

CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 BACKGROUND

A Resource Management Plan (RMP) guides management actions on public lands. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) documents broad-scale land use plan decisions in an RMP that covers each program area and guides subsequent site-specific implementation. Comprehensive in nature, RMPs address resource management issues identified through public, agency, and interagency scoping efforts as well as resource management according to laws, regulations, and BLM policies. The RMP establishes goals and objectives for resource management, actions needed to achieve them, and parameters for using BLM lands. Lands open or available for certain uses, including any applicable restrictions, and lands closed to certain uses are also identified. When there are competing resource uses and values in the same area, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended, requires the BLM to manage the public lands and their various resources so they are used in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

The approval of this RMP constitutes a major federal action, and pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). NEPA requires federal agencies to consider environmental consequences in their decisionmaking process. This EIS was prepared to formulate the RMP while fulfilling the requirements of NEPA in 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500–1508 and 43 CFR 1601.0-6. The EIS informs decisionmakers and the public of a range of reasonable alternatives, associated environmental impacts, and any mitigation measures required for selection of an alternative.

Currently, land managed by the Price Field Office (PFO) is managed using the 1983 *Price River Management Framework Plan* (MFP) and supplements and the 1991 *San Rafael RMP* and amendments. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS resulted from internal interdisciplinary team coordination, public involvement and the gathering of the best available information. The BLM published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on November 7, 2001 announcing its intention to replace the Price River and San Rafael land use plans and prepare an EIS. The BLM provided extensive opportunities for public and other agency involvement during the scoping process. Scoping meetings were held in six cities and ended February 15, 2002. More information on the scoping process is presented in Chapter 5 and in the *Scoping Report for the Price RMP and EIS (2002)*. The information submitted by citizens and groups helped the BLM identify the issues that were addressed during this planning process.

Based on agency expertise and issues raised by the public, the BLM prepared a Draft Resource Management Plan /Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft RMP/EIS) with a full description of the affected environment, a reasonable range of alternatives, and an analysis of the impacts of each alternative. The BLM published the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Price Draft RMP/EIS for public review and comment in the *Federal Register* on July 16, 2004. This initiated the 90-day public comment period; public requests extended the public comment period for another 45 days, which concluded on November 29, 2004. In addition, four public meetings were held in August 2004 to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the Price Draft RMP/EIS.

The original NOA for the Draft RMP/EIS released July 2004 was augmented with an NOA published in the *Federal Register* on December 13, 2005, providing the public with information on Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) considered in the Draft RMP/EIS and specifically requesting public comments on the ACECs. Specifically, this NOA published information about each existing and potential ACEC as required in 43 CFR 1610.7-2. This initiated a 60-day public comment period. Public comments

submitted on this NOA were considered and responses prepared for inclusion in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

Six months later the BLM published another NOA of the *Supplemental Information and Analysis to the Price Field Office Draft RMP/EIS for ACECs* for public review and comment in the *Federal Register* on June 9, 2006. The supplemental information provided additional documentation regarding the disposition of ACECs nominated during scoping, provided a description of four additional potential ACECs not presented in the 2004 Draft RMP/EIS, and analyzed any potential impacts relating to the inclusion of these ACECs in Alternative C of the Price Draft RMP/EIS. This initiated the 90-day public comment period. Public comments submitted on this NOA were considered and responses prepared for inclusion in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

A second NOI was published in the *Federal Register* on May 24, 2007, notifying the public that the BLM Vernal and Price Field Offices, Utah, were preparing a Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS to include a new alternative which provides management prescriptions and analysis to protect, preserve, and maintain wilderness characteristics for areas outside existing Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). Previous inventory maintenance activities over the past twelve years showed multiple areas in the Price Field Office, outside of existing WSAs, which were found to have wilderness characteristics. The BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) provides guidance for considering non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics in land use planning. The handbook provides that the BLM consider these lands and resource values in planning, and prescribe measures to protect wilderness characteristics. These characteristics include appearance of naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, or outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

When completed, the BLM published the NOA for the *Supplement to the Price Field Office Draft RMP/EIS for Non-WSA lands with Wilderness Characteristics* for public review and comment in the *Federal Register* on September 14, 2007. The PFO Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS presented Alternative E which provided specific management actions to protect, preserve, and maintain the wilderness characteristics of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. This new alternative ensured that: (1) consideration was given to wilderness characteristics; (2) an appropriate range of alternatives was considered for these lands; and (3) an adequate analysis was prepared from which to base future land use decisions. This NOA initiated a 90-day public comment period. Public comments submitted on this NOA were considered and responses prepared for inclusion in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS incorporates all of the information provided to the public as part of the Draft RMP/EIS, which includes the original Draft RMP/EIS, the ACEC Supplemental Information and Analysis, and the Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Supplement.

The Proposed RMP consists of a combination of all the alternatives, as well as information from the ACEC Supplement (June 2006) and the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics supplement (September 2007), and Alternative D from the Draft RMP/EIS – which was used as the foundation for the Proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS does not carry forward, in whole, Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) from the Draft RMP/EIS. Alternative D (preferred alternative) in the Draft RMP/EIS has been replaced with the Proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP was crafted in response to public comments, internal comments, and coordination with cooperating agencies. Completing a new RMP allows the PFO area to be managed under one planning document. This new RMP will provide planning guidance for public land and federal mineral estates managed by the PFO in Carbon and Emery counties in central-eastern Utah. The PFO has coordinated the management of public lands within its boundaries with other land management agencies, including the State of Utah, the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Carbon and Emery counties, municipalities, and private entities. The PFO has also coordinated management with adjoining BLM offices.

This EIS analyzes the Proposed RMP and five distinct alternatives from the Draft RMP/EIS for management of public lands in the PFO. All decisions discussed in this document apply only to public lands and federal mineral estates administered by the BLM.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

1.2.1 Purpose

FLPMA requires that the BLM "develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land-use plans" (43 United States Code [USC] 1712 [a]). The BLM has determined it is necessary to revise existing land-use plans (LUP) and prepare a new RMP for the PFO based on a number of new issues that have arisen since preparation of the existing plans. In general, the purpose of this RMP is to provide a comprehensive framework for public land management within the PFO and its allocation of resources pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate of FLPMA. In addition, the purpose of this plan revision is as follows:

- To consolidate the existing LUPs and its amendments.
- To reevaluate, with public involvement, existing conditions, resources, and uses, and reconsider the mix of resource allocations and management decisions designed to balance uses and the protection of resources pursuant to FLPMA and applicable law.
- To resolve multiple-use conflicts or issues between resource values and resource uses. The resulting Price RMP will establish consolidated guidance and updated goals, objectives, and management actions for the public lands in the decision area. The RMP will be comprehensive in nature and will address issues that have been identified through agency, interagency, and public scoping efforts.
- To disclose and assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the reasonably foreseeable future actions resulting from the management actions in the Proposed RMP and draft alternatives pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), its implementing regulations, and other applicable laws.

