the preferred method of disposal. Site specific analysis would be required prior to any exchange or disposal effort.

Approximately 18,700 acres of land would be acquired to facilitate various aspects of public land management should opportunities become available (Figure 2-22).

MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

The following section provides, by program, the management guidance common to all alternatives and thus constitutes a part of each alternative. It includes past management decisions that would continue, proposed management decisions that would be implemented in all alternatives, and procedures and policy common to all alternatives. It is provided here to avoid repetition in Table 2-1.

Minerals

Leasable Minerals

Oil and Gas

Administrative and technical capabilities for oil and gas operations have been established in the Vernal District. The following procedures would be continued under the RMP.

Preliminary environmental reviews and notices of staking would be processed at the district and area levels. Onsite inspections, processing of needed rights-of-way, and field activities for other requests or permits would be administered at the area level.

Applications for permits to drill (APD), sundry notices, other applications to perform work, and compliance reports would be processed at both the district and area levels. Onsite inspections, environmental review, determinations, conditions of approval, and other aspects of the processing of APDs and sundry notices would be handled at the district and area levels.

Drainage determinations and delineation of KGSs would be handled at the state and district levels.

Future oil and gas activities would continue to be subject to further environmental review. Special stipulations for protection of renewable resource values would be developed through an activity plan and attached to future oil and gas leases.

Tar Sand

Administrative and technical capabilities for managing tar sand operations are presently at the Utah State Office although these responsibilities could be delegated in the future to the Vernal District.

Tar sand development would be managed in accordance with the 43 CFR 3140 regulations which would require a detailed development plan as outlined in 43 CFR 3570. These regulations promote orderly prospecting, exploration, testing, development, mining and processing operations and require operating procedures which would avoid, minimize, or correct damage to the environment.

Combined hydrocarbon leases could be obtained in two possible ways. Prior to November 16, 1983, existing oil and gas leases in Special Tar Sand Areas (STSA) could be converted to a combined hydrocarbon lease (CHL). An approved CHL would provide the leaseholder the opportunity to develop either oil and gas and/or the tar sand resource. Applications to convert existing oil and gas leases to CHL's within the BCRA totalled approximately 35,000 acres within PR Spring STSA, 4,000 acres within Hill Creek STSA, and 800 acres within Raven Ridge-Rim Rock STSA. A second method would be through a competitive leasing program. No schedule to offer tracts for competitive lease has been developed.

Site specific environmental documents would be prepared prior to any development.

Combined hydrocarbon leases would be issued using one category system. Oil and gas categories have been separated from tar sand categories in this document to clarify which type of energy mineral resource development may result in the final constraints placed upon lease development (Appendix 4, Specialized Mineral Terminology).

Oil Shale

Lease administration of U-a and U-b (White River Shale) including all technical review and compliance would be handled through the BLM Oil Shale Office in Grand Junction, Colorado. These responsibilities could be delegated in the future to the Vernal District Office.

The oil shale program for future leasing is currently being developed with environmental, industry, and governmental input. The procedures and policies would probably involve tract delineation; environmental review; a competitive lease program, including local and state government input; and a lessee's submittal of a detailed development plan (43 CFR 3570). These plans would provide detailed information concerning all aspects of mining and development along with detailed measures for protection of the environment. They would be subject to BLM approval.

Gilsonite

Gilsonite leases would be handled through the Utah

State Office although these responsibilities could be delegated to the Vernal District in the future.

Future gilsonite leasing would be made through a competitive ***or preference right*** leasing program. Lease approval would require submittal of an acceptable mining and reclamation plan subject to environmental review prior to any development.

Locatable Minerals

The general mining law of 1872 (17 Stat. 91) authorized placer and lode mining claims to be located by a procedure that is largely unchanged to this day. In 1930, it became apparent that mining claims located in lands considered valuable for oil shale posed a potential encumbrance against future oil shale development. Subsequently, lands considered valuable for oil shale were withdrawn from appropriation under the general mining laws. Approximately 75 percent of the BCRA remains under an oil shale withdrawal and is not open to entry.

