

Table 2.1.26 Proposed RMP and Alternatives – Wildlife and Fisheries Resources

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PROPOSED RMP	Alternative A (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Current Management (No Action)	Alternative E
WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES					
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide, maintain, enhance, and protect habitats for a diversity of fish and wildlife species within the VPA. • Maintain, restore, enhance, and protect crucial habitats for all fish and wildlife species and restore degraded habitats. Manage for unfragmented blocks of continuous habitat that would provide the life cycle requirements of a variety of wildlife species. • Identify species and habitats most in need of conservation. • Coordinate with UDWR and other partners to accomplish the population and habitat goals and objectives of current, revised, and/or future big game Herd Management Plans that are consistent with and meet the goals and objectives of this LUP. 					
MANAGEMENT COMMON TO THE PROPOSED RMP AND ALL ALTERNATIVES					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BLM would consider habitat banking (i.e., off-site mitigation) as a method to compensate for habitat loss due to surface-disturbing activities. • Coordinate with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to prepare an annual operating plan for predator control within the VPA. • Enlist APHIS' continued support to provide predator control within the black-footed ferret reintroduction area and provide carnivore samples for on-going disease monitoring. • The VFO would assist in implementing the strategic plan for Utah's Initiative on Blue Ribbon Fisheries by managing aquatic and riparian habitats along the Green River, from the Ashley National Forest border to the Colorado/Utah border, for a quality cold-water sport fishery and Pelican Lake for a quality warm water sport fishery. In addition, any aquatic and riparian habitats along other waters identified as Blue Ribbon Fisheries would be managed for quality sport fisheries. The VFO would implement this initiative to the extent consistent and appropriate with the Vernal RMP and other land use authorizations. • Reduce habitat fragmentation by requiring oil and gas field development plans and encouraging such activities as well clustering, multiple drilling from a single pad, utilization of existing routes and pipelines, and other measures to minimize surface impacts. • In accordance with Executive Order 13186, incorporate conservation measures for the protection of migratory birds, as outlined in the Utah Partners-In-Flight Avian Conservation Strategy and other scientific information, into all surface-disturbing activities. • Manage habitat to prevent the need for additional listing of species under the Endangered Species Act and to contribute to the recovery of those species already listed. • The BLM will approach compensatory mitigation on an "as appropriate" basis where it can be performed on-site, and on a voluntary basis where it is performed off-site, or, in accordance with current guidance. • Minor adjustments to crucial wildlife habitat boundaries periodically made by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) would be accommodated through plan maintenance. 					
HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife habitat improvement projects would require consultation with UDWR on job design, construction techniques, and project feasibility. Revise the Pariette Wetlands portion of the Myton Habitat Management plans. • Work with permittees to provide water to wildlife on all BLM water developments, including troughs, after livestock are removed from an allotment or pasture. Wildlife escape devices would be installed on all new and existing water troughs in the VPA. • Existing Habitat Management Plans (e.g., Brown's Park, Myton, and Diamond Mountain-Ashley Creek) would continue to be implemented and revised, and new ones would be developed as necessary. • Develop antelope and upland game guzzlers on a case-by-case basis considering the effects to migratory birds, wildlife, and livestock. • Encourage coordination with oil and gas companies to inform the BLM and USFWS of plans for workovers in order to protect species from disturbances during critical time periods. 					
HABITAT PROTECTION					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not allow activities that would result in adverse impacts to antelope from May 1 through June 30 on currently identified 7,800 acres of antelope fawning ground in Antelope Flat. This restriction does not apply if antelope are not present or if impacts would be mitigated through other management actions. This restriction also does not apply to maintenance and operations of existing facilities. • Modify existing fences on public lands where wildlife are adversely affected. Work with other surface management agencies or surface owners toward modifying wildlife-restricting fences that border public lands to improve natural movement of wildlife. • All applications to pave roads would be evaluated in the site-specific NEPA analysis to determine the need for fencing. Applicants receiving a ROW grant would be required to fence the road if it is determined necessary to protect human and livestock health and safety. • In order to protect crucial elk calving and deer fawning habitat, exploration, drilling, and other development activity would not be allowed from May 15 through June 30. Maintenance of producing wells would be allowed. 					
RAPTORS					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with utility companies, UDWR, and USFWS to prevent electrocution of raptors. • Spatial and temporal buffers applied to disturbances in the vicinity of nesting raptors should be tailored to the individual raptor species involved and based on factors such as line of sight distance between nest and disturbance, type and duration of disturbance, nest structure security, sensitivity of the species to disturbance, observed responses to related disturbances, and the amount of other disturbances already occurring in the vicinity. • Pursue a partnership between industries, local governments, USFWS, UDWR, the BLM, USFS, NRCS, and others as appropriate to establish a raptor management fund to be utilized for raptor population monitoring and habitat enhancement. 					
MOUNTAIN LION AND BLACK BEAR					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation with UDWR, promote appropriate habitat enhancement to contribute to maintaining a healthy predator population within the existing suitable habitat, while considering human safety, economic concerns, and other wildlife species. • Placement of bear bait on public land would require a permit. 					
MULE DEER, ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK, AND PRONGHORN					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve or increase forage through vegetation treatments that would setback the seral stage of crucial use areas, and, if necessary, re-seed areas with a variety of native and adapted non-native plant species. • It is preferred that surface-disturbing actions within crucial deer winter range would be located in pinyon juniper rather than browse where both vegetation types occur. • Acquire and protect crucial wildlife habitat through sale or exchange. • Establish new and maintain all existing guzzlers and other water sources to improve habitat and distribution in the VPA. 					
NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide habitat for cavity-nesting non-game wildlife species and other species that utilize standing snags during a portion of their life cycles. • In cooperation with permittees, manage grazing to allow regeneration of riparian tree species and to protect natural water sources. • Prevent the spread of non-native plants, especially cheatgrass, salt cedar, and Russian olive. 					

