

Table 2.1.5 Proposed RMP and Alternatives – Fire Management					
PROPOSED RMP	Alternative A (Draft RMP/EIS Preferred Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Current Management (No Action)	Alternative E
<b>FIRE MANAGEMENT — MAP FIGURES 3 &amp; 4</b>					
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>					
<p>A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-compliant Fire Management Plan (FMP) was completed for the VPA in 1998. The FMP reflects the goals and objectives for vegetation management and fire's role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and is incorporated into this EIS. The FMP was updated in 2005 and will be signed once the Vernal RMP ROD has been signed for the VFO.</p>					
<b>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firefighter safety and public safety would be the first priority in every fire management activity. Property values and critical resource values would be the next priority.</li> <li>• The primary goal and objective of fire management is to help restore natural systems to their proper functioning condition by restoring fire to its legitimate role in the ecosystem, including managing wildland fire for other resource benefits.</li> </ul>					
<b>MANAGEMENT COMMON TO THE PROPOSED RMP AND ALL ALTERNATIVES</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All alternatives would attempt to restore natural fire regimes in fire dependent/adapted ecosystems primarily through the use of prescribed fire and managed wildland fire. Where social and/or resource constraints preclude or limit the use of fire, mechanical and/or chemical treatments would be used.</li> <li>• The Fire Management Plan has been updated and amended to meet the direction and objectives of the RMP. The FMP has been revised to comply with the Interagency Template for Fire Management Plans and identifies Fire Management Units (FMUs) that describe the mix of management activities that can be used to meet the desired future conditions and land use objectives.</li> </ul>					
<b>EMERGENCY STABILIZATION AND RESTORATION</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following any wildland fire event, the VFO manager would select an Interdisciplinary Emergency Stabilization and Restoration (ESR) team that would evaluate any burned areas to determine if ESR treatments are needed. ESR treatments would follow the procedures outlined in the BLM Manual Handbook H-1742-1 (including supplemental guidance dated 11/27/2002). If the interdisciplinary team determined that ESR treatments were necessary, the team would develop an ESR plan with site-specific measures designed to minimize resource losses, both on-and off-site, following the wildfire. Consideration would be given to sensitive resource values in preparation of the ESR plan, including WSAs, special emphasis areas, critical soils, cultural resources, and special status species habitat. ESR treatments may include, but would not be limited to seeding, seedbed preparation practices, fencing, chemical applications, water retention structures, and control of livestock, and wildlife grazing. Site-specific ESR plans would be tiered to the existing Normal Fire Year Rehabilitation Plan for the VPA.</li> <li>• Criteria for developing ESR actions would consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Areas where the risk of imminent soil loss is high.</li> <li>◦ Areas that contain T&amp;E Species or state sensitive species habitat.</li> <li>◦ Areas that contain municipal watersheds; and areas where there is a high potential for invasive species establishment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>					
<b>HAZARDOUS FUELS</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazardous fuel reduction activities would be implemented primarily through the use of prescribed fire and managed wildland fire. In some cases, chemical and/or mechanical treatments would be used in conjunction with fire. Where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of fire, mechanical and/or chemical treatments would be used.</li> <li>• Criteria for developing hazardous fuel reduction priorities would consist of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Areas of Fire Regime Condition Class 2 and 3.</li> <li>◦ Areas where the potential risk of losing keystone ecosystem species is present.</li> <li>◦ Areas where threats to private/public property exist.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All fire-management planning activities would comply with the National Fire Plan, including the streamlined Section 7 Consultation procedures.</li> <li>• Fire Regime and Condition Classes for the VPA have been designated and mapped (Map Figures 3 and 4 respectively). The FMP would be updated and amended to meet the direction of the Vernal RMP and adjusted to meet the Department of the Interior's Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.</li> <li>• In partnership with the State of Utah, the Utah Indian Tribe, and the counties, the BLM would develop WUI Projects.</li> <li>• The VPA is divided into fire management categories. Fire suppression activities and the Appropriate Management Response (AMR) would be implemented through the guidance developed under the ABCD polygons as outlined in Handbook-1601. Criteria used in development of the categories were determined through an Interdisciplinary Team of resource specialists. Criteria for each category is described below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Category A</b> — Areas where unplanned fire is not desired at all. This category includes the salt desert shrub vegetation type where the risk of cheatgrass invasion is high following fire events. Also included are the major river corridors where fire results in the loss of Fremont cottonwood, a keystone species in present decline. Other constraints to fire management activities include cultural resource sites, high recreational use, and highly developed oil and gas fields.</li> <li>◦ <b>Category B</b> — Areas where unplanned fire is not desired because of current conditions. Prescribed fire use is allowed to obtain resource management objectives; mechanical/chemical treatments would be utilized where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of prescribed fire. This category includes the five identified WUI areas for the VFO, including adjacent urban interfaces, cultural resources, crucial deer winter range, and crucial Sage-grouse habitat. Within this habitat, Wyoming sagebrush is identified as a keystone species, which has been in a continual state of decline due to widespread drought and invasive species encroachment.</li> <li>◦ <b>Category C</b> — Areas where wildland fire is desired. Prescribed fire is allowed and may be extensive to obtain resource management objectives; mechanical/chemical treatments would be utilized where social and/or resource constraints preclude the use of prescribed fire. This category contains the pinyon-juniper vegetation type, along with aspen/Douglas fir, mountain browse, and non-crucial areas of sagebrush. Other constraints to fire management activities include a limited amount of oil and gas development, non-crucial Sage-grouse habitat, a limited amount of T&amp;E species habitat, and a limited amount of cultural resources.</li> <li>◦ <b>Category D</b> — Areas where wildland fire is desired, and there are few or no constraints for its use. This category contains non-crucial Sage-grouse habitat, a limited amount of T&amp;E species habitat, non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, and a limited amount of cultural resources.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>					