Mineral exploration and development would be regulated in accordance with the 43 CFR ***3809*** regulations. These regulations apply to mining activities from claims made under the authority of the 1872 mining law, as amended. These regulations establish procedures to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of public lands. A notice giving a description of the operation and a reclamation plan would be required for disturbances of 5 acres or less per year. A detailed plan of operations, including a reclamation plan would be required for disturbances of more than 5 acres per year or in areas closed to ORV use. Environmental assessments would be prepared in response to all plans of operations. Environmental review, approval of plans, and compliance would be administered at the area level.

Salable Minerals

Sand and Gravel

Environmental review would be required prior to any development with sales and compliance administered at the area level.

Building Stone

Building stone would be sold in accordance with an activity plan developed following the RMP.

Land Tenure Adjustments

Disposals

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires that public lands be retained in Federal ownership unless, as a result of land use planning, it is determined that disposal of a particular parcel would serve the national interest. FLPMA also provides criteria for use in categorizing public land for retention or disposal and for identifying acquisition and disposal priorities. All parcels identified within the alternatives meet the basic FLPMA criteria for disposal. All other public lands not identified for disposal would remain in public ownership and be managed by the BLM under its multiple use policy.

Public land, within disposal areas, would be made available for disposal through sales or exchanges although no sales or exchanges would occur without further environmental review. The environmental review would consider several factors when specific adjustment proposals are received. These would include public resource values, including, but not limited to, endangered and threatened and sensitive species habitat, riparian areas, fisheries, nesting/breeding habitat for game animals, key big game seasonal habitat, developed recreation and recreation access sites, visual resource management, watershed, energy and mineral potential, cultural resources, wilderness study areas, statutorily-authorized designations, accessibility of the land for public uses; amount of public investments in facilities or improvements and the potential for recovering those investments; difficulty or cost of administration (manageability); suitability of the land for management by another Federal agency; significance of the decision in stabilizing business, social and economic conditions, and/or lifestyles; encumbrances, including, but not limited to, recreation and public purposes (R & PP) and small tract leases, withdrawals, or other leases or permits, mining claims, consistency of the decision with cooperative agreements and plans or policies of other agencies; and suitability and need for change in land ownership or use for purposes including, but not limited to, community expansion or economic development, such as industrial, residential, or agricultural (other than grazing) development.

Acquisitions

Land to be acquired by the BLM through exchanges generally must be located in areas identified for retention. In addition, acquisition of such land should meet at least one of the following conditions: 1) facilitate access to public land and resources, 2) maintain or enhance important public values and uses, 3) maintain or enhance local social and economic values, or 4) facilitate implementation of other aspects of this RMP. ***All lands identified in this document meet one or more of the above criteria.***

Withdrawal Review

Review of existing withdrawals including reclamation, oil shale, and powersite would be an ongoing process, scheduled to be completed in 1991.

Rights-of-Way

Types of utilities which could be located within a corridor include electric transmission facilities, pipelines, significant canals, ditches and conduits, railroads, electric communication and microwave sites, communication lines, and highways.

Authorization, including environmental review, of rights-of-way would be handled on a case-by-case basis with approximately 75 to 100 rights-of-way processed annually in the BCRA.

Land Use Authorizations

Land use authorizations such as agricultural leases would be processed on a case-by-case basis as the need arises. Land use permits for a wide variety of uses would be processed regularly on a case-by-case basis.

Desert Land Entries

Desert land entries would be processed periodically on a case-by-case basis as the need arises.

Trespass Abatement

Cases of unauthorized use of public land would be processed as necessary. Highest priority would be given to abatement of the following unauthorized uses: 1) new unauthorized activities or uses where prompt action would minimize damage to public resources and associated costs; 2) cases where delay could be detrimental to authorized users; 3) cases involving special areas, sensitive ecosystems, and resources of national significance; and 4) cases involving malicious or criminal activities.

Recreation

Dispersed recreation opportunities, where visitors would have freedom of recreational choice with minimal regulatory constraints, would continue to be provided for the public. Recreation facilities receiving the heaviest use would receive first priority for maintenance funds. Investment of public funds for new recreation developments would be permitted only on land identified for retention in public ownership, where demand for such sites is high and where recreation objectives would not be attained without development. The basic management objective for recreation management shall be to provide for unstructured recreation activities, to be managed under the Bureau's basic stewardship responsibilities.

