

RECORD OF DECISION
and
RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY
for the
BOOK CLIFFS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

MAY 1985



Prepared by
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Vernal District Office
Vernal, Utah

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Roland Robison
Utah State Director

DECISION RECORD SHEET

Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan
 Book Cliffs Resource Area
 Vernal District
 Bureau of Land Management

The alternatives listed below correspond with those that were analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan. The alternative selected directs the management of approximately 1.1 million acres of public lands following the actions, mitigation, and monitoring procedures that are applicable to that alternative. The specific details of the selected plan are included in the contents of the Record of Decision which follows this Decision Record Sheet.

Option (Alternative)	Area Manager's Recommendation	District Manager's Concurrence	State Director's Decision
Current Management (No Action)	_____	_____	_____
Date	_____	_____	_____
Resource Protection (Environmentally Preferable)	_____	_____	_____
Date	_____	_____	_____
Commodity Production	_____	_____	_____
Date	_____	_____	_____
Balanced Use (Proposed Plan)	<i>Deann Evans</i>	<i>Shirley</i>	<i>Richard R. Brown</i>
Date	<i>05/23/85</i>	<i>May 23, 1985</i>	<i>June 3, 1985</i>

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

This plan has been selected because it optimizes the use of forage, energy, and other natural resources while protecting critical resources such as wildlife habitat, cultural resources, endangered and threatened species, etc.

This plan allows ranchers to continue their operations at a level that avoids severe economic hardships for most permittees. The grazing level in this plan will protect the range resource from deterioration through overgrazing and will allow range condition improvement in some allotments. The proposed grazing levels are only a starting point; the monitoring program will determine the ultimate grazing levels.

The proposed allocation of forage will satisfy the current demand of wildlife populations and allow for increased wildlife numbers in areas where the potential for increases exists.

The use of fire management allows protection of property and critical resources while providing for the use of fire as a beneficial tool within selected areas. Proper management will provide more desirable habitat and forage for wildlife and livestock.

This plan will impose the least restriction possible upon off-road vehicle travel while protecting critical resource values such as wildlife, wild horses, endangered and threatened species, cultural and recreational sites, water quality, soils, and vegetation.

The plan provides an area where wild horses can be managed to maintain a viable herd in a location where they will be least susceptible to disturbing influences, such as energy development and human activity.

The desires of recreationists for primitive facilities in support of hunting will be satisfied under this plan. The need for developed campgrounds is unlikely, due to the lack of recreational attractions which tend to concentrate people and the seasonal use that is limited to a few weeks in the fall.

The rights-of-way corridors identified under this plan provide a means to transport products through the BCRA while minimizing impacts to the critical resources. This network will satisfy the needs of both public utilities and private industry.

This plan will allow BLM to dispose of isolated land parcels where management is unfeasible or impractical, while acquiring properties that can benefit BLM management.

This plan is consistent with State and local governmental and Tribal policies, plans, and programs, as provided for by regulation (43 CFR 1610.3-2).

Implementation of this plan will include practical, appropriate mitigation and monitoring procedures to assess the effectiveness of the management actions. Additional mitigation will be developed for each resource program through specific activity planning. Where evaluation of monitoring data indicate that additional mitigation or changes in the management action (i.e. levels of authorized livestock grazing, off-road vehicle use, etc.) are necessary, the public will be afforded an opportunity to participate in the process, in accordance with Federal regulations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan (BCRMP) is a land use plan for management of all natural resources on 1.1 million acres of public lands. It complies with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976), and appropriate planning and grazing mandates, (43 CFR 1600 and 43 CFR 4160). This plan replaces the outdated Management Framework Plans (MFP) which were developed during the early 1970s. The BCRMP provides planning direction for resolving conflicts between competing resource uses such as minerals, recreation, wildlife, livestock, etc. Provisions for leasing additional Federal energy minerals such as oil shale and tar sand are identified in the plan.

This document directs both present and future Federal surface and subsurface resource management in the Book Cliffs Resource Area (BCRA). The decisions identified in this RMP apply to all public lands within this resource area and any lands subsequently added to it. Other federal, state, native American, and private properties are only discussed to the extent that their management interacts with that of the Bureau of Land Management.

Based upon current regulations, this plan would remain in effect until it is determined to be outdated by management. If significant changes occur in the proposed land uses of the BCRA, the plan would be amended or revised.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCE AREA

The BCRA is located in northeastern Utah. It is roughly triangular in shape, bounded by the Utah Colorado state line on the east, the Book Cliffs Divide to the south, and the Green River to the north and west (Figure 1-1).