1.2.2 Need

A revision to the *Price MFP 1983* and *San Rafael RMP 1991* is necessary because there have been significant alterations in light of new information and changed resources, circumstances, and policies relevant to the future management of public lands and allocation of resources under the multiple-use and sustained yield mandate. The BLM completed detailed evaluations of the Price River MFP and San Rafael RMP in 2001 and determined that both plans needed revision (BLM 2001). The evaluation also noted that many of the decisions in both existing land use plans had already been implemented, thus a revision was needed.

Changes in the laws, policies, and regulations directing public land resource management and new information and resource data need to be considered to better manage the public lands. Population in and visitation to the region have grown, and population demographics have changed, as have public awareness and use of lands within the planning area. Specifically, there may be a need to evaluate management prescriptions and resource allocations to address the increases in recreation and visitor use, including scenic quality and open spaces, as well as the increased interest in oil and gas development. Land use plan decisions may be changed only through the amendment or revision process.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The PFO is located in central-eastern Utah on the western portion of the Colorado Plateau and encompasses Carbon and Emery counties (Map 1-1). The BLM PFO is bounded by the Carbon-Duchesne–Utah County line on the north, the Green River on the east, the Emery-Wayne County line on the south, and county lines for Sanpete and Sevier counties to the west. Lands managed by the PFO encompass 2,479,000 acres of surface estate and 2,723,000 acres of federal mineral resources underlying lands managed by the BLM, USFS, the State of Utah, and private entities. The planning area shares boundaries with the Richfield Field Office, Salt Lake Field Office, Vernal Field Office, Moab Field Office, and Manti-La Sal National Forest as well as the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. Land ownership is shown in Table 1-1 and Map 1-2.

Table 1-1. Land Ownership in the Price Field Office, by County

Land Owner	Number of Acres	Percentage of Total
Carbon County		
BLM	418,000	44
USFS	30,000	3
State	125,000	13
Private	373,000	40
Total Carbon County	946,000	100
Emery County		
BLM	2,061,000	72
USFS	211,000	7
National Park Service	2,100	<1
State	348,000	12
Private	228,000	8
Total Emery County	2,850,100	100
Total Field Office—Carbon and Emery Counties Combined		
BLM	2,479,000	65
USFS	241,000	6
National Park Service	2,100	<1
State	473,000	13
Private	601,000	16
Total Carbon and Emery Counties	3,788,100	100

Communities in the northern portion of the planning area are located adjacent to U.S. Highway 6 (US-6). These include Helper, Price (Carbon County seat), Wellington, and East Carbon/Sunnyside (off Highway U-123). Several communities are located to the south adjacent to Highway SR-10. These include Huntington, Castle Dale (Emery County seat), Orangeville, Ferron, and Emery. Green River is located on the east side of Emery County on Interstate 70 (I-70).

Elevations in the PFO range from approximately 4,000 feet to more than 10,000 feet. The planning area is drained by the Green River and its tributaries, including the Price and San Rafael Rivers. A number of popular scenic attractions lie within the area, including the Book Cliffs, Roan Cliffs, San Rafael Swell, Nine Mile Canyon, Desolation Canyon, Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry, and Price River Canyon.

1.4 BLM'S PLANNING PROCESS

1.4.1 Overview and Types of Planning

FLPMA is the primary authority for the BLM's public land management. As defined by the act, public lands are those federally owned lands and any interest in lands that are administered by the BLM (FLPMA Sec. 103 (e)). The approved RMP will meet the BLM's statutory requirement as mandated by Section 202 of FLPMA, which specifies the need for a comprehensive land use plan consistent with multiple use and sustained-yield objectives.

In addition to documenting the RMP's management direction, the associated EIS will provide NEPA analysis to assist subsequent plan implementation. The "tiering" of NEPA documents assists in preparing more site-specific environmental documents without having to duplicate relevant parts of other, previously prepared, more general documents such as RMPs/EISs (BLM-H-1790). When such tiering occurs, environmental documents associated with the more specific activity incorporate by reference the general discussions and analysis from the broader document (RMP/EIS), enabling the NEPA document for the specific activity to concentrate on the issues and impacts of the project. BLM decisionmaking relevant to land use planning includes the following:

- **Management planning.** The BLM's broadest, least-specific level of decisionmaking related to land and resource use is in the management plan. The BLM uses RMPs to make land use allocations, provide general future management direction for managing specific areas of land, and provide the framework for management of all natural resources under BLM authority.
- **Activity planning.** Mid-level decisions are provided in activity plans, also known as implementation plans. Activity planning addresses management of specific programs and usually selects and applies standards and guidelines, and best management practices (BMP) to meet land use plan objectives. Decisions covering major (often geographically widespread) proposals lead to coordinated activity plans that cover all programs in an integrated manner. A program-oriented activity plan such as a habitat management plan is another example. Activity plans must also undergo a NEPA analysis.
- **Project decisions.** The BLM analyzes individual projects proposed in a specific location for localized or site-specific effects, and decisions will be made in conformance with the RMP.

1.4.2 BLM's Planning Process

FLPMA requires the BLM to use LUPs as tools by which "present and future use is projected" (43 United States Code [USC] 1701 [a][2]). FLPMA's implementing regulations for planning, 43 CFR Part 1600, state that land-use plans are a preliminary step in the overall process of managing public lands, "designed to guide and control future management actions and the development of subsequent, more detailed and limited scope plans for resources and uses" (43 CFR Part 1601.0-2). Public participation and input are important components of land-use planning.

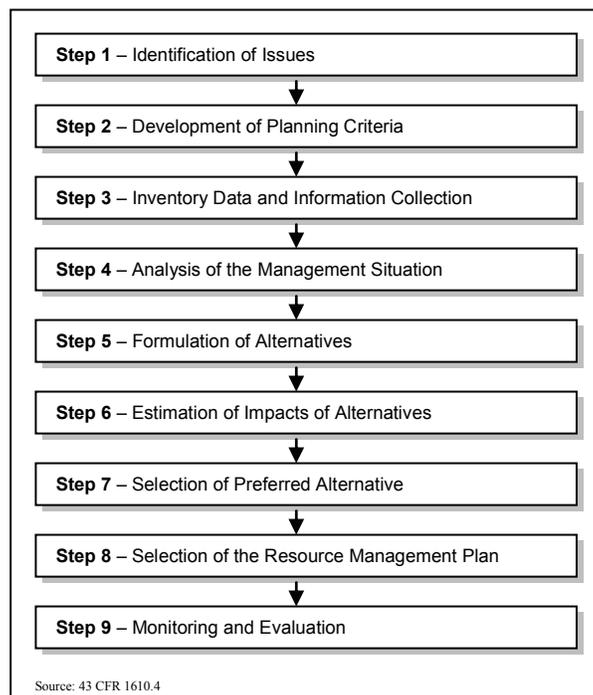
Revision of an existing plan is a major federal action for the BLM. NEPA requires federal agencies to prepare an EIS for major federal actions; thus, an EIS accompanies the revision of the existing RMP. The EIS analyzes the impacts of the Proposed RMP and five draft alternatives for the PFO, including the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative reflects current management (the existing plans) and is required by NEPA.

