

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## ES.1 INTRODUCTION

The BLM Moab (Utah) Field Office (Moab FO) has prepared this Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) to provide direction for managing public lands within the Moab Field Office and to analyze the environmental effects. A Draft RMP/EIS with four alternatives was presented to the public on August 25, 2007, which initiated a 90-day public comment period. The comments submitted by the public were considered in formulating the Proposed RMP, also referred to as the Proposed Plan.

The Proposed RMP will replace the Grand Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP), which was signed in 1985. The Proposed RMP covers the same area as that covered by the 1985 RMP, which is all of Grand County and the northern one-third of San Juan County (BLM 1985). The Moab planning area (MPA) comprises approximately 2,756,065 acres of land, of which approximately 1,822,562 acres is public land administered by the BLM. Due to its easier access, the BLM Vernal FO presently manages a small amount of public land at the top of the Book Cliffs along the northern portion of the MPA.

The MPA is situated in the canyon, plateau, and desert areas of the Colorado Plateau Physiographic Province. Geographically, the Moab FO is bounded by the Bookcliffs to the north, the Utah-Colorado state line to the east, Harts Point and Lisbon Valley to the south, and the Green River to the west. Major waterways within the planning area include the Colorado River, the Dolores River, and the Green River. Elevations within the planning area range from approximately 13,000 feet above mean sea level in the La Sal Mountains to approximately 3,900 feet above mean sea level at Mineral Bottom along the Green River.

The planning area encompasses Arches National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, and the La Sal Mountains of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. The Moab FO shares boundaries with lands administered by the BLM Vernal, Monticello, Grand Junction, Uncompahgre, Dolores, and Price FOs, as well as with the Uintah/Ouray Indian Reservation and Canyonlands National Park.

The Proposed RMP was prepared using the BLM's planning regulations and guidance issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is incorporated into this document to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508) and requirements of BLM's NEPA Handbook 1790-1.

## ES.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

### ES.2.1 PURPOSE

FLPMA requires that the BLM "develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land-use plans" (43 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1712 [a]). The BLM has determined it is necessary to revise existing land-use plans (LUP) and prepare a new RMP for the MPA based on a number of new issues that have arisen since preparation of the existing land-use plan (1985). The purpose of this Proposed RMP is to provide a comprehensive framework for BLM's management of the public

lands within the MPA and its allocation of resources pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate of FLPMA.

### **ES.2.2 NEED**

The Proposed Plan as presented in this document is necessary because there have been significant changes within the MPA since the time of the 1985 RMP.

### **ES.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Public involvement has been an integral part of BLM's RMP effort.

The scoping period for the Moab RMP began on June 4, 2003 and ended on January 31, 2004. Comments obtained from the public during the scoping period were used to define the relevant issues that would be resolved by presenting a broad range of alternative management actions.

The Draft RMP/EIS was released to the public on August 25, 2007, with publication of the Notice of Availability by the Environmental Protection Agency. A 90-day public comment period ended on November 30, 2007. The BLM hosted four open houses during the public comment period to provide information to the public on the content of the Draft RMP/EIS and how to provide comments. The preferred alternative (Alternative C) in the Draft RMP/EIS was adjusted based on public comment to formulate the Proposed Plan which is presented in this document. See Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination, for additional information on public involvement in the RMP process.

### **ES.4 PROPOSED PLAN AND DRAFT ALTERNATIVES**

The Proposed Plan and three alternatives from the Draft RMP/EIS are presented in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Alternative C has been adjusted based on public comment and review of the Draft RMP/EIS and now represents the BLM's Proposed Plan.

#### **ES.4.1 ALTERNATIVE A - NO ACTION**

Alternative A would be a continuation of existing management under the current Grand Resource Area RMP (1985), as amended.

#### **ES.4.2 ALTERNATIVE B**

Alternative B would offer more protection for wildlife and other natural resources, and favor natural systems over commodities development. It would emphasize the protection of natural resources and landscapes as well as non-motorized recreation.

#### **ES.4.3 PROPOSED PLAN**

The Proposed Plan would protect important environmental values and sensitive resources while allowing for commodities development. It would provide a balance between protection of important natural resources and commodity production, as well as offer a full range of recreation opportunities.

Under the Proposed Plan, 1,866 acres would be open to cross country OHV use, 339,298 acres would be closed, and OHV use would be limited to designated routes in the remainder of the

planning area (Table ES1). Approximately 2,642 miles of travel routes (including motorcycle trails) would be designated (Table ES2). Under the Proposed Plan, ten Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) would be designated, and 30 Focus Areas which emphasize a particular recreation activity would be established (Table ES3).

Five Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) would be designated under the Proposed Plan, and 10 segments of 3 eligible rivers would be recommended as suitable for Wild and Scenic River (WSR) designation (Table ES4). Approximately 47,761 acres of non-Wilderness Study Area (WSA) lands (in 3 areas) would be managed to protect, preserve, and maintain their wilderness characteristics (Table ES5). All BLM lands within the MPA are classified for oil and gas leasing stipulations. About 370,250 acres would be closed to oil and gas leasing. About 217,480 acres would be managed with No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations, and 427,273 acres would be open with standard stipulations (Table ES6). The remaining 806,994 acres would be managed with timing limitation or controlled surface use stipulations.

