities would be increased in comparison to Alternative A.	Recreation management activities would be increased in comparison to Alternative A.	Compared to Alternative A, recreation management activities would decrease the benefits and experiences for recreationists.	Recreation management activities would be increased in comparison to Alternative A.
RENEWABLE ENERGY					
Renewable Energy	The majority of lands in the planning area would be available for wind and solar development.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer areas available for wind and solar development.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer areas available for wind and solar development.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer areas available for wind and solar development.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be fewer areas available for wind and solar development.
LANDS AND REALTY					
ROWs	The majority of lands in the planning	Compared to Alternative A, there	Compared to Alternative A, there	Compared to Alternative A, there	Compared to Alternative A, there

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
	area would be available for ROWs.	would be fewer areas available for ROWs.	would be fewer areas available for ROWs.	would be fewer areas available for ROWs.	would be fewer areas available for ROWs.
SPECIAL DESIGNATION AREAS					
ACECs	ACECs would be designated in the planning area.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be more ACECs designated.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be more ACECs designated.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be more ACECs designated.	Compared to Alternative A, there would be more ACECs designated.
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC					
Social and Economic	Continuation of current management would maintain or enhance the quality of life of permittees, those who prefer resource use, and many residents of local communities. Those who prefer resource protection for prairie ecosystems (including greater sage-grouse habitat) and primitive, quiet recreation opportunities may not feel these resources would receive adequate protection and may experience a decline in quality of life. Alternatives A, C, and D have similar	This alternative would enhance the quality of life of those who prefer resource protection and recreation that provides primitive, quiet experiences. Permittees, those who favor resource use, OHV enthusiasts, and many residents of local communities, may not feel their concerns were adequately addressed and may experience a decline in quality of life. Opportunities for primitive, quiet recreation experiences would be greatest under this alternative.	This alternative would maintain the quality of life of those who prefer resource protection for prairie ecosystems (including greater sage-grouse habitat) and primitive, quiet recreation opportunities. Permittees, those who favor resource use, OHV enthusiasts, and some residents of local communities, may also feel their concerns were addressed. Alternatives A, C, and D have similar job and income contributions. Total local jobs and	This alternative would maintain or enhance the quality of life of permittees, those who prefer resource use, many residents of local communities, and those who participate in off-road recreation opportunities. Those who prefer resource protection for prairie ecosystems (including greater sage-grouse habitat) and primitive, quiet recreation opportunities may not feel that these resources would receive adequate protection and may experience a decline in quality of life.	This alternative may maintain the quality of life of those who prefer resource protection for prairie ecosystems (including greater sage-grouse habitat) and primitive, quiet recreation opportunities. Permittees, those who favor resource use, OHV enthusiasts, and some residents of local communities, may also feel that their concerns were addressed. Total local jobs and associated labor income related to BLM land management would be an estimated

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
	job and income contributions. Total local jobs and associated labor income related to BLM land management would be an estimated 2,132 jobs and about $101 million, an increase of 4% and 46%, respectively, from current levels. Annual average program revenues are anticipated to generate more than $104 million in federal revenue annually over the next 20 years under current management. The redistribution of federal revenues associated with the MCFO is estimated to provide Montana with $36.5 million in public revenue and the 17-county study area with $16.5 million on annual average.	Total local jobs and associated labor income related to BLM land management would be an estimated 1,950 jobs and $94.8 million, a decrease of 5% and an increase of 37%, respectively, from current levels. While greater than current contributions this is less than total contributions under Alternative A and the other alternatives. Annual average program revenues are anticipated to generate about $102.8 million in federal revenue over the next 20 years. The redistribution of federal revenues associated with the MCFO is estimated to provide Montana with $35.9 million in public revenue and the 17-county	associated labor income related to BLM land management would be an estimated 2,133 jobs and approximately $101 million, an increase of 4% and 47%, respectively, from current levels. Annual average program revenues are anticipated to generate more than $104 million in federal revenue over the next 20 years. The redistribution of federal revenues associated with the MCFO is estimated to provide Montana with $36.5 million in public revenue and the 17-county study area with $16.5 million on annual average.	Except for Alternative A, this alternative would be result in the highest levels of resource use. Alternatives A, C, and D have similar job and income contributions. Total local jobs and associated labor income related to BLM land management would be an estimated 2,136 jobs and $101.5 million, an increase of 4% and 47%, respectively, from current levels. Annual average program revenues are anticipated to generate about $104.6 million in federal revenue over the next 20 years. The redistribution of federal revenues associated with the MCFO is estimated to provide Montana with $36.5 million	2,119 jobs and $99.8 million, an increase of 3% and 45%, respectively, from current levels. Annual average program revenues are anticipated to generate a little more than $104 million in federal revenue over the next 20 years. The redistribution of federal revenues associated with the MCFO is estimated to provide Montana with $36.3 million in public revenue and the 17-county study area with $16.5 million on annual average.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY COMPARISON OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE					
Resource or Resource Use	**Alternative A (No Action)**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**	**Alternative E (Proposed)**
		study area with $16.3 million on annual average.		in public revenue and the 17-county study area with $16.5 million on annual average. This alternative would allow the highest levels livestock grazing, coal exploration and oil and gas development.	

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