Nine-Step Planning Process

The BLM uses a nine-step planning process (Figure 1-1) when developing and revising RMPs as required by 43 CFR Part 1600 and planning program guidance in the BLM Handbook H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook (BLM 2005a). The planning process is designed to help the BLM identify the uses desired by the public of BLM-administered lands and to consider these uses to the extent they are consistent with the laws established by Congress and the policies of the executive branch of the federal government.

As depicted in Figure 1-1, the planning process is issue-driven (**Step 1**). The plan revision process is undertaken to resolve management issues and problems as well as to take advantage of management opportunities. The BLM used the public scoping process to identify planning issues which would in turn direct (drive) revision of the existing plan. The scoping process also was used to introduce the public to preliminary planning criteria, setting limits to the scope of the RMP revision (**Step 2**).

Figure 1-1. Nine Basic Planning Steps



As appropriate, the BLM used existing data from files and other sources and collected new data to update or supplement existing data in order to address planning issues and to fill data gaps identified during public scoping (**Step 3**). Using these data, information concerning the resource management programs, and the planning criteria, the BLM completed an Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) (**Step 4**)

to describe current management and to identify management opportunities for addressing planning issues. Current management reflects the existing plans and management which would continue through selection of the No Action Alternative. The existing affected environment is summarized from the AMS into Chapter 3, Affected Environment, of the Draft RMP/EIS.

Results of the first four steps of the planning process clarified the purpose and need and identified key planning issues to be addressed by the RMP revision. Key planning issues reflect the focus of the RMP revision and are described in more detail in Section 1.6, below.

Alternatives constitute a range of management actions that set forth different priorities and measures to emphasize certain uses or resource values over other uses or resource values (usually representing a continuum from extraction and development to preservation/conservation) pursuant to the multiple-use and sustained yield mandates, so as to achieve certain goals or objectives. During alternative formulation (**Step 5**), the BLM collaborated with cooperating agencies to identify goals and objectives for resources and resource uses in the PFO. These desired outcomes addressed the key planning issues, were constrained by the planning criteria, and incorporated the management opportunities identified by the BLM. Details of alternatives were developed by considering management options and potential resource conflicts to achieve the goals and objectives. The alternatives represent a reasonable range for managing resources and resource uses within the PFO. Chapter 2 of this document, Description of Alternatives, describes and summarizes the Proposed RMP and alternatives considered in detail.

This Proposed RMP/Final EIS also includes an analysis of the impacts of the Proposed RMP and the alternatives in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences of Proposed RMP and Alternatives, (**Step 6**). With input from cooperating agencies and BLM specialists, and taking into consideration planning issues, planning criteria, and the impacts of alternatives, the BLM identified and recommended that, at the time of the Draft RMP/EIS, Alternative D was the Preferred Alternative from among the six alternatives presented (**Step 7**). This is documented in the Draft RMP/EIS, which was distributed for a 90-day public review and comment period in July 2004; public requests extended the public comment period for another 45 days, which concluded on November 29, 2004. Four public meetings were held in August 2004 to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the Price Draft RMP/EIS.

The NOA for the Draft RMP/EIS released July 2004 was supplemented with a NOA published in the *Federal Register* on December 13, 2005. This NOA published supplemental information about each existing and potential Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) as required in 43 CFR 1610.7-2. This initiated a 60-day public comment period.

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The BLM published the NOA for the *Supplement to the Price Field Office Draft RMP/EIS for Non-WSA lands with Wilderness Characteristics* for public review and comment in the *Federal Register* on September 14, 2007. The PFO Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS presented Alternative E which provided specific management actions to preserve, maintain, and protect the wilderness characteristics of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. This new alternative ensured that: (1) Adequate consideration was given to wilderness characteristics; (2) an adequate range of alternatives was considered for these lands; and (3) an adequate analysis was prepared from which to base future land use decisions. This initiated a 90-day public comment period.

Step 8 of the land-use planning process occurred following receipt and consideration of public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS. In preparing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the BLM considered all comments it received during the four public comment periods. The Proposed RMP was crafted from the draft alternatives.

Step 9, monitoring and implementation, will occur following signature of the Record of Decision during implementation of the Proposed RMP. Monitoring is the repeated measurement of activities and conditions over time. Evaluation is a process in which the plan and monitoring data are reviewed to see if management goals and objectives are being met and if management direction is sound. Monitoring data gathered over time is examined and used to draw conclusions on whether management actions are meeting stated objectives, and if not, why. Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or what changes need to be made in management practices to meet objectives.

The two types of monitoring that are tied to the planning process include implementation and effectiveness monitoring. Land use plan monitoring is the process of (1) tracking the implementation of land use planning decisions and (2) collecting and assessing data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use planning decisions. The two types of monitoring are described below.

- **Implementation Monitoring:** Implementation monitoring is the most basic type of monitoring and simply determines whether planned activities have been implemented in the manner prescribed by the plan. Some agencies call this compliance monitoring. This monitoring documents BLM's progress toward full implementation of the land use plan decision. There are no specific thresholds or indicators required for this type of monitoring.
- **Effectiveness Monitoring:** Effectiveness monitoring is aimed at determining if the implementation of activities has achieved the desired goals and objectives. Effectiveness monitoring asks the question: Was the specified activity successful in achieving the objective? This requires knowledge of the objectives established in the RMP as well as indicators that can be measured. Indicators are established by technical specialists in order to address specific questions, and thus avoid collection of unnecessary data. Success is measured against the benchmark of achieving desired future conditions established by the plan.

Regulations at 43 CFR 1610.4-9 require that the Proposed RMP establish intervals and standards, as appropriate, for monitoring and evaluation of the plan, based on the sensitivity of the resource decisions involved. Progress in meeting the plan objectives and adherence to the management framework established by the plan is reviewed periodically. CEQ regulations implementing NEPA state that agencies may provide for monitoring to assure that their decisions are carried out and should do so in important cases (40 CFR 1505.2(c)). To meet these requirements, the BLM will review the plan on a regular schedule in order to provide consistent tracking of accomplishments and provide information that can be used to develop annual budget requests to continue implementation. Land use plan evaluations will be used by BLM to determine if the decisions in the RMP, supported by the accompanying NEPA analysis, are still valid. Evaluation of the RMP will generally be conducted every five years per BLM policy, unless unexpected actions, new information, or significant changes in other plans, legislation, or litigation triggers an evaluation.

Land use plan evaluations determine if decisions are being implemented, whether mitigation measures are satisfactory, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, whether there is new data of significance to the plan, and if decisions should be changed through amendment or revision. Evaluations will follow the protocols established by the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1 in

effect at the time the evaluation is initiated. Specific monitoring and evaluation needs are identified by resource/uses throughout Chapter 2.

Adaptive Management

This approach to evaluation and interim adjustment will frame a process of adaptive management, permitting effective response to changing knowledge. Adaptive management is a continuing process of action based on monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting with the objective of improving the implementation and achieving the goals of the RMP. To be successful, the process must have the flexibility to adapt and respond to new information. Under adaptive management, new information will be evaluated, and a decision will be made whether to make adjustments or changes. The adaptive management approach will enable resource managers to determine how well management actions meet their objectives and what steps are needed to modify activities to increase success or improve results.

