

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
State of Utah	G-1	LG67	Statements such as "though [range] improvements could have adverse impacts if livestock move into areas that have received little grazing in the past" (page 2-100 under Alternative A) are inappropriate and too general to fit the on-the-ground situation. The State of Utah requests that the parties involved in range improvements work toward a real analysis of impacts at the time of range improvement proposals, and that this impact statement in the DEIS be revised.	The analysis in question is conducted at a programmatic (landscape) level. Additional impact analyses are conducted for rangeland improvements that have the potential to affect resources at the time the improvements are proposed and their specific location and nature are known. The statement cited in the comment is located in Table 2.2.16 (Riparian Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS and merely summarizes anticipated impacts of the general scope of rangeland improvements on special status species. More information about these impacts can be found in Section 4.15.2.4.	
State of Utah	G-1	LG68	Statements about the impacts of various levels of grazing in the "Nine Mile Acquired Area" (page 2-105) in relation to scenic values appear to have no basis in fact, and are too general. The impacts are tied to grazing levels described as "elimination," "limited," and "unlimited," and postulate effects of "preserve," "partially preserve," and "diminish" scenic quality. What are these statements based on? Are the effects of grazing being tied to VRM classifications, and if so, where is the supporting analysis? Are the effects of grazing being tied to the BLM's riparian policy, and if so, where is the consideration of the mitigation measures? The State of Utah requests that the BLM improve on this analysis, and discuss real on-the-ground issues in light of the BLM's riparian policy, no on unsupported assumptions.	Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS for the Proposed Plan column has been revised to read as follows:  "Livestock grazing could be allowed in the Nine-Mile Acquired Area if such use is controlled, of short duration, and would not detract from recreation and/or riparian values along the river and is in accordance with the Green River Allotment Management Plan administered by the Price Field Office"	X
State of Utah	G-1	LG69	Page 2-18 outlines action common to all alternatives for livestock and grazing. The UDWR would like to	See comment response SS73.	

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			<p>suggest some additional management practices to be included in this section. Permittees using dogs in connection with their grazing operations in black-footed ferret recovery areas should be required to show proof that they have had them vaccinated for distemper.</p>		
State of Utah	G-1	LG70	<p>Page 2-16 discusses criteria for changing class of livestock. The UDWR suggests incorporation of the following phrasing: Cattle are preferred within 10 miles of bighorn sheep habitat areas.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:                      The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.                      The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.                      The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.                      The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.                      The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
State of Utah	G-1	LG71	<p>Livestock grazing seasons of use alternatives are discussed on page 2-48. The UDWR generally supports the seasons of use as outlined in Alternative A. However, we urge the BLM to consider converting critical/crucial deer winter range areas to the area 4 grazing system, May 1 to June 1. Periodic spring grazing in sagebrush areas can promote browse growth and limits competition with wintering big game animals.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:                      The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.                      The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.                      The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.                      The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p>	

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State of Utah	G-1	LG71A	Under all alternatives, many critical/crucial deer winter ranges are categorized as area 6 grazing, which allows for winter use. The UDWR recommends the season of use be moved to a spring grazing system in these areas. This management scenario is consistent with goals outlined by the Utah Partners for Conservation and Development Group who define habitat restoration as 1) active management (i.e., restoration), and 2) passive management (i.e., changes in grazing programs, etc.). The BLM, as a partner in this group, has the obligation to lead the effort for range restoration through the application of appropriate land use activities.	Area 6 already provides for a spring grazing treatment between March 15 – April 30. After April 30th, the graminoid species are in the critical growth period where the risk of decreasing perennial grass species increases, providing the opportunity for invasive species to increase which would defeat the obligation to lead the effort in range restoration through the application of appropriate land use activities.	
State of Utah	G-1	LG72	It is unclear if this is referring to the few allotments which are solely on river bottoms or if this refers to any allotment which has a river in it. If this refers to any allotment which has a river within its boundaries, then there is a potential for discontinuing grazing on many allotments with trust lands within them and inhibiting TLA's ability to collect revenue from these lands.	The Grazing in River Corridors subsection to Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS refers to considering discontinuing livestock use in river corridors following the voluntary relinquishment of a permit. It does not state that entire allotments would be retired. The BLM only manages the lands under its jurisdiction and does not have the authority to make management decisions pertaining to non-Bureau lands. As such, the BLM would not make blanket decisions that would apply to TLA lands.	
State of Utah	G-1	LG73	Introducing bison to the area would create unnecessary conflict with cattle operations in the area, including damage to fences. These bison would be competing with other ungulates and removing feed from trust lands without compensation to the agency. TLA would not support a bison introduction without compensation either in direct payment or hunting tags if the herd became a huntable unit.	Bison emigration or reintroduction would only be considered under those alternatives that allow for it and in cooperation with UDWR.. The Proposed Plan would follow the Book Cliffs Bison Management Plan.	

## Livestock Grazing

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State of Utah	G-1	LG74	Rangelands should be managed to control soil erosion to prevent the soil erosion rate from exceeding the tolerable (T) rate as determined through USDA/NRCS. Resources should be managed such that T is not exceeded from rangelands nor from roadways nor roadcuts, nor from riparian areas within rangelands.	The RMP adopts the Utah Rangeland Health Standards under all alternatives. These standards include specific management goals related to soil erosion. The BLM, by adhering to these Standards, would be managing to meet these soil erosion goals. See Management Common to All, Soil and Water Resources, for specific management prescriptions related to preventing undue soil erosion.	
Bureau of Indian Affairs	G-2	LG1	If the BLM is considering implementing utilization standards for grazing for uplands, a similar consideration should be given to riparian areas.	See Table 2.1.16 (Riparian Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS/FEIS for information on grazing in riparian zones.	
Bureau of Indian Affairs	G-2	LG2	Allocation of wildlife AUMs appears to be secondary to livestock AUMs in the document. Wildlife needs should be met first.	Comment noted.	
Bureau of Indian Affairs	G-2	LG3	AUMs assigned to wildlife that are mobile cannot be verified.	Comment noted.	
Duchesne County	G-9	LG107 (LG-S) (LG-22)	Section 4.6.2.4 does not seem to exist in the document and the effects of livestock grazing decisions on fire management definitely needs to be addressed	Section 4.7.2.1.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to remove the reference Section 4.6.2.4 and to impacts analysis of livestock grazing management actions on fire management. As stated in Section 4.4.2, the management actions associated with livestock grazing would have negligible impacts on fire management.	X
Duchesne County	G-9	LG132 (LG-RR)	It is noted that unallocated AUMs could be allocated to wildlife. The Duchesne County General Plan contains a policy that "The BLM and Forest Service are expected to comply with and honor the domestic grazing preference on grazing districts." As such, any unallocated AUMs should be considered first for domestic grazing.	See comment response LG88.	
Duchesne	G-9	LG8	The Forage policies of the RMP should be revised to	In accordance with FLPMA, the BLM reviewed and	

## Livestock Grazing

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County			<p>be consistent with the livestock and grazing policies of Duchesne County, which are as follows:</p> <p>The cultural heritage of Duchesne County is based on agriculture and livestock. These industries formed the historic basis of the local economy from the beginning days of settlement until the development of significant oil and gas resources in the early 1970s. Livestock grazing influenced lifestyles, left its imprints on the landscapes, and is one of the oldest enduring and economically important cultural heritage resources in the west. Although farms and ranches in the County were established on a private land base, during parts of the year livestock is pastured on public rangeland. The combination of public rangeland and private farmland constitutes the economic base for many of the County's livestock operations. If either the grazing permit or the private land is lost or diminished, the economic viability of those operations can be jeopardized.</p> <p>Federal grazing permits issued under the Taylor Grazing Act (BLM) or the Granger-The Act (USFS) allow permittees the privilege to use publicly owned forage.</p> <p>It is the position of Duchesne County that:</p> <p>a. Public land agencies shall maintain livestock grazing permits and grazing allocations at present levels until a study of rangeland improvement justifies increased or decreased grazing.;</p>	<p>considered the general plans of Duchesne, Daggett, Uintah, and Carbon counties during development of the management alternatives within the RMP. Where feasible, prudent, and consistent with the purpose and need of the RMP and BLM's multiple-use/sustained yield mandate, the BLM developed a range of alternatives and included them in the RMP/EIS.</p> <p>The BLM is aware that there are specific County and State plan decisions relevant to aspects of public land management that are discrete from, and independent of, Federal law. However, the BLM is bound by Federal law. The FLPMA requires that the development of an RMP for public lands must be coordinated and consistent with County plans, to the maximum extent possible by law, and inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal government plans be resolve to the extent practical (FLPMA, Title II Sec. 202 (c)(9)). As a consequence, where State and local plans conflict with Federal law, there will be an inconsistency that cannot be resolved or reconciled.</p> <p>Thus, while County and Federal planning processes, under FLPMA, are required to be as integrated and consistent as practical, the Federal agency planning process is not bound by or subject to County plans, planning processes, or planning stipulations. The BLM will identify these conflicts in the FEIS/PRMP, so that the State and local governments have a complete understanding of the impacts of the PRMP on State and local management options. A consistency review of the</p>	

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			<p>b. The County recognizes grazing permits on public lands as an asset, which may be transferred by the permit owner. Such transactions must be processed by the land management agency within ninety days of proper notification. Any reduction in the size of the permit or forage allocation as a result of the transaction shall not be made without a specific scientific justification;</p> <p>c. When grazing permits are withdrawn from a livestock operator due to grazing violations, the permit shall not be reallocated to other uses and shall be made available for continued livestock use before the commencement of the next grazing season;</p> <p>d. Access to public rangeland is vital to the permit-holders and the management agency for planning, management, and development. Access shall be maintained and improved as management needs require;</p> <p>e. The permit-holder shall be compensated for the remaining value of improvements made on reduced allotments, unless the permit was canceled for non-compliance with grazing regulations. Said compensation will be provided for in accordance with Section 402 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, which provides a reasonable compensation for the adjusted value, to be determined by the Secretary concerned, of his interest in authorized permanent improvements placed or constructed by the permittee or lessee on lands covered by such permit or lease, but not to exceed the fair market value of the terminated portion of the permittee's or lessee's interest therein;</p> <p>f. Livestock allocations shall not be converted to wildlife allocations as long as the land supports the</p>	<p>PRMP with the State and County Master Plans is included in Chapter 5.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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			<p>grazing Animal Unit Months (AUM's) assigned to the allotment. The only justification for decreasing domestic livestock grazing AUM's is for there to be a valid and documented scientific finding that the range district will no longer support the AUM's in question. The BLM and Forest Service are expected to comply with and honor the domestic grazing preference on grazing districts.</p> <p>Duchesne County recognizes that 43 CFR part 4110.3 provides for changes in permitted use. Conversion of allocated forage from one grazing animal to another would require a NEPA process that conforms with land use plans;</p> <p>g. Management decisions shall be based on the individual range allotment condition and not on the overall condition of surrounding lands. Increases in available forage resulting from the conservation practices of livestock permit-holders shall not be allocated or credited to other uses;</p> <p>h. Forage allocation reductions resulting from forage studies, drought, or natural disasters shall be implemented on an allotment basis. Reductions shall be applied proportionately to all allocations unless it can be proven that a specific type of grazing animal is causing the land health degradation. Duchesne County recognizes that, in the event of fire, drought or natural disaster, a variety of emergency or interim actions may be necessary to minimize land health degradation, such as temporary reduced forage allocation for livestock and wildlife. Forage allocation reductions shall be temporary. Grazing allocations shall be restored when forage production is restored;</p> <p>i. Weed control efforts that affect forage allocations shall be discussed by the land management agency</p>		

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			<p>with livestock representatives, neighboring landowners, and the County weed specialist. After the discussion, a weed control plan shall be developed and implemented;</p> <p>j. Public land management agencies shall endeavor to inspect riparian and sensitive areas with livestock permittees approximately one week before livestock are admitted to the grazing allotment;</p> <p>If riparian areas are damaged or degraded before the livestock enter the grazing allotment, the management agency and representatives shall make a record of the condition and appropriate mitigation shall be acceptable to all parties. A copy of the signed report shall be filed with the agency and provided to the permit-holder;</p> <p>k. Increases in available forage resulting from practices or improvements implemented by managing agency will be allocated proportionately to all forage allocations, unless the funding source specifies the benefactor;</p> <p>l. Changes in season of use or forage allocation must not be made without full and meaningful consultation with permittee. The permittee must be the first point of contact;</p> <p>m. The continued viability of livestock operations and the livestock industry shall be supported on federal and state lands within Duchesne County by management of the lands and forage resources and the optimization of animal unit months for livestock in accordance with the multiple-use provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq., the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, 43 U.S.C. 315 et seq., and the provisions of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, 43 U.S.C. 1901</p>		

## Livestock Grazing

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			et seq.		
Carbon County	G-11	LG75	All AUMs should be used to the maximum extent possible allowing for existing conditions and forage availability.	<p>The Vernal Field Office RMP determines the allowable uses of the public lands as provided for in FLPMA. FLPMA states in section 202(a) that land use planning provides for the use of the public lands “regardless of whether such lands previously have been classified, withdrawn, set aside, or otherwise designated for one or more uses”. FLPMA further provides in Section 202(e) the authority to issue management decisions which implement newly developed or revised land use plans. Such decisions, including those that exclude one or more uses, are subject to reconsideration, modification and termination through revision of the land use plan.</p> <p>See comment response LG45A regarding FLPMA policy to manage the public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield.</p> <p>While it is the goal of the BLM to enhance rangeland health while providing for and recognizing the need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber and fiber, there is no requirement in the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) or other applicable law for the BLM to maximize the number of domestic livestock AUMs. According to section 2 of the TGA, it is the objective of the act to regulate the occupancy and use of the Grazing Districts and to preserve these lands.</p>	
Carbon County	G-11	LG90 (LG-B)	Grazing AUMs or allotments should not be relinquished or retired to wildlife or any other conservation type use.	See comment response LG60.	
Carbon County	G-11	LG91 (LG-C)	Season of use restrictions need to have flexibility and make good on the ground science complete with trend and utilization study to support any decisions made before restrictions are levied.	Comment noted.	

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Carbon County	G-11	LG92 (LG-D)	Data gathered in cooperation with permittees or by third parties from universities, etc. as outlined in the Cooperative Monitoring MOU with NCBA and PLC should be accepted as part of any studies conducted to support changes in season of use.	Comment noted.	
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	G-12	LG183 (JLG-10)	The document states "If grazing is causing resource degradation and all other options have been exhausted, temporarily close those riparian areas that do not satisfactorily respond to changes in management." You should identify the time frame the degradation will be allowed to continue, the expected response time of the degraded habitat, as well as how you are defining "temporarily".	Response begins immediately when degradation is documented. However, the specific timing and nature of the response must be determined on a case-by-case basis in order to be most appropriate to the conditions at hand. Specific response times cannot be dictated in a programmatic level document, such as an RMP, and be expected to be the most effective possible.	
Daggett County	G-13	LG9	Brown's Park has always been an important winter range for wildlife, and Clay Basin and Brown's Park have been important to farming and ranching. In many areas range lands can continue to be improved with cooperation from the Division of Wildlife Resources. These efforts should not be limited by VRM's or ACEC's.	VRM classification and ACEC designation do not preclude maintenance of rangeland health or range enhancements. Maintenance of rangeland health is listed in Table 2.1.6 Forage – All Localities) in the PRMP/FEI under the subsection entitled Management Common to All Alternatives.	
USFS—Ashley National Forest	G-19	LG186 (LLG-3)	It is preferable to address riparian [grazing] conditions to be achieved on the ground, as stubble height is a short-term annual indicator and not a long-term resource goal.	See comment response LG182.	
USFS—Ashley National Forest	G-19	LG62	Please acknowledge that early season grazing is not beneficial to all streams. Clary and Webster (1989) note that streambanks are susceptible to early season grazing damage where a combination of high soil moisture and fine soil texture exists; in these cases, delayed grazing is recommended. Also, some TES species may need disturbance protection in some early spring riparian areas.	Comment noted.	
USFS—	G-19	LG63	While it is agreed that "longer duration of use would	Grazing strategies addressing riparian areas would	

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Ashley National Forest			result in greater impacts to vegetation, soils, and water in a given area”, it does not seem feasible to limit grazing before periods of late summer thunderstorms, since they occur during the grazing season in an unpredictable manner. However, limiting livestock grazing generally so that perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams function well -- preserving soil, water and vegetative components and functions – would seem to be a reasonable goal. Since such a high percentage of streams are not in properly functioning condition (p. 4-161), a grazing strategy which reduces livestock numbers or duration to enhance riparian condition would seem appropriate; however, this is not discussed.	be developed in the AMP (allotment management plan).	
USFS— Ashley National Forest	G-19	LG89 (SW15)	Livestock grazing could also have negative impacts on wetlands and riparian zones, particularly in areas which either have riparian areas below proper functioning condition or upland conditions with watershed integrity concerns (whether from activities or natural conditions; i.e., the 70% of the allotments which are in categories of “improve” or “custodial” care, p. 3-36).	Management prescriptions by alternative for grazing in riparian areas can be found in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.12.2, and Table 2.3 under Riparian and Wetland Resources.	
Dept. of Agriculture and Food	G-21	LG174 (JLG-1)	There is a need for flexibility of grazing times in the management plan. Weather conditions, husbandry practices and economic impacts can all create the need for some adjustment in grazing schedules. Especially true for sheep ranchers; producers need to lamb on the winter BLM range before moving to spring and summer sites, e.g.	There is no data that says that sheep ranchers need to lamb on BLM range, in fact within the VFO very few of the sheep operators lamb on the BLM. If we are to have a true flexibility system then the permittees also need to have the flexibility built into their operations that provide for them to be able to leave the allotments early (i.e. in case of low precipitation in the spring when the cold season species have little soil moisture to re-grow or continue to grow, in some cases this could be as early as the end of March).	
Dept. of Agriculture	G-21	LG175 (JLG-2)	Sheep permit holders have demonstrated good stewardship by reducing their numbers during these	Comment noted.	

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and Food			drought years. They want to maintain viable and healthy grazing units.		
Dept. of Agriculture and Food	G-21	LG176 (JLG-3)	Well drilling planned for these allotments may require the sheep to leave or may cause too much disruption to the sheep. Both activities can coexist. Drilling activities should be adjusted around grazing schedules for specific areas to create a plan to minimize impact to both parties. Creation of additional watering sites could help with this scheduling. Much of the area has limited amounts of grazing due to availability of water, if additional grazing acres were made usable, sheep could be rotated around to reduce the interaction between the two activities. Utah ranchers have expressed support for such a plan. District should allow enhancement of improved water sources by the ranchers.	The BLM has and will continue to encourage and allow the permittees to participate as an affected party in the development of the NEPA documents, in this case specifically the Oil & Gas NEPA documents.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG10	The draft contains proposals to retire AUMs and convert them from livestock to wildlife or other purposes. Recently a copy of a memorandum issued by the Office of the Solicitor, clarification of M-37008 was made available to us. Based on that memo, it is the County's position that before the BLM can accomplish such relinquishments and reallocations, the Secretary must revoke the 1936 orders of withdrawal and reverse or revise the determination that these lands are chiefly valuable for grazing. As written, the draft does not provide for this. The availability of this memo will require a revision of Uintah County's Plan. As written, the RMP draft proposes to approve all voluntary retirements without plan amendments and public involvement. Assignments of retired AUM's would be made for various purposes without further analysis or public input. This is unacceptable and must be rewritten or struck.	See comment responses LG1 and LG4.	

