

## **CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION**

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The Monticello Field Office (FO) of the Utah Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (formerly referred to as the San Juan Resource Area, Moab District) is in the process of revising its Resource Management Plan (RMP), which directs the use, protection, and enhancement of resources on public lands. The BLM has initiated a nationwide process of reviewing and updating, as necessary, their Land Use and Resource Management Plans. Many of these plans were developed in the 1980s and are now outdated. A Special Evaluation Report, completed in August 2001, determined that the San Juan RMP (1991) no longer provides effective guidance for the management issues now facing the Monticello FO. The 1991 RMP failed to anticipate issues related to resource uses and land use changes, and these circumstances have driven the need for a revision of the current RMP. Results from the evaluation report were incorporated into a Preparation Plan, which outlined preliminary planning criteria and specific resource issues of concern. These planning criteria and resource use issues will be used in the process of developing a revised RMP.

During the planning process, the Monticello FO will coordinate with the State of Utah, Native American Tribes (including the Ute, Navajo, Paiute, Hopi, and Puebloan Tribal groups), the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the local San Juan County government, as well as with applicable municipalities and private entities. The Monticello FO will also coordinate with adjacent BLM field offices in Utah and Colorado.

### **1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) directs the BLM to develop and periodically update the RMPs that guide land management on BLM-administered public lands. A first step in the process of revising an RMP is to provide information regarding the current management of the land administered by the Monticello FO in an Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS). The purpose of the AMS is to summarize the existing management situation, explain the need for change, propose a range of management opportunities, and describe any management limitations. As mentioned above, the resource uses and land uses within the planning area have changed since the approval of the current 1991 RMP.

General population growth and the increased need for resource development are occurring, along with a heightened concern for the environment. Public interest is challenging traditional consumptive uses (e.g., grazing, mining) , with uses that emphasize aesthetic values such as open space and increased the recreational opportunities. Conflicting uses need to be addressed in terms of how they affect local communities, regional and state interests, and ecosystem health. The effect of changes in resource use on the ecology and the socioeconomics of the region need to be addressed. In order to determine the current state of resource use, this AMS document discusses new land management issues and data since publication of the current 1991 RMP. In doing so, the AMS describes the physical, biological, and socioeconomic components of the environment that would be affected by the management decisions incorporated into the proposed RMP. The physical, biological, and socioeconomic descriptions in the AMS will also provide the analytical base for the proposed RMP's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

### **1.2 MANDATES AND AUTHORITIES FOR RMP/EIS PREPARATION**

The management of resource programs is governed by a series of laws and regulations that provide objectives and procedures for resource management. Specific resource-related mandates and authorities

are listed within each AMS resource chapter. In addition, there are several broad authorities that pertain to management of public lands and resources. These broad authorities include the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) – NEPA requires the use of a "systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and decision making that may have an impact on man's environment;" and "include in every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, a detailed statement...on the environmental impact of the proposed action." Significant impacts to the environment could result from the implementation of the revised RMP, and NEPA requires the analysis and disclosure of potential environmental impacts in an EIS.
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) – The FLPMA, as amended, requires that "the Secretary shall, with public involvement... develop, maintain, and, when appropriate, revise land use plans." The Act sets forth the policy concerning the management of public lands, and provides for the management of public lands under the principle of multiple use and sustained yield. The Act specifically calls for the periodic and systematic inventory of public land resources; the development, maintenance, and revision of public land use plans (using an interdisciplinary approach); and compliance with various state and federal standards. The Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to take any action necessary to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the environment.
- Clean Air Act of 1970 – This Act establishes the mechanism for control of air pollution for public health and welfare. This Act requires federal agencies to comply with all federal, state, and local requirements regarding the control and abatement of air pollution. This includes abiding by the requirements of State Implementation Plans (SIPs).
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended – This Act requires the BLM to ensure that proposed actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species and do not cause its critical habitat to be modified or destroyed. The Act provides a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved, provides a program for conservation of these species, and requires all federal agencies to seek to conserve these species and to use applicable authorities to further the purpose of the Act. The Act also requires federal agencies to avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of any species or habitat listed (or proposed for listing) as threatened or endangered, and the Act requires all federal agencies to consult (or confer) in accordance with Section 7 of the Act with the Secretary of the Interior, through the Fish and Wildlife Service, to ensure that any federal action (including land use plans) or activity is not likely to produce the destruction or adverse modification of designated or proposed habitat.
- Clean Water Act of 1987, as amended – The mandate of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) is to ensure the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, biological, and physical integrity of the nation's waters at a quality sufficient to protect fish and wildlife, as well as suitable for recreational use.
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, as amended – This Act requires federal land management agencies to identify potential river systems and then study them for potential designation as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational rivers.
- Federal Water Pollution Control Act – This Act requires federal land managers to comply with all federal, state, and local requirements, administrative authorities, processes, and sanctions regarding the control and abatement of water pollution in the same manner and to the same extent as any nongovernmental entity.

- Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act (43 USC 1593) – This Act requires a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from BLM-administered lands.
- Safe Drinking Water Act – As amended in 1996, this Act is designed to make the Nation's water safe for drinking and swimming. Amendments in 1996 established a direct connection between safe drinking water and watershed protection and management.
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 – This Act provides that the public rangelands be managed so that they become as productive as possible, in accordance with management objectives and the land use planning process established pursuant to 43 USC 1712.
- Antiquities Act of 1906 – This Act protects cultural resources on federal lands, and authorizes the President to designate National Monuments on federal lands.
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended – This Act expands protection of historic and archaeological properties to include those of national, state, and local significance, and directs federal agencies to consider the effects of proposed actions on properties eligible for or included in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934, as amended (42 U.S.C. 315, 315a through 315r) - Provides direction to protect rangelands by preventing overgrazing and soil deterioration while providing for managed use and improvement, and to stabilize the livestock industry dependent upon public lands.
- Mineral Materials Act, July 31, 1947 – grants the Secretary [Interior] to dispose of materials including but not limited to sand, stone, gravel, ... [and] common clay ... on public land of the United States ... .
- Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as amended and supplemented – Oil and gas in public domain lands and lands returned to the public domain under section 2370 are subject to lease.
- The General Mining Act of 1872 – “all valuable mineral deposits in lands belonging to the United States” are open to entry, location and purchase (patent) unless withdrawn.
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- 43 CFR 1600 – This federal regulation establishes the process by which the BLM develops, maintains, amends, and revises RMPs.

### 1.3 GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

The Monticello FO administers approximately 2,538,069 acres (3,966 mi<sup>2</sup>) of mineral estate land, approximately 2,066,810 (3,229 mi<sup>2</sup>) acres of grazing land, and approximately 1,785,127 acres (2,789 mi<sup>2</sup>) of public lands in southeastern Utah. The Monticello FO planning area lies primarily within San Juan County; there is a small portion on the northern boundary that is within Grand County. The Monticello FO includes within its boundaries a number of national parks, national monuments, and USFS-administered lands: Canyonlands National Park lies along the northwestern portion of the Monticello FO boundary; Natural Bridges National Monument lies in the southwestern part of the FO planning area; and a large unit of the Manti-La Sal National Forest lies in the center of the FO planning area boundary.

Table 1.1 below shows land ownership and corresponding acreages within the Monticello FO planning area.

**Table 1.1. Land Ownership Within the Monticello Field Office Planning Area**

Ownership	Acres
BLM	1,785,127
Navajo Nation Reservation	1,278,476
National Park Service	528,565
Private	353,516
State	202,318
U.S. Forest Service	319,933
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,467,935</b>

Source: BLM 2004

Geologically, the Monticello FO planning area is part of the Colorado Plateau physiographic province, an area world-famous for its topographic diversity, its extraordinary landforms, and numerous scenic attractions. The topography of the Monticello FO planning area is defined largely by high mountains, steep escarpments and ridges, and incised canyons. Elevations vary from approximately 3,700 feet above sea level near Lake Powell to over 11,000 feet in the Abajo Mountains. The area's landforms are largely a product of eroded sandstones, and exposed igneous intrusions, such as the Abajo and La Sal Mountains.

Mean monthly temperatures in the lower valley regions reach over 90 degrees Fahrenheit (° F) in July and less than 20° F in January. Mean annual precipitation in the lower valley regions is less than 10 inches. Precipitation increases with elevation to approximately 15 inches annual precipitation at Monticello and 30 inches annual precipitation in the Abajo Mountains. Precipitation is highest from July to October, during convective storms, but generally occurs throughout the year.

The BLM Field Offices surrounding the Monticello FO planning area include: San Juan Colorado to the east; Kanab and Richfield to the west; and Moab to the north. The towns of Monticello, Blanding, Bluff, and Mexican Hat are the largest population centers within the area (see Figure 1-1).