Off-Road Vehicle Use (ORV)

It is BLM policy that planning for ORV use is an integral part of the planning system with decisions to designate Federal lands as either "open", "closed", or "limited" for vehicle use. After selection of off-road vehicle designations in the Final RMP, an Off-road Vehicle Implementation Plan would be developed within 1 year of the Final RMP if funding is available.

Wildlife

Impacts to fish and wildlife habitat would continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as a part of project level planning. Such evaluation would consider the significance of the proposed project and the sensitivity of fish and wildlife habitat in the affected area. Mitigations would be attached as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with management objectives for fish and wildlife habitat. Habitat improvement projects would be implemented where necessary to stabilize and/or improve unsatisfactory or declining wildlife habitat condition.

Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) would be prepared upon approval of the Final RMP. The HMPs would be prepared for each wildlife herd unit in accord with the wildlife management actions to be implemented under the selected alternative. Where circumstances warrant, wildlife habitat work and related fund expenditures could proceed independently upon approval of the State Director. However, where applicable, HMPs and AMPs would normally be coordinated in preparation and implementation to the fullest extent possible to avoid duplication of effort and undue costs.

Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive Habitat

No activities would be permitted in habitat for endangered or threatened species that would jeopardize the continued existence of such species.

Whenever possible, management activities in habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species would be designed to benefit those species through habitat improvement.

The BLM would complete either a clearance (minor actions and projects) or a biological assessment (major actions and projects requiring an EIS) for endangered or threatened species before implementing projects. Any project or action that could affect an endangered or threatened species or it's habitat would be determined through the clearance or biological assessment process and would require a consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended.

Big Game and Upland Game Habitat

Sufficient forage and cover would be provided for wildlife populations on seasonal habitat.

Rangeland improvements generally would be designed to benefit or accommodate both wildlife and livestock. Vegetation manipulation projects would be designed to minimize damage to and improve wildlife habitat. Existing fences could be modified, and new fences would be built to allow wildlife passage. Water would be provided, where practical, in allotments (including rested pastures) during seasonal periods of need for wildlife.

Riparian/Fisheries Habitat

Management actions within floodplains and wetlands would include measures to preserve, protect, and if necessary, restore their natural functions (as required by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990). Management techniques would be used to minimize the degradation of stream banks and the loss of riparian vegetation.

Management activities in riparian zones, including mitigating surface disturbing activities, would be designed to maintain or, where possible, improve riparian habitat condition.

Soils, Water, and Air

Soil, water, and air resources would continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis on non-Bureau initiated projects and in project level planning. Such an evaluation would consider the significance of the proposed project and the sensitivity of soil, water, and air resources in the affected area. Stipulations would be attached as appropriate to ensure compatibility of projects with soil, water, and air resource management.

Watershed Management Plans (WMPs) would be prepared upon approval of the Final RMP. The WMPs would usually be prepared for a geographical area with similar watershed problems and outline specific actions to be implemented in achieving specific objectives. Watershed expenditures could also be made in areas of approved AMPs and HMPs where specific actions are identified to solve watershed problems.

Soils would be managed to maintain productivity and to minimize erosion. Management techniques that could be used to maintain soil productivity and minimize soil erosion include treatments designed to increase vegetation cover and gully plugs to reduce head cutting.

On projects that may significantly affect water quality, consultation with State of Utah agencies would be made to assure protection of existing water quality, consistent with the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act and state water quality standards for stream segments within the BCRA. Water quality monitoring would be undertaken by BLM or required of project sponsors to assure compliance.

Forestry

Fuelwood, cedar posts and other woodland products would be available for harvest by the public from the public lands. As a general rule, charges would be made for these products. Free use could be authorized on lands where the material has no market value and demand is small. Stipulations designed to protect visual resources, wildlife habitat, and other resource values would be attached to permits at time of sale.