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UBAOG	G-22	LG11	Strike the first sentence.	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG11A	The RMP fails to document resource-based reasons to change seasons-of-use. The conflicts arise in large part from the failure to comply with previous RMP decisions regarding wild horses, undocumented theories of phenology, and increased numbers of big game species, which are both numerous and increasing in population and proper use of rangeland health standards.	Where feasible and prudent and consistent with the purpose and need of the RMP and BLM's multiple-use/sustained yield mandate, the BLM developed actions that are compatible with said plan and included them as alternatives in the RMP/EIS. Phenology is and will remain a staple for rangeland management.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG12	<p>Add at the end of the second sentence:</p> <p>"although proposed rule changes would continue the practice of showing the suspended AUMs on the grazing permit."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p>	

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UBAOG	G-22	LG12A	The RMP omits the fact that proposed changes to the grazing rules would restore the practice of showing suspended non-use on a grazing permit, with the opportunity to restore that use. § 4110.3	The RMP must be consistent with all applicable grazing regulations.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG13	<p>The RMP proposal to allow the retirement of a grazing permit violates the Taylor Grazing Act, 43 U.S.C. § 315, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act ("FLPMA"), 43 U.S.C. § 1752. It violates the Tenth Circuit decision in Public Lands Council v. Babbitt, 167 F.2d 1287 (10th Cir.1999)</p> <p>Any relinquished grazing permit should be offered to qualified permittees.</p>	See comment response LG4.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG14	"all grazing activities" should include horses, burros, and wildlife.	The statement, as written, does not specifically exclude wild horses, burros, or wildlife from the Comprehensive Land Health Standards.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG15	<p>Add after "allotment(s)":</p> <p>"Commit to and implement appropriate range improvements."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions</p>	

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				<p>or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG15A	The RMP fails to address the need to actually implement range improvements.	All management prescriptions proposed in the RMP are predicated on the basis that implementation would be accomplished as funding becomes available to accomplish them.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG16	<p>"Maintain or improve the total forage resource using techniques that are compatible with the use and development of other resources and which would meet or exceed Utah BLM Rangeland Health Standards."</p> <p>Add after "would":</p> <p>"make substantial progress and"</p> <p>The grazing rules recognize that making progress towards meeting rangeland health standards is compliance. 43 I.E. §4180.1. The RMP generally omits this key qualifier, which is problematic because in many cases it will take many years to "achieve" range health standards.</p>	<p>Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Localities) in the PRMP/FEIS (under the subsection entitled Goals and Objectives, has been changed to read as follows:</p> <p>"Maintain or improve the total forage resource using techniques that are compatible with the use and development of other resources and which would meet, make substantial progress toward, or exceed Utah BLM Rangeland Health Standards."</p>	X
UBAOG	G-22	LG17	"Any adjustments in forage assignments to either livestock or wildlife would be based on analysis of monitoring data including long-term vegetation trend, actual use, climate, and utilization. Additionally forage would not be allocated in areas where forage production is less than 25 lbs per acre, which equates to 32 acres per AUM. Areas that are seldom or never grazed by livestock due to physical factors such as slopes greater than 50% and areas that are in excess of four miles from water would not be included in the	Comment noted.	

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			livestock forage allocation. An exception for areas in excess of four miles of water if water is hauled or the areas would be grazed when snow is on the ground. Adjustments would involve permittees and would be implemented through documented mutual agreement or decision."		
UBAOG	G-22	LG17A	<p>Paragraph should be struck entirely.</p> <p>"50% slope and limitation of 25 lbs/acre".</p> <p>The DEIS/RMP fails to analyze or disclose the impacts of this proposal.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG18	<p>"Increases or reductions associated with monitoring of base allocations would be evaluated against the established grazing permits, UDWR herd unit objectives, and wild horse Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) to determine needed adjustments to animal numbers." Based on the TGA, PRIA and MUSYA, BLM should state that it is the goal of BLM to manage the range resource to retain full grazing preference AUMs taking all necessary actions to do so like they say later on under wildlife. Then if necessary then follow the rest of the paragraph. Starting "If it is determined."</p>	<p>The Vernal Field Office PRMP/FEIS proposes allowable uses of the public lands as provided for in FLPMA. Alternative D includes an analysis of the current active preference, while Alternative B emphasizes livestock use, both sheep and cattle, over use by wildlife by allocating additional available forage to livestock.</p> <p>As provided for in FLPMA, the Secretary has the discretion, in the land use planning process, to modify levels of use including livestock grazing. The RMP proposes, in all alternatives, to use</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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				<p>monitoring information to adjust forage allocations based on current levels of livestock use, wildlife herd unit objectives, and wild horse AMLs in relationship to objectives set forth in each alternative (see alternative tables). This will assure that allocation levels are within the rangeland's ability to sustain them. While it is the goal of the BLM to enhance rangeland health while providing for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber and fiber, there is no requirement in the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) or other applicable law for the BLM neither to "retain full grazing preference AUMs" nor to take "all necessary actions to do so". According to FLPMA, BLM is to manage for "multiple uses" which best meet the present and future needs of the American people without permanently impairing the productivity of the land. The use of monitoring data to adjust forage allocations based on the lands capability is consistent with FLPMA, PRIA, and the TGA.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG19	Livestock grazing is an historic use along the Green River and Brown's Park area. There is little, if any, scientific basis to exclude livestock grazing from this area.	Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Localities), in the PRMP/FEIS under the subsection entitled Management Common to All Action Alternatives provides for a prescription where grazing may be allowed under certain conditions.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG20	BLM lacks the authority to hold grazing permits in "nonuse."	The BLM is not proposing to hold a grazing permit in "nonuse".	
UBAOG	G-22	LG20A	The grazing rules prohibit nonuse, 43 C.F.R. §4130.1-1(g) (limiting nonuse to three years).	The grazing regulations do not prohibit nonuse. See 43 C.F.R. §4130.1-1.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG20B	The RMP essentially attempts to adopt the prohibited conservation use grazing permit while violating the	The grazing regulations limit nonuse. See 43 C.F.R. §4130.2 (g), (2).	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			grazing rules regarding nonuse.		
UBAOG	G-22	LG21	The Counties object to the proposed "retirement" of grazing permits. The State of Utah is not qualified to hold grazing permits and must relinquish them. The State is not using the permits, which violates the nonuse permits.	See comment response LG4.  The State of Utah does not hold any BLM permits within the Vernal Field Office.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG22	These groups have failed to follow BLM grazing rules by not exercising their grazing permits. BLM has failed to enforce the rules, which would not allow nonuse for more than three years. This entire scheme should be ended now.	Please see comment responses LG4 and LG21.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG23	Grazing is a mandated legal use and not to be reduced to provide for watersheds as provided for in the Taylor Grazing Act, subsequent withdrawals and FLPMA. With proper management, grazing and watershed protection are not incompatible.	See comment responses LG8 and LG10.  While it is the goal of the BLM to enhance rangeland health while providing for and recognizing the need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber and fiber, there is no requirement in the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) or other applicable law which restricts BLM from reducing livestock use or to continue allocations at historical levels. The definition of multiple use in Section 103(c) of FLPMA specifically indicates that some lands can be used for "less than all of the resources" which they are capable of providing. According to FLPMA, BLM is to manage for "multiple uses" which best meets the present and future needs of the American people without permanently impairing the productivity of the land. According to section 2 of the TGA, it is the objective of the act to regulate the occupancy and use of the Grazing Districts and to preserve these lands. Under FLPMA, uses of the land are allocated during the land use planning process. BLM agrees that	

## Livestock Grazing

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				proper grazing is not incompatible with livestock grazing and most of the Field Office is grazed by livestock. The combinations of uses proposed in the Draft RMP/EIS are varied and diverse across the planning area taking into consideration the current and future needs of the public. This is consistent with both FLPMA and the TGA.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG23A	At the end of this sentence, strike  "unless specified elsewhere in the plan".	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG23B	As written, this is not consistent with the Uintah County Plan and violates previous decisions that set aside the land as chiefly valuable for grazing.	See comment response LG8.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG24	In discussions with BLM staff it is their position that this is not a permanent reallocation and it is only for the life of the plan. The history of these acquisitions and the stated purpose would indicate that the reallocation is permanent.	See comment response LG4.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG25	"Achieve appropriate utilization of the range by livestock, wildlife and wild horses through management prescriptions and administrative adjustments."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:	

## Livestock Grazing

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			<p>Replace with</p> <p>"Grazing is an important economic and cultural resource and the BLM goal is to maintain and enhance the industry by retaining full historic grazing preference through management prescriptions."</p>	<p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>Under FLPMA, multiple use and sustained yield are mandated goals of federal land use management plans. Multiple use and sustained yield relative to rangelands means that the range is managed appropriately and within its carrying capacity for the combination of forage users (e.g., livestock, wildlife, wild horses) placing demands on the land. The BLM cannot favor one land use or user group over another when developing land management plans.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG26	<p>"Requests from a permittee to change seasons of use would be a priority if all of the following criteria were met: changes enhance or meet resource objectives contained in the Vernal RMP; allotments(s) are scheduled for assessment the same year a request is made; and funding for the assessment is provided by sources other than BLM."</p> <p>Strike all of the above.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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				<p>or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG26A	<p>Changes in seasons of use should be based on site specific facts and management decisions.</p> <p>Add:</p> <p>"The Secretary concerned shall also specify therein the numbers of animals to be grazed and the seasons of use, and that he may reexamine the condition of the range at any time, and, if he finds on reexamination that the condition of the range requires adjustment in the amount or other aspect of grazing use, that the permittee or lessee shall adjust his use to the extent the Secretary concerned deems necessary." 43 U.S.C. § 1752(e)."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG27	<p>The VFO has not convened an Advisory Board meeting in over 5 years. This requirement should be struck if board is not required to meet.</p>	<p>Changes to the regulations in 1995 no longer provided for the Grazing Advisory Boards and they were reestablished under State law. They are currently active under Utah States Grazing Improvement Program. The coordination with this Board is still appropriate and provided for in the grazing regulations. This policy improves coordination and communication with local livestock permittees and improves range management and BLM believes it should remain in effect.</p> <p>Although a meeting has not been recently held, the agreed upon policy remains in effect.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG28	<p>The Counties object to these limits on changes in livestock for several reasons. First, the grazing rules</p>	<p>The allocation of resources and the uses made of BLM lands is a function of the Land Use Planning</p>	X

## Livestock Grazing

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			<p>govern such changes and require monitoring data and other relevant information. 43 C.F.R. § 4130.3-2. Second, the limits on crucial deer range or wild horse areas are not within the scope of the rules. Similarly the limits on conversions and range improvements in WSAs are not required in the IMP. Strike or rewrite these provisions.</p>	<p>process. Proposed livestock conversions will be analyzed on a site specific basis considering the criteria as outlined in the plan. This is an appropriate use of the LUP as it allocates uses of the land and guides the management of the BLM lands. Monitoring data and other relevant information will be used to analyze the impacts of livestock conversions and make the decision as to whether or not to approve the proposed conversion.</p> <p>The subsection entitled Criteria for Changing Class of Livestock, in the PRMP/FEIS for Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management), has been revised to read:</p> <p>“Prior to the authorization of any livestock conversions in WSAs, the impacts from any necessary rangeland improvements projects would be assessed.”</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG29	Strike this bullet.	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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				adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG29A	The RMP establishes the number of AUMs available for livestock grazing and for wild horses. This bullet implies that there would be some movement of livestock AUMs to wild horses. Grazing and their associated AUMs are mandated and legal uses as provided for in the Taylor Grazing Act, subsequent withdrawals and FLPMA. Nowhere is it authorized for the conversion of livestock AUMs to wild horses. Forage for wild horses should have been established at the time of the creation of the HMA and not supplemented by such conversions.	See comment response LG1.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG30	Strike this bullet. Replace with  "conversions in WSAs would be made when in compliance with H-8550-1 IMP Chapter 3 Guidelines for Specific Activities -D. The Interim Management Plan (IMP) is to direct activities within the WSAs until such time as congress acts on the designations."  It is very specific in the analysis and provisions for such conversions and should not be replaced with language that is inconsistent with the IMP and that is vague.	The subsection entitled Criteria for Changing Class of Livestock, in the PRMP/FEIS for Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management), has been revised to incorporate the suggested change.	X
UBAOG	G-22	LG31	Strike this paragraph as it is not consistent with the WSA IMP.  If not struck it should be provided that such designations should not be more restrictive than requirements of the IMP.	The subsection entitled Criteria for Changing Class of Livestock, in the PRMP/FEIS for Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management), has deleted the bullet item in question to make it consistent with the WSA IMP.	X
UBAOG	G-22	LG32	Strike 1st three paragraphs.	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG32A	<p>In 4th paragraph add the following after "resource degradation":</p> <p>"to the extent that rangeland health standards are not being met and progress is not being made, monitoring data show that livestock grazing is the most significant factor and all other options have been exhausted, temporarily close those riparian areas that do not satisfactorily respond to changes in management."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG32B	<p>Most of this section should be deleted entirely, and the riparian or river corridor section needs to be amended to conform to BLM rules. First, the changes need to be based on monitoring data and the data must show that livestock is the primary reason that the area is not meeting or making progress towards meeting</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			standards. In too many cases, there is no monitoring data and it is otherwise very difficult to qualify the role of wildlife, especially big game, or wild horses.	<p>substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG33	There cannot be any increased allocation to anything. All AUM's were allocated before PRIA and can only be a reallocation, which should be a separate NEPA process.	BLM is authorized to implement allocation changes through the land use planning process, and a separate NEPA process is not required. Allocation of AUMs is based on range health and availability of forage; active AUMs may be increased or decreased depending on the health and quantity of forage.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG34	The RMP projects a reduction [in AUMs] without explaining the basis or accounting for the likely reductions due to application of RMP standards. The RMP needs to document the changes from Alternative D to Alternative A. If these projections are due to the permit retirements, this is unlawful. If it is something else, this too violates FLPMA since the RMP cannot reduce grazing on individual permits without failing to consult, coordinate and cooperate with the permittee.	<p>As stated in Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Localities) under the subsection entitled Management Common to All Action Alternatives in the PRMP/FEIS, monitoring would be used to determine the amount of forage available to livestock, wildlife, etc. Adjustments would be based on vegetation trends, actual use, climate, and utilization. Adjustments would involve permittees and would be implemented through documented mutual agreement or decision.</p> <p>Table 2.1.6 in the PRMP provides a summary of the proposed actions in Alternatives A – C and E as well as the existing management direction (Alternative D).</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG35	The Counties' position is that the number of AUM's for permitted use should be no less than the maximum number sustainable by range conditions as mandated	The Vernal RMP will replace the existing Book Cliffs and Diamond Mountain RMPs, and that as authorized under FLPMA . The Vernal RMP can	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			in the allotments and grazing districts as governed by the Taylor Grazing Act and other related grazing legislation, and as contemplated under existing Vernal and Diamond Mountain RMP's.	make changes in the allocation of forage	
UBAOG	G-22	LG36	The current AUM figure of 137,897 is a depressed figure reflecting the scaling back of AUM's in recent years to deal with the current five year drought. As drought conditions abate and forage conditions improve, the current AUM figure should be adjusted back upward to pre-drought numbers, and the current AUM figure should not be seized upon as the new arbitrary maximum.	The 137,897 AUMs is the permitted number which was not decreased by the drought conditions that have existed. Instead it is the average actual use over the past 10 years of 78,500 AUMS that reflects the drought conditions.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG37	Where are the AUMs for horses coming from? It should be noted here. County Plans require forage must be available when reintroductions are made. No AUM should be taken from livestock and wildlife allocations.	Any alternative that proposes reintroduction of wild horses would only occur when rangeland health meets acceptable standards and adequate forage to support the AUMs allocated to livestock, wildlife, and wild horses is found to be available. BLM's commitment to the health, condition, and availability of rangeland and forage for all allocations is found in Chapter 2, Management Common to All (MCA) for Forage, Rangeland Health, and Wild Horses. BLM declines to implement the suggested wording addition as we do not believe it is necessary and this issue is addressed in the MCA section of the document.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG37A	Add to the beginning of this alternative  "if monitoring, field observation, or ecological site inventory indicate that adequate forage is available"	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why	