The adaptive management process will be implemented to maximize the benefits and efficiency of the RMP. This implementation may result in the refinement of management direction or land use allocations, which may require amendment of the RMP. Adaptive management decisions may vary in scale from individual watersheds, to specific vegetation types, physiographic provinces, or the entire planning area. Many adaptive management modifications will not require formal changes to the RMP.

New information that would compel an adjustment of strategy may come from monitoring, research, statutory or regulatory changes, organizational or process assessments, and other sources. During the evaluation process, personnel will analyze the information to determine the nature, scope, and importance of the new information.

Adaptive management could entail modifying existing prescriptions to respond to increasing knowledge, providing greater certainty about anticipated climate variability or to respond to increasing knowledge about the habitat needs of special status species. Adaptive management could just as likely entail modification of localized management practices to respond to monitoring results.

Any potential new management actions identified after approval of the RMP and the ROD will be reviewed before BLM moves to implement them.

1.5 NEPA PROCESS

The planning process is integrated with the NEPA EIS process. The process for preparing this EIS is determined by the federal regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508). The following describes the major steps in the planning process for this EIS:

- **Notice of Intent (NOI)**—The BLM published an NOI in the *Federal Register* in November 2001 to announce its intention to replace the Price River and San Rafael land use plans and prepare an EIS.
- **Scoping Period**—The BLM provided extensive public and other agency involvement opportunities during the scoping process in early 2002. Scoping meetings were held in Salt Lake, Green River, Price, Castle Dale, and Moab, Utah, and in Grand Junction, Colorado. The scoping period, its results, and additional agency and public participation are described in Chapter 5, Consultation and Coordination.
- **Draft EIS**—The *Draft RMP/EIS* and *Notice of Availability (NOA)* was published July 2004. The *Draft EIS* considered public and agency comments received during the scoping process, described

the alternatives, described the environment that would be affected, and assessed the potential impacts.

- **Comment Period and Public Meetings**—The public and agencies reviewed and commented on the *Draft EIS* during a comment period that ended November 29, 2004. The BLM held public open houses for informational purposes and received comments from the public. Analysis and response to public comments are described and contained in Chapter 5 of this document under the heading “Comment Analysis.” Additional public comment periods were held for the Draft RMP/EIS ACEC information (December 13, 2005 through February 12, 2006), the *Supplemental Information and Analysis to the Price Field Office Draft RMP/EIS for ACECs* (June 9, 2006 through September 7, 2006), and the *Supplement to the Price Field Office Draft RMP/EIS for Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics* (September 14, 2007 through December 13, 2007).
- **Final EIS**—The purpose of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is for the BLM to assess, consider, and respond to comments received on the Draft RMP/EIS and to lay out the Proposed RMP for management of public lands using the draft alternatives as a base line. A 30-day protest period follows the release of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, along with a 60-day governor’s consistency review.
- **Record of Decision (ROD)**—This is a separate and concise public document that clearly identifies and describes the RMP. It links the BLM’s decision to the analysis presented in the EIS. The ROD shows how environmental impacts and other factors were considered in selecting the RMP. It identifies the preferred alternative or sections of the other alternatives that are being included in the RMP.

1.6 SCOPING AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF PLANNING ISSUES

1.6.1 Scoping Process

Public input was generated through a formal public scoping period, which began with the publication of the Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* on November 7, 2001. The scoping period included six public scoping meetings. The formal scoping period ended on February 15, 2002. The majority of comments emphasized OHV management, recreation, and areas of special designation. Other issues of high interest included non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, minerals, livestock grazing, wildlife resources, and cultural resources. The scoping process identified the affected public and agency concerns, defined relevant issues and draft alternatives that were examined in detail in the Draft RMP/EIS, and eliminated those that are not significant.

For the Price planning process, scoping comments received from the public were placed in one of three categories:

1. Issues identified for consideration in the Price RMP;
2. Issues to be addressed through policy or administrative action (and therefore not addressed in the RMP);
3. Issues eliminated from detailed analysis because they are beyond the scope of the RMP (and therefore not addressed in the RMP).

The Final Scoping Summary (available at www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/price/planning.html), prepared in conjunction with the Draft RMP/EIS, summarizes the scoping process. Other resource and use issues are

identified in the BLM Planning Handbook and Manual (H1610-1). All of these issues were considered in developing the draft alternatives that were brought forward in the Draft RMP/EIS.

Issues Identified for Consideration in the RMP

Planning issues are concerns or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations; levels of resource use, production, and protection; and related management practices. They contribute to the need for this plan. The RMP process provides an opportunity to address these conflicts or questions through NEPA analysis. Issues may be of local, State, or national concern, or they may reflect conditions specific to the PFO.

Comments were solicited from the public; organizations; tribal governments; and federal, State, and local agencies to identify issues. Additionally, management concerns were identified through discussions with the BLM resource specialists. The issues listed below do not include all resources involved in the planning process but only those that were identified by the PFO during the agency and public scoping process.

Natural Resources

What air and water quality standards are needed to further watershed and riparian values while allowing for development and maintenance of other natural resources like forest and woodlands, fire and fuels management, livestock grazing and special status species, including fish and wildlife habitats? How should these same resources be managed responsibly to allow for their continued use while sustaining the other resources?

Cultural

How can cultural and historic resources be protected while allowing for development and maintenance of all other resources to be further sustained?

Recreation and Off-Highway Vehicle Management

With increased recreation demand and diversity, in what ways should these issues be balanced with other resources and resource uses? How should travel be managed to provide access for recreation and enjoyment of the public lands and development and maintenance of other resources while protecting cultural and natural resources?

Land Ownership Adjustments

How should land adjustments improve access and management of the public lands?

Minerals and Energy Development

How should present development of mineral and energy resources be maintained to increase the overall economic benefits to the surrounding communities? What areas are suitable or not suitable for energy and mineral resource development? What level of development should be allowed in areas suitable for energy and mineral resource development?

Special Designations

What areas contain unique or sensitive resources requiring special management?