**ES.5.4 ALTERNATIVE D**

Alternative D would emphasize commodity development over the protection of natural resources, and would emphasize motorized recreation.

The following Tables present a summary of decisions, comparing the Proposed Plan to the No Action alternative. Table ES1 provides the acreage open, limited and closed to OHVs; Table ES2 provides the miles of designated routes; Table ES3 shows the SRMAs and Focus Areas; Table ES4 gives the Special Designations; Table ES5 provides the acreage of lands managed to protect, preserve and maintain their wilderness characteristics, and Table ES6 compares the oil and gas stipulations in the Proposed Plan and the No Action alternative.

**Table ES1. OHV Categories (acres) in No Action Alternative vs. Proposed Plan**

Category	Alt A No Action	PROPOSED PLAN
Closed	5,062	339,298
Limited to Existing	1,196,920 <sup>1</sup>	0
Limited to Designated	0	1,481,334
Open	620,212	1,866

<sup>1</sup> 48,169 acres would be limited to designated roads and trails; and 309,749 acres would be limited to inventoried routes in WSAs.

**Table ES2. Designated Routes (miles) In Inventory vs. Proposed Plan**

Item	Inventory	PROPOSED PLAN
D and B routes	6,199	3,693
D Routes <sup>1</sup> only	4,673	2,519
Singletrack Motorcycle Routes	129	150
Motorcycle Routes on Existing D Routes	142	163

<sup>1</sup> At time of publication.

**Table ES3. SRMAs and Focus Areas In No Action Alternative vs. Proposed Plan**

Category	Alt A (ac) No Action	PROPOSED PLAN
SRMAs	3 (141,234)	10 (658,642)
Focus Areas	0	30

**Table ES4. Special Designations In No Action Alternative vs. Proposed Plan**

		Alt A No Action	PROPOSED PLAN
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	Number	0	5
	Acres	0	63,232
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Eligible Segments	12	29
	Suitable Segments	Deferred	10

**Table ES5. Non-WSA Areas Managed for Wilderness Characteristics In No Action Alternative vs. Proposed Plan**

	Alt A No Action	PROPOSED PLAN
Units (#)	0	3
Acres	0	47,761

**Table ES6. Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations (acres)**

Stipulation	Alt A No Action	PROPOSED PLAN
Standard	1,038,344	427,273
TL and CSU	389,605	806,994
NSO	38,912	217,480
Closed	353,293	370,250
Projected No. of wells/LOP	451	432

## ES.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Selection of Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, would maintain the current rate of progress in meeting land health standards and protecting resource values. It would allow for use levels to mostly continue at current levels in the same places in the MPA, with adjustments required in order to meet Standards for Rangeland Health or to mitigate resource concerns in compliance with existing laws and regulations.

Alternative B would have the least potential to adversely impact physical and biological resources and would protect a variety of vegetation types and wildlife habitats. Alternative B would be the most restrictive to commodity extraction. Consequently, Alternative B would have the greatest potential for short-term adverse impacts to local economies and businesses that depend on public land for commodity extraction.

Implementation of the Proposed Plan would allow for many uses to continue but would constrain certain activities in order to maintain or protect important natural resources. This could result in some short-term adverse impacts to local economies and resource extraction businesses, but long-term economic benefits would be gained from the emphasis on a diversity of recreational activities.

Alternative D offers the greatest potential benefits to the local economy from traditional commodity extraction. Commodity extraction uses would generally be least encumbered by management decisions under this alternative. Alternative D would result in greater impacts on the physical and biological environment than actions proposed under Alternative B or the Proposed Plan.

See Table 2.2 at the end of Chapter 2, Proposed Plan and Draft Alternatives, for a summary of potential impacts of the Proposed Plan and the three alternatives brought forward from the Draft RMP/EIS. Detailed descriptions of impacts of the Proposed Plan and the draft alternatives are provided in Chapter 4.

## ES.6: CHANGES FROM THE DRAFT RMP TO THE PROPOSED RMP

As a result of public comment and internal review of the Draft RMP/EIS, the Preferred Alternative has been adjusted and now represents BLM's Proposed Action in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. Changes regarding alternatives focused on adjustments to the Preferred

Alternative in order to address public concerns while continuing to meet BLM's legal and regulatory mandates. Changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/FEIS include clarifications in wording, changes to the Preferred Alternative (such as adding two allotments as unavailable for grazing). Additional information and changes throughout the document have been shaded in light gray (with the exception of Chapter 5). See the end of Chapter 1, Introduction, Purpose and Need, for a summary of these changes. See Appendix U for a complete listing of every change between the Draft RMP/EIS and the present document.

## **ES.7: NEXT STEPS**

Following publication by the EPA and the BLM of a Notice of Availability of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS in the Federal Register and distribution of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, there will be a 30 day protest period. In addition, a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review period runs concurrently with the first half of the protest period.

The State Director will approve the Proposed RMP/FEIS by issuing a public Record of Decision (ROD), which is a concise document summarizing the findings and decisions brought forward from the Proposed RMP. However, approval shall be withheld on any portion of a plan being protested until final action has been completed on such protest. Before such approval is given, there shall be public notice and opportunity for public comment on any significant change made to the proposed plan. Among other decisions, the proposed ACEC designations and OHV categories (limitations and closures) will be approved when the ROD is signed. Implementation level decisions brought forward into this planning process will be appealable for 30 days after the ROD is signed.