## Livestock Grazing

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				<p>the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG37B	<p>The Uintah County Plan requires adequate habitat must exist before introductions or reintroductions. There is no indication of where these AUMs are to come from or if they exist. This is supported in 3.20.2, which indicates that the decision to remove the horses in 1985 was partially based on forage concerns and there is no indication that forage was improved.</p>	See comment response LG8.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG38	<p>The RMP should reflect a goal of retaining the full grazing preference to sustain and enhance the livestock industry. Any additional AUMs will be allocated based on contribution resources invested. The process otherwise outlined violates FLPMA because it makes management a matter of forage, rather than whether resource objectives are being achieved and the reasons that they are not. In addition, the process violates the obligation to coordinate, consult and cooperate because it imposes a top down reduction without the permittee's involvement or consent.</p>	<p>The RMP has as a goal (see Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS ) for the appropriate use of the range by livestock, wildlife, and wild horses. The BLM recognizes that livestock grazing has been identified as a primary use of public lands; however, BLM has been given the authority under the Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA to manage grazing to ensure range health and is not required to manage for full grazing preference without regard to resource condition. The goal, therefore, must reflect sustainable yield, which is based on range health and forage availability. BLM monitors range health and land uses to determine sources of rangeland health degradation and implements management actions accordingly. As indicated in Table 2.1.8 in the PRMP, the BLM will coordinate with permittees.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG39	<p>This is ... inequitable, because the permittee makes the largest investment and yet receives the least compensation.</p>	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
UBAOG	G-22	LG40	The omission of wild horses [from analysis of available forage and impacts on forage] is ... inequitable and unrealistic. Wild horse numbers increase by 19% a year and to date BLM has not made any projects or improvements to mitigate the damage done to range resources. BLM policy requires a proportionate reduction [in forage assignments to wild horses] while the RMP would put the burden entirely on the permittee.	The impacts of wild horse management decisions on forage under each alternative are analyzed in Sections 4.7.1, 4.16.2.2, and 4.16.2.14.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG41	Alternative D does not fairly reflect the current no action [relative to forage management.]	As the commenter does not indicate how Alternative D fails to fairly reflect the current no action condition, the BLM cannot address this comment.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG42	Alternative C contradicts BLM rangeland health management policy by only reducing livestock without regard to the causal connection between forage and user or consumer. While the RMP can discuss an alternative that violates law or policy, it needs to fully disclose this fact.	Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Localities) in the PRMP/FEIS for Alternative C indicates that monitoring would be used to determine if adjustments in forage allocation are needed. Alternative C considers the use by wildlife over livestock as part of the range of alternatives that are required and appropriately considered in the RMP. The commenter is correct that reductions in livestock would not be appropriate if livestock use was not a factor in the forage allocation issue.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG43	All of the alternatives ... suffer from the fact that they do not address resource conditions and would base reductions simply on forage.	Throughout the RMP, the BLM fully commits to management based on resource condition, including the condition (quantity and quality) of forage, with the goal of maintaining a healthy and thriving ecosystem. Please, see Tables 2.1.1 through 2.1.27 in Chapter 2 of the PRMP, Management Common to All alternatives, especially those for wildlife, vegetation, forage, rangeland health, and wild horses, for more information about these resource-based goals and commitments.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG44	The Counties do not support disclosing forage allocations, since otherwise BLM is adopting plan	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			conditions that cannot be achieved.		
UBAOG	G-22	LG45	Strike- all of Alternative A. Strike - all of Alternative C.	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG45A	<p>The Alternative A criteria for livestock grazing should be deleted entirely. First, it violates FLPMA which provides that seasons of use be established in a grazing permit, not the RMP. 43 U.S.C. 1752(e). Second, it violates the grazing rules to the extent that the RMP would unilaterally amend a grazing permit without monitoring data or other information. 43 C.F.R. 4130.2-1 (changes in grazing use). Third, it also violates the requirement that BLM coordinate, consult and cooperate with individual permittees before amending an allotment management plan. 43 U.S.C. 1752(d). This proposal also violates the grazing rules by attempting to substitute principles of phenology for rangeland health standards. BLM has no choice but to follow the Utah standards and cannot amend them without revising the rules with the advisory councils. 43 C.F.R. 4180.2; 43 C.F.R. Part 1784. Finally, from a resource perspective, neither the RMP nor the DEIS</p>	<p>The CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1502.1) require BLM to consider reasonable alternatives, which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment, based on the nature of the proposal and facts in the case (CEQ 40 Most Asked Questions 1b.). While there are many possible management prescriptions or actions, the BLM used the scoping process to determine a reasonable range alternatives that best addressed the issues, concerns, and alternatives identified by the public.</p> <p>An Interdisciplinary team of resource specialist, with on-the-ground knowledge of the planning area, analyzed the current management situation, desired conditions, the uses and activities to create a framework to resolve the issues raised through the</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>justify this departure from established criteria. This alternative is unlawful and should be deleted in its entirety.</p>	<p>development of the alternatives. A balanced approach consistent with FLPMA's principles of "multiple use" was a key component of the analysis.</p> <p>The FLPMA makes it clear that the term "multiple use" means that not every use is appropriate for every acre of public land and that the Secretary can "make the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use. . . ." (FLPMA, Section 103(c) (43 U.S.C. §1702(c)).) The FLPMA intended for the Secretary of the Interior to use land use planning as a mechanism for allocating resource use, including energy and mineral development, as well as conserving and protecting other resource values for current and future generations.</p> <p>The DRMP/DEIS contains alternatives which strike an appropriate balance between environmental protection and development of the mineral resources on our public lands consistent with the requirements of the Mining and Mineral law and FLPMA. The PRMP/FEIS will offer BLM management the flexibility to protect resource values and uses while allowing for acceptable levels of mineral development.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG46	<p>BLM has made a number of decisions regarding livestock grazing that an RMP cannot unilaterally discard, e.g. public lands are withdrawn as chiefly valuable for domestic livestock grazing, the grazing permits issued pursuant to Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA, and renewed pursuant to Congressional direction. In these circumstances, BLM does not have</p>	<p>The BLM has the authority under the Taylor Grazing Act and through the Secretary to make adjustments to grazing use based upon range conditions and to regulate the occupancy and use of public rangelands in order to preserve the land and its resources from destruction or unnecessary injury, and to provide for the orderly use, improvement,</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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			<p>the discretion to allow or disallow livestock grazing. Alternatives C and D do not reflect Congressional direction that grazing permits be renewed under the same terms and conditions until BLM does a site-specific evaluation under NEPA. Similarly the efforts to set seasons of use in an RMP without regard to the permit terms also violates federal law and the grazing rules, which require a change in grazing use to be based on monitoring data. The RMP provides no justification in terms of science and data for the stipulated seasons of use.</p>	<p>and development of the range (43 U.S.C. §315a). FLMPA and PRIA also authorize the BLM to manage public rangelands for multiple use, sustained yield, and all rangeland values (43 U.S.C. §1712 and 43 U.S.C. §§1901(b) (2) and 1903(b)).</p> <p>See comment responses LG4, LG11, and LG26.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG47	<p>The discussion regarding range projects needs to be prefaced with an explanation that these are anticipated projects but are not intended to be a ceiling if additional work is appropriate to meet rangeland health standards and other management objectives. As written, the discussion appears to set ceilings on range projects. The discussion is also troubling in that it fails to show how BLM would actually accomplish these objectives. Unfortunately, more often than not, planned projects are not funded and/or approved. The agriculture industry should not be punished if BLM fails to secure the funding or adopts other priorities.</p>	<p>The information about rangeland improvements contained in Table 2.1.12 (Rangeland Improvements) of the PRMP/FEIS does not represent a ceiling or limit but serves as a relative estimate of such improvements for the purpose of assessing impacts under each alternative. Table 2.1.12 of the PRMP under Management Common to All alternatives for Rangeland Improvements indicates that:</p> <p>“Specific improvements to rangeland health would include, but are not limited to [emphasis added], vegetation treatments, fencing, spring development, reservoirs, guzzlers, pipelines, and wells.”</p> <p>The entire PRMP and the management actions implemented through it are predicated on the base assumption that the BLM will have the resources available to undertake the actions indicated.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG48	<p>The number of acres for vegetation treatment, especially the differences between Alternatives D and A, make no sense. Vegetation treatment can be</p>	<p>The commenter does not provide any additional information on how or why the acreage differences do not "make sense", nor why or how acreages</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			equally or even more beneficial for wildlife. There is no explanation for fewer acres. Analysis of proposed habitat improvement projects proposed by the partners for conservation and development and as well as projection of future projects. Allowable treatment acres proposed here must be adjusted to provide for opportunity for completion of this project.	should be adjusted for an unidentified "this project."	
UBAOG	G-22	LG49	The RMP never explains the reasons for reducing both range improvement and vegetation treatment.	See comment responses AT61 and LG45.  As required by NEPA, the RMP/EIS analyzed a range of alternatives and management actions to ensure that resources are protected and to ensure that a balanced approach was recommended that allows opportunities for legitimate land uses.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG50	The VRM Classes I and II will likely affect range project construction [in addition to minerals production] but the RMP fails to disclose, justify or document this effect.	No VRM classification precludes range improvements. VRM Class I and II designation place greater restrictions on how such actions may be undertaken but do not prevent them. The analysis of anticipated impacts of visual resource management decisions on livestock and grazing, minerals and energy, and vegetation are provided in Sections 4.7.2, 4.8.2.7, and 4.16.2.13, respectively.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG51	The RMP does not disclose what is the full historic grazing preference. The Counties assume it is substantially less than 146,220 AUMs.	For the purposes of the RMP/EIS, the historic preference is the amount of use authorized under the existing MFP as modified through implementation of the MFP. As stated on Page 3-35 in Section 3.7 in the DRMP - Livestock and Grazing; 146,161 AUMs are the total permitted use.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG52	The RMP discussion largely omits the economic and cultural importance of grazing and ignores affects of reducing AUMs on private land open space. During the ten years since BLM adopted new grazing rules, the western states have seen more and more ranchers	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>leave the business and sell their private lands for 3-acre homesites. This occurred even during very high cattle prices and low costs of money. It is widely recognized that BLM's increased regulation and hostility to livestock grazing plays a significant role in this trend. If BLM wants to protect open space and wildlife habitat it needs to recognize the importance and even critical role that livestock grazing plays in providing wildlife habitat and open space.</p>		
UBAOG	G-22	LG53	<p>The assumption of limited demand for AUMs is unsubstantiated. If BLM had a number of vacant allotments it could make the case but it does not. The only vacant allotments are those purchased by UDWR.</p>	<p>The commenter has misinterpreted the section of the document to which the comment refers. The statement says that the demand for forage by livestock during the last 10-year period (as reported by permittees themselves) was only 78,500 AUMs as compared to the 137,897 AUMS allocated under existing permits. The statement does not claim that there is no desire by permittees to use more of the AUMs allocated; it is merely a statement of data reported to the BLM.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	LG54	<p>Strike</p> <p>"resource use conflicts or controversy".</p> <p>The criteria used to classify the allotments is incorrect and bears little relationship to actual management or resources.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				Controversy is a legitimate basis for considering management approaches to allotments.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG55	"Positive economic return" this is under grazing	The point of the comment is unclear, and as such, the BLM cannot provide a detailed response.	
UBAOG	G-22	LG56	This conclusion in the RMP is unsupported and inaccurate. The base property for most ranches consists of "farm land" where operators will grow hay. These lands are an integral part of the public lands and the RMP management policies directly affect these lands. These comments have identified the anti-grazing bias throughout the document. The implementation of the RMP without correction will lead to more ranches being sold for development. This more than any other factor will close access to public lands and "fragment habitat" by replacing ranches and grazing allotments with 3 to 5 acre ranchettes. The trend in Colorado and Idaho shows that there is a huge market for this type of development. If BLM were to follow the direction, it would revise the plan to recognize and provide for the economic viability and stability of the livestock industry. Unfortunately the plan fails to even recognize the significant contribution that ranch operations make to maintaining open space, improving rangeland conditions, and providing water for all species, not just livestock.	The linkage between private agricultural pursuits and public lands within the Vernal planning area is acknowledged in Sections 3.12.2.2.2, 3.12.3.2.2, and 3.12.4.2.1.	
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties	G-25	LG58	The RMP proposes to exclude from forage allocation the land that produces less than 32 pounds of forage per year. The draft RMP and DEIS do not analyze the effects of doing so but given the fact that much of the planning area is a high mountain desert, this would remove significant volume of forage. The majority of range science does not support this proposal and the DEIS inadequately assesses the effects of adopting	In Section 2.4.5.2 in the DRMP, the actual number cited is 25 pounds per acre, which equated to 32 acres per AUM. The commenter does not provide substantial information to refute these suitability criteria.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			such a proposal.		
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties	G-25	LG59	The draft RMP fails to recognize current livestock grazing in these areas as legitimate and authorized land uses.	The commenter does not identify which areas the BLM allegedly fails to recognize as current grazing areas. The RMP recognizes livestock grazing as a legitimate and authorized use of public lands within the Vernal Planning Area (VPA) and provides for its continuance under the new RMP. See Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS for provisions related to livestock and grazing within the VPA.	
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties	G-25	LG60	Throughout the draft there are proposals to directly and indirectly convert livestock AUMs to wildlife and watersheds. State law (U.C. §§63-38d-401(6), (7) and (8)) broadly outlines criteria for state plans concerning the management of federal lands located in Utah and the natural resources on those lands. The law contains provisions which generally disfavor diminishment of forage allocated to livestock grazing, the law also recognizes the state's interest in providing forage and habitat for wildlife, and the general provision that increases in forage ought to be shared among all users who participate in managing the forage of the area. Uintah and Duchesne County Plans also provide that livestock AUMs cannot be converted to other uses.	The Taylor Grazing Act, FLMPA, and PRIA authorize the BLM to manage grazing to achieve multiple use and sustained yield and for the full range of resource values. The 1995 rangeland policy (see Office of the Solicitor IM 37008, and the subsequent clarification) authorizes the BLM to convert livestock AUMs to wildlife, so long as the conversion does not constitute a permanent withdrawal grazing on lands that have been identified as chiefly valuable for such activity.	
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties	G-25	LG61	There is no discussion of impacts of wild horse management decisions on livestock.	The anticipated impacts of wild horse management decisions on livestock are addressed in Section 4.7.1. See also the discussion of forage management decisions on livestock found in Section 4.7.2.2.	
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties	G-25	LG87 (PR14)	At page 2-48 table 2.3 Alternatives, Livestock and Grazing Management, Season of Use, it is proposed to establish new seasons of use for designated Seasons of Use for Livestock Grazing. As proposed C and D of the Alternatives are inconsistent with the Federal Land	The PRMP/FEIS doesn't propose to change the Utah Standards for Rangeland Health. The limitation on season of use proposed by the RMP is a common rangeland management practices to maintain or improve range conditions. The	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>Policy Management Act (FLPMA) 43 U.S.C. 1752(b) and the terms of the ten-year grazing permits. To the extent that the proposal purports to change the season of use, it also conflicts with the Utah Rangeland Health Standards, which do not adopt a phenology criteria. BLM must follow rangeland health and is not at liberty to unilaterally change the standards. Even assuming BLM could and should change seasons of use in an RMP, it cannot do so without violating the requirement that it coordinate, consult, and cooperate with the permittee or lessee in doing so. 43 U.S.C. 1752 (d); 43 C.F.R. 4110.2-3.</p>	<p>proposed seasons of use have been developed on an area specific basis (Figures 7 through 10) to help assure that Rangeland Health Standards continue to be met or are met in the future.</p> <p>The Guidelines for Grazing Management include implementing grazing management practices that “meet the physiological requirements of desired plants and facilitate reproduction and maintenance of desired plants” (1(c)). The proposed seasons of use will provide for these plant needs. The DRMP also includes flexibility providing for extended seasons of use when deferment and/or rest are provided for and for authorization of use outside of the specified season of use when certain criteria are met (Section 2.4.7.2).</p> <p>There is no requirement in FLPMA to maintain seasons of use as currently specified in grazing permits. Alternative D continues the current grazing management practices including the seasons of use as indicated on existing grazing permits. FLPMA indicates that it is the policy of the United States to manage the public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield and in such a manner as to best meet the present and future needs of the American people without permanently impairing the productivity of the land. The proposed seasons of use will provide for the use of the public lands while helping to insure that no permanent loss of productivity will occur.</p> <p>The BLM does not propose to violate any</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>consultation, coordination or cooperation requirements as indicated in the grazing regulations. The public participation process associated with this RMP and EIS effort as well as with that of the site specific environmental analysis and administrative decision process involved with any changes to the season of use will comply with the grazing regulation requirements to consult, coordinate and cooperate with the permittee and other interested publics.</p>	
<p>Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties</p>	<p>G-25</p>	<p>LG88 (PR16)</p>	<p>The RMP attempts to authorize the retirement of grazing permits and their "reallocation" to wildlife. This violates the Taylor Grazing Act, 43 U.S.C. 315, The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (AFLPMA"), 43 U.S.C. 1752, and the terms of the Executive Orders Ns. Executive Order 6910, 54 I.D. 539 (1934), and Executive Order 6964 (Feb 5, 1935) which withdrew public lands that were determined to be chiefly valuable for (10th Cir. grazing. The Tenth Circuit in Public Lands Council v. Babbitt, 167 F.3d 1287 (10th Cir. 1999) aff'd on other grounds, 529 U.S. 728 (2000), held that BLM could not offer permits "not to graze" public lands, since grazing permits are limited to domestic livestock. By the same token, BLM cannot purport to retire grazing permits for wildlife. Any such decision would require amending the Presidential Executive Order, which BLM cannot do, since authority to amend a withdrawal is limited to the Interior Secretary. It is also inconsistent with the grazing rules, which provide for BLM to offer a permit to qualified permittees whose base property is nearby. 43 C.F.R. 4130.1-2.</p>	<p>The PRMP/FEIS determines the allowable uses of the public lands as provided for in FLPMA. FLPMA states in Section 202(a) that land use planning provides for the use of the public lands "regardless of whether such lands previously have been classified, withdrawn, set aside, or otherwise designated for one or more uses". FLPMA further provides in Section 202(e) the authority to issue management decisions which implement newly developed or revised land use plans. Such decisions, including those that exclude one or more uses, are subject to reconsideration, modification and termination through revision of the land use plan.</p> <p>As provided for in FLPMA, the RMP proposed to re-allocate retired livestock AUMs to in order to meet the overall goals and objectives of the plan. The Secretary has the discretion under FLPMA to use the land use planning process to close areas to grazing, change levels of use, or to devote the land to another public purpose in accordance with the relevant land use plan. The transfer of AUMs from livestock to wildlife reflects the desire of BLM to</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>modify the levels of use and in this particular instance to recognize the importance of wildlife values. These changes in use are made within the rangeland's ability to sustain the allocations of use. Any AUMs allocated by the land use plan, whether for livestock or wildlife, are within the productive capability of the public lands involved.</p> <p>FLPMA indicates that it is the policy of the United States to manage the public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield. While it is the goal of the BLM to enhance rangeland health while providing for and recognizing the need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber and fiber, there is no requirement in the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) or other applicable law for the BLM to "maximize the number of domestic livestock AUMs" or to continue allocations "at historical levels." According to FLPMA, BLM is to manage for "multiple uses" which best meets the present and future needs of the American people without permanently impairing the productivity of the land. According to Section 2 of the TGA, it is the objective of the act to regulate the occupancy and use of the Grazing Districts and to preserve these lands. The Grazing Districts were established through a classification system established in the TGA. Under FLPMA, uses of the land are allocated during the land use planning process. The combinations of uses proposed in the RMP are varied and diverse across the planning area taking into consideration the current and future needs of the public. This is consistent with both FLPMA and the TGA.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				Also, see comment response LG4.	
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	LG66	The draft RMP at page 4-317 states that rangeland improvements would include a variety of activities. The Ute Tribe supports these improvements, as they would also improve existing wildlife habitat and provide water during high-stress drought periods. The Tribe requests that the BLM notify the Ute Tribe Fish and Wildlife Department prior to initiating rangeland improvements in proximity to Tribal land. Cooperation between the BLM and Tribal biologists would result in the greatest benefit to wildlife that inhabit both BLM and Tribal lands.	The BLM commits to continuing the existing and ongoing consultation with the Ute Tribe regarding actions that have the potential to affect tribal resources or concerns and actions that create opportunities for cooperative management regarding these resources and concerns.	
Scott Schew	I-51	LG93 (LG-E)	The RMP doesn't address how it will adjust grazing if the rangeland health standards are not being met and wildlife or wild horses are the problem. We feel that the BLM is wrong and inconsiderate where it proposes to use a permittee's AUMs that he has in nonuse, as a base for wildlife or wild horse AUMs. This is especially evident after the number of drought years we have gone through where these extra AUMs have been the lifesavers of both the ranchers and the range.	The BLM is not and has not proposed to use a permittees' AUMs in nonuse for wildlife or wild horses. Site specific evaluations which indicate that the loss is due to something other than grazing should also indicate the action which needs to be taken to correct the situation.	
Scott Schew	I-51	LG94 (LG-F)	We never saw where or how ADC (animal damage control) was going to be able to operate which is essential to the livestock operations and the wildlife survival especially where lambing, fawning, and sage grouse are concerned. This should be in the RMP.	Table 2.1.26 (Wildlife and Fisheries) in the PRMP/FEIS under the subsection entitled Management Actions Common to All Alternatives, the second paragraph states:  "Coordinate with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (Aphis) to prepare an annual operating plan for predator control within the planning area."	
Scott Schew	I-51	LG95 (LG-G)	We feel that the BLM is being irresponsible in its opposition to fencing the road ROW when safety, property loss, and range management could all benefit from some fencing and certainly if the range is going to	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			benefit from a fence the BLM should help with the cost.		
Scott Schew	I-51	LG96 (LG-H)	We feel that the green stripping practice that is currently being done on the desert ranges could be enhanced by allowing the use of a good hardy grass such as crested wheat grass on pipeline ROWs and other reclamation projects and in areas that need some help getting re-vegetation to occur.	Seed mixes for reclamation and revegetation of development areas are determined through project-level development and mitigation plans in order to be specific and appropriate to the area in question. As such, the RMP cannot make sweeping decisions about precisely what mixes will be used.	
Scott Schew	I-51	LG97 (LG-I)	We would like to see an appendix such as Appendix 11 in the Book Cliffs RMP/EIS in the final RMP.	Appendix L in the Draft RMPT provides similar information to Appendix 11 in the Book Cliffs RMP.	
Bert DeLambert	I-82	LG98 (LG-J)	I would like to comment on the proposed wild horse herd to be put on Winter Ridge. In my opinion there is not sufficient forage to maintain a herd of 60-110+ horses year round.	Comment noted.	
Nick Theos	I-108	LG100 (LG-L)	OHV use is here, but needs to be curtailed to some extent during the periods when livestock are grazing an area especially during lambing or calving.	Restriction of OHV travel to designated routes and areas as proposed under Alternatives A, B, C, and E (see Table 2.1.15 Travel –Travel Roads and Trails) in the PRMP/FEIS is expected to reduce OHV-livestock conflicts.	
Nick Theos	I-108	LG64 (LG-M)	Mining, drilling for oil or gas: Road or pipeline construction should not be done when grazing is going on. Conflicts with drilling, mining, vehicles, road and pipeline construction and the wildlife force the wildlife into more virgin areas and possible reduction in the permittee's AUM's, numbers, and/or time. Drilling pads, pipelines, and roads must be reseeded and weed spraying must be required, and lost AUM's be reinstated. Users should communicate directly as well as through the Range Con.	Comment noted.	
Nick Theos	I-108	LG65	Since the permittees were not included in the drafting of this document I feel it necessary and I am willing to go out on the range with knowledgeable people to assess and monitor the area before any of the alternatives are decided on.	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Nick Theos	I-108	LG99 (LG-K)	I believe in multiple use, but shouldn't every use be controlled? Why is it always livestock? Use on BLM lands has increased and every use should be treated alike. Over use by any entity works a decrease on another.	The BLM has considered a full range of management options in the development of the alternatives under consideration in the RMP. The BLM recognizes that livestock grazing is a primary use of public lands designated as chiefly valuable for that purpose and has accommodated the continuance of grazing within the parameters of federal law and BLM policy. Please, see responses to Comments LG4, LG20, LG60, and LG75 for additional information about the laws and policies governing BLM's authority to manage grazing on lands under its jurisdiction.	
Mark W. Belles	I-112	LG102 (LG-N)	Grazing management criteria should include periodic evaluation of grazing allotments and retirement of those allotments if the grazing is not maintaining minimum rangeland health criteria.	Policy and regulations including Standards for Rangeland Health provide steps to evaluate and adjust grazing.	
Bill Robinson and Sheep Ranch Permitees	I-126	LG104 (LG-P)	Rather than continue to work with an unreasonable pre-May spring off date and go through the difficulty each year of seeking extensions of that date to deal with the lambing process, the more prudent route would be to permanently set those regular spring off dates for all winter sheep ranges to at or around May 20th to reflect the reality of the annual extensions given in the past. There is more than ample evidence, history, pattern and practice for BLM to adjust the regular spring off dates to at or around May 20th of each year. Accordingly, we request that the Vernal Draft RMP be revised to clarify these Winter Range spring off dates, setting those dates at or around May 20th of each year.	See comment response LG87.	
Stephen Borton	I-154	LG103 (LG-O)	I would ask that when you do grant oil and gas leases, more consideration be given to the impact of these leases on existing grazing permits.	The anticipated impacts of minerals and energy management decisions on livestock and grazing are discussed in Section 4.7.2.3, and summarized in Table 2.28 in the PRMP/FEIS under Livestock &	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				Grazing. Where specific considerations for livestock and grazing are appropriate, the BLM includes such considerations and stipulations in lease notices.	
Laird Fetzer Hamblin	I-169	LG182 (JLG-9)	Instead of artificial water sources, such as guzzlers, natural riparian areas should be restored to a properly functioning condition. To do so would require the permanent removal of all livestock and feral species. It would also require eradication of non-native plant such as tamarisk.	<p>Protections for riparian areas as related to grazing are outlined in the Grazing in River Corridors subsection to Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) and Table 2.1.16 (Riparian Resources).</p> <p>Noxious weed control, including control of tamarisk, is discussed in Table 2.1.23 (Vegetation) in the PRMP/FEIS as well as Sections 3.16.2</p>	
Laird Fetzer Hamblin	I-171	LG181 (JLG-8)	Grazing in the VPA has caused severe changes in the abundance or absence of native plant species and has led to the establishment of exotic plant species as well as severe erosion. The EIS lists some of the adverse impacts of livestock on wildlife and wildlife habitat. However, many adverse impacts of livestock are not sufficiently addressed. Instead of artificial water sources, such as guzzlers, natural riparian areas should be restored to a properly functioning condition. To do so would require the permanent removal of all livestock and feral species. It would also require eradication of non-native plants such as tamarisk. It is critical that livestock, and feral animals, horses or other not be grazed on the VPA.	See comment responses to LG26, LG46, LG134, and LG182.	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG116 (LG-BB)	The DRMP fails to properly address grazing related issues under federal law, regulation and policy. Prior to the DRMP/DEIS the number of AUMs allocated to wildlife differs from the DRMP DEIS. Every alternative besides the no action alternative would increase the number of AUMs to wildlife. The BLM has cut a valid and recognized public use, livestock grazing, without proper or sufficient justification. In order to reallocate	The allocation of resources on BLM lands is an appropriate use of the BLM Land Use Planning process. The range of alternatives, as stated in the DRMP/EIS, provides for an analysis of the impacts of changing the current allocation (Alternative D). FLPMA provides BLM the authority to allocate resources and determine what uses will be made of the BLM lands in the LUP process.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			AUMs in such a manner, the BLM must provide sufficient justification for the change, particularly in light of the TGA. See inconsistencies on Table 2.3 (p. 43) and Table 4.16.1	Also, see comment response LG88.	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG117 (LG-CC)	It is apparent that the Vernal BLM intends to retire grazing preferences on at least eight allotments. DRMP/DEIS does not contain any supporting language or citation to regulation or law to support this move to retire grazing preference. Before such a retirement is done, the BLM must make an affirmative determination that livestock grazing is not chiefly valuable before grazing preferences are retired	The seven allotments referred to in Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Locations) in the PRMP/FEIS were retired and the AUMs were allocated to wildlife in 1964 and 1982 as mitigation due to the loss of deer habitat by the Flaming Gorge Reservoir project and the Central Utah Project. This decision is being brought forward from the 1994 Diamond Mountain RMP. Table 2.1.6 also authorizes a livestock grazing prescription.	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG118 (LG-DD)	The DRMP makes several references that improperly distinguish types of livestock grazing and their effects. Specifically, the DRMP/DEIS makes references that indicate that sheep grazing is uniquely damaging to the range conditions and health as compared to that of other livestock or wildlife. From this unsupported conclusion, the DRMP/DEIS makes several unsupported references that suggest that sheep grazing will be likely changed to cattle. The BLM, however, then does not substantiate or support these conclusory comments with any scientific evidence.	The BLM is not proposing to require operators to change class of livestock.	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG119 (LG-EE)	The BLM in its DRMP/DEIS fails to acknowledge the significant benefits that properly managed sheep grazing can have on the condition of the range and environment. There is a sizeable amount scientific research that shows that sheep grazing can improve wildlife habitat (see Comment letter I-173for references). These studies need to be properly addressed before the BLM continues in its unjustified position regarding sheep grazing and then require a change from sheep to cattle grazing.	The following references have been added to the PRMP/FEIS:  Jeffery C. Mosely, Prescribed Sheep Grazing to Enhance Wildlife Habitat on North American Rangelands. "Sheep Research Journal", 1994, pp. 79-91;  K.M. Havstad, Sheep Grazing as a Rangeland	X