Land ownership within the planning area consists primarily of large blocks of BLM-administered public land interspersed with smaller, privately owned tracts, and state land owned by the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). The Mackracken Split Estate is a tract of land that is jointly administered by the BLM and the BIA.

The Monticello FO manages grazing and minerals on NPS-administered land, and federal minerals on USFS-administered land. The McCracken Extension an area of split estate where the FO manages federal minerals on Native American reservation land that is administered by the BIA and Native American tribal councils. The FO also administers grazing allotments that extend into the Moab Field Office resource management area to the north, and the Colorado San Juan BLM Field Office to the east.

Other agencies that manage resources within the area include the USFS, the NPS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the BIA. Additional lands are held in private or Tribal ownership. All of the land south of the San Juan River is within the Navajo Nation Reservation. Minerals on these lands are administered by the Farmington New Mexico FO by agreement.

## **1.4 RESOURCE SETTING**

Surface water in the Monticello FO planning area originates primarily from the major, regional rivers (the Colorado, the Green, and the San Juan). Additional surface water comes from those intermittent and perennial streams that originate in the Abajo Mountains. Runoff occurs from snowmelt and from the brief, but intense, summer convective thunderstorms. Much of the Monticello FO planning area provides habitat for desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn, rocky mountain elk, and mule deer. Numerous raptor species inhabit the area, including bald eagles and peregrine falcons. Fish species that inhabit the rivers and waterways include humpback chub, Colorado pikeminnow, and razorback sucker.

Archaeologically, the Monticello FO planning area is one of the richest under BLM management. It also possesses unique paleontological resources that occur as fossils in rock formations that outcrop in the region.

Land use within the Monticello FO planning area is a mixture of historical land uses, such as grazing and hard rock mining, and increasingly popular recreational activities such as backpacking, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, and sightseeing. The Monticello FO manages grazing allotments and recreational areas. Other agencies and private owners also manage some grazing allotments, while some of the recreational use areas are managed jointly by the BLM and other agencies.

Land use and economic resources within the Monticello FO planning area include oil and natural gas exploration and development; uranium, vanadium, and copper mining; livestock grazing; woodland products; and building stone. Recreational resources provide opportunities for public enjoyment, as well as providing additional revenues to businesses in and adjacent to the FO planning area. Table 1.1 below shows land ownership and corresponding acreages within the Monticello FO planning area.

## **1.5 PLANNING PROCESS**

The purpose of the RMP is to guide BLM public land managers in making decisions concerning land uses and resource allocations, within the context of current planning regulations and policies. Planning process regulations are found in 43 CFR 1600, and planning program guidance is found in BLM Manual 1600. The AMS is one step in the RMP planning process: it describes the current land and resource management within the planning area, analyzes the effectiveness of current management, identifies data gaps, and outlines opportunities for more effective resource use and protection and any management limitations that could inhibit effective resource use and protection.

The issues and questions raised through public involvement meetings and comments drive the planning process. Opportunities are made available during the planning process and subsequent NEPA analysis to encourage agencies, interested organizations, stakeholders, and the general public to participate. All comments submitted through the scoping process are considered in the formulation of alternatives. Resource Management Planning includes coordination of the following processes: writing and review of the Analysis of Management Situation (AMS), alternatives development for the Draft EIS, response to comments on the DEIS, and formulation of the Resource Management Plan.

Documents produced during the RMP preparation process include the following:

- Preplanning Analysis
- Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS)
- Draft RMP Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

- Final RMP EIS (FEIS), which includes the Preferred Management Alternative (i.e., the Proposed RMP)
- Record of Decision (ROD) and Final RMP

A detailed description of these documents and the planning steps they include are provided below.

## 1.6 PREPLANNING ANALYSIS

The preplanning analysis comprises the first two steps of the planning process, which are: 1) internal BLM identification of issues, and 2) internal development of preliminary planning criteria.

### 1.6.1 Issue Identification

Issues are further identified through the scoping process of externally identified issues. For the Monticello FO RMP, scoping occurred from January 2003 through December 2003, and through a Planning Bulletin requesting input on issues and concerns. Agencies, interested organizations, stakeholders, and the general public were able to voice their concerns, identify issues, and nominate Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). Six public meetings were held to solicit public input. These meetings were held in October and November 2003 in Green River, Grand Junction, Moab, Monticello, Blanding, and Salt Lake City.