Issues Addressed Through Policy or Administrative Actions

Policy or administrative actions include those actions that are implemented by the BLM because they are standard operating procedure, federal law requires them, or they are BLM policy. They are, therefore, issues eliminated from detailed analysis in this planning effort. Administrative actions do not require a planning decision to implement. The following issues raised during scoping are already addressed by administrative actions:

- Compliance with existing laws and policies (e.g., FLPMA, NEPA, Endangered Species Act, American Antiquities Act, Clean Air Act, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act).
- Application of the BLM's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management addresses, among other issues, the allocation of forage for grazing animals and wildlife, the numbers of livestock, and changes in grazing management practices.
- Education, enforcement/prosecution, vandalism, and volunteer coordination.
- Cultural resource management, which includes up-to-date inventories, non-disclosure of sensitive sites, National Register of Historic Places proposals, and Native American consultation.
- Management of the 11 existing Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) (approximately 530,000 acres) under the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP; H-8550-1; BLM 1995). These WSAs are statutorily required (pursuant to FLPMA Section 603[c]) to be managed to protect their suitability for Congressional designation into the National Wilderness Preservation System. There are, however, a few decisions that will be made for WSAs in this planning effort. They include applying a visual resources management (VRM) Class I objective to the WSAs and determining if the WSAs will be limited or closed to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use.
- Completing an inventory of riparian and wetland areas and the use of monitoring and mitigation to help protect these resources.
- Continuing work on a comprehensive sign system and maps for recreational and other users.
- Administration of existing mineral leases, permits, and other authorized uses.
- Use of valid existing rights.
- Monitoring wildlife and biodiversity.
- Monitoring air quality.
- Mitigation measures for site-specific projects.
- Eligibility standards for specially designated areas.
- Protection of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.
- Coordination with local, state, and federal agencies.
- Cooperation with user groups.

Issues Eliminated from Detailed Analysis because they are Beyond the Scope of the RMP

Issues beyond the scope of the RMP planning process include all issues not related to decisions that would occur as a result of the planning process. They include decisions not under the jurisdiction of the PFO or are beyond the capability of the BLM to resolve as part of the planning process. Issues identified in this category include the following:

- The State of Utah and Carbon and Emery counties may hold valid existing rights-of-way in the planning area pursuant to Revised Statute (RS) 2477, Act of July 28, 1866, Chapter 262, 8, 14 Stat. 252, 253, *codified at* 43 USC 932. On October 21, 1976, Congress repealed R.S. 2477 through passage of FLPMA. This RMP does not adjudicate, analyze, or otherwise determine the validity of claimed rights-of-way. However, nothing in the RMP extinguishes any valid right-of-

way, or alters in any way the legal rights the state and counties have to assert and protect R.S. 2477 rights or to challenge in federal court or other appropriate venues any use restrictions imposed by the RMP that they believe are inconsistent with their rights.

- Activities and uses beyond the jurisdiction of the BLM.
- Changing existing laws, policies, and regulations.
- Availability of funding and personnel for managing programs.
- Considering alternative energy sources as substitutes for activities related to mineral development.

1.6.2 Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and guidelines which help guide data collection, alternatives formulation, and alternatives selection in the RMP development process. In conjunction with the planning issues, planning criteria ensure that the planning process is focused. These criteria further define the need for the Proposed RMP revision and determine how the planning team develops alternatives and, ultimately selection of a preferred alternative. Planning criteria ensure plans are tailored to the identified issues (Section 1.6) and unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. The criteria focus on providing an early, tentative basis for inventory and data collection needs. The following planning criteria are used to develop alternatives analyzed in this Proposed RMP/Final EIS:

- This plan will recognize the existence of valid existing rights (43 CFR 1610.5-3 (b), FLPMA 701 (h)).
- Lands covered in the RMP are public lands managed by the BLM, including split-estate lands (43 CFR 1601.0-7). Planning decisions will not apply to State and private lands within the planning area.
- The plan will use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield set forth in FLPMA and other applicable laws (FLPMA Sec. 102 (7)).
- Where possible, the BLM will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach to jointly determine the desired future condition of public lands (43 CFR 1610.3-1 (a))
- The BLM will strive to ensure that management prescriptions are consistent with other planning jurisdictions to the extent possible, within the boundaries described by law and policy (43 CFR 1610.3-1 (d)(1)).
- The BLM will develop management prescriptions by considering a range of alternatives focusing on the relative values of resources and ensuring responsiveness to the identified issues which created the need for the Proposed RMP revision (43 CFR 1610.4-5).
- The BLM will consider the socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives (42 USC 4332).
- The BLM will use current scientific information, research, new technologies, and the results of inventorying, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies to enhance or restore impaired ecosystems (IBID).
- The Interim Management Policy (IMP) for Lands under Wilderness Review will guide existing wilderness study areas (WSA) management. Land use allocations made for WSAs must be consistent with the IMP and with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management. The RMP will address how these lands would be managed if released by the Congress from WSA status.

- Comprehensive land health standards will apply to all activities and uses. Adjustments to current livestock grazing or wildlife forage allocations will be considered in accordance with *Utah Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing on Public Lands in Utah*. The standards and guidelines are applicable to all action alternatives (43 CFR 4180).
- The BLM will coordinate with Native American tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage (43 CFR 1610.3-1 (a)).
- The BLM will evaluate paleontological and cultural resources for use allocations, as appropriate, including provisions for interpretation, preservation, conservation, and enhancement (42 USC Sec. 4331 (b) 4).
- The BLM will implement the decisions of the selected plan in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, as amended. The BLM will conduct Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on listed plant and animal species as necessary for individual actions taken under this plan. The BLM will not authorize any action that will contribute to the need to list any non-listed special status species (16 USC 1536 (a) and 50 CFR 402).
- The BLM will identify and bring forward areas potentially suitable for an ACEC for analysis in the RMP. Public nominations were requested (43 CFR 1610.7-2) for use in the EIS analysis.
- Public nominations for wild and scenic rivers were requested for use in the EIS analysis and were included in the BLM's consideration of all rivers. The EIS assesses the determinations of eligibility, suitability, tentative classification, and protective management in accordance with Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and BLM Manual 8351.
- Decisions regarding OHV use will be consistent with the BLM's National OHV Strategy (43 USC 1701 Sec. 102 (7)).
- The RMP will not address RS-2477 right-of-way assertions (see Issues Eliminated from Detailed Analysis because they are Beyond the Scope of the RMP).
- The State of Utah has jurisdiction over all water rights in the State. This is a responsibility of the State Engineer.
- The BLM will coordinate with State and federal agencies, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and private consultants to continue to monitor population trends and obtain additional population and habitat data for plants, fish, and wildlife that are special status species and other species of economic interest (43 CFR 1610.3-1 (a)).

1.7 RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER PROGRAMS, PLANS, AND POLICIES

The BLM must coordinate planning for the PFO with the land use planning and management programs of other federal agencies, the State of Utah, local governments in the planning area, and Native American tribes. The BLM will develop a land use plan that will be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent to which the Secretary finds those plans consistent with federal law and the purposes of FLPMA (Section 202(c)(9) and 43 CFR 1610.3-2 [a]).

The BLM has reviewed Carbon and Emery counties and State of Utah plans that affect public lands within the PFO for decisions, issues, and management prescriptions which must be carried forward or considered for consistency with this RMP. Consistency with State and local plans will be determined during a 60-day governor's consistency review after publication of this Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The PFO has worked with the Manti-La Sal National Forest and no inconsistencies have been identified.