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>Improvement Tool, " Sheep Research Journal," 1994, pp. 72-78;</p> <p>B.E. Olson and J.R. Lacey, Sheep: A Method for Controlling Rangeland Weeds, "Sheep Research Journal," 1994, pp. 105-112.</p> <p>See comment response LG118.</p>	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG120 (LG-FF)	If in fact the BLM can properly substantiate that the class of livestock is directly responsible for impacting the range conditions, then the BLM must consider alternatives and options to address such issues and not merely force an operator to change class of livestock.	See comment response LG118.	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG121 (LG-GG)	The DRMP specifically addresses the seasons of use for grazing. The alternatives are all different and the DRMP/DEIS neither indicates whether other options were considered and eliminated nor whether hybrids of the proposed alternatives were considered. The DRMP does not provide any information as to why the methods or means utilized in the alternatives were selected and included for each alternative. It does not include any information as to what is the standard generally used by the BLM for determining grazing seasons of use or any information as to what type of determination generally is best for the affected environment with any explanation or justification.	<p>The PRMP/FEIS provides five different alternatives analyzing a wide range of issues. These issues were developed on the basis of public scoping.</p> <p>See comment response LG87.</p>	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG122 (LG-HH)	The proposed season of use in the DRMP is not only limited to four hard and fast alternatives for determining the season of use, it is also constrained by seven areas. (Figures 7-10). The reasoning for delineating these areas in the manner done by the BLM is without explanation or justification. The area titled "area 6" is	See comment response LG87.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			enormous as compared to the other areas. The DRMP fails to explain the disparity in the size of the grazing areas boundaries but then goes on to try and establish grazing seasons of use based on these arbitrarily delineated areas.		
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG123 (LG-II)	The DRMP fails to identify what allotments are located within what area. Thus, a permittee has no way of knowing with any certainty what the DRMP is proposing will be the season of use for their permits. A permittee has no actual notice of exactly how their permit and the season of use will be affected. This eliminates the effectiveness of a comment period for the permittees to make substantive comments. The BLM should remedy this error and seek to address a season of use for each allotment instead of the macro-level treatment that is currently within the DRMP/DEIS. This would best serve the environment and allow for the best and proper management of the range of resources within the VPA.	The addition of allotment boundaries and names in Figures 7 – 10 would have made the figures unreadable so a seasons of use code has been added to the Appendix L (Grazing Allotment Table). This will indicate which allotments fall within which seasons of use area.	X
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG124 (LG-JJ)	These requirements are not only unduly burdensome on the applicant but are also arbitrary, capricious and contrary to law.	These requirements are criteria to be used to help maintain, or move the allotments in the direction to meet or exceed Rangeland Health Standards.	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG125 (LG-KK)	The DRMP does not discuss other alternatives that may be used to improve range and soil conditions in times of "drought." Other measures that should be considered include the removal of wild horses, and reduction in wildlife numbers. Acknowledge the possibility of alternatives that could improve range conditions through seeding and water/irrigation improvement projects.	The BLM has the authority under the Wild Horse and Burro Act to implement an emergency gather due to drought or other climatic events, the UDWR has the ability to increase or extend hunts for the same purpose.	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG126 (LG-LL)	The DRMP has a crucial mistake in that it fails to define the critical term "drought". A definition should be included so that the affected parties can know with certainty when the BLM will begin taking actions that	As defined by the Society for Range Management, "prolonged dry weather when precipitation is less than 75% of the average amount" (SRM 1989)	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			will limit or reduce permitted activities within BLM managed lands.		
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG127 (LG-MM)	One way of dealing with the ambiguity created by the lack of a definition of "drought" in the document is to use adaptive management for forage and range conditions to determine conditions long before a full-fledged drought has occurred and before damage is exacted on range that cannot support the permitted use.	Comment noted.	
Bill Robinson	I-173	LG86	It should be noted that section 3.7 contains serious errors. In the first part of this section it states that "comprehensive grazing allotment information is summarized in Appendix N." Appendix N does not exist. The reader has no way of knowing which allotments make part of what areas.	Appendix L in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to correct grazing allotment information.	X
Smokey Rasmussen	I-174	LG135 (ALG-2)	The DRMP/DEIS is severely lacking in its approach to seasons of use. First the DRMP states that under the BLM's preferred Alternative A, seasons of use would be based on phenology. The BLM ignores the fact that many currently existing grazing permits currently have a season of use.	See comment response LG87.	
Smokey Rasmussen	I-174	LG136 (ALG-3)	Based on the Federal Lands Policy Management Act (FLPMA), the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA), and the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA), the BLM's approach in the DRMP and DEIS to limit or change the season of use is not legal. Furthermore, the mandatory requirements to change season of use the DRMP sets out at page 2-18 is also illegal. The BLM cannot use extortion in exchange for changing the season of use and still be in compliance with the law. Essentially, the BLM has a blank check to ask for whatever the agency currently thinks may be necessary for management practices in exchange for granting a change in the season of use.	See comment response LG87.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Smokey Rasmussen	I-174	LG137 (ALG-4)	In the past, the BLM has conducted studies in areas fenced off from cows. Is this practice going to continue under the DRMP? If so, what is the BLM studying and what data has been gathered thus far?	Any fence studies already in place would continue until the study is completed. There are no new fence studies proposed in the Vernal Planning Area.	
Smokey Rasmussen	I-174	LG79 (AAT-4)	The Stock-Raising Homestead Act of 1916, P.L. 290, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw land necessary for the moving of livestock to and from winter and summer ranges or shipping points. Permittees, including Mr. Rasmussen and his predecessors, have been using the Rough Trail Stock Driveway for more than 40 years. The BLM's failure to recognize and protect the ongoing use of the Rough Trail Stock Driveway is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A review of the DRMP also reveals that the BLM also failed to recognize other stock driveways, such as the Diamond Mountain Stock Driveway.	43 CFR 4130.6-3, Crossing Permits, provides for the authorization of livestock to cross public lands and/or other lands managed by the BLM. The DRMP as currently written does not restrict the authorization of crossing or trailing permits within the Field Office. Under 43 CFR 4130.6-3 the authorized officer has the authority to attach terms and conditions to the crossing authorization which limits the amount of time and location of the authorized trailing. The DRMP does not invalidate currently designated Stock Driveways within the Field Office.	
Chad F. Hamblin	I-175	LG134 (ALG-1)	I feel the alternatives in the plan don't cover the full range of options in regards to grazing. I think we need a "no-grazing alternative. Of all of the uses of our public lands I think grazing has had some of the most detrimental effects on the land, and I would like to see all grazing stopped on all public lands. I think that at the very least the BLM should have some large, wilderness-quality areas in which grazing is not allowed.	Livestock grazing is a valid existing right on public lands as mandated by the Taylor Grazing Act, FLPMA, and other federal legislation and policy for lands identified as chiefly valuable for that purpose.  See the comment responses LG46 and LG60.	
The Piney Valley Ranches Trust	O-3	LG5	Studies used to support the analysis for impacts to vegetation resources from livestock and grazing decisions should be cited. Please, use the article "Vegetation Change After 65 Years of Grazing and Grazing Exclusion" found in the recently released Journal of Rangeland Management. This study found few differences between plant populations on grazed and ungrazed lands.	The BLM uses a variety of monitoring and inventory techniques to evaluate rangeland conditions and trends. These can be found in BLM Technical References and are referenced in many parts of the documents. Indicators of Rangeland Health, Proper Functioning Conditions, Utilization, Actual Use, are a few of the techniques used by the BLM to assess rangeland conditions.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				The commenter reference to the article entitled "Vegetation Change After 65 Years of Grazing and Grazing Exclusion" is noted.	
The Piney Valley Ranches Trust	O-3	LG6	A more recent Bighorn Sheep study than the one from 1900 that is cited in the document should be used. Use more recent data.	Section 3.19.1.4 in the DRMP does not cite a study, but rather a statement of declining big horn sheep numbers in the early 1990s.	
The Piney Valley Ranches Trust	O-3	LG7	The RMP/DEIS should note what studies were used to support the claim that sheep grazing interferes with sage grouse and their strutting.	The commenter did not provide a page number for reference. Therefore, the BLM is unable to provide a response.	
Uintah County Farm Bureau Federation	O-5	LG4	Reallocating AUMs from livestock to wildlife or wild horses as described in the RMP/DEIS violates the Taylor Grazing Act.	The Vernal RMP determines the allowable uses of the public lands as provided for in FLPMA. FLPMA states in section 202(a) that land use planning provides for the use of the public lands "regardless of whether such lands previously have been classified, withdrawn, set aside, or otherwise designated for one or more uses". FLPMA further provides in Section 202(e) the authority to issue management decisions which implement newly developed or revised land use plans. Such decisions, including those that exclude one or more uses, are subject to reconsideration, modification and termination through revision of the land use plan. The Secretary has the discretion under FLPMA to use the land use planning process to close areas to grazing, change levels of use, or to devote the land to another public purpose in accordance with the relevant land use plan. The transfer of AUMs from livestock to wildlife reflects the desire of BLM to modify the levels of use and in this particular instance to recognize the importance of wildlife values.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>FLPMA indicates that it is the policy of the United States to manage the public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield. While it is the goal of the BLM to enhance rangeland health while providing for and recognizing the need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber and fiber, there is no requirement in the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) or other applicable law for the BLM to continue current allocations. According to FLPMA, BLM is to manage for “multiple uses” which best meets the present and future needs of the American people without permanently impairing the productivity of the land. According to section 2 of the TGA, it is the objective of the act to regulate the occupancy and use of the Grazing Districts and to preserve these lands. Under FLPMA, uses of the land are allocated during the land use planning process. The combinations of uses proposed in the Draft RMP/EIS are varied and diverse across the planning area taking into consideration the current and future needs of the public. This is consistent with both FLPMA and the TGA.</p>	
The Nature Conservancy Moab Project Office	O-6	LG184 (LLG-1)	None of the text in this section refers to the Standards for Rangeland Health in Appendix F.	Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS under the subsection entitled Goals and Objectives incorporates the Rangeland Health Standards by reference.	
The Nature Conservancy Moab Project Office	O-6	LG185 (LLG-2)	All rangelands/livestock allotments should undergo a rangeland assessment per the Interpreting Indicator of Rangeland Health. Livestock should be removed from poorly functioning streams to allow rehabilitation, and allotment management should address drought alternatives.	Please, see Table 2.1.6 (Forage - All Locations) and Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/EIS for proposed management actions related to forage allocations and livestock and grazing.	
Utah Farm	O-9	LG101	This section predicts economic impacts based on the	Proposed mitigation of anticipated impacts from	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Bureau Federation		(SO-J)	assumption that "the demand for oil and gas will remain high over the next twenty years." Agriculture, particularly sheep and cattle production, has been a major historic economic contributor in the Vernal District, when mineral industries have gone through several "boom and bust" cycles. Farm Bureau supports multiple-use, but believes that adverse impacts anticipated to grazing, especially in the Bonanza area, must be mitigated.	management decisions on livestock and grazing resources are discussed in Section 4.7.3.	
Utah Farm Bureau Federation	O-9	LG109 (LG-U)	The RMP proposes establishing a forage priority in violation of the Taylor Grazing Act.	See comment response LG88.	
Utah Farm Bureau Federation	O-9	LG110 (LG-V)	The RMP notes that all alternatives pertaining to wild horse management decisions would have "indirect impacts upon livestock grazing, mostly in regards to forage availability." It continues, "if AUM designation were changed for wild horses, it could affect livestock and wildlife." Further the RMP discusses reintroduction of Rocky Mtn. big horn sheep, bison and moose and changes in forage availability and "use-priority" All proposals potentially adversely impact livestock AUMs and should be assessed for economic, cultural and historic effects.	The statements in question represent potential management decisions over the life of the RMP. Changes in AUM allocation from those represented in the final RMP and any reintroductions of Rocky Mountain big horn sheep, bison, and/or moose would require additional impacts analysis subsequent to the RMP/EIS at the time the change in AUM allocation and/or reintroductions were proposed and specific implementation plans were developed.	
Utah Farm Bureau Federation	O-9	LG111 (LG-W)	UFB is concerned that the VFO in its RMP is proposing reallocation "from livestock to wildlife or wild horses," clearly in violation of Presidential Executive Order, Congressional mandates, state and federal law and the stated position of the agency's administrative officers.	See comment response LG4.	
Utah Farm Bureau Federation	O-9	LG112 (LG-X)	The VFO RMP or any BLM FO, proposing the transfer or retirement of livestock grazing rights to accommodate increases in wildlife or wild horses clearly violates the "chiefly valuable" doctrine of the Taylor Grazing Act.	See comment response LG4.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Utah Farm Bureau Federation	O-9	LG113 (LG-Y)	As BLM field offices make minor changes and temporary adjustments to address rangeland health, the UFB recommends they be broad based. Past experience has shown that BLM resource managers focus attention on easily identified livestock allocations for reductions while not making similar demands of the state's wildlife managers and BLM wild horse herds.	Comment noted.	
Utah Farm Bureau Federation	O-9	LG114 (LG-Z)	Concerns are raised in the Vernal RMP pertaining to adverse impacts on cool season plants. There are no range trend studies cited that quantify this assertion.	See comment response LG87.	
Utah Farm Bureau Federation	O-9	LG115 (LG-AA)	UFB supports "restoration of suspended non-use and active non-use or increased animal unit months to existing permittees when range monitoring clearly demonstrates an upward trend in carrying capacity, including recovery from drought condition."	Comment noted.	
Duchesne County Water Conservancy District	O-10	LG105 (LG-Q)	Duchesne County is within Areas #2 and #6 depicted on the grazing maps. DCWCD supports Alt A for Areas #2 and Alt B for Area #6 as they have the potential for the most beneficial use by the livestock industry. If the Duchesne County Cattleman's Assoc has a different preference during the review process, DCWCD would concur with their decision.	See comment response LG88.	
Duchesne County Water Conservancy District	O-10	LG106 (LG-R)	It is noted that unallocated AUMs could be allocated to wildlife. DCWCD feels strongly that any unallocated AUMs should be considered first for domestic grazing as this directly affects the economy of the Uintah Basin.	See comment response LG88.	
Duchesne County Water Conservancy District	O-10	LG107 (LG-S) (LG-22)	Section 4.6.2.4 does not seem to exist in the document and the effects of livestock grazing decisions on fire management definitely needs to be addressed	Section 4.7.2.1.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to remove the reference Section 4.6.2.4 and to impacts analysis of livestock grazing management actions on fire management. As stated in Section 4.4.2, the management actions associated with livestock grazing would have negligible impacts on fire management.	X