Upon approval of the RMP, woodland management plans would be prepared outlining specific actions to be implemented to achieve objectives. Specific actions such as establishment of green wood cutting areas, access needs, estimation of products to be harvested, signing needs, etc., would be identified in the activity plan phase.

Pest Control

The BLM would allow control of insects, predators, noxious weeds, and diseases on public lands in cooperation with Federal, State, and local government control agencies, on a case-by-case basis.

Allotment Categorization

All allotments have been placed in one of three basic management categories: (Improvement (I), Maintenance (M), Custodial (C)), based primarily on current resource conditions and potential for improvement (specific criteria for categorization of allotments are outlined in Appendix 3 (Allotment Management Category Criteria)). "I" category allotments are those having a need and potential for "improvement" thru management, "M" category allotments are those to be managed to "maintain" current satisfactory conditions, and "C" category allotments are those to be managed on a "custodial" basis to prevent resource deterioration.

The same basic categorization criteria and ratings for the respective allotments are used for each of the alternatives. Under each alternative, the process is dynamic, i.e. the ratings would be subject to change as management practices or other factors alter the category into which the respective allotments would fall.

Under all alternatives, initial categorization would be 25 "I" allotments, 18 "M" allotments, and 11 "C" allotments.

Allotment Management Plans

Allotment management plans are commonly used to present, in detail, the types of changes required in an allotment, and to establish a schedule for implementation. Actions set forth under the allotment management plans that affect the environment would be analyzed

prior to their implementation. The proposal, however, may be altered to mitigate adverse impacts in the future. The priorities for completing AMPs would be in line with the allotment categorization process.

Stocking Levels and Adjustments

In reviewing the target stocking level figures and other recommended changes, it is emphasized that the target AUM figures are not final stocking levels. Rather, all livestock use adjustments would be implemented through documented mutual agreement or by decision. When adjustments would be made through mutual agreement, they could be implemented once the Rangeland Program Summary has been issued (subject to a 30-day protest period). When livestock use adjustments would be implemented by decision, it would be based on operator consultation and monitoring of resource conditions. Current BLM policy emphasizes the use of a systematic monitoring program to determine the need for livestock adjustments.

The Federal regulations that govern changes in allocation of livestock forage provide specific direction for livestock use adjustments implemented by decision (43 CFR 4110.3-1 and 43 CFR 4110.32). The regulations specify that permanent increases in livestock forage "shall be implemented over a period not to exceed 5 years...," and that decreases in livestock forage "shall be implemented over a 5-year period...". The regulations do provide for decreases to be implemented in less than 5 years when 1) the downward adjustment is 15 percent or less of the "authorized active grazing use for the previous year", 2) an agreement is reached to implement the adjustment in less than 5 years, or 3) a shorter implementation period is needed to sustain resource productivity.

Monitoring

The "Five Year Implementation and Monitoring Program", required by current range policy to determine proper stocking levels for livestock grazing, would be completed by September 1989.

Monitoring activities to determine the effect of the various management practices on the soil and vegetative resource will be carried out for all alternatives. The same basic procedures will be followed. However, the frequency, intensity, and particular kind of studies will vary between alternatives. For instance, under the Current Management Alternative, emphasis would be placed on the "I" allotments, which have resource problems. "M" and "C" allotments would also be monitored but commensurate with district capabilities. Under the Resource Protection Alternative, emphasis would be placed on wildlife, watershed, and wild horse aspects. The kind of study and area of concentration would vary accordingly. Under the Commodity Production Alternative, emphasis would be placed on maximizing livestock production. Under the Balanced Use Alternative, emphasis would be similar to the Current Management Alternative.

Allotment Evaluation Program

Periodically, each allotment will be evaluated with respect to resource conditions, management practices, and facilities. The evaluation will involve an analysis of monitoring data including climatological data. It may also include range inspection tours by BLM and affected users to jointly evaluate on-the-ground conditions. Any necessary adjustments in stocking levels or other management practices including changes or additions to existing management facilities would be based on the allotment evaluation.

The frequency and intensity of evaluations would be commensurate with resource values and use level conflicts relative to the "M", "I", or "C" category assigned to the allotment.