Table 2.1.5 Proposed RMP and Alternatives – Fire Management

Table 2.1.5 Proposed RMP and Alternatives – Fire Management							
PROPOSED RMP		Alternative A (Draft RMP/EIS Preferred Alternative)		Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Current Management (No Action)	Alternative E
<b>FIRE MANAGEMENT — MAP FIGURES 3 &amp; 4</b>							
<b>Hazardous Fuel Targets</b>				<b>Wildland Fire Use Targets</b>		<b>Allowable Wildland Fire Acres Burned per Decade</b>	
Category	Prescribed Fire (acres)	Mechanical (acres)	Chemical (acres)	Category	Acres	Category	Acres
Category A	1,000	5,000	5,000	Category C	75,000	Category A	2,100
Category B	19,570	10,000	10,000	Category D	30,000	Category B	21,000
Category C	82,738	20,000	20,000			Category C	151,500
Category D	53,117	0	0			Category D	30,000
<b>WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI)</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas, the objective would be to reduce hazardous fuels adjacent to these at-risk areas through mechanical, prescribed fire, or chemical treatments, or a combination thereof. In partnership with the State of Utah, the Ute Indian Tribe, and the counties, the BLM would develop WUI Projects.</li> <li>WUI areas within the VFO area have been identified in NFORS. These are communities/developed areas that are located within the vicinity of federal lands and are at risk from potential wildland fire events. The intent is to reduce the hazardous fuels adjacent to these at-risk areas through mechanical, prescribed, or chemical fire or a combination of these treatments. The priority areas identified for WUI projects are Browns Park, Deadman Bench, Deep Creek, Diamond Mountain, and Dry Fork.</li> </ul>							
Prescribed burning would be allowed for approximately 156,425 acres per decade.	Same as the Proposed RMP.	Same as the Proposed RMP.	Same as the Proposed RMP.	Same as the Proposed RMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prescribed burns would be employed on up to 27,950 acres in the Book Cliffs RMP area.</li> <li>For the Diamond Mountain RMP, 22,950 acres of pinyon-juniper woodlands and sagebrush communities would be manipulated (methods would include prescribed burning).</li> </ul>	Same as the Proposed RMP.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of prescribed fire in non-WSA lands that are managed for wilderness characteristics would be permitted for forest, woodland, and vegetation treatments, and for reduction of fuels, when compatible with the goals and objectives for management of the areas.</li> <li>Fire lines and other surface disturbances would be rehabilitated following completion of the burning operation.</li> </ul>	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the current management plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of prescribed fire in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would be permitted for forest, woodland, and vegetation treatments, and for reduction of fuels, when compatible with the goals and objectives for management of the areas.</li> <li>Fire lines and other surface disturbances would be rehabilitated following completion of the burning operation.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wildfire suppression operations would be permitted in non-WSA lands that are managed for wilderness characteristics.</li> <li>Fire lines and other surface disturbances would be rehabilitated following completion of suppression operations.</li> </ul>	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the current management plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wildfire suppression operations would be permitted in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.</li> <li>Fire lines and other surface disturbances would be rehabilitated following completion of suppression operations.</li> </ul>	