Consultation with Native American tribes is ongoing. Consistency with other plans is addressed in the analysis of impacts on programs included in Chapter 4. These plans are shown in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2. Other Management Plans

Plan Type	Plan Title
County Plans	Carbon County Master Plan, Carbon County, Utah Emery County General Plan, as Amended, Emery County, Utah
State of Utah Plans	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Huntington Lake State Park Resource Management Plan Goblin Valley State Park Resource Management Plan Millsite State Park Resource Management Mineral Leasing Plan for Sovereign Lands on the Green and Colorado Rivers Utah Nonpoint Source Management Plan (http://www.waterquality.utah.gov/watersheds/NPSplan.htm) Utah Water Quality Plan, State of Utah
Other Federal Land Use Plans	Manti-La Sal National Forest Land Use Plan Uintah and Ouray Indian Tribe Land Use Plan Vernal, Moab, and Richfield Proposed RMPs Capital Reef National Park Plan Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Plan, Bureau of Reclamation
PFO Mineral Activity	Oil and Gas EA, 1988 Designation of Hydrocarbon Lease Categories, 1984
PFO Recreation Management Plans	Cleveland–Lloyd Management Plan, 1976 Recreation and Cultural Management Plan for Nine Mile Canyon, 1995 Desolation and Gray Canyons of the Green River River Management Plan, 1979 San Rafael Route Designation Plan, 2003
PFO Habitat Management Plans	North San Rafael HMP, 1997 San Rafael Desert HMP, 1992 Range Valley Mountain HMP EA Grassy Trail HMP, 1987
PFO Herd Management Area Plans	Range Creek HMAP, 1994 Sinbad HMAP, 1993

Plan Type	Plan Title
USFWS Endangered Species Recovery Plans	Razorback Sucker Recovery Plan, 1999 Maguire Daisy Recovery Plan, 1995 Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, 1995 Utah Reed-Mustards Recovery Plan, 1994 Last Chance Townsendia Recovery Plan, 1993 Colorado Squawfish Recovery Plan, 1991 Bonytail Chub Recovery Plan, 1990 Humpback Chub Recovery Plan, 1990 Uinta Basin Hookless Cactus, 1990 Northern States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan, 1983 Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Plan, 1988 The Recovery Implementation Plan for the Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin, 1987 Wright Fishhook Cactus Recovery Plan, 1985 American Peregrine Falcon Recovery Plan, 1984
Vegetation Management	Final EIS Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States and associated RODs, 1991 Final Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic EIS and associated ROD, 2007 Final Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report, 2007
BLM Programmatic Environmental Analysis	Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Oil Shale and Tar Sands Leasing West-wide Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS

1.7.1 Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA)

In May 2001, the Comprehensive National Energy Policy was issued, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to examine land status and lease stipulation impediments to federal oil and gas leasing, and review and modify those where opportunities exist consistent with the law, good environmental practice and balanced use of other resources. Under this directive, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management delivered to Congress an inventory of U.S. oil and gas resources in five western basins, as well as the extent and nature of any restrictions or impediments to their development. This report was prepared at the request of Congress under the provisions of the 2000 Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA).

In April 2003, the BLM specified four EPCA integration principles, as follows:

1. Environmental protection and energy production are both desirable and necessary objectives of sound land management practices and are not to be considered mutually exclusive priorities.
2. The BLM must ensure appropriate accessibility to energy resources necessary for the nation's security, while recognizing that special and unique non-energy resources can be preserved.
3. Sound planning will weigh the relative resource values, consistent with the multiple use and sustained yield mandates required by FLPMA.
4. All resource impacts, including those associated with energy development and transmission, will be mitigated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

1.7.2 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Oil Shale and Tar Sands

The PFO has tar sands and oil shale resources. The tar sand resources have been, and currently are, available for lease under the Combined Hydrocarbon Leasing Act of 1981 and in accordance with decisions in the existing BLM land use plans/plan amendments. Currently, no regulations are in place for leasing oil shale; nor are there any existing commercial oil shale leases.

In Utah, the major tar sand resources lie within 11 designated Special Tar Sands Areas (STSA) managed by the Vernal, Price, Richfield, and Monticello Field Offices. One of these STSAs is in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument where leasing is prohibited. The PFO manages some of the remaining 10 STSAs.

Lands with oil shale resources were originally identified through an inventory portraying the Green River geologic formation in Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado. Once identified, lands with oil shale resources were withdrawn from mineral entry through a 1930 Executive Order, which was later modified to allow for oil, gas, and sodium leasing. Since that time, the economic potential for the oil shale resource has been further defined, now comprising a much smaller area in Utah, primarily in the southern part of the BLM Vernal Field Office area with a small area in the northeast portion of the lands managed by the PFO.

When the Price RMP revision was initiated in 2001, there was no reasonable foreseeable development expectation for tar sands or oil shale over the life of the plan. The mineral report identified these resources, but did not foresee any leasing or development due to prevailing and anticipated economic factors.

Since this RMP revision began, the Congress enacted the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Section 369 of the Energy Policy Act requires the Secretary of the Interior to “complete a programmatic environmental impact statement for a commercial leasing program for oil shale and tar sands resources on public lands, with an emphasis on the most geologically prospective lands within each of the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming.” On December 13, 2005, the BLM published an NOI in the *Federal Register*, initiating a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to support a commercial oil shale and tar sands leasing program on federal lands in these three States. Since that time, the scope of the PEIS has been revised. The BLM is no longer using the PEIS as the document that supports the NEPA requirements for leasing. Given that the development technologies for in-situ production of oil shale are just emerging, there is a lack of information regarding resource use and associated impacts. Therefore, the BLM has changed this document to a resource allocation document that identifies the BLM-managed lands for which applications to lease oil shale and tar sands resources would be accepted in the future. Although applications would be accepted, additional NEPA analysis would be performed before any leasing of the area would be considered.

All decisions related to land use planning decisions (areas open to application for potential leasing) for oil shale and tar sands resources in this RMP will be made by the ongoing PEIS for Oil Shale and Tar Sands Resources. The ROD on the Final PEIS will amend the existing *Price River MFP* and *San Rafael RMP*, or the ongoing PFO RMP, if completed first, by making land use planning decisions on whether or not public lands will be available for future application, leasing, and development of oil shale and tar sands for those areas where the resource is present. Additional site-specific NEPA analysis will be completed on each lease application before any leases would be issued.

As part of the site-specific NEPA analysis, the environmental consequences to specific resource values and uses within the areas and any alternative actions would be analyzed. Any decision to offer the lands for lease would be made based on full disclosure of the impacts. If a decision is made to offer the lands

for lease, specific mitigation measures will be developed to ensure commercial operations employ practices that minimize or mitigate impacts.

Pre-leasing NEPA analysis would include the same opportunities for public involvement and comment that are part of this PEIS process and every other land use planning and NEPA process the BLM undertakes. Decisions associated with the PEIS will be incorporated into the PFO RMP as it is finalized or will amend the PFO RMP. Additional opportunities for public involvement and comment will occur when the Proposed RMP Amendment/Final PEIS is available.

This RMP will, however, provide allocation and leasing decisions for conventional oil and gas leasing in the STSAs and oil shale areas.