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Duchesne County Water Conservancy District	O-10	LG108 (LG-T)	DCWCD would question the assumption that management decisions for livestock and grazing, forage and wild horse resources would always result in a loss of vegetative cover and result in wind and water erosion. With proper management, livestock grazing can actually have beneficial effects.	Section 4.13.1.3 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to eliminate the use of the word "always" and to reflect the concept that vegetation loss is possible but not a given.	X
Cripple Cowboy Cow Outfit	O-30	LG128 (LG-NN)	All lands should be open for desert land entry and section 15 leasing.	Comment noted.	
Cripple Cowboy Cow Outfit	O-30	LG129 (LG-OO)	There is enough land out of production, we don't need any withdrawals.	Comment noted.	
Cripple Cowboy Cow Outfit	O-30	LG130 (LG-PP)	This plan shows that you have the ability to double AUMs. Therefore you have no reason to propose any livestock cuts.	Comment noted.	
Cripple Cowboy Cow Outfit	O-30	LG131 (LG-QQ)	It appears, based on your AUM figures that you are planning to replace livestock with big game.	Nowhere in the RMP is it proposed, stated or assumed that wildlife is replacing livestock.	
Cripple Cowboy Cow Outfit	O-30	LG57	There seems to be 100k AUM mistake here. Probably because you left the previous page blank where it should have said 146k AUMs. In any case, a 50k AUM preference looks like a 2/3 cut.	The comment refers to Table 2.4 in the DRMP, which outlines alternative actions that were eliminated from detailed analysis. The AUM numbers identified in the table arose during the scoping process in advance of the development of the alternatives. The principle of the suggested action in maintaining certain levels of AUM allocation for livestock and wildlife were rolled into management actions common to all alternatives and were supplemented. This table was removed in the PRMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG203 (R-LG1)	The seasons of use in the RMP are one example of prescriptive rather than outcome based management. Setting seasons of use in the RMP is inconsistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act	See comment responses LG26, LG46, and LG87.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>("FLPMA"), 43 U.S.C. §1752(b) and the terms of the ten-year grazing permits held by grazing permittees. FLPMA provides that seasons of use must be established in a grazing permit, not the RMP. 43 U.S.C. §1752(e).</p>		
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG204 (R-LG2)</p>	<p>The RMP conflicts with the grazing rules to the extent that the RMP would unilaterally amend a grazing permit without monitoring data or other information. 43 C.F.R. §4130.2-1 (changes in grazing use). Dictating changes in the seasons of use from the RMP also violates the requirement that BLM coordinate, consult and cooperate with individual permittees before amending an allotment management plan. 43 U.S.C. §1752(d); 43 C.F.R. §4110.3-2. Public comment on the RMP falls far short of "consultation, cooperation, and coordination." Alternative D should be adopted.</p>	<p>See comment responses LG4, LG20, LG26, LG46, LG75, and LG87 regarding BLM's authority to amend grazing permits. Please, note that in Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS, the BLM acknowledges that under all alternatives, changes in grazing management for specific allotments will be undertaken in direct consultation and coordination with the affected permittee.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG205 (R-LG3)</p>	<p>Because any permit must conform to the RMP, BLM must amend or revise the RMP if it is determined that a grazing plan or allotment management plan needs different seasons of use. For instance, we have been working jointly with BLM to implement a grazing management plan where livestock graze Area 3 two months longer than would be allowed under the RMP. This circumstance illustrates the reasons that seasons of use should be set at the allotment level rather than as a prescription in the RMP.</p>	<p>The Guidelines for Grazing Management include implementing grazing management practices that "meet the physiological requirements of desired plants and facilitate reproduction and maintenance of desired plants" (1(c)). The proposed seasons of use will provide for these plant needs. The DRMP also includes flexibility providing for extended seasons of use when deferment and/or rest are provided for and for authorization of use outside of the specified season of use when certain criteria are met (Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS,</p> <p>There is no requirement in FLPMA to maintain seasons of use as currently specified in grazing permits. Alternative D continues the current grazing management practices including the seasons of use as indicated on existing grazing permits. FLPMA</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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				<p>indicates that it is the policy of the United States to manage the public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield and in such a manner as to best meet the present and future needs of the American people without permanently impairing the productivity of the land. The proposed seasons of use will provide for the use of the public lands while helping to insure that no permanent loss of productivity will occur.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG206 (R-LG4)</p>	<p>The RMP proposes to exclude from forage allocations all land that produces less than 25 or 32 pounds of forage per year. See DEIS 2-11. The draft RMP and DEIS do not analyze the effects of doing so even though much of the planning area is a high mountain desert and produces less than 25 pounds of forage a year. This criteria could remove significant volume of forage and acreage from livestock grazing. Range science does not support this proposal and the DEIS inadequately discloses and assesses the effects. While livestock may use the steep slopes less, wildlife and wild horses graze these areas. By excluding these areas from the forage allocation and calculations, the RMP actually allocates significantly more forage for wildlife and wild horses than is disclosed in the RMP and imposes domestic grazing reductions by removing land from the permit. The grazing rules require that such changes be made in consultation and coordination with the individual permittee rather than unilaterally throughout the planning area. In addition, the grazing rules require consultation with the permittee before amending the permit to exclude land. 43 C.F.R. §4110.4-2.</p>	<p>See comment response LG17.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG207 (R-LG5)</p>	<p>Delete this entire statement:</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Partnership		(R-LG14)	"A permittee would voluntarily relinquish a grazing permit (active and suspended use). Relinquished grazing permits would be devoted or allocated to another public purpose after completion of an appropriate evaluation and analysis."	<p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG207A (R-LG5) (R-LG14)	The RMP attempts to authorize the retirement of grazing permits and their reallocation to wildlife. This violates the Taylor Grazing Act, 43 U.S.C. §315, FLPMA, 43 U.S.C. §1752, and the terms of the Executive Orders No. 6910, 54 I.D. 539 (1934), and No. 6964 (Feb. 5, 1935), which withdrew public lands as chiefly valuable for grazing. Any such decision would also require amending the Presidential Executive Orders, which BLM cannot do, since authority to amend a withdrawal is limited to the Interior Secretary.	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG208 (R-LG6)	<p>Delete the following statement:</p> <p>"Any decision to retire livestock grazing on federal lands would not be permanent and such action would be subject to reconsideration and reversal during subsequent land use planning."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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				or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG208A (R-LG6)	The Tenth Circuit in <i>Public Lands Council v. Babbitt</i> , 167 F.3d 1287 (10 Cir. 1999), <i>aff'd</i> on other grounds, 529 U.S. 728 (2000), held that BLM could not offer permits “not to graze” public lands, since grazing permits are limited to domestic livestock. By the same token, BLM cannot purport to authorize wildlife grazing by retiring grazing permits in order to allocate the forage for wildlife.	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG209 (R-LG7)	This [RMP] represents a change in grazing use without following the procedures set out in the BLM grazing rules. 43 C.F.R. §§4110.3; 4110.4. It is also inconsistent with the grazing rules, which provide for BLM to offer a vacant permit to qualified permittees whose base property is nearby. 43 C.F.R. §4130.1-2.	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG210 (R-LG8)	FLPMA limits the discretion to disallow all livestock grazing by requiring BLM to file a report with Congress. 43 U.S.C. §1712(e). Grazing is a major multiple use and as such enjoys a preferred status among multiple uses. 43 U.S.C. §1702(l). To the extent that these allotments have been closed to domestic grazing for almost 10 years, failure to report the land use decision to Congress violates FLPMA. 43 U.S.C. §1712(e).	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG211 (R-LG9)	The impacts of special management areas and ACECs on livestock grazing and other multiple uses are significant. The draft RMP fails to recognize current livestock grazing in these ACECs and SMAs as a legitimate and authorized land use. It is ironic that the Wilderness Act, 16 U.S.C. §1133(d), actually grants more protection to livestock grazing, than BLM’s WSA and de facto wilderness policies found in the proposed ACEC and SMAs. The RMP should drop these	The RMP does not exclude livestock grazing in areas of special designations. Nowhere in the RMP is it suggested that the livestock grazing permittee will be subject to significant reductions and operating restrictions within an ACEC or SRMA.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			proposals from the preferred alternative.		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG212 (R-LG10)	If the RMP were to assure current land users, especially livestock permittees, that the ACEC or SRMA will not be managed to the detriment of grazing, it would be less problematic. As written, however, the RMP suggests without adequate discussion or disclosure, that the livestock grazing permittee will be subject to significant reductions and operating restrictions. There is no justification for this action and the rules do not allow BLM to use the ACEC to limit other multiple uses. 43 C.F.R. §1610.51.	See comment response LG211.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG213 (R-LG11)	The RMP fails to document the need to change livestock grazing management or to renew and expand ACECs.	The need for a new resource management plan is outlined in Section 1.3 of the PRMP/FEIS where the Purpose and Need for the new RMP are described. The discussion of renewing, expanding, and establishing ACECs can be found in Section 3.14 and its subsections and in Appendix G. Also, see Alternative E in the Supplement RMP regarding ACECs.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG214 (R-LG12)	Delete the following statement:  "Resource concerns and potential conflicts have arisen regarding the allocation and season-of use of forage within the planning area."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the	

## Livestock Grazing

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Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG214A (R-LG12)	The RMP fails to document resource-based reasons to change livestock grazing seasons-of-use. Any resource conflicts arise from: (1) the failure to comply with previous RMP decisions regarding wild horses; (2) increased numbers of big game species, which are both numerous and increasing in population; and (3) the failure to actually fund and implement grazing or allotment management plans ("AMPs"). Any conflicts should be addressed on site-specific basis.	<p>adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>The Guidelines for Grazing Management include implementing grazing management practices that "meet the physiological requirements of desired plants and facilitate reproduction and maintenance of desired plants" (1(c)). The proposed seasons of use will provide for these plant needs. The DRMP also includes flexibility providing for extended seasons of use when deferment and/or rest are provided for and for authorization of use outside of the specified season of use when certain criteria are met (Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management)).</p> <p>There is no requirement in FLPMA to maintain seasons of use as currently specified in grazing permits. Alternative D continues the current grazing management practices including the seasons of use as indicated on existing grazing permits. FLPMA indicates that it is the policy of the United States to manage the public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield and in such a manner as to best meet the present and future needs of the American people without permanently impairing the productivity of the land. The proposed seasons of use will provide for the use of the public lands while helping to insure that no permanent loss of productivity will occur.</p> <p>The entire RMP and the management actions within it are predicated upon the base assumption that the BLM will have the funding and staffing necessary to accomplish the decisions enacted upon issuance of the Record of Decision.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG215 (R-LG13)	<p>Modify the following statement with the bolded addition:</p> <p>"BLM grazing regulations recognize suspended non-use as part of the grazing preference."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG215A (R-LG13)	<p>The 2005 grazing rules would restore suspended non-use and recognition of grazing preference, 43 C.F.R. §4100.0-5, and the opportunity to restore that use. 43 C.F.R. §4110.3.</p>	<p>IM 2007-137 instructed the BLM to stop implementing all changes to the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4100) that were promulgated on July 12, 2006. Until a decision on the 2005 grazing regulations is made, the BLM will implement the grazing regulations that were in effect previously.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG217 (R-LG15)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"A permittee may apply for temporary non-renewable the grazing permit or AUMs; however, BLM must determine if forage is available."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG217A (R-LG15)	This change is necessary to conform to the grazing rules, 43 C.F.R. §4130.1-3.	Comment noted.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG218 (R-LG16)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Isolated instances of resource degradation, whether caused by livestock, big game, or wild horses, have occurred in site-specific areas particularly associated with seasons-of-use and forage allocation. The planning effort would ensure resolution of rangeland health concerns by addressing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• incorporating standards for rangeland health into the revised RMP;</li> <li>• evaluating adjustments in livestock, and wildlife, wild horse numbers and seasons-of-use;</li> <li>• evaluating forage allocation and carrying capacity for wildlife, wild horses, and livestock; and." </li></ul>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>The wording in question is not a process issue. It is a method to determine contributing factors.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG218A (R-LG16)	The RMP cannot imply or assume that livestock grazing is the sole or even primary reason that there is resource degradation. Big game and wild horse numbers have steadily increased, while livestock grazing has either declined or remained at the same levels.	The RMP based the so-called assumptions off of the issues identified through the scoping process.	
Vermillion	O-33	LG219	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Ranch Limited Partnership		(R-LG17)	<p>additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>“Joint monitoring and evaluation strategies would be implemented to measure progress in accordance with Utah BLM Rangeland Health Standards based on site-specific conditions. Site-specific conditions must be documented in order to warrant modification of prescriptions.”</p>	<p>changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG219A (R-LG17)	The RMP over prescribes without regard to site-specific conditions. BLM has also signed a national memorandum of understanding to promote joint BLM and permittee monitoring of range conditions.	<p>The BLM acknowledges and promotes joint monitoring yet the BLM cannot force the permittees to participate in monitoring, therefore we can only use the word “joint” in terms of “promotion of joint monitoring.”</p> <p>Site-specific conditions must be the basis for any adjustments.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG220 (R-LG18)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Use would be allowed in both quantity and timing that would not result in a downward shift in rangeland health and/or production. BLM would work cooperatively to affect effect a grazing strategy specific to a grazing permittee’s individual grazing allotment(s), commit to fund and implement appropriate range improvements; and make changes to the grazing authorizations as appropriate within the limits of the existing permit and in accordance with the grazing</p>	<p>The Fire, Drought, and Natural Disasters subsection of Table 2.1.1 in the PRMP/FEIS (Management Common to All Alternatives) in the PRMP/FEISPRMP/FEIS has been revised to read as follows:</p> <p>"Use would be allowed in both quantity and timing that would not result in a downward shift in rangeland health. BLM would work cooperatively to affect a grazing strategy specific to a grazing permittee’s individual grazing allotment(s), commit to fund and implement appropriate range</p>	X