Administratively, the BCRA includes public lands and minerals that are within portions of Uintah and Grand Counties, Utah. The BCRA also includes administration of grazing allotments which overlap into Garfield, Moffat, and Rio Blanco counties in Colorado.

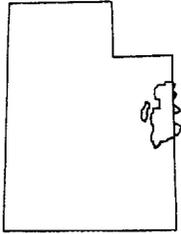
In the BCRA, the Vernal District boundary officially ends at the Uintah County line. The public lands in Grand County, Utah and Garfield, Moffat, and Rio Blanco Counties in Colorado are administered by the BCRA under memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Moab and Craig District Offices, Bureau of Land Management (Figure 1-1). The MOU with Moab includes administration of all resources within the adjusted boundary. The MOU with the Craig District delegates only grazing administrative responsibility.

Land ownership in this Resource Area (Figure 1-2) is as follows:

Bureau of Land Management Vernal District	
Public Lands	1,027,167 Acres
Public Lands Within Naval Oil Shale Reserve II	46,152 Acres
Public Lands Under Federal Power Site Reserve	6,633 Acres
Sub total	1,079,952 Acres
Craig District- Public Lands	32,218 Acres
Moab District- Public Lands	3,284 Acres
State of Utah Lands	216,646 Acres
Private Lands	123,780 Acres
Resource Area Total	1,455,880 Acres