The identification of resource issues is one of the first steps in the planning process. Planning issues generally can be considered as resource management problems and opportunities that the Monticello FO needs to address to ensure that it is fulfilling its mission of multiple-use and sustained yield resource management, as required by FLPMA. That is, resource issues are considered in the context of planning goals, which are to maintain ecosystem health and productivity while promoting community stability and ensuring sustainable economic development. Issues may be identified as local, state, or national needs, or may reflect conditions specific to the Monticello FO.

Preliminary issues, identified in the Special Evaluation Report, are presented below. The following preliminary planning issues and management concerns were identified during an internal BLM evaluation conducted on 31 July 1–August 2001 by the Monticello FO. The evaluation consisted of a review of the current San Juan RMP. Note that these issues are subject to change during the planning process, as new conditions are identified and the public becomes more fully involved. Resources and issues are not listed in order of importance.

**Wildlife and Fish Habitat, and Special Status Species.** There is a need to address habitat allocations and conflicts, habitat fragmentation and degradation, drought and the competition for water between livestock and wildlife, and disease transmission. Wildlife habitats need to be characterized, and the planning effort needs to assess and use wildlife habitat inventories to identify measurable objectives for important wildlife habitat. Permitted versus non-permitted recreation activities need to be considered in regard to wildlife protection. Controlling access to wildlife habitat should be a consideration. There is a need to identify opportunities or restrictions to achieve management objectives. Management actions need to include state management objectives. Geographic Information System (GIS) maps need to be updated with new distribution data. Special status species locations need to be documented, along with designated critical habitat. There is a need to incorporate recovery plan boundaries, habitat definitions, and management recommendations for special status species. Strategies need to be formulated for protecting threatened and endangered species, particularly the Mexican spotted owl, southwestern willow flycatcher, and yellow-billed cuckoo. Additional management actions for desert bighorn sheep and Gunnison sage grouse need to be considered. There is a need to include prescriptions from the sage grouse management

guidelines related to the protection of buffer zones around leks, as well as the general management of the sagebrush ecosystem to ensure the protection of sage grouse habitat. There are no stipulations for deer fawning, elk calving, and bighorn sheep lambing. There is a need to consider the impacts of road development on wildlife resources. There is insufficient habitat for small mammals and amphibians, and insufficient protection of raptors. The restoration of prairie dog habitat should be considered. There is a need for consistent riparian habitat management guidelines that address scheduled deferment/rest of riparian areas from livestock grazing. Management of the Animal Damage Control program in accordance with National and State Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) should be included.

**Vegetation and Special Status Plants.** There is a need to consider the adoption of the list of special status plants including Utah's BLM State Director Sensitive Plant List. Management for these species should be incorporated into the RMP revision in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. BLM should establish criteria for keeping this list current for new species or critical habitat, through RMP maintenance. Current recovery plans, conservation agreements, and biological opinions in the revised RMP planning process should be considered, and actions identified in recovery plans for listed species and protection of critical habitat should be implemented. There is a need to consider the management of noxious weeds in the revised RMP planning process, which is not considered in the current RMP. Also, the lack of treatment maintenance of vegetation should be considered. The revised RMP should establish integrated pest management criteria in light of current policy and laws for management of these species. There is a need to maintain and restore the health of sagebrush, grasslands, and pinyon-juniper vegetation communities, in response to the impacts of drought, infestations (by insects and noxious weeds), seed collection, recreation, and encroachment by other vegetation communities.

**Wetland and Riparian Areas.** Impacts of recreational activities, grazing, and invasive species on wetland and riparian areas should be addressed. There is a need to consider the encroachment of tamarisk on riparian cottonwood.

**Livestock Grazing/Rangeland.** The revised RMP needs to reflect the Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, and the Utah Rangeland and Health Standards. Recreation Standards and Guidelines should be incorporated into the planning process, and standards applied to all surface-disturbing activities. The planning process needs to identify best management practices and rehabilitation techniques to assure properly functioning ecosystems. There is a need to incorporate BLM policy regarding native species versus introduced species for rangeland rehabilitation. There is a need to consider the impacts and potential use-conflicts of livestock grazing in riparian areas.

**Hazardous Materials, Sites, and Wastes.** The planning process needs to address issues related to management of hazardous materials, including BLM employee safety, waste management, the criteria for evaluation and handling of hazardous wastes, and updated policy and regulations. There is a need to assess, update, and develop management plans on the current hazards to public and BLM employee safety, such as abandoned mines, in existing and proposed recreation areas in order to eliminate or minimize these hazards.