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			regulations. In the case of drought, the last recourse for BLM would be to temporarily close the range, or portions of it, to livestock grazing."	improvements; and make changes to the grazing authorizations as appropriate within the limits of the existing permit and in accordance with the grazing regulations. In the case of drought, the last recourse for BLM would be to temporarily close the range, or portions of it, to livestock grazing."	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG220A (R-LG18)	The RMP needs to recognize and commit BLM to implementing range improvements.	The entire RMP and the management actions within it are predicated upon the base assumption that the BLM will have the funding and staffing necessary to accomplish the decisions enacted upon issuance of the Record of Decision.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG221 (R-LG19)	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:  "Maintain or improve the total forage resource using techniques that are compatible with the use and development of other resources and which would maintain, meet, or make substantial progress towards meeting meet or exceed Utah BLM Rangeland Health Standards."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG221A (R-LG19)	The grazing rules recognize that making progress towards meeting rangeland health standards is compliance. 43 C.F.R. §4180.1. The RMP omits this key qualifier, which is problematic because, in many cases, it will take many years to meet range health standards.	See comment response LG16.	
Vermillion	O-33	LG222	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Ranch Limited Partnership		(R-LG20)	<p>additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>“Any adjustments in forage assignments to either livestock, wild horses, or wildlife would be based on analysis of joint monitoring data including long-term vegetation trend, actual use, climate, and utilization. Additionally forage would not be allocated in areas where forage production is less than 25lbs per acre which equates to 32 acres per AUM. Areas that are seldom or never grazed by livestock due to physical factors such as slopes greater than 50% and area that are in excess of four miles from water would not be included in the livestock forage allocation. An exception for areas in excess of four miles of water if water is hauled or the areas would be grazed when snow is on the ground. Adjustments would involve permittees and would be implemented through documented mutual agreement or decision ...”</p>	<p>changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>The BLM acknowledges and promotes joint monitoring yet the BLM cannot force the permittees to participate in monitoring, therefore we can only use the word “joint” in terms of “promotion of joint monitoring.” The lined out statements are range suitability criteria. Therefore we decline to delete those.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG222A (R-LG20)	<p>The first sentence is appropriate but the rest of the paragraph should be struck because forage is currently allocated on allotments that may produce less than 25 lbs/acre or which have steep slopes. BLM cannot use the RMP to revise grazing permit adjudications, which must be done in consultation, coordination, and cooperation with the permittee. 43 C.F.R. §4110.2-3. The exclusion of land from forage allocations for areas more than 4 miles from water penalizes allotments where BLM has not been able or willing to fund or approve range projects. More importantly, there is no resource basis for these conditions.</p>	<p>The commenter provides no data to support their statement that the BLM is allocating areas with less than 25lbs/acre.</p> <p>The BLM is not proposing to use the RMP to revise grazing permit adjudications, and the BLM agrees that this must be done in consultation, coordination, and cooperation with the permittee. 43 C.F.R. §4110.2-3. The BLM has merely provided criteria to use to when adjustments are required.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				See comment response LG220.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG223 (R-LG21)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions:</p> <p>“Increases or reductions associated with joint monitoring of base allocations would be evaluated against the established grazing permits, UDWR herd unit objectives, and wild horse Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) set in the RMP to determine needed adjustments to animal numbers. The goal of the RMP is also to maintain the full preference AUMs and BLM will undertake all actions necessary to do so, including the recognition and coordination with livestock grazing, including range improvements and vegetation treatments, in maintaining habitat.”</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>As per comment response LG88, the BLM is not required to maintain maximum grazing levels or historical levels but is authorized to make adjustments in grazing to maintain appropriate ecosystem health and manage for multiple use and sustained yield.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG223A (R-LG21)	The statutory policies in the TGA, FLPMA, and PRIA require BLM to recognize the grazing preferences adjudicated and to ensure that wild horse management does not lead to loss of grazing in order to protect resources adversely affected by excess wild horse numbers. Livestock grazing is an integrally connected land use and needs to be both recognized and coordinated.	See comment response LG219A.	
Vermillion Ranch	O-33	LG224	Delete the statement beginning with	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Limited Partnership		(R-LG22)	"A permittee would voluntarily relinquish..." and ending with "...after completion on an appropriate evaluation and analysis."	<p>limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG224A (R-LG22)	Any relinquished grazing permit should be offered to qualified permittees. 43 C.F.R. §4110.3	See comment response LG4.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG225 (R-LG23)	<p>Delete the following statement:</p> <p>"Any decision to retire livestock grazing on federal lands would not be permanent and such action would be subject to reconsideration and reversal during subsequent land use planning"</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion	O-33	LG225A	BLM lacks the authority to hold grazing permits in	See comment response LG4.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Ranch Limited Partnership		(R-LG23)	"nonuse." The grazing rules prohibit nonuse, 43 C.F.R. §4130.1-1(g) (limiting nonuse to three years). The RMP essentially attempts to adopt the prohibited conservation use grazing permit while violating the grazing rules regarding nonuse.		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG226 (R-LG24)	The public lands were classified as "chiefly valuable for livestock grazing" pursuant to Section 1 of the Taylor Grazing Act, 43 U.S.C. §315. Shortly thereafter, President Roosevelt withdrew these lands from operation of most of the public land laws to effect this classification pursuant to authority in TGA, 43 U.S.C. §315f. See Executive Order 6910, 54 I.D. 539 (1934), and Executive Order 6964 (Feb. 5, 1935). These lands are still withdrawn as chiefly valuable for grazing and BLM cannot super-impose a new "range suitability" determination in the absence of a change in the withdrawal or the law.	See comment response LG88. Having an area deemed chiefly valuable for livestock grazing does not exempt the area from analysis to determine the amount of the area suitable for livestock grazing.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG227 (R-LG25)	Delete the following statement:  "If it is determined through monitoring that livestock grazing is beneficial to other resource values, it would be allowed in 16 miles of river corridor along the upper Green River in Browns Park following an adequate evaluation and assessment. If such use is allowed, it would be of short duration and would not detract from recreation and/or riparian values along the river."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch	O-33	LG227A	Livestock grazing is an historic use along the Green River and Brown's Park area and has occurred since	See comment response LG19.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Limited Partnership		(R-LG25)	1849. There is little, if any, scientific basis to exclude livestock grazing from this area. It is also unlawful and contrary to existing BLM rules.		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG228 (R-LG26)	Add the following statement:  "In most cases, livestock grazing is part of the historical use of the river areas and may continue in conformance with applicable rules."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG228A (R-LG26)	FLPMA does not allow BLM to cancel grazing preference in an RMP and the grazing rights on the river corridor cannot be canceled in this fashion.	See comment response LG19.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG229 (R-LG27)	Delete the following statement: "Grazing preference is retired on the following allotments: Red Creek Flat, Taylor Flat, Watson... and Crouse Reservoir. Applications for livestock grazing would only be approved on a non-renewable, short duration basis following an adequate evaluation and assessment to determine if it would enhance wildlife values."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG229A (R-LG27)	<p>The proposed "retirement" of the listed grazing permits is legally flawed. The State of Utah acquired these grazing permits from certain nonprofit groups for the purpose of not grazing them. This is unlawful, because the federal courts set aside the "conservation grazing permit" and no permittee may take nonuse for more than three years. The State is not using the permits, which violates the 1995 non-use grazing rules, which are still in effect. Under the revised grazing rules, these permits should be made available to other permittees, especially since these lands remain chiefly valuable for grazing. 43 C.F.R. §4130.1-2. Federal law does not authorize or recognize a wildlife grazing permit.</p>	See comment response LG117.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG230 (R-LG28)	<p>Delete the following statement:</p> <p>"The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation would voluntarily relinquish their grazing permits when the Vernal RMP becomes effective. Active AUMS permitted to TNC (4,239) and RMEF (4,025) would be allocated to wildlife."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG230A (R-LG28)	These groups have failed to follow BLM grazing rules by not exercising their grazing permits. BLM has failed to enforce the rules, which prohibit nonuse for more than three years. This situation should be ended now, with the permits canceled and offered to other qualified permittees.	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG231 (R-LG29)	Delete the following statement:  "Achieve appropriate utilization of range by livestock; wildlife and wild horses through management prescriptions and administrative adjustments."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG231A (R-LG29)	The management objectives for livestock grazing fails to correctly reflect the weight to be given to grazing as a major or principal multiple use. 43 U.S.C. §1702(I).	The BLM manages for multiple use and recognized the forage and grazing needs of all grazing groups, including livestock, wildlife, and wild horses.  See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG232 (R-LG30)	Add the following statement:  "BLM will consider changes in a grazing permit including changes in seasons of use or livestock conversions when joint monitoring data by the permittee and BLM establish that livestock grazing	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>contributes to the failure to make significant progress towards meeting or to meet or maintain Utah rangeland health standards:..."</p>	<p>substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>See comment response LG219A.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG232A (R-LG30)</p>	<p>The criteria proposed in the draft RMP fail to conform to FLPMA or the grazing rules. Changes in seasons of use should be based on site specific facts and management decisions with consultation, coordination, and cooperation with the grazing permittee.</p>	<p>See comment response LG88.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG233 (R-LG31)</p>	<p>Delete the following statement:</p> <p>"Requests from a permittee to change seasons of use would be a priority if all of the following criteria were met..."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				See comment response LG26.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG233A (R-LG31)	The Secretary concerned shall also specify therein the numbers of animals to be grazed and the seasons of use and that he may reexamine the condition of the range at any time and, if he finds on reexamination that the condition of the range requires adjustment in the amount or other aspect of grazing use, that the permittee or lessee shall adjust his use to the extent the Secretary concerned deems necessary." 43 U.S.C. §1752(e); 43 C.F.R. §4110.3.	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG234 (R-LG32)	Delete the following statements:  "..changes enhance or meet resource objectives contained in the Vernal RMP;" "..allotment(s) are scheduled for assessment the same year a request is made, and..", and "..funding for the assessment is provided by sources other than the BLM."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG234A (R-LG32)	There is no legal basis to deny any change if the allotment is not scheduled for assessment nor is there any legal basis to require the grazing permittee to pay for the NEPA compliance.	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited	O-33	LG235 (R-LG33)	Delete the entire statement beginning with	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Partnership			<p>"Requests from permittees to convert class of livestock would be handled as follows..." and ending with "Applicants would be required to fence the road if it is determined necessary to protect human and livestock health and safety."</p>	<p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG235A (R-LG33)	<p>These limits in the RMP for livestock grazing are legally and factually flawed. First, the grazing rules govern such changes and require monitoring data and other relevant information. 43 C.F.R. §4130.3-2. Second, the proposed limits on livestock grazing in crucial deer range or wild horse areas are not within the scope of the rules. Similarly the limits on conversions and range improvements in WSAs are not required in the Interim Management Plan ("IMP") and cannot be justified as a matter of science based management. The level of detail that is found in the section is inconsistent with the respective differences between an RMP and a subsequent activity plan. The RMP repeatedly makes the incorrect statement that grazing levels or utilization in the current RMP are not specified, when they are appropriately stated in AMPs or grazing plans.</p>	<p>See comment response LG26.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG236 (R-LG34)	<p>Delete the following statements:</p> <p>"Conversions to cattle would not be allowed in wild horse management areas."; "Areas with reverie/lotic systems may require additional management actions such as, but not limited to, fencing of streams.";</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>"Conversions would not be allowed in WSAs if fencing or other structural improvements are necessary or if the conversion would result in significant resource conflicts or impacts."; "As opportunities arise, such as voluntary relinquishment, consider discontinuing livestock use."; and "Where livestock conflicts with other uses of the river, mitigate through management or other action."</p>	<p>substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>See comment response LG31.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG237 (R-LG35)	<p>Delete the following statement:</p> <p>"Identify criteria for acceptable levels of livestock grazing use along river bottoms. (See Riparian section.)"</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG237A (R-LG35)	<p>The riparian or river corridor section needs to be amended to conform to BLM rules. First, the changes need to be based on monitoring data and the data must show that livestock is the primary reason that the area is not maintaining, meeting or making progress towards meeting rangeland health standards. BLM must address the causes as well.</p>	<p>The Taylor Grazing Act directs the BLM to preserve the land and its resources from destruction or unnecessary injury. In addition, FLPMA requires that the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of ecological, environmental, and water resource values as well as others. The criteria referenced will be developed at the activity</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>based level to help assure that these requirements are met. Also, rangeland health standards and proper functioning conditions will be met or maintained as indicated in the riparian section. The DRMP doesn't propose to make changes at this time but rather requires criteria to be developed that will be used in assessing and evaluating monitoring data to determine what changes, if any, are needed for livestock grazing to be in compliance with the RMP and the BLM's regulations.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG238 (R-LG36)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions:</p> <p>"If grazing is causing resource degradation to the extent that rangeland health standards are not being met and progress is not being made, joint monitoring data by the permittee and BLM show that livestock grazing is the most significant factor, and all other options have been exhausted, temporarily close those riparian areas that do not satisfactorily respond to changes in management."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG238A (R-LG36)	<p>Strike the entire statement beginning with "As opportunities arise..." and ending with "Identify criteria for acceptable levels of livestock grazing use along river bottoms."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG238B (R-LG36)	<p>In too many cases, there are no monitoring data and it is otherwise very difficult to quantify the role of wildlife, especially big game, or wild horses. The RMP would unfairly penalize the permittee for lack of data, when, in most cases, the absence of data is a result of the RMP monitoring plan not being implemented. In the past, BLM has not approved water projects, which reduce grazing pressure in riparian areas.</p>	See comment response LG222.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG239 (R-LG38)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Restore, maintain and/or improve rangeland conditions and productivity to maintain, meet or make substantial progress towards meeting rangeland health standards while meeting forage obligations in grazing permits and grazing preference decisions, as well as wildlife and wild horse habitat. while providing for its use and development. Maintain, improve, and/or restore habitat for wildlife; provide optimum forage for livestock; maintain healthy watersheds and vegetation communities; and promote sustained yield and multiple use."</p> <p>The change would reflect both the rules and FLPMA policies that livestock grazing is a principal multiple use to be protected.</p>	<p>Table 2.1.12 (Rangeland Improvements) in the PRMP/FEISPRMP/FEIS has been revised to read as follows:</p> <p>Restore, maintain and/or improve rangeland conditions and productivity to maintain, meet or make substantial progress towards meeting rangeland health standards while meeting forage obligations in grazing permits and grazing preference decisions, as well as wildlife habitat.</p>	X

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG240 (R-LG39)	BLM should not claim authority to tell a livestock operator which kind of livestock to raise. This is especially true when there are such significant differences between the cattle and sheep markets.	See 4130.3-1 (a) Mandatory Terms and Conditions, of 43 CFR (a)  "The authorized officer shall specify the kind and number of livestock,..."	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG241 (R-LG40)	There are few management options in the RMP that enable livestock operators to remain [when riparian objectives aren't being met] and the alternatives to livestock are 35-acre subdivisions, where recreational users are excluded.	Comment noted.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG242 (R-LG41)	RE: Alternative A—Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:  "Unless otherwise specified by a management plan, up to 50% utilization of forage on uplands would be allowed. 137,838 _____ [replaced by current preference allocation] AUMs are would be allocated for livestock, 104,871 AUMs would be allocated for wildlife, and 2,940 AUMs would be allocated for wild horses."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG242A (R-LG41)	The RMP fails to disclose the grazing preference AUMs or whether the AUMs stated in the RMP are the permitted use or an average of actual use on public lands. The grazing rules require monitoring data before there can be a change in grazing use (up or down). 43 C.F.R. §4130.2-3.	See Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>The RMP projects a reduction in livestock grazing without explaining the basis nor accounting for the likely and additional reductions due to application of RMP standards. The RMP needs to document the changes from Alternative D to Alternative A.</p> <p>If these projections are due to permit retirements, this is unlawful. If it is something else, this too violates FLPMA since the RMP cannot reduce grazing on individual permits without failing to consult, coordinate and cooperate with the permittee. 43 U.S.C. §1752(d); 43 C.F.R. §4110.3-2.</p>		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG243 (R-LG42)	<p>RE: Alternative A—Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"If joint monitoring indicates that the resources cannot support the forage assignments cannot be met, then livestock wild horses and wildlife use would be reduced proportionately. The first year livestock wild horse reductions would be made with an initial 10% adjustment. Similar adjustments would be made to big game. If that is not sufficient, then the BLM would develop five-year agreements would be developed and signed to establish outlining the process for phased reductions to the desired level.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG243A (R-LG42)	<p>Additional AUMs would be provided as follows:</p> <p>In the northern half of the area (Diamond Mountain and Browns Park), additional AUMs would be provided to</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			livestock until wildlife demands require them. In the southern half of the area (Ashley Valley and Myton Bench), forage increases would be divided proportionately between livestock and big game on non-crucial wildlife areas."	<p>necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG243B (R-LG42)	It is good that the RMP discloses forage allocations, since otherwise BLM is adopting plan conditions that cannot be achieved. The RMP should reflect a goal of retaining the full grazing preference to sustain and enhance the livestock industry. Any additional AUMs should be allocated based on contribution of resources invested. The process outlined in the RMP violates FLPMA because it makes management a matter of forage, rather than whether resource objectives (Utah rangeland health standards and individual allotment management or grazing plan) are being achieved and the reasons that they are not. In addition, the process violates the obligation to coordinate, consult and cooperate with the grazing permittee, because it imposes a top-down grazing reduction without the permittees' involvement or consent. 43 C.F.R. §4110.3-2. BLM policy requires a proportionate reduction while the RMP would put the burden entirely on the permittee. H-4180-1, III-16. This is also inequitable, because the permittee makes the largest investment and yet receives the least reward.	See comment response LG222.	
Vermillion Ranch	O-33	LG244 (R-LG43)	RE: Alternative C—Modify the following statement as indicated by the bolded addition:	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Limited Partnership			If joint monitoring indicates forage assignments cannot be met."	<p>limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG244A (R-LG43)	Alternative C contradicts BLM rangeland health management policy by only reducing livestock without regard to the causal connection between forage use or consumer. H-4180-1, III-12. While the RMP can discuss an alternative that violates law or policy, it needs to fully disclose this conflict. All of the alternatives also suffer from the fact that they do not address resource conditions and trend and would base reductions simply on forage. This too contradicts the grazing rules, which control.	See comment response LG222.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG245 (R-LG44)	<p>RE: Alternative D—Modify Alternative D as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"If joint monitoring indicates that forage assignments cannot be met..If there is no conflict and the reduction is necessary because of overuse by either livestock or wildlife, that animal's numbers would be reduced..Temporary adjustments in use due to effects of drought would be made to livestock and/or wildlife as needed based on joint monitoring by the permittee and</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			the BLM."	<p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG245A (R-LG44)	Alternative D may reflect the current plan but it does not reflect the current situation. Forage is assigned through preference adjudications and grazing permits.	See comment response LG219A.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG246 (R-LG45)	<p>RE: Alternative A—Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"PHENOLOGY</p> <p>Livestock grazing would be continued in Areas 1-6 in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act. allowed in Area 1 of the VFO. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 6/ 1 to 10/ 31 in Area 2 or 5/ 1 with a deferment. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 5/ 1 to 11/ 30 in Area 3. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 5/ 1 to 6/ 1 in Area 4. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 5/ 1 to 6/ 1 and 10/ 1 to 2/ 28 in Area 5. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 10/ 1 to 4/ 1 or 5/ 1 w/ deferment in Area 6. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 4/ 1 to 5/ 31 and/ or 9/ 1 to 10/ 31 in Area 7."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG246A (R-LG45)	BLM does not have the discretion to disallow grazing. The Taylor Grazing Act, FLPMA and PRIA all establish direction and mandate for livestock grazing. Thus the language with respect to grazing discretion needs to be changed for all alternatives. The Alternative A grazing	The BLM is not proposing to "disallow grazing" on the areas in question. Livestock grazing will continue although with potential changes to the grazing seasons of use. These changes would be made on an allotment specific basis to meet the	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>seasons belong in allotment specific plans and decisions and should be deleted from the RMP.</p> <p>It appears that the RMP seeks to return the allotments to either traditional winter or summer allotments. While, in some cases, the grazing seasons may have changed from traditional winter and summer grazing, these are site-specific circumstances that should remain part of the grazing plan or allotment management plan and should not be prescribed at the RMP level.</p>	<p>objectives of the RMP and the requirements of the BLM's rules and regulations. Both the TGA and FLPMA provide BLM with the authority to regulate and manage the uses of the BLM lands to preserve the land and protect its values.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG247 (R-LG46)	<p>RE: Alternative C— Modify the following statements as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"ADJUDICATED</p> <p>Livestock grazing would continue in Areas 1-6 in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act. could be allowed under the discretion of the VFO. in Area 1. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 6/ 15 to 8/ 31 in Area 2. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 6/ 15 to 8/ 31 in Area 3. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 10/ 1 to 3/ 1 (Fall/ Winter) in Area 4. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 10/ 1 to 3/ 1 (Fall/ Winter) in Area 5. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 10/ 1 to 3/ 1 (Fall/ Winter) in Area 6. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 10/ 1 to 11/ 30 (Fall) in Area 7."</p> <p>" PERMITTED</p> <p>Livestock grazing would be continued in Areas 1-6 in</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act. allowed in Area 1 under the discretion of the VFO. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 5/ 19 to 10/ 7 in Area 2. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 6/ 3 to 10/ 6 in Area 3. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 6/ 1 to 10/ 31 in Area 4. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 4/ 3 to 6/ 15 and 10/ 31 to 1/ 30 in Area 5. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 3/ 10 to 4/ 24 and 6/ 23 to 8/ 30 and 10/ 21 to 2/ 28 in Area 6. Livestock grazing would be allowed from 5/ 26 to 10/ 20 in Area 7."</p>		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG247A (R-LG46)	<p>Continuing livestock grazing is not "discretionary." Current permittees are entitled to renewal and Congress affirmed this only recently. §328, Pub. L. 108-7, 117 Stat. 11 (2003) as amended by Supp. Appropriations Act, Pub. L. 108-11, 117 Stat. 559, 594 (2003).</p>	<p>Alternative C is not proposing to discontinue livestock grazing. The proposed seasons of use would be adjustments to the terms and conditions of the permit to meet objectives of the RMP and the requirements of the grazing regulations. Both the TGA and FLPMA provide BLM with the authority to regulate and manage the uses of the BLM lands to preserve the land and protect its values.</p> <p>The public laws cited provided BLM the ability to renew grazing permits for a period of ten years under the same terms and conditions of the expiring permit. These "rider" permits are to remain in effect, according to P.L. 108-7 "until such time as the Secretary of the Interior completes processing of such permit or lease in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, at which time such permit or lease may be canceled, suspended or modified, in whole or in part, to meet the requirements of such applicable laws and regulations". As proposed, the need for season of</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				use changes would be assessed and analyzed during the BLM's processing of the permit to comply with applicable laws and regulations as referenced.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG248 (R-LG47)	<p>RE: Alternative A--Modify the following statements as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"52,720 acres in Browns Park would be managed for multiple use, including livestock grazing and recreation uses. as an SRMA to provide for outstanding scenic vistas and enhancement of resources and associated activities such as, riparian, fisheries, special status species, water quality, water-based recreation, hunting, comprehensive trail system for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and OHV use, camping, cultural and historic interpretation and facility development. The south side of the river between Little Hole and Fire Flat extending around the Taylor Flat subdivision to Rye Grass Draw in the east would be managed for primitive recreation values, VRM I, and closed to surface disturbing activities, except for activities that complement recreation values. Additionally, the area would be closed to OHV use. The historic wagon route in Sears Canyon would be evaluated and analyzed along with other routes, i.e. Crouse Canyon and Rye Grass to determine if an opportunity exists to provide a loop route for OHV use."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG248A (R-LG47)	<p>The RMP does not document the need to continue the ACECs or manage the area as an SRMA. This area surrounds the Taylor Flat subdivision and is not shown to be critical or necessary for recreation use. Application of VRM I is unnecessary and contrary to policy, since Class I is limited to wilderness or wilderness study. Map 29 does not show this area as</p>	<p>Table 2.1.14 (Recreation – Special Recreation Management Areas) and Table 2.1.8 (Special Designations – ACECs) in the PRMP/FEIS discuss the values for both the SRMA and the ACEC. Both identify scenic vistas and views as one of the values associated with these areas.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>VRM I. The establishment of ACEC or SRMA will increase regulatory burdens for agriculture, thereby facilitating subdivision development and the loss of open space. During the life of the current plan, the Taylor Flat subdivision was established when a ranch sold. If the RMP wants to promote recreation use, it would recognize that current land use activities like livestock grazing are entitled to continue and should be protected. Otherwise recreation will continue to lose access as ranchers are forced to sell and the private land is subdivided. In general, the RMP fails to address the impacts on livestock grazing but adopts a number of objectives that could be used to reduce or remove livestock grazing. If this is the objective, the RMP and DEIS must disclose it and the effects. If this is not the objective, then specific language recognizing that livestock grazing is compatible should be added.</p>	<p>Neither the SRMA nor the ACEC preclude agricultural use in their prescriptions. The BLM does not administer use on private lands.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG249 (R-LG48)	<p>RE: All Alternatives—Management of this WSA should be consistent with the adjacent Colorado BLM management and related grazing management plans.</p>	<p>Land Use Plans may prescribe certain activities allowed for in IMP policy which includes current grazing management plans.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG250A (-LG49)	<p>RE: Alternative A—Delete the following statement:</p> <p>"..phenology-based use system would have minimal impacts on rangeland health. 137,838 AUMs allocated to livestock, a 5.7% AUM reduction compared to alternative D."</p> <p>The RMP fails to document or justify the livestock grazing reduction.</p>	<p>Table 2.2.7 (Livestock and Grazing) in the PRMP/FEIS for Alternative A has been revised as follows:</p> <p>"Phenology-based use system would have positive impacts on rangeland health."</p> <p>The reduction is based off of the relinquishment of AUMs from the TNC, and the RMEF, which is stated in Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Locations). No other reductions are proposed.</p>	X
Vermillion	O-33	LG251	<p>RE: Alternative A—Modify the following statement as</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording</p>	X