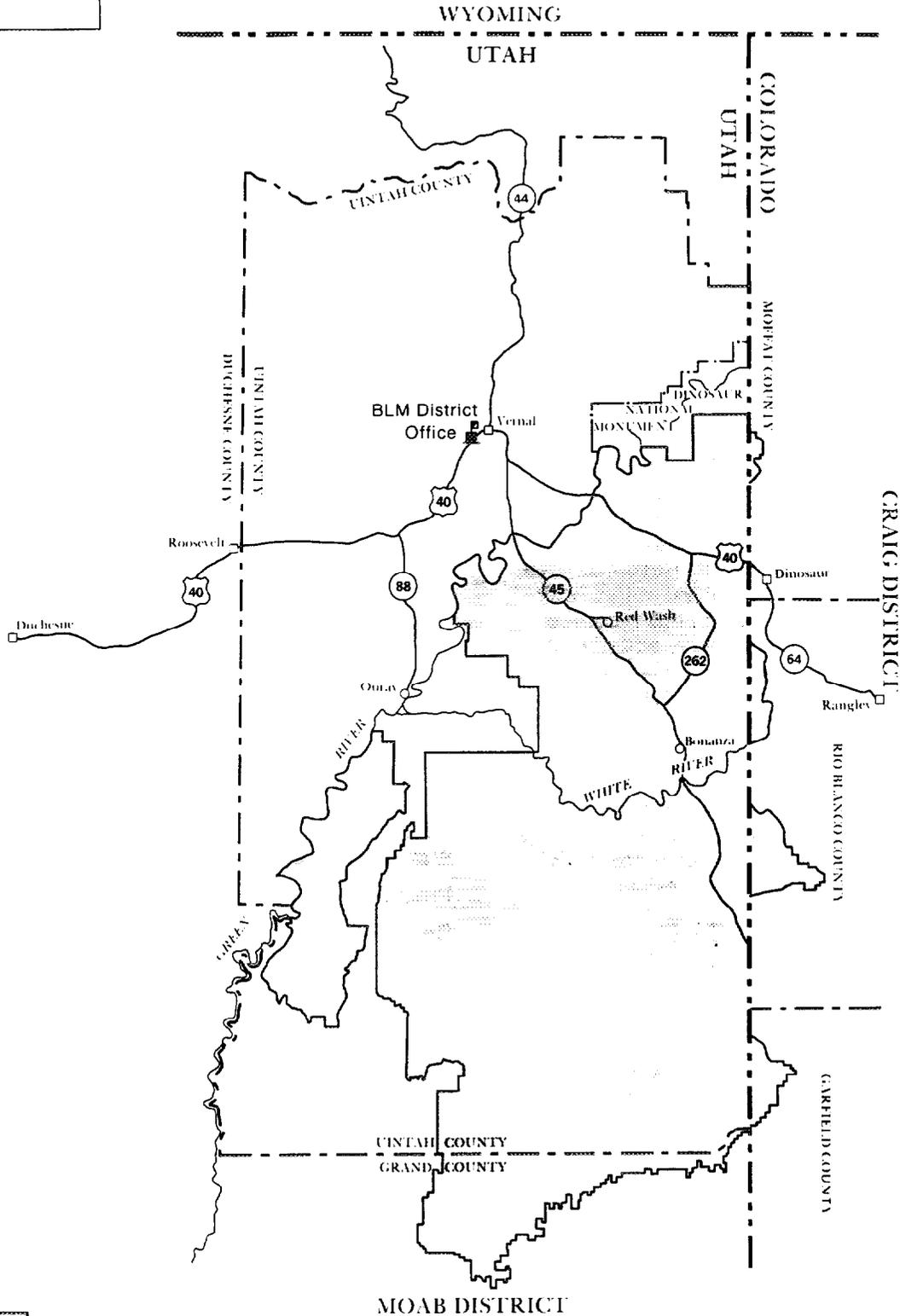
IMPLEMENTATION

The decisions presented in Chapter 2 of this plan will be implemented over a period of years. The ability of the Vernal District to complete the identified projects is directly dependent upon the BLM budgeting process. If insufficient funding is appropriated for any given year, some delays in the completion schedule may result. The priorities for accomplishment will be reviewed annually and may be revised based upon changes in law, regulations, policy, or economic factors such as cost effectiveness of projects.