**Mineral Resources.** Standard operating procedures need to be developed for all mineral activity. Plan maintenance is needed for minerals. There is a need to review projected mineral development, and baseline minerals information needs to be revised based on new and developing information (i.e., McCracken Extension and the Lockhart Basin). A minerals regional reasonable foreseeable development (RFD) scenario needs to be coordinated with the Moab FO planning area, and criteria for updating the RFD needs to be developed. There is a need to update and identify mineral development potential throughout the Monticello FO planning area. An analysis of the resource potential of unleased coal, combined hydrocarbons, and salable and locatable minerals is needed. There is a need to develop guidelines for surface use stipulations based on expected impacts that could apply to surface-disturbing

activities. The socioeconomic impacts of minerals development should be considered. Also, there is a need to incorporate new guidelines and policies into future planning efforts, which includes integrating the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) into the BLM's land use planning and use authorization programs.

**Cultural Resources.** The revised RMP needs to be updated to reflect current BLM cultural resource program policy, including traditional cultural properties. The Class I Overview is out of date, and upgrades are necessary to appropriately address cultural resource issues. Not all of the cultural resource decisions in the current RMP have been implemented. The Comb Ridge area is not in the current RMP, and the plan may consider the proposal of Comb Ridge as a National Register of Historic Places District. Coordination with the Colorado BLM in the Hovenweep ACEC–Canyon of the Ancients National Monument area needs to be considered. Current procedures for Section 106 consultations and consultation with tribal leaders need to be incorporated into future planning efforts. There is a need to take into consideration all new laws, regulations, manuals, and program guidance for cultural resources in the planning area. There is a need to recognize and consider possible solutions to the widespread use of digital Global Positioning System (GPS) in the identification of cultural resource locations. There is a need to provide a more active and educational forum for the cultural resource management including consideration of values for science, education, recreation, and research. The recently designated Old Spanish National Historic Trail needs to be evaluated for travel route conflicts.

**Paleontological Resources.** The Class I Overview is out of date, and upgrades are necessary to appropriately address paleontological resource issues. The Morrison geologic formation should be identified as a feature that may have fossil resources. There is a need to identify and map paleontological hotspots, for internal BLM use in resource planning. New paleontological guidance needs to be incorporated into future planning efforts (i.e., BLM Manual and Handbook H-8270-1), and the ramifications of looting should be addressed by law enforcement. There is a need to provide a more active and educational forum for the paleontological resource management including consideration of values for science, education, recreation, and research. There is a need to take into consideration all new laws, regulations, manuals, and program guidance for paleontological resources in the planning area.

**Fire.** Hazardous fuel loading is becoming a concern in wilderness areas and in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas. The fire policies presented in the 2001 Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, with the new terminology, needs to be included in the revised RMP planning effort. As required by the 2001 Wildland Fire Management Policy, there is a need to address appropriate fire management actions that include areas where fire is not desired, areas where fire could be used as a resource management tool, and areas where fuel reductions are necessary. The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy also needs to be considered in formulating fire management planning. The management direction in the Fire Management Plan needs to be reviewed and analyzed in the next planning effort, and revised as needed. The 2001 hazardous fuels policy and guidance needs to be included in the revised RMP, and WUI issues and adjacent communities at risk need to be addressed. Safety measures need to be incorporated into the revised RMP. Consider the impacts of fire on air quality. There is a need to consider the impacts of widespread pinyon pine losses from drought, disease, and infestation on fire potential, and the threat from human-caused errors on wildland fire potential.

**Air Quality.** Ensure compliance with all applicable local, state, tribal, and federal air quality laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans. Federal PSD Class I areas are within and in proximity to the Monticello FO, and need to be addressed. Baseline data are needed to address potential air quality impacts.

**Woodland Resources.** There is a need to look at fuel modification for future woodland manipulation. The revised RMP needs to address the correlation of insufficient harvesting and fuels buildup. The current

RMP does not address the harvesting of pinyon and juniper green wood, so clarification is needed in the revised RMP. There is a need to examine OHV access to and impacts on areas open to woodland harvests. There is a need to address possible commercial pinyon/juniper fuelwood harvests on public lands. There is a need to assess forest and woodland resources related to environmental justice and needs of minority populations, primarily Native American groups, that depend upon firewood as their primary source of heat. The planning process needs to address the cutting of green pinyon/juniper, identifying seed collection areas, and the possible free use of some woodland species for Native American religious and cultural purposes. There is a need to address the impacts of insect infestations, hazardous fuel loading, the interruption of historic fire regimes, tamarisk encroachment, overland travel, and wood collection on woodland resources.