Cost Estimates

Under all alternatives, range improvement costs are based on district averages as depicted below (BLM 1984):

Reservoirs	$ 2,000 each
Seeps or Springs	$ 3,000 each
Guzzlers	$20,000 each
Pipelines	$10,500 per mile
Fence	$ 4,000 per mile
Prescribed Burn	$ 3.00 to $ 4.00 per acre
PJ Chaining	$25.00 to $35.00 per acre
Sagebrush Spraying	$12.00 per acre
Clear Cuts (Cost absorbed by sale of woodland products)	

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Cultural and paleontological resources would continue to be inventoried and evaluated as part of project level planning and non-Bureau initiated actions. Such evaluation would consider the significance of the proposed projects and the sensitivity of resources in the affected area. Mitigation would be attached to project approvals as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with management objectives for cultural and paleontological resources. For example, if a cultural site is located during construction operations, the operator would be required to cease work in that area and notify the appropriate agency official. Upon determination of significance, and if necessary, salvage/avoidance would be deemed appropriate through consultation between the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the BLM. The operator could continue work near the affected area. If the site is determined to be non-significant, the operator could continue without any mitigation to the site.

The objective of the BLM cultural resource program is to manage cultural resources in a stewardship role for public benefit. The Department of the Interior has issued instructions and regulations concerning management of cultural resources. The purposes of the system are to analyze the specific values of cultural resources, to incorporate cultural resources into the planning system, and to identify cultural resource information needs when existing documentation is inadequate to support land use decision making. The Bureau would evaluate sites, areas, and structures on a case-by-case basis as to their eligibility for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Sites.

Visual Resources

Visual resources would continue to be evaluated as a part of activity and project planning. Such evaluation would consider the significance of the proposed project and the visual sensitivity of the affected area. Stipulations would be attached as appropriate to attain compatibility of projects with management objectives for visual resources.

GENERAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The approval of the RMP is only the first step in the planning process. The RMP does not represent the final implementation plan for decisions, although site specific actions are identified in an RMP. The activity and project planning phase generally provides the guidance on implementing decisions, actions, cost phasing, scheduling, maintenance, and monitoring, involving areas where extensive capital expenditures are required. Program specific activity plans (i.e., Allotment Management Plans, Habitat Management Plans, Watershed Management Plans) would be prepared following the final decisions made for the RMP. When several program priorities require activity plans in a common geographic area, a coordinated activity plan would be prepared. The final step is plan implementation, including appropriate mitigation. Maintenance of any improvements would be continued as directed in the appropriate plans.

ACTIONS WHICH WOULD OCCUR REGARDLESS OF THE ALTERNATIVE SELECTED

Most of the management concerns discussed in Chapter 1 involves administrative decisions which will be the same, regardless of the alternative that is selected for this RMP. These concerns include: leasing of public lands for support facilities; administration of NOSR II; retention or revocation of oil shale; reclamation and power site withdrawals; and leasing of geothermal steam. The impacts that would result to the environment would not be significant based upon current information; however, additional environmental documentation would be prepared when specific proposals are developed for these concerns. No additional discussion of these concerns appears in this text.

Two management concerns, management of the Boulevard Ridge Watershed Study Area and the Book Cliffs Mountain Browse Natural Area, were included in the alternative analysis.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Table 2-3 presents the environmental consequences of the actions for each alternative. The table is not complete and merely highlights the impacts discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

RATIONALE FOR PROPOSED PLAN

The Balanced Use Alternative has been identified as the preferred alternative 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 alternative allows ranchers to continue their operations at a level that they have been accustomed to in recent years, thus avoiding severe economic hardships for most permittees. The grazing level in this alternative 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 by wildlife populations and allow for increased wildlife numbers in areas where the potential for increases exists.

The use of fire management under this alternative 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 alternative will impose the least restriction possible upon off-road vehicles while protecting critical resource values such as wildlife, wild horses, endangered and threatened species, ***cultural and recreational sites, water quality, soils, and vegetation.***

This alternative will provide 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 alternative. 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 right-of-way corridors identified under this alternative 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 alternative will allow BLM to dispose of isolated parcels where management is unfeasible or impractical, while acquiring properties that can benefit BLM management.