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Ranch Limited Partnership		(R-LG50)	<p>indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"It is projected that about Rangeland improvements would treat 34,640 acres of forage rangeland would be treated, build 69 miles of fence, construct 812 guzzlers/reservoirs, and develop 51 spring/wells for long term beneficial impacts on livestock and wildlife/wild horse grazing."</p> <p>The acres of rangeland are not equal to forage. The discussion is confusing, since it refers to range improvements in terms of acres and then refers to structures, which are also range improvements. In addition, these projected projects should not be considered a ceiling. Finally the RMP never explains the reasons for reducing both range improvements and vegetation treatment from what is planned for Alternative D or the Current Direction and Alternative A.</p>	<p>changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>Table 2.2.7 (Livestock and Grazing) in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to incorporate the suggested change for Alternative A.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG252 (R-LG51)	<p>As a general comment, the RMP either omits or understates the economic and cultural importance of grazing and ignores effects that reducing AUMs on will have on private land open space. During the ten years since BLM adopted new grazing rules, the western states have seen ranchers leave the business and sell their private lands for 35-acre home sites. This occurred even during high cattle prices and low interest rates. It is widely recognized that BLM's increased regulation and hostility to livestock grazing plays a significant role in this trend. If the objective is to protect open space and wildlife habitat, the RMP must recognize the important and, even critical, role that ranch operations and livestock grazing plays in providing wildlife habitat and open space.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG253 (R-LG52)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Forty-five of the 153 allotments are currently grazed under a deferment rotation system, which involves delaying grazing in an allotment until the seed maturity of the key forage species. The remaining 108 allotments employ deferred grazing through annual plans, grazing plans, or allotment management plans do not have a recognized grazing system."</p> <p>The RMP incorrectly implies that most livestock grazing in the VPA is year-long and not under any system. The BLM made a policy decision several years ago not to make significant investments for allotments that were in good condition (M) or which could not be improved (C). Those allotments were not scheduled for intensive management and no funding was allocated for improvements.</p> <p>Many of the Vernal permits are winter grazing, which defers or rests the allotment at least half the year. Grazing during dormancy also requires less intensive grazing system. Grazing should be restored to these allotments. TNR does not contribute to the stability of the livestock industry, a policy that is mandated by Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG254 (R-LG53)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated:</p> <p>"The criteria used for categorizing the allotments were based on resource potential, resource use conflicts or controversy, opportunity for positive economic return</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			on public investments."	<p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>Controversy is a legitimate basis for considering management approaches to allotments.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG254A (R-LG53)	The criteria used to classify the allotments is incorrect and bears little relationship to actual management or resources.	The commenter does not identify how the criteria do not reflect actual management or resources. As such, the BLM cannot respond to the latter part of this comment.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG255 (R-LG54)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"The Utah Department of Agriculture reports 36 farms in Daggett County, by which 26,485 acres of land is farmed. Livestock and the related ranch operations are is the county's largest source of cash receipts, with a contribution of \$1.6 million for livestock and livestock products and \$500,000 for crops. Daggett County has 7,676 acres of harvested cropland and 7,840 acres of irrigated land, which produce 12,000 tons of hay and alfalfa (Utah Agricultural Statistics 2001). Livestock grazing is important economically and culturally to Daggett County. Reductions in AUMs adversely affect the cash flows of individual ranches and may cause those permittees to leave the ranching business and to</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			develop their private land. Elsewhere in Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming, ranchers have converted their land to subdivisions, with a resulting loss of open space and often public access. The rural subdivisions are generally less beneficial to wildlife, including big game."		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG255	The DEIS fails to disclose and discuss the full historic grazing preference. The reference to 146,220 AUMs appears to be the average use over the last 10 years. By using this lower figure, the DEIS obscures the probable reductions in domestic grazing that will occur under this plan. This violates the obligation under NEPA to fully disclose the effects of a proposed federal action on the social and economic aspects of the human environment.	The VFO has only one permittee that actually resides and farms in Daggett county.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG256 (R-LG55)	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:  "The RMP adopts management standards Many areas have proposed management decisions that change limit or reduce livestock grazing intensity and time, and manage for greater vegetation retention and generation. These standards will not address the adverse effects of other grazing animals, such as wild horses and wildlife."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch	O-33	LG256A	An RMP does not make management decisions. Here the RMP prejudices and predetermines the response to	See comment response LG88.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Limited Partnership		(R-LG55)	livestock grazing issues inappropriately. The first sentence is also inaccurate because the RMP only limits livestock grazing while increasing big game and wild horse impacts. Thus the RMP actually increases big game and wild horse grazing intensity. There is likely to be little reduction in the intensity of grazing. This discussion further illustrates the bias found in the document against livestock grazing and the related myopia regarding the other species that also graze the public lands.		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG257 (R-LG56)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>“..Impacts from these management alternatives may have significant are generally projected to have minor impacts on livestock grazing, except as they relate to improved vegetation... Long-term effects are expected to include the required revision development of grazing management plans and structural range improvements to achieve appropriate vegetation utilization as per BLM guidelines and to provide sources of water outside of the riparian areas.”</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG257A (R-LG56)	The impacts from riparian management can never be described as “relatively minor.” Any management involves significant investment of time and money, and BLM imposed reductions in grazing use would have significant and adverse effects on ranch operations.	The BLM does not agree with the implication of the sentence in question regarding the nature of impacts	
Vermillion Ranch Limited	O-33	LG258 (R-LG57)	The RMP only manages for the effects of livestock grazing when rules and policy require BLM to manage all grazing animals. For example, the RMP would require removal of livestock, if elk graze the area to	The BLM does not find the suggested change necessary as all management prescriptions proposed in the RMP are predicated on the basis that implementation would be accomplished as	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Partnership			30% utilization (of woody species) or to 4" stubble height of key herbaceous species. Thus the impacts are potentially huge since it is generally not possible to remove livestock from a riparian area without removing them from the allotment entirely. Grazing management plans are the best way to address the issue but implementation of the plans depends entirely on BLM's willingness and ability to support the structures necessary to implement the plans. Historically, BLM has been unable to do so, thus the RMP puts the ranchers at a huge risk, since there is no correlative commitment in the RMP to approve and to fund these structures.	funding becomes available to accomplish them.  See comment response LG220.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG259 (R-LG58)	The RMP needs to clearly commit to joint permittee BLM monitoring and implementation of grazing plans and range improvement projects. During the past planning cycle, BLM did not implement plans or conduct as much monitoring as needed.  Also, for semantic purposes in the RMP, most allotments have grazing plans so any change is a revision.	See comment response LG219A.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG260 (R-LG59)	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:  "Habitat and forage decisions for wildlife may affect livestock grazing directly and indirectly. Prescribed fire, vegetation treatments, and development of water may temporarily displace grazing but will benefit the operation over the long term. Impacts specific to decisions regarding the provision of habitat and forage, and potential emigration and reintroduction of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, bison, and moose, would	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			include some changes in forage availability and use priority. Combined with prescribed fire and other vegetation treatment options, including enhanced distribution and access to water and impacts to livestock grazing from wildlife and fisheries management, would be minor. Any reintroduction of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep would occur only with the agreement of any affected permittee."	or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG260A (R-LG59)	<p>The RMP ignores the fact that wildlife allocations and habitat restrictions adversely affect livestock grazing, especially where closures are imposed and range projects are blocked due to perceived adverse effects on wildlife. Range projects and vegetation treatments can displace an operator for several years, which can be very significant to the permittee.</p> <p>The RMP may benefit livestock grazing but as it is written and without clarification, it could lead to removal of grazing to a significant degree and this could force some operators out of business. The RMP must disclose these effects and discuss the social, economic and environment consequences. The RMP should also provide ways to mitigate the effects, including allocating replacement AUMs to livestock.</p>	The anticipated impacts of wildlife management and forage allocation decisions on livestock grazing are discussed in Sections 4.7.1 and 4.7.2.2. The anticipated impacts of proposed management decisions on the socioeconomic elements of the planning area, which includes agricultural pursuits, are discussed in Section 4.12.3.1.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG261 (R-LG60)	As specified in the RMP, none of the allotments slated for reintroduction are sheep permits. The RMP, however, appears to set a precedent to cancel grazing permits for wildlife reintroduction. The RMP needs to clearly state that the reintroduction would not occur if it were to require cancellation of grazing permits. The RMP also needs to make it clear that adjacent sheep operations will not be adversely affected.	Comment noted.	
Vermillion Ranch	O-33	LG262	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Limited Partnership		(R-LG61)	<p>"Impacts to livestock grazing from these management decisions may be temporarily would be moderately adverse in that they would result in increased human caused noise, dust, and vegetation disturbance, and allow a greater opportunity for harassment of grazing animals. Intense recreational activities would exclude livestock use in the same area unless uses were separated in time. Any effects are best mitigated with signs, replacing gates with guards, and public education."</p>	<p>limited to, the following:                      The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.                      The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.                      The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.                      The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.                      The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested change necessary as the RMP provides for actions, such as those suggested, that would help mitigate the impacts.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG262A (R-LG61)	<p>The RMP overstates the effects of recreation use on livestock grazing. There is no basis for the claimed impacts of noise and dust. Dust does not adversely affect grazing activities.</p> <p>The RMP also overstates the impacts between recreation and livestock grazing. Public use of rangelands has occurred for several decades and the effects on fences and harassment of livestock have been largely resolved. The most effective mitigation is to replace gates with cattle guards.</p>	Comment noted.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited	O-33	LG263 (R-LG62)	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Partnership			<p>"The mean number of AUMs per acre of land within the VPA is 0.06 AUMs (standard deviation of 0.04). Assuming this average loss per acre of land open to OHV use, the number of lost AUMs for these areas under Alternatives A, B, and C, would be up to 372, 326, and 326 AUMs respectively. There is no way to effectively quantify the amount of AUMs that have currently been lost due to the 787,859 acres of area open to OHV use under Alternative D. Sound management is likely to increase AUMs which would replace AUMs lost due to other land uses, including OHV recreation. However, it is assumed that future loss of AUMs by continuing to leave these areas open would be much higher than would be experienced under the more controlled OHV use proposed under Alternatives A, B, and C."</p>	<p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG263A (R-LG62)	<p>This assumption cannot be proven. If the RMP is going to calculate lost AUMs for each land use, it needs to make the same calculation for wild horses outside HMAs, wild horse numbers that exceed AMLs, and lost AUMs due to big game population increases and habitat management. The RMP assumes that the forage resource is finite and cannot be increased, which is not the case. Vegetation treatments will very likely increase forage, which would replace lost forage due to other land uses. The RMP does not provide that forage increases would be allocated to livestock, which is contrary to grazing rules, which provide the permittee is entitled to grazing increases when his investment yields increases in forage.</p>	<p>Forage allocations for livestock, wildlife and wild horses are covered Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Locations) in the PRMP/FEIS. The allocation of increased forage resulting for improved range conditions and vegetative treatments is addressed in Table 2.1.6. BLM does not allocated forage to non-consumptive uses such as OHV use. But when activities such as OHV use reduce the amount of forage available for consumptive uses it is appropriate to attempt to quantify the level of that impact. Livestock forage made available by permittee investment would be allocated in proportion to the permittees contribution as provided for in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4110.3-1(a)(1)).</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited	O-33	LG264 (R-LG63)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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Partnership			<p>"Impacts on livestock grazing from forage management decisions could result in increases or decreases in total AUMs, depending on the alternative. Increases in forage utilization in some areas of the VPA could occur where range improvements are planned. Without careful management, long-term impacts could be adverse, as increased utilization can result in decreased forage quality over time. Additional impacts would be related to the potential for available unallocated AUMs to be allocated to wildlife and wild horses, rather than livestock."</p>	<p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG264A (R-LG63)	<p>This section is both confusing and not accurate. The RMP sets a precedent for removing livestock grazing from the landscape. There are few if any areas where forage for livestock grazing will be increased or could be increased in the future unless BLM commits to range projects and vegetation treatments and the effective management of other grazing animals. There are no unallotted AUMs. The Taylor Grazing Act adjudication process allocated the AUMs between wildlife and livestock grazing. The RMP would reallocate AUMs from livestock to wildlife.</p>	<p>See comment response LG88.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG265 (R-LG64)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Impacts from special status species, wild horses, and wildlife and fisheries management decisions are projected to be adversely small to moderate to significant on livestock grazing, as management for the increased needs of bighorn sheep could result in the negatively affect sheep operations reduction of grazing opportunities and changes in priority forage utilization for livestock. The RMP standards could dramatically</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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			<p>affect forage and range management. The emphasis to manage for big game habitat also means that the management may reduce grass species and forage in favor of increasing browse species. In the case of special management species like the sage grouse, the management favoring sage brush may directly affect forage availability, especially when considered in the context of increased big game species and wild horses. Additional forage should be returned to livestock to replace reductions."</p>	<p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG265A (R-LG64)</p>	<p>The DEIS inconsistently identifies adverse impacts on livestock grazing (although understated) and elsewhere concludes there is no adverse impact. See above [LG260, LG263]. The RMP incorrectly assumes that forage is a finite resource that cannot be increased. Adverse effects should be mitigated with intensive management and BLM commitment to fund and approve range improvement projects.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG266 (R-LG65)</p>	<p>Delete the entire statement beginning with</p> <p>"The determination of the season of use.." and ending with ".....thereby producing minimal impacts to rangeland health."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG266A (R-LG65)	The statement is not accurate. The RMP proposes to change seasons of use, thus decreasing the grazing season, which disrupts ranch operations. These decisions by law must be made on an allotment basis in consultation, cooperation and coordination with the permittee. 43 U.S.C. §1752(d); 43 C.F.R. §4110.3-3.	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG267 (R-LG66)	The RMP fails to articulate a legal or policy reason to reduce domestic livestock grazing while increasing wild horses and wildlife. As written, this is arbitrary and capricious. The 5.7 % reduction is understated because it does not take into account the effects from other management standards in the RMP for wildlife, wild horses, and riparian areas. If grazing is reduced 5.7% it is not possible for the forage reductions to be 1% unless BLM treats the current non-use as permanent. The projected reduction also assumes that management cannot and will not increase forage. Sound management actions would avoid livestock reductions and should be a part of this plan.	See comment response LG88.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG268 (R-LG67)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"As the number of AUMs is directly related to the amount of available forage for grazing, the short-and long-term, direct impacts can be similarly anticipated whenever AUMs are used as a quantitative measure of impact. In the short term, Alternative A would beneficially impact livestock. Also, the use of grazing management criteria (see Section 2, Alternatives) to maintain or improve rangeland conditions, would over the long term, maintain adequate forage production levels for livestock, wildlife, and wild horse use. Minor Indirect and potentially significant indirect impacts as a result of the implementation of Alternative A would</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			occur to the ranching community but not and to individual ranchers due to the reduction in AUMs."		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG268A (R-LG67)	The RMP overstates the direct benefits to livestock grazing. The most beneficial alternative is the no action alternative. All of the other alternatives increase or expand big game wildlife management while sacrificing management for livestock grazing, restrict opportunities for vegetation treatments and range projects, and fail to address the resource damage done by uncontrolled wild horse numbers.	Comment noted.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG269 (R-LG68)	RE: Alternative D – Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:  "The determination of season of use under Alternative D – No Action was based on the permitted use. Season of use, combined with allowable utilization levels would adversely impact rangeland health to the greatest degree among the alternatives. Under this alternative, within the VPA, a total of 146,161 AUMs would be allocated to livestock, a total of 96,607 AUMs would be allocated to wildlife, and a total of 3,360 AUMs would be allocated to wild horses. Forage actions for the uplands in all localities of the VPA are established in allotment management and grazing management plans. unspecified; therefore, the effects of forage management decisions on livestock grazing cannot be determined at this time. Alternative D – No Action is the alternative most favorable to livestock."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.  Alternative D describes the current management.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG269A (R-LG68)	Alternative D is the best option and Alternative A should be modified to follow Alternative D. The RMP fails to accurately discuss current livestock grazing program. For instance, current seasons of use and standards in permits cannot be said to have adverse	The CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1502.1) require BLM to consider reasonable alternatives, which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment, based on the nature of the proposal and facts in the case (CEQ	