**Lands and Realty.** There is no general language in the current RMP for dealing with land acquisitions and other land tenure actions. The status of lands needs to be updated, and maps found in the FEIS need to be incorporated into future planning efforts. The planning process needs to ensure that transportation planning issues and utility right-of-way corridor issues are addressed. Public land access needs to be ensured, and that proposals for land tenure adjustments (including the State Focus List) will be evaluated and prioritized in the context of facilitating resource management objectives. There is a need to review recent land tenure adjustments or ownerships, and management agreements that were not addressed in the current RMP. Current land withdrawals need to be reviewed, alternative energy resources need to be considered, and source protection for municipal culinary water needs to be addressed. There is a need to coordinate with the State Office on how to address RS2477 rights-of-way issues in future planning efforts. There is a need to identify land withdrawals that no longer serve a purpose. There is a need to maintain natural landscapes for filming exchanges, acquisitions, withdrawals, and disposals. There is a need to identify SITLA land parcels as targets for land exchanges, consider ownership adjustments (e.g., road conflicts with San Juan County), and ownership along San Juan River accretion areas.

**Socioeconomics.** Updated and current socioeconomic data and analyses need to be obtained for incorporation into the planning process, as well as the incorporation of Environmental Justice considerations. The current RMP was written prior to the Executive Order requiring Environmental Justice analysis.

**Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs).** The use designations in the current RMP are outdated and do not address the level of current OHV use. There is a need to incorporate OHV National Strategy and Utah OHV Strategy into future planning efforts. OHV designations should be reviewed and revised as necessary to protect other resources, and maps developed to identify uses of competing resources and show the public where OHV use is allowed. Use fees should be considered in OHV use planning. There is a need to make certain that OHV designations and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are consistent in future planning efforts, and to coordinate with adjacent field offices to match OHV designations.

**Recreation.** There is a need to consider how to meet public demands while protecting sustainable opportunities and natural resource values. There is a need to address resource conflicts and the impacts from recreational activities, conflicts and impacts regarding cultural sites, user conflicts and displacement (e.g., motorized—non-motorized, private—commercial), the increase in OHV use, the impacts of river use, the increase in visitors, the dispersion or displacement of visitors from the National Parks onto BLM lands, and the dependence of local economies on public land use. Recreational activities in different locations need to be evaluated. Due to the increase in recreational use on BLM lands, the impacts to other resources may need to be identified and analyzed.

There is a need to identify the kinds and levels of land uses that could sustain recreational values. Management plans for the Hole in the Rock Trail and Dark Canyon need to be prepared, with additional consideration of a permit system within Dark Canyon. The connection between OHV damage to natural

resources and unregulated camping needs to be addressed, and areas designated for horses should be considered. There is a need for a San Juan River recreation plan. A travel plan and trail system needs to be prepared for OHV use. There is a need to consider Utah Recreation Standards for public land health and Guidelines for Recreation Management in the planning process. There is a need to incorporate into the planning process the policies and regulations regarding Special Recreation Permits, and their application both locally and regionally. There is a need to establish limits of use of acceptable change that will protect recreation resource values while satisfying the public's demand for these uses. Management of existing recreation developments should be evaluated, as well as the need for facilities. Impacts of graffiti and the destruction of cultural resources caused by recreational activity should be considered. There is a need to consider health and safety, such as human waste and flooding. There is a need to review management prescriptions from the current RMP and evaluate their application in the proposed plan revision. There is a need to assess recreational use patterns and analyze the impacts of recreation on other resources. The need for more interpretive sites to manage the high demand for visiting cultural sites should be considered, as well as limiting activities to roads and trails, and educating OHV users to reduce OHV impacts. A management plan should be completed in conjunction with the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA) and the Navajo Nation to reflect current needs and issues with the river corridor.

**Visual Resources.** The Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes may need to be modified to protect the visual resources within the FO. New VRM guidance needs to be incorporated into the revised RMP. Visual resource management needs to be separated from recreational resource management. There is a need to review the VRM inventory to ensure land management classification consistency. Develop a current VRM management map and establish limits of acceptable change.