1.7.3 The Western Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS and the Energy Policy Act of 2005

Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (designation of West-wide energy corridors) is being implemented by development of an interagency, Programmatic EIS (PEIS). The Final PEIS could amend numerous RMPs in the western U.S., providing decisions addressing numerous energy corridor-related issues, including the use of existing corridors (with enhancements and upgrades), identification of new corridors, supply and demand considerations, and compatibility with other corridor and project planning efforts. The Proposed RMP is currently consistent with the Preferred Alternative in the PEIS.

1.8 CHANGES BETWEEN THE DRAFT RMP/EIS AND THE PROPOSED RMP/FINAL EIS

Review of and comments on the Draft RMP/EIS and the Supplements related to ACECs and non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics have resulted in several changes. Changes were due to a combination of public comments, meetings with cooperating agencies, internal review, and changes in BLM policy and management direction. General changes from the Draft RMP/EIS include the following:

- The Proposed RMP consists of a combination of all the alternatives, as well as information from the ACEC Supplement (June 2006) and the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics supplement (September 2007), and Alternative D from the Draft RMP/EIS – which was used as the foundation for the Proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS does not carry forward, in whole, Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) from the Draft RMP/EIS. Alternative D (preferred alternative) in the Draft RMP/EIS has been replaced with the Proposed RMP. The Proposed RMP was crafted in response to public comments, internal comments, and coordination with cooperating agencies. The remainder of the alternatives from the Draft RMP/EIS were carried forward because the changes and clarifications were extensive and were better presented in their full context.
- Chapters 2 and 4 were restructured to improve readability, and goals and objectives were clarified and refined.
- Chapter 4 impact analyses were updated and changed from a matrix to narrative format and presents for the first time analysis of the Proposed RMP.
- Chapter 5 was changed to include a description of ongoing coordination and consultation for this planning effort; a table displaying consistency with State and County plans; a description of the public comment response process based on the Draft RMP/EIS; a summary of public comments and BLM's responses; and specific comments from cooperating agencies and BLM's responses.

- Maps were updated to correct minor errors, and improve readability, present new information, and display the Proposed RMP decisions.

1.8.1 Summary of Changes between the Preferred Alternative (Draft EIS) and the Proposed RMP (Final EIS)

- A high-country watershed stipulation has been added to protect areas above 7,000 feet.
- More restrictive management prescriptions have been applied to Greater sage-grouse habitat.
- The appropriate management level for the Muddy Creek wild horse herd has been increased by 25 horses.
- The criteria-based voluntary relinquishment decision in the Draft EIS has been revised consistent with BLM policy.
- A prescription has been added for managing livestock grazing in the Range Creek allotment.
- Boundaries of the Desolation Canyon SRMA have been revised to match the no action alternative boundary. The Range Creek SRMA has been carried forward from Alternative C, where it was part of the Desolation Canyon SRMA.
- There have been minor adjustments to management prescriptions in most of the SRMAs.
- Five areas of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics (totaling 97,100 acres) would be managed to protect, preserve, and maintain their wilderness characteristics.
- Designated off-highway vehicle routes have been adjusted from 247 miles in the Preferred Alternative of the Draft RMP/EIS to 606 miles in the Proposed RMP in this document. These additional 359 miles of routes were identified in the Draft RMP/EIS as part of the Alternative A route designation.
- Oil and gas leasing decisions (i.e., open with standard terms and conditions, minor and major constraints, and unavailable) have been revised to be consistent with other resource decisions, such as ACECs, VRM class objectives, and non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.
- The Reasonable Foreseeable Development for oil/gas was modified in the Proposed RMP to be the same as Alternative A in the Draft RMP/EIS.
- ACEC boundaries for the Interstate 70, Rock Art, San Rafael Canyon, Nine Mile Canyon, Uranium Mining District, and Heritage Sites have been adjusted for various reasons.
- The Range Creek and Sids Mountain ACECs have not been carried forward.
- The San Rafael River and the recreational segment of the Green River near the Town of Green River have not been carried forward as suitable for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- Two scenic segments of the Green River through Desolation Canyon would be managed as suitable for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System with a Wild tentative classification.
- The management of WSAs, if released by Congress, has been changed and would be managed according to the prescriptions in the RMP.
- More restrictive decisions have been added to manage the Old Spanish Trail.
- In August 2005, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) changed its wildlife habitat classification system. Prior to 2005, the UDWR classification system distinguished between “critical” habitat (an area that provides for biological and/or behavioral requisites necessary to sustain the existence and/or perpetuation of a wildlife population) and “high value” (an area that provides for intensive use by the species). The UDWR has come under criticism for using the term “critical,” because the term refers to habitat federally designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In previous BLM planning efforts, mitigation decisions (usually timing stipulations) for impacts to UDWR’s “critical” habitats have been integrated into the planning process. BLM rarely

incorporated management decisions in its RMPs for “high value” habitats. UDWR changed its classification system to include “critical” habitat with “high value” habitat, in part to accommodate the limitations of having classifications that were of no practical value to land managers. The new term “crucial” habitat is defined by UDWR as “habitat on which the local population of a wildlife species depends for survival because there are no alternative ranges or habitats available. Crucial habitat is essential to the life-history requirements of a wildlife species. Degradation or loss of crucial habitat will lead to significant declines in the wildlife population in question.”

Crucial habitat boundaries appear larger on the wildlife maps in this Proposed RMP because they are a combination of UDWR’s old “critical” habitat and “high value” habitat, with some minor modifications. Timing stipulations for each of the species now apply to the whole crucial habitat area. It is important to note however, that the application of waivers, exceptions and modifications, as outlined in Appendix G, will be taken into consideration and used where/when applicable for all surface disturbing activities in these areas. The range of alternatives in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS considered both of UDWR’s old classifications of critical and high value habitat. Minor boundary modifications have been made by UDWR prior to incorporating them into crucial habitat boundaries. Because this information was taken into consideration and analyzed in the Draft, these minor changes are not considered significant in terms of resource uses and/or analysis in this Proposed RMP, and therefore a supplement to this EIS is not necessary for this purpose.

1.8.2 Summary of Changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS

Executive Summary

- The Executive Summary was rewritten to reflect the Proposed RMP.

Chapter 1

- Added a summary of changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.
- Added language to describe the relationship of this plan to the National Programmatic EIS for Tar Sands and Oil Shale and the West-wide Energy Corridor Programmatic EIS.

Chapter 2

- Added a section describing alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis.
- Removed decisions related to predator control through Animal Plant Health Inspection Service.
- High-use zones within SRMAs have been renamed as recreation management zones (RMZ).
- References to Special Recreation Permit group size have been removed from all of the alternatives.
- The coal leasing decisions have added a map reference of lands available for further coal leasing consideration.
- Areas previously referred to as “closed to oil and gas leasing” are now referred to as “unavailable for oil and gas leasing.” This is a terminology change only.
- Areas withdrawn or recommended for withdrawal from locatable minerals (alternatives and maps) have been revised; specifically the oil shale and Three Rivers withdrawals have been added to the maps and WSAs (not currently recommended for withdrawal through an ACEC management prescription) have been removed.