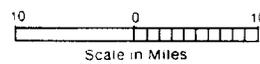


VICINITY MAP

Figure 1-1



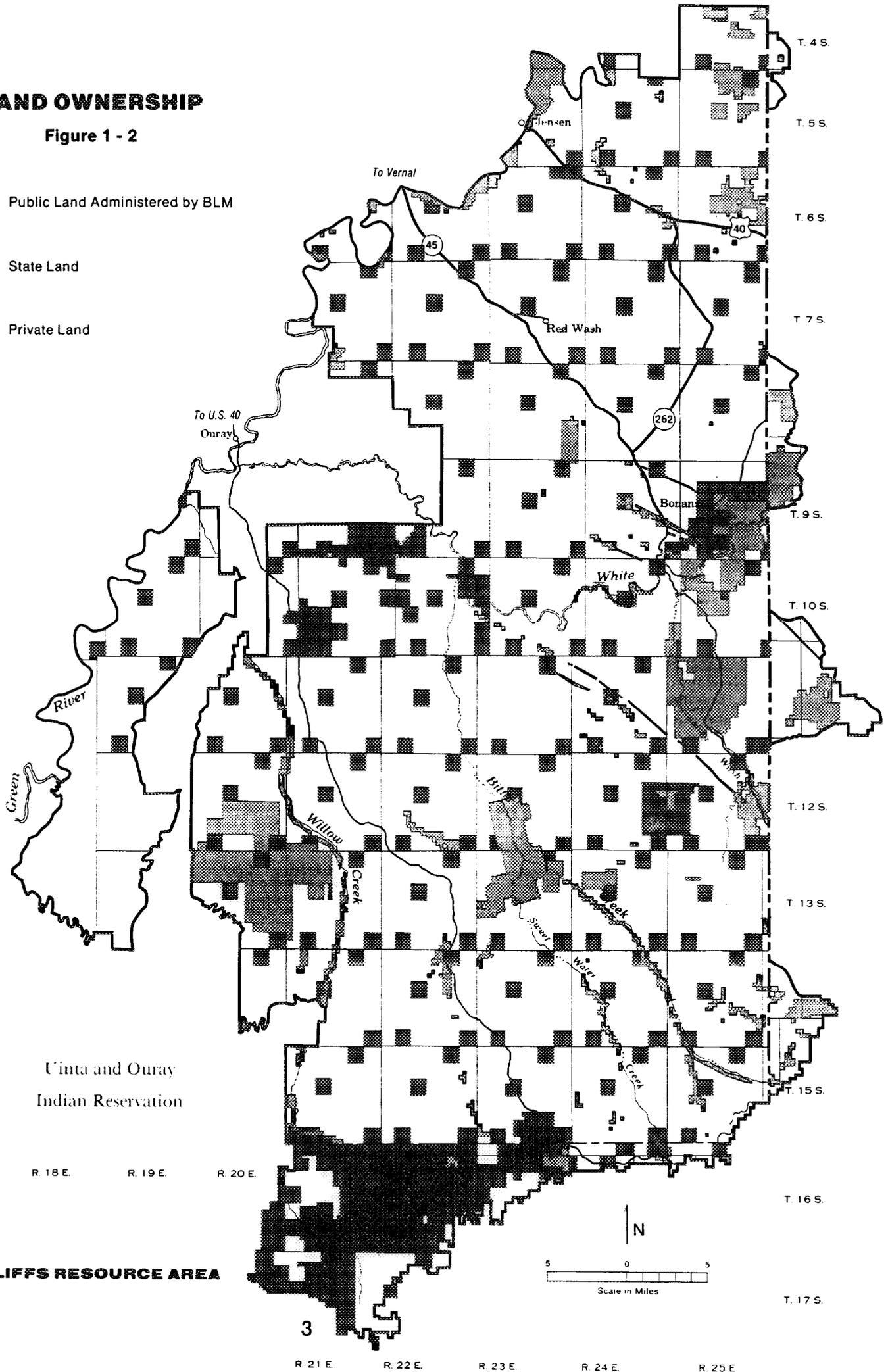
 Book Cliffs Resource Area



LAND OWNERSHIP

Figure 1 - 2

-  Public Land Administered by BLM
-  State Land
-  Private Land

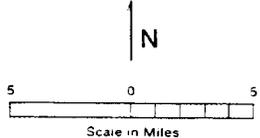


Uinta and Ouray
Indian Reservation

R. 17 E. R. 18 E. R. 19 E. R. 20 E.

T. 16 S.

BOOK CLIFFS RESOURCE AREA



T. 17 S.

R. 21 E. R. 22 E. R. 23 E. R. 24 E. R. 25 E.

MONITORING

A monitoring system will be developed to determine the effectiveness of the management decisions made in the plan. This monitoring system will include a means of tracking the implementation of decisions, and a means of establishing priorities of the management actions. This monitoring system will be used as a tie to the annual work plan. In addition this system will be used to determine the overall effectiveness of the plan and the need for future modification. The methods and schedules for monitoring the individual resources are discussed under each resource program section of Chapter 2. The monitoring process will determine whether the planned actions are satisfactorily solving resource management problems or if the problems remain unresolved, or if new or previously unknown problems have emerged. Additional mitigation or plan revisions may be necessary to correct unresolved problems should they occur.

MAINTENANCE

This plan will be maintained through the addition of minor changes as new information is gained. The maintenance additions will not change the major intent of the plan, but may refine, clarify the decisions, or update information. Any maintenance information will be documented by supporting records. Members of the public will be welcome to inspect all maintenance data that are added to the plan; however, a formal notification and public review will not be necessary for plan maintenance.

AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

The plan will be amended or revised as needed, following the procedures contained in 43 CFR 1610.5. Circumstances which could result in a plan amendment or revision include: results of monitoring, substantial new data or issues, new or revised policy, or a change in a proposed action that could alter the scope, terms, or conditions of the plan. The public and concerned agencies will be notified of any proposed amendments or revisions and will be invited to participate in that process. Any amendments would be analyzed through an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

VALID EXISTING RIGHTS

This plan will not repeal valid existing rights on public lands. Valid existing rights are those claims or rights to public land that take precedence over the actions in this plan. Valid existing rights may be held by other federal agencies or by private individuals or companies. Valid existing rights may also pertain to oil and gas leases, rights-of-way, and water rights.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED

Four alternatives were analyzed in the Book Cliffs Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). They were intended to provide choices between development and nondevelopment of the natural resources.

The Proposed Plan will provide for the use of non-renewable resources while protecting critical renewable resource values. Resource trade-offs will provide a balance between commercial production and protection of resources.

The Current Management Alternative would have continued the existing BLM management in the BCRA. Ongoing resource activities such as oil and gas leasing, livestock grazing, firewood cutting, watershed treatment, and off-road vehicle (ORV) use, would have continued at the existing levels. No additional oil shale or tar sand leasing would have occurred.

The Resource Protection Alternative would have emphasized maintenance or improvement of environmental quality. While resource uses and developments would have occurred, preference would have been given to long-term maintenance of the natural environment. Resource trade-offs would have favored protection of renewable natural resources through more restrictive stipulations and authorizations.

The Commodity Production Alternative would have emphasized commercial utilization of resources and produce the greatest revenues from them. Maintenance of natural environments would have continued where compatible with resource production and where mandated by law. Resource trade-offs would have favored maximizing revenue and providing for human needs.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public was involved in the development and helped to shape the direction of this plan. Their participation is documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan that was published on November 30, 1984.

The public was notified of their right to file protests through the Federal Register, news releases, and a letter attached to the FEIS. The protest period ended on January 7, 1985 and no protests were received.

STATE CONSISTENCY REVIEW

The Book Cliffs RMP was reviewed by the State of Utah and was determined to be consistent with any officially approved resource-related plans or policies of the state, as indicated in Governor Norman H. Bangerter's letter to Roland Robison, Utah State Director, BLM, dated February 4, 1985.