**Watersheds and Water Quality.** Impacts from recreational activities and grazing are affecting water quality and watersheds within the Monticello FO planning area. There is a need to ensure that management of watershed and water quality programs is consistent throughout the Monticello FO planning area. The water inventory database needs to be updated in such areas as springs, wells, and groundwater in order to support future planning efforts. There is a need to identify priority watersheds within the planning area (and those watersheds in need of protection), and develop management criteria for actions allowed within priority watersheds. New planning efforts should incorporate water quality standards as described by the State. Also, the new planning efforts need to address water quality concerns related to activities on public lands including, but not limited to, the requirements mandated by the Clean Water Act, state water classifications in the 303D and 305 report, state water inventories, and sources at risk for water quality due to naturally occurring formations.

**Wild and Scenic Rivers.** The revised RMP needs to verify and/or reassess the Wild and Scenic eligibility of segments of the San Juan, Colorado, and White Canyon rivers, incorporating new guidance into the planning efforts. Suitability studies for all eligible segments should be completed during the RMP process.

**Wilderness.** There is a need to resolve inconsistencies between OHV closed designations and WSA boundaries. There is a need to develop management plans for the existing WSAs within the Monticello FO planning area boundaries. Native Americans have concerns with wilderness concepts, and they are opposed to wilderness restrictions of their use of resources within WSA boundaries. Joint USFS and BLM management of resources within the Dark Canyon ACEC should be considered. There is a need for the revised RMP to address inconsistencies with management prescriptions resulting from OHV designations, oil and gas leasing categories, and interim management of WSAs. There is a need to establish VRM objectives in each WSA, need to prescribe how vehicles will be managed in each WSA by OHV designations and need to identify how each WSA would be managed if released from wilderness consideration by Congress.

Management of lands with wilderness characteristics remains an extremely controversial issue in Utah. Thirteen areas were established as wilderness study areas (WSAs) in the 1980s in the Monticello Field Office, and are being managed to preserve their wilderness characteristics until Congress determines whether they should be designated as wilderness. Others areas have since been inventoried by the BLM and determined that they possess wilderness characteristics. The public has suggested that other areas have wilderness characteristics and should be managed to preserve these values. While the BLM will not consider designating additional WSAs in this planning process, BLM will consider the information in formulating possible management actions.

Management of existing WSAs would be guided by the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Land Under Wilderness Review (IMP). Land use allocations made within WSAs must be consistent with the IMP and with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management. The RMP must also address how these lands would be managed if released by Congress from WSA status. If Congress designates areas as wilderness, then they would be managed to preserve their wilderness values, according to applicable laws and policy.

**Special Management Designations.** There is a need to prioritize and establish clear management objectives for special management areas within the FO. There is a need to consider what plans need to be developed and identify them in the new planning effort. There is a need to schedule and prioritize plan development. There is a need to check for consistency of management adjacent to the newly designated Canyon of the Ancients National Monument. Management prescriptions for existing ACECs need to be reviewed and modified, as appropriate. New nominations will be solicited through the planning process, and there is a need to establish priorities for management plan development and implementation for any new ACECs.

## 1.6.2 Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the plan, and determine how the planning team approaches the development of alternatives and, ultimately, selection of a Preferred Alternative. A Planning Bulletin requesting comments and specific planning criteria was sent out to the public. Comments received will be included in the Planning criteria as listed in the DEIS. These criteria ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. They focus on the decisions to be made in the plan and achieve the following:

- Provide an early, tentative basis for inventory and data collection needs.
- Enable the manager and staff to develop a preliminary planning base map delineating geographic analysis units.
- Stimulate the development of planning criteria during public participation.

Following are the preliminary planning criteria for the Monticello FO RMP revisions:

- Plan revisions will recognize the existence of current, valid rights.
- All decisions made in the RMP revisions will only apply to public lands, including split estate land (subsurface mineral estate) managed by the BLM.
- The BLM will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where possible, to jointly determine the desired future conditions of public lands. At a minimum, the Utah Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines will be met.
- The BLM will strive to ensure that its management prescriptions are as consistent as possible to other planning jurisdictions, within the boundaries described by law and policy.