- Alternative A in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS has been changed to recommend no suitable Wild and Scenic River segments and eligible river segments would not be protected. Management prescriptions for the segments found suitable under the different tentative classifications have been added.
- A summary of impacts section has been added to compare the impacts of all alternatives.

Chapter 3

- Social and economic baseline information has been updated.
- The Bald Eagle was delisted as a Threatened and Endangered species to a special status species.
- Information on Global Climate Change has been added.
- Tar sands and oil shale background information has been added.

Chapter 4

- New analysis on the Proposed RMP has been incorporated and Alternative E has been added from the wilderness characteristics supplement.
- The social and economic impact analysis has been updated. Economic impacts were revised using the IMPLAN model.
- Analysis on Global Climate Change has been added.
- The Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) has been changed to reference well locations/pads, not the number of wells.
- Air Quality emissions calculations have been added for all alternatives.
- An EPCA analysis has been added, which portrays impacts of resource stipulations on oil and gas leasing/development.

Chapter 5

- Chapter 5 has been changed to include a description of ongoing coordination and consultation for this planning effort; a table displaying consistency with State and County plans; a description of the public comment response process based on the Draft RMP/EIS; a summary of public comments and BLM's responses; and specific comments from cooperating agencies and BLM's responses.

Appendices

- A number of appendices from the Draft RMP/EIS have not been repeated in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.
 - Listed, Sensitive and Other Native Species
 - Objectives for Cultural Resource Management Categories
 - Visual resource Management
 - Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Program Definitions
 - Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management for BLM Lands in Utah
 - Areas Recommended for Withdrawal
 - Standard Lease Form for Oil and Gas
 - Hydraulic Considerations for Pipeline Crossings of Stream Channels
 - Hydrologic Modification Standards for Roads
 - Basis and Rationale for Modification of Surface Water, Ground Water, and Floodplain Protection Buffer Zone
 - Energy Policy and Conservation Act Planning Considerations

- Multiple Use Requires Multiple Management
- Coal Report for the Price RMP
- Appendices numbering has been changed from numbers to letters in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.
- Appendix C – Wild and Scenic Rivers suitability justification has been augmented.
- Appendix F – Best Management Practices for Raptors and Their Associated Habitat in Utah has been updated with the August 2006 version.
- Appendix G – The Draft RMP/EIS contained two appendices concerning seasonal and special wildlife stipulations and surface disturbing activities stipulations (formerly Appendices 8 and 16). These have been combined in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS into Appendix G and adjusted for consistency.
- Appendix K – The SRMAs and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classifications Standards have added information on market strategy, market niche, and management goals for each SRMA and Recreational Management Zone.
- Appendix M – The Fluid Mineral Reasonable Foreseeable Development has been clarified.
- Five new appendices (O through S) have been added.

Maps

- Maps have been updated to correct minor errors, and improve readability, present new information, and display the Proposed RMP decisions.
- Maps 2-35 thru 2-39 added occurrence of uranium and gypsum to assist with impact analysis.
- Maps 2-40 thru 2-44 added occurrences of clay, stone, sand and gravel to assist with impact analysis.
- Maps 2-53 through 2-55 and 2-68 have been revised to display on-the-ground utility ROWs.

The BLM has made numerous changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS. These changes are described above and detailed in Appendix Q. The BLM has prepared this appendix to document if changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS resulted in a significant change in circumstances or conditions, or if the Proposed RMP/Final EIS contains different information from that which was presented to the public in the Draft RMP/EIS. Finally, the BLM confirms that all changes made to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS fall within the range of alternatives presented and analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS and Supplements. Changes have been made to the Proposed RMP which are outside the range of alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS, this section and Appendix Q provide an explanation of the need to make the change and a determination of whether it is or is not significant.

The regulation controlling whether or not a supplement is required is found at 40 CFR 1502.9(c), which directs that Agencies:

- (1) *Shall prepare supplements to either draft or final environmental impact statements if:*
 - (i) *The agency makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns; or*
 - (ii) *There are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impact.*
- (2) *May also prepare supplements when the agency determines that the purposes of the Act will be furthered by doing so.*
- (3) *Shall adopt procedures for introducing a supplement into its formal administrative record, if such a record exists.*

- (4) Shall prepare, circulate, and file a supplement to a statement in the same fashion (exclusive of scoping) as a draft and final statement unless alternative procedures are approved by the Council.*

All changes to the Price Field Office Draft RMP/EIS have been made in response to public comment and/or internal review. Most changes were editorial and made to add clarity to the document. In some cases, alternatives presented in the Draft RMP/EIS were modified in the Proposed RMP to reflect technical corrections and data updates. In other cases, such as in Chapter 3, incorporating updated information was necessary to refine and augment analysis in Chapter 4. Many of the changes made are within the range of alternatives considered in the Draft RMP/EIS, however a few new decisions in the Proposed RMP and one in Alternative A are outside the range of alternatives considered in the Draft RMP/EIS. The following decisions in the Proposed RMP were not within the range of alternatives of the Draft RMP/EIS, but are not considered significant, and do not require the BLM to issue another supplemental draft.

- Increased restrictions to protect the greater sage-grouse.
 - Additional restrictions on the greater sage-grouse habitat are minor because it would only apply to four leks, two of which are partially on private land, and a minimum amount of acreage would be affected.
- Redefined big game crucial habitat based on updated UDWR information.
 - Crucial big game habitat acreage was increased minimally, so no adjustment to the impacts analysis is required. Additionally, waiver, modification, and exception criteria may be applied to applications for surface disturbing activities.
- Increased AML and forage allocation for the Muddy Creek wild horse herd.
 - Formally allocated 300 pre-existing AUMs to the Muddy Creek HMA wild horse herd. No change to current conditions would occur, because they were already in place. Therefore no change was needed in the impacts analysis.
- WSAs were incorrectly depicted as being withdrawn from mineral entry (locatable) under all alternatives. This has been corrected in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS for all alternatives.
 - Decisions within WSAs are outside the purview of the land use planning process, except for VRM and OHV determinations. WSAs are managed under the Interim Management Policy (IMP) for Lands Under Wilderness Review; therefore, the impact analysis has not changed.
- The management of WSAs, if released by Congress, has been changed and would be managed according to the prescriptions in the RMP.
 - Any released lands would continue to be managed consistent with the prescriptions identified in this plan unless and until the plan is amended, therefore no separate analysis is required to address impacts to released lands.
- Alternative A in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS was changed to recommend no suitable Wild and Scenic River segments and eligible river segments would not be protected.
 - The three river segments in the Draft RMP/EIS Alternative A, along the Green River, are also carried forward and recommended as suitable in Alternatives B, C, E, and the Proposed RMP with more restrictive management prescriptions. Therefore, no management options for suitable river segments have been precluded.

None of the changes described above and further detailed in Appendix Q meet the regulatory definition for significance in 40 CFR 1508.27(a) and (b). These regulations require an agency preparing a NEPA document to review the changes for significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Proposed RMP or its impacts, using context and intensity as the trigger for significance. The BLM has reviewed each substantive change through this regulatory standard and has determined that none of the changes, individually or collectively, require a supplement to this Final EIS.

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