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strive for a dense understory with a reduction in salt cedar and improvement of cottonwood regeneration. <p>REINTRODUCTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reintroduction of native fish and wildlife species into appropriate habitats would be accomplished through coordination with UDWR, counties, and interested publics through appropriate public participation processes. Reintroductions would involve, but may not be limited to, native species such as Rocky Mountain big horn sheep, moose, bison, and Colorado River cutthroat trout, and wild turkey. Implement the guidelines outlined in the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Cooperative Agreement between the BLM, Diamond Mountain Resource Area, Vernal District and UDWR Northeastern Region (1993), and the Vernal District Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep Guidance Plan (1987). Allotments near current or potential Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep habitat, where future transplants are likely to occur, should be considered for conversion from domestic sheep grazing to cattle grazing, as cattle are the preferred livestock within 10 miles of bighorn sheep habitat areas. Conversion would only be done in cooperation with affected parties. Potential reintroduction of gray wolves would be made in consultation with the UDWR, USFWS, Ute Tribe, counties, and private landowners through the Resource Advisory Council process for public involvement. The BLM will follow the State of Utah's management plan for wolves (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Publication #: 05-17-- Prepared by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and The Utah Wolf Working Group). 					
No surface-disturbing activities would be allowed from April 15 through May 31 within McCook and Monument Ridge mule deer migration corridors (Figure 46).	Same as the Proposed RMP.	Same as the Proposed RMP.	No surface-disturbing activities would be allowed from April 15 to May 31 and September 1 to October 15 within McCook and Monument Ridge mule deer migration corridors (Figure 46).	For minerals only, no surface-disturbing activities would be allowed within the Monument Ridge mule deer migration corridor from May 11-May 31 and within the McCook Ridge mule deer migration corridor from October 2-May 31.	Same as Alternative C.
<p>Habitat and forage would be provided for the emigration and/or reintroduction of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashley Gorge Beaver Creek/Willow Creek Area Big Brush Creek Brown's Park/Green River Corridor that includes Red Creek Canyon Crouse Canyon Diamond Mountain ridgetops Goslin Mountain Island Park /Dry Fork area Little Brush Creek Nine Mile Canyon Richard's Mountain Sears Creek Canyon Teepee Mountain Toliver's Creek White River Upper Book Cliffs (Willow Creek drainage upstream from Wood Canyon and the Bitter Creek drainage upstream from the Sweetwater confluence) <p>Forage required for Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep would be included in the AUMs allocated for wildlife.</p>	Same as the Proposed RMP.	Same as the Proposed RMP except the BLM would only support Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep if natural emigration occurs.	Same as the Proposed RMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book Cliffs: Suitable habitat exists for bighorn sheep. Diamond Mountain: Bighorn sheep would be re-established in Brown's Park. Forage and cover would be provided to annually support an average population of about 300-400 animals on public lands in the HMP area. 	Same as the Proposed RMP.
The BLM would continue to work cooperatively with UDWR and other entities to revise and implement the Book Cliffs Bison Management Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat and forage would be provided for the emigration and/or reintroduction of bison in the Southern Book Cliffs. Forage required for bison would be 	The BLM would not support bison in the Southern Book Cliffs.	Same as Alternative A.	Unspecified in the current management plans.	Same as Alternative A.