- Final management prescriptions will consider a range of alternatives that focus on the relative values of resources and not the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or output and ensure responsiveness to the issues.
- Sensitive watersheds will be identified and watershed conditions determined, in particular on Utah Category One (A, B, and C) watersheds and those HUC-8 sub-basins ranked highest in the Utah Interagency Colorado River Salinity Ranking Process (BLM, NRCS, USGS, BOR).
- The socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives will be addressed.
- The BLM will use current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore impaired ecosystems.
- Direction provided by the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Policy will be incorporated into the planning process. Planning will be consistent with the National Fire Plan.
- Comprehensive Land Health Standards and Guidelines will apply to all activities and uses and generally will be evaluated on a watershed basis. Standards and guidelines would be applicable to all alternatives.
- Baseline Reasonable Foreseeable Management/Development (RFD) scenarios will be developed and portrayed based on historical, existing, and projected levels of development.
- The BLM will coordinate with Native American Tribes to identify sites, areas, issues, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage.
- Paleontological and cultural resources will be evaluated for use allocation and, if appropriate, include provisions for interpretation, preservation, conservation and enhancement.
- The decisions of this plan will comply with the Endangered Species Act and follow interagency agreements with USFWS regarding the Section 7 consultation process.
- Areas potentially suitable for ACECs and other special management designations will be identified and brought forward for analysis in the RMP.
- River segments will be considered and determinations of eligibility, tentative classification, suitability, and protective management will be made in accordance with Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and BLM Manual 8351. Public nominations will be requested.
- Vegetation management objectives will be developed for specific areas. Limits will be identified on the type and amount of disturbance that will be allowed before mitigation is required.
- VRM objectives will be developed for public land in the field office area.
- The decision of the RMP will be consistent with the legislation designating the Old Spanish National Historic Trail, and the comprehensive management plan (in preparation).
- Management actions will be responsive to the issues, concerns, and opportunities identified for resolution in this plan revision.
- Decisions regarding OHV travel will be consistent with the BLM's National OHV Strategy.

## **1.7 ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT SITUATION**

Development of the AMS incorporates the next two planning steps: 1) collection of existing data, and 2) an analysis of the current management programs in use by the Monticello FO. The analysis also assesses whether the resources will be able to meet current and future demands under the current management programs. Where no conflicts or concerns are identified, those management programs may be carried through to the final RMP. Any identified problems are further scrutinized as to whether or not they can be

resolved administratively. If they cannot, various ways to adjust the land use or reallocate the resource are proposed and carried through the EIS process.

## **1.8 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

This is the phase of the planning process whereby the alternatives for the EIS are formulated, impacts are analyzed and disclosed, and a preferred alternative is chosen. The level of management, management actions, and management objectives under the current RMP comprise the No-Action alternative, which will be the basis for comparison of the action alternatives. As stated above, the alternatives are formed from the planning issues raised during scoping. The Draft EIS, which analyzes and discloses the environmental impacts of the alternatives and presents the BLM's preferred alternative, is distributed for public review and comment. These comments are then analyzed, addressed, and, as appropriate, incorporated into the proposed RMP and Final EIS. Further review of the proposed RMP comes from the Utah State Governor for consistency between the proposed RMP and state and local land-use plans. The proposed RMP and Final EIS are subject to public protest through a formal procedure described in 43 CFR 1610.5-2.

## **1.9 RECORD OF DECISION AND FINAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The publication of the Record of Decision (ROD) and the final RMP completes the planning process. The ROD usually is not substantially different from the proposed RMP and, therefore, is not subject to public review. The final RMP provides resource management guidance, either taken directly from those existing management programs evaluated as being sufficient, or from resolved planning issues analyzed in the EIS. Monitoring and evaluation of the RMP will follow a set schedule and will be documented through plan supplements, amendments, or addenda.

## **1.10 DATA AND THE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)**

Data management and the effort expended to acquire, develop, use, and share geospatial information for this planning process will be integrated into and coordinated with other federal and BLM data management initiatives. Most of the data gathered and used in this planning effort will be used during RMP implementation and by other resource programs to conduct day-to-day resource management. As the jurisdictional boundaries of the Monticello FO planning area are contiguous with other BLM Field Offices, data development and data management will be coordinated with other BLM planning efforts to ensure that the data remain consistent.

Inventory data are used to provide a basis for preparing and monitoring the RMP. Existing information is often combined with new data to analyze alternatives and make planning decisions. The BLM has compiled a database that has been supplemented by private contractors and other government agencies. Any data gaps and the means to acquire the information are identified in the AMS.

A Geographic Information System (GIS) was used to display, analyze, and store the resource data. A GIS allows managers to integrate data, such as resource locations and acreage calculations, from many types of resources and identify potential conflicting uses. The GIS is a useful tool in the formulation of alternatives, and it will also be used, following completion of the RMP development process, for resource management.

## **1.11 REFERENCES**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) 2004. GIS data. Monticello Field Office, Monticello, Utah.