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	included in the AUMs allocated for wildlife.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat and forage would be provided for the emigration and/or reintroduction of moose populations. Forage required for moose would be included in the AUMs allocated for wildlife. 	Same as the Proposed RMP.	The BLM would not support moose in the Upper Book Cliffs.	Same as the Proposed RMP.	Unspecified in the current management plans.	Same as Alternative A.
The BLM will approach compensatory mitigation on an “as appropriate” basis where it can be performed on-site, and on a voluntary basis where it is performed off-site, or in accordance with current guidance.	Disturbance within sagebrush habitat on crucial deer winter range would be reclaimed at or enhanced at a ratio of 1.5:1.	Disturbance within sagebrush habitat on crucial deer winter range would be reclaimed at or enhanced at a ratio of 1:1.	Disturbance within sagebrush habitat on crucial deer winter range would be reclaimed or enhanced at a ratio of 3:1.	Unspecified in the current management plans.	Same as Alternative C.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities that would result in adverse impacts to deer and elk within crucial winter range would not be allowed from December 1 through April 30. This restriction would not apply if deer and/or elk are not present, or if it is determined through analysis and coordination with UDWR that impacts could be mitigated Factors to be considered would include snow depth, temperature, snow crusting, location of disturbance, forage quantity and quality, animal condition, and expected duration of disturbance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities that would result in adverse impacts to deer and elk within crucial winter range would not be allowed from November 15 through April 30. This restriction would not apply if it is determined through analysis and coordination with UDWR that impacts could be mitigated. Factors to be considered would include snow depth, temperature, snow crusting, location of disturbance, forage quantity and quality, animal condition, and expected duration of disturbance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disturbance activities would not be allowed from December 15 through March 15 that would displace deer and elk from more than 10% of their total winter habitat at any given time. Waivers would be granted if deer and elk are not present, topography or other attributes screen the activity sufficiently so that the proposed activity would not displace the subject species, or disturbance resulting from the proposed activity could be mitigated. 	Same as the Alternative A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book Cliffs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to protect crucial winter elk habitat, surface-disturbing activities would not be allowed from November 1 through March 31. No surface-disturbing activities would be allowed on McCook Ridge October 2 through May 31 to protect the crucial winter deer and elk habitat. Diamond Mountain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities that would result in adverse impacts to deer and elk within crucial winter range would not be allowed from December 1 to April 30. This restriction would not apply if deer and/or elk are not present, or impacts could be mitigated through other management actions. 	Same as Alternative A.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within crucial deer winter range, no more than 10% of such habitat would be subject to surface disturbance and remain unreclaimed at any given time. 	New Surface disturbance of up to 560 acres per township would be allowed, prorated based on the percentage of the crucial deer winter range within the township.	Same as the Proposed RMP.	Total surface disturbance (new and existing) of 560 acres per township would be allowed, prorated based on percentage of the crucial deer winter range within the township.	Unspecified in the current management plans.	Same as Alternative C.
Raptor management would be guided by the use of Best Management Practices for Raptors and Their Associated Habitats in Utah (Utah BLM, 2006, Appendix A), utilizing seasonal and spatial buffers, as well as mitigation, to maintain and enhance raptor nesting and foraging habitat, while allowing other resource uses.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the Draft EIS.	Unspecified in the current management plans.	Same as Alternative C.

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