## Livestock Grazing

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			<p>effects on rangeland health, while the RMP omits any mention of unmanaged wild horse and wildlife numbers, as well as lack of implementation of range projects from the previous land use plans.</p>	<p>40 Most Asked Questions 1b.). While there are many possible management prescriptions or actions, the BLM used the scoping process to determine a reasonable range alternatives that best addressed the issues, concerns, and alternatives identified by the public. Public participation was essential in this process and full consideration was given to all potential alternatives identified.</p> <p>The BLM determined that a single alternative analyzing the protection of all Non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would best provide a reasoned choice among the alternatives. Although the other alternatives do not provide specific management prescriptions to protect Non-WSA, these alternatives analyze and disclose the impacts of the proposed resource management prescriptions, uses and actions on the Non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. This gives the public the ability to fully compare the consequences of protecting or not protecting the wilderness characteristics on these Non-WSA lands. If all alternatives contained comparable protections of the Non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, the alternatives would have substantially similar consequences and would not be significantly distinguishable.</p> <p>The BLM, in developing the PRMP/FEIS, can chose management actions from within the range of the alternatives presented in the DRMP/DEIS and create a management plan that is effective in addressing the current conditions in the planning area based on FLPMA's multiple-use mandate.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG270 (R-LG69)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"The potential impacts of mineral development on livestock grazing would be similar for all of the alternatives. The construction of drilling well pads, pipelines, and access roads would remove areas from the forage base, thereby resulting in a decrease in available AUMs for livestock. These lost AUMs are expected to be relatively small and temporary. The actual losses of AUMs as a result of development under each alternative are described separately below. Mineral development would also potentially produce adverse impacts on use patterns due to roadways and fence lines, resulting in the potential fragmentation of the forage resource base. This fragmentation could result in areas where livestock grazing would be avoided or areas where livestock become more concentrated. While the loss in AUMs under any alternative would be relatively low, these other issues pertaining to habitat changes, either temporary or longer-term, resource fragmentation could result in a cumulatively greater impact.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG270A (R-LG69)	<p>Discussion misuses term fragmentation and should be replaced with "habitat changes" or "habitat loss." The RMP appears to use an expansive definition of fragmentation which applies whenever there is any removal or displacement, regardless of the fact that it is temporary. Since livestock are domesticated, most "fragmentation" can be overcome by driving or hauling livestock. Roads and fences do not fragment forage.</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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				<p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG271 (R-LG70)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Improved management practices, coupled with rangeland improvements would result in improved wildlife habitat, potential benefits to Threatened and Endangered (T&amp;E) species. , improved conditions for and security to permit holders, increased flexibility during times of drought, and potential improvements to scenic quality."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG271A (R-LG70)	<p>The RMP does not increase security, nor provide flexibility to livestock operators. The RMP cancels permits, reduces grazing, restricts management action, and makes grazing subservient use to wildlife and wild horses. Scenic quality plays a minor role, if any, in livestock operations.</p>	<p>The BLM does not agree with the implication of the sentence in question regarding the nature of impacts.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG272 (R-LG71)	<p>Delete the following statement in its entirety:</p> <p>"Alternative A would use a phenology-based system for timing livestock use. This system would use timing of vegetation growth to determine proper grazing limits. Due to limits on grazing time, Alternative A provides an intermediate amount of direct, long-term beneficial</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>impacts to riparian resources, as compared to Alternatives B and C. This alternative would provide greater direct, long-term beneficial impacts than Alternative D – No Action."</p>	<p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG273 (R-LG72)</p>	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Alternative D – No Action would uses the grazing permit and/or allotment management plan to set the periods of time for a permitted system for timing livestock use. This system is currently in use and provides an intermediate amount of impacts between other alternatives. FLPMA provides that the number of livestock and seasons of use be established in the grazing permit and the grazing rules reflect this requirement."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG273A (R-LG72)</p>	<p>The RMP cannot override the permit terms and conditions. FLPMA requires that BLM set both numbers and seasons of use in the grazing permit. 43 U.S.C. §1752(d) and 1752(e); 43 C.F.R. §4130.3-1. These are mandatory terms and BLM cannot set them outside of the permit. Natural Resources Defense Council v. Hodel, 618 F. Supp. 848, 869 (E.D. Calif. 1985) (setting aside cooperative management permit rule on basis that FLPMA requires the grazing permit to state the numbers and seasons of use). Only Alternative D conforms to FLPMA and grazing rules.</p>	<p>See comment response LG88</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG274 (R-LG73)	<p>Delete the following statement in its entirety:</p> <p>"In addition to oil and gas development, other activities, such as construction of livestock and wildlife facilities, vegetation treatments and harvesting of forest products would likely occur in various areas having wilderness character. However, at this time, site-specific project locations are not known."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG274A (R-LG73)	<p>These activities are consistent with Wilderness Act, which allows livestock grazing and range improvements and are allowed under the IMP.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG275 (R-LG74)	<p>Delete the following statement in its entirety:</p> <p>"Alternative A would employ a phenology-based grazing system, which would allow vegetation to recover by coupling forage use with dormancy and avoiding the growth periods of plants. Grazing would occur in Area 1 (Special Resources) only at the discretion of the VFO. Also, BLM lands acquired in the Nine Mile area would not be grazed. This would have less of an adverse impact on vegetation compared to Alternative D – No Action."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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				adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG275A (R-LG74)	This belongs in an AMP or grazing plan.	See comment response LG68.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG276 (R-LG75)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Rangeland improvements that include vegetation treatments and fencing may would have short-term adverse impacts on vegetation caused by construction, surface disturbances, but would have long-term beneficial impacts on vegetation by improving distribution of grazing animals, restricting livestock, restoring natural vegetation communities, and eliminating weeds. Guzzlers and reservoir development would tend to have long-term adverse impacts on vegetation by concentrating livestock and attracting wildlife and wild horses in those areas, with subsequent disturbance and degradation of vegetation communities. These effects are mitigated in AMPs or grazing plans."</p> <p>Range improvements do not "restrict livestock" as written but facilitate proper grazing by encouraging livestock to water and graze outside of riparian areas.</p>	<p>Section 4.16.2.7.4 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to read as follows:</p> <p>"Rangeland improvements that include vegetation treatments and fencing would have short-term adverse impacts on vegetation caused by construction, but would have long-term beneficial impacts on vegetation by improving distribution of grazing animals, restoring natural vegetation communities, and eliminating weeds. Guzzlers and reservoir development would tend to have long-term adverse impacts on vegetation by concentrating livestock and attracting wildlife and wild horses in those areas, with subsequent disturbance and degradation of vegetation communities."</p>	X
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG277 (R-LG76)	<p>Amend the following sentences by adding the bolded language and deleting the strikethrough language:</p> <p>"Additional forage will be allocated in proportion to the contribution each program or permittee makes to improved conditions. If wild horses or big game in the</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>Winter Ridge Wild Horse Herd Area do not need additional forage, it would be allocated to livestock. Additional forage in the northern-half of the Diamond Mountain locality (Diamond Mountain and Browns Park) would be provided to livestock until wildlife demands require them. These strategies would provide additional forage to wildlife under these conditions when compared to the No Action Alternative."</p>	<p>substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG277A (R-LG76)</p>	<p>Grazing rules regarding additional forage supersede RMP. Permittees with suspended use may also be entitled to increases.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	
<p>Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership</p>	<p>O-33</p>	<p>LG278 (R-LG77)</p>	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"If forage allocation reductions are necessary to make significant progress towards or sustain rangeland health, reductions must be based on the reasons that the area is not maintaining, meeting or not making progress towards meeting Utah rangeland health standards as shown by joint permittee and BLM monitoring. there is no specified management plan for the Bonanza and Book Cliffs localities. In the Bonanza Wild Horse Area locality pronghorn use would be reduced but not below 289 AUMs. Wild horse numbers may need to be reduced. In the Blue Mountain locality, any reductions in livestock use states that livestock AUM figures are not the final stocking levels. Rather, all livestock use adjustments would be implemented must be based on joint monitoring data by the permittee and BLM that document the causes for the area not meeting, failing to maintain, or not making substantial progress towards meeting Utah rangeland health</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>standards and reductions must be prorated among the causes, i.e. wildlife, wild horses, and livestock, and through documented mutual agreement or by decision. When livestock use adjustments would be implemented by decision, it would be based on operator consultation and joint monitoring of resource conditions. Additionally, any necessary adjustments in stocking levels or other management practices, including changes or additions to existing management facilities, would be based on allotment evaluations. Decreases in livestock would be implemented over a 5-year period."</p> <p>The RMP would impose livestock reductions without regard to the causal role of livestock, wildlife, or wild horses, contrary to BLM policy, H-4180-1, ch. III 12-16. Reduction procedure as applied to livestock must conform to 43 C.F.R. §4110.2-3, which requires monitoring data and the cooperation, consultation and coordination with the permittee.</p>		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG279 (R-LG78)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"The Diamond Mountain locality would based on joint monitoring data by the permittee and BLM that documents the causes for the area not meeting, not making substantial progress towards meeting, or not maintaining Utah rangeland health standards and reductions must be prorated among the causes, i.e. wildlife, and livestock, and through documented mutual agreement or by decision. make reductions using the following criteria. (1) Livestock temporary, nonrenewable AUMs above permitted use would be reduced first. (2) On wildlife crucial habitat, livestock</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>permitted use would be reduced if there is a conflict between use by livestock and wildlife, and if wildlife numbers are within the herd unit or population objective levels. If there is no conflict and the reduction is necessary because of overuse by either livestock or wildlife, the number of grazers would be reduced. (3) On non-crucial wildlife habitat, livestock permitted use and wildlife numbers would be reduced in proportion to their role, if determined, or otherwise equally. The first year, there would be an initial 10% adjustment in permitted use. Five-year agreements would be developed and signed at the same time outlining the process for phased reductions in the desired level. (4) Temporary adjustments in use due to effects of drought would be made proportionally to livestock, wild horses, and/or wildlife as shown needed by joint monitoring by the permittee and BLM."</p> <p>BLM policy does not allow rangeland resources to be overused simply because UDWR herd numbers are higher. Similarly, BLM policy requires removal or reduction of wild horses or wildlife to the extent that they are the reason an area is not achieving rangeland health standards. Since rangeland health is based on a rule, the RMP must conform to the rule and BLM policy.</p> <p>The answer does not change even if the habitat is crucial or non-crucial.</p> <p>BLM policy does not allow pro-rating forage out of proportion to the contribution of each party.</p>	<p>adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion	O-33	LG280	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Ranch Limited Partnership		(R-LG79)	<p>additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>"Additionally, any necessary adjustments in stocking levels or other management practices, including changes or additions to existing management facilities, would be based on allotment evaluations that would address the proportional and causal role played in the area not meeting, not making substantial progress towards meeting or not maintaining Utah rangeland health standards. Additional forage would be allocated in the Blue Mountain area the same as described for Book Cliffs except habitat for deer would be managed to support current levels and the permittee would receive additional AUMs in relation to management measures that led to improved resource conditions. Diamond Mountain additional forage would be used to provide additional AUMs (over permitted use) to livestock on a temporary, nonrenewable basis until identified for crucial wildlife needs. Additional AUMs outside crucial wildlife areas may be assigned to livestock."</p>	<p>changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG280A (R-LG79)	<p>The RMP would allocate AUMs away from livestock for wildlife, notwithstanding BLM rules and policy to the contrary. The liberal use of "temporary nonrenewable" also contradicts the principles in Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA that a permittee enjoy the certainty and stability of livestock numbers. It also assumes that livestock grazing is not a primary multiple use of the public lands, even though FLPMA so provides.</p>	<p>See comment response LG88.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG281 (R-LG80)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions: "Special Designation areas (ACECs/Research Natural Areas [RNAs]) may would generally have a long-term beneficial impact on the wildlife and fisheries known to</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>occur within their boundaries but the restrictions on management actions would also have adverse effects. Normally, only activities that would maintain or enhance habitat used by wildlife and fisheries and maintain livestock grazing at grazing preference levels would be permitted in these areas, although some of these areas would remain open to minerals development. In areas where minerals development may impact wildlife and fisheries, restrictive lease stipulations would be required to minimize these impacts. The designation of these areas, or lack thereof, would have similar impacts between alternatives. Alternative C proposes the most ACECs/Research Natural Areas. Alternatives B and D propose the same ACECs/Research Natural Areas.</p> <p>Alternative A generally designates fewer acres in the existing and proposed ACECs/Research Natural Areas than Alternative C but more than Alternatives B and D."</p>	<p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG281A (R-LG80)	<p>The DEIS discussion implies that livestock grazing will be restricted in ACECs when nothing else in the plan discloses this consequence. The RMP does not document the basis for the restrictions.</p>	<p>Nowhere in the statement in question is livestock grazing or any restriction to it mentioned. The commenter has misinterpreted the statement regarding the interaction between special designations and livestock grazing. Please see Section 4.7.2, second to last bullet, regarding the anticipated impact of special designations on livestock and grazing resources.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG282 (R-LG81)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions:</p> <p>"Provided that there is no adverse effect on sheep permittees, habitat and forage would be provided for the emigration and/or reintroduction of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the following areas: ..This would expand the reintroduction effort for bighorn sheep in</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			the VPA and would benefit bighorn sheep populations when compared with the No Action Alternative. So long as it does not adversely affect existing grazing permits and preference rights, habitat and forage would be provided for the emigration and/or reintroduction of bison. Habitat and forage would be provided for the emigration and/or reintroduction of moose. This would benefit moose populations in the VPA when compared with the No Action Alternative. Moose and bison are also subject to rangeland health."	<p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG282A (R-LG81)	<p>The DEIS needs to discuss and disclose the effects on existing ranch operations. Reintroduction may adversely affect nearby permittees.</p> <p>The RMP fails to disclose the basis or the effects of introducing either bison or moose. Portions of the DEIS conclude there is range degradation, a fact, that if true, would argue against the introduction of another grazing animal, when BLM has limited authority to control numbers or grazing. In addition, brucellosis infections from bison herds pose a serious health risk for Utah cattle.</p>	<p>The subsection entitled Reintroductions in Table 2.1.26 states that:</p> <p>"After analysis, reintroductions would be made in areas where they do not conflict with livestock or where such conflicts would be avoided. Coordination with permittees would be required."</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG283	<p>Add the following statement:</p> <p>Grazing is an important economic and cultural resource and the BLM goal is to maintain and enhance the industry by retaining full historic grazing preference through management prescriptions and forage for wildlife and wild horses.</p>	<p>Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS/PRMP/FEIS has been changed to read as follows:</p> <p>"Achieve appropriate utilization of the range by livestock and wildlife through management prescriptions and administrative adjustments."</p>	X
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG284 (R-LG52)	The assumption of limited demand for AUMs is unsubstantiated. If BLM had a number of vacant allotments it could make the case but it does not. The only vacant allotments are those purchased by UDWR	See comment response LG53.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>and kept in nonuse in violation of the grazing rules limiting nonuse to 3 years.</p> <p>The RMP incorrectly implies that most livestock grazing in the VPA is year-long and not under any system. The BLM made a policy decision several years ago not to make significant investments for allotments that were in good condition (M) or which could not be improved (C). Those allotments were not scheduled for intensive management and no funding was allocated for improvements.</p>		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG285	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions:</p> <p>"On the remaining 7 allotments (Red Creek Flat, Rye Grass, Marshall Draw, Taylor Flat, Warren Draw South, Watson-Diamond Mountain and Sears Canyon), cattle are permitted on a temporary, non-renewable basis; however, such use has been is discretionary. Applications for grazing permits will be considered."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG285A	<p>Grazing should be restored to these allotments. TNR does not contribute to the stability of the livestock industry, a policy that is mandated by Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA.</p>	<p>See comment response LG88.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch	O-33	LG286	<p>The RMP does not disclose what is the full historic grazing preference. Chapter 3 states that 146,220</p>	<p>As stated on Page 3-35 in Section 3.7 Livestock and Grazing, the last paragraph; 146,161 AUMs are the</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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Limited Partnership			AUMs are allocated to grazing and 137,897 AUMs are active permitted use. The difference in 8,323 AUMs appears to be the Bookcliffs permits now owned by UDWR. The RMP and DEIS must disclose this difference. As written, BLM would never restore the suspended preference, when preference grazing is to be restored when permittees contribute to increased forage. 43 C.F.R. §4130.3-2.	<p>Full preference for Alternative D. See Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Localities) where the AUMs for the TNC and RMEF are discussed.2.</p> <p>Nowhere in the PRMP/FEIS does in state that the BLM would never restore suspended preference.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG287	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions: "Impacts to livestock grazing from fire management decisions, livestock grazing management decisions, rangeland improvements, riparian management decisions, vegetation management decisions, and woodland and forest management decisions are projected to be directly beneficial and provide both short-and long-term improvements in forage health and availability, habitat improvements, and water access and availability. These improvements will directly benefit livestock grazing over the long-term, while having significant adverse impacts over the short term. The permittee will lose access to allotments or parts of allotments during vegetation treatment and must make a significant investment of time and often money to support implementation of the other management decisions. The use of fire as a management tool may lead to some areas being unavailable for foraging in the short term, but in the long term would act to improve overall conditions and reduce the chance for catastrophic wildland fire damage. Additional forage will be allocated to livestock to replace lost AUMs."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG287A	<p>Effective vegetation treatment and range projects will improve range resources and forage availability. These increases should go first to livestock. 43 C.F.R. §4110.3- 1. Failure to implement the projects (as in the</p>	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			past) may force operators out of business and the DEIS needs to disclose and discuss this possibility.		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG288	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions: "Increased human-caused impacts would include potential harassment of livestock, potential for OHVs to move off of designated roads and trails, potentially producing vegetation losses due to illegal trails, and the potential cutting of fences or leaving gates open affecting proper livestock distribution. These events currently occur and have been mitigated through public education and signs. Under Alternative D – No Action, designated routes would not exist, which would allow visitors to travel throughout the allotments. Four open or “play” areas exist close to Vernal, Utah. These areas are designated as “open for OHV use. While these areas are limited in forage production, they are located within existing allotments. Due to the level of impact, these areas would be considered lost in the calculation of forage production because these areas effectively change the allotment boundaries."	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG288A	<p>The DEIS overstates the effects of lost AUMs. RMP actually creates sacrifice areas outside of existing allotments, a fact not included in this discussion. As written, this section overstates the user conflicts while grossly understating the inter-relationship between wildlife and wildlife habitat and livestock grazing management. BLM cannot remove land from forage calculations unless</p> <p>there is no vegetation or the allotment and 10-year grazing permit is amended in accordance with the grazing rules. 43 C.F.R. §§4110.3-2; 4110.4.</p>	Comment noted.	
Vermillion Ranch	O-33	LG289	Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded strikethrough deletions:	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not	

## Livestock Grazing

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Limited Partnership			<p>"Impacts from recreation and travel-based management decisions are expected to be adversely small to moderate on livestock grazing as related to increases in noise, dust, soil and vegetation disturbances, and harassment from humans. The majority of these projected impacts are assumed to be the result of proposed increases in motorized travel and access opportunities."</p>	<p>limited to, the following:                      The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.                      The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.                      The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.                      The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.                      The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG289A	<p>The DEIS overstates recreation and grazing use conflicts in this section.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG290	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions:</p> <p>"Activities associated with the exploration and development of mineral resources would have impacts on livestock grazing that would result in: 1) the temporary loss of vegetation and/or the loss of land available for grazing; 2) the possible disruption of livestock practices; and 3) the possible loss of grazing capacity due to changes in land management. These are minor, unless well densities are higher than projected, and are routinely mitigated. Reclamation can result in more palatable forage Livestock grazing and the development of oil and gas and coal bed methane, deposits are assumed to be generally compatible uses in most cases, as exploration activity would be short-</p>	<p>Section 4.7.2.3 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to read as follows:</p> <p>"Activities associated with the exploration and development of mineral resources would have impacts on livestock grazing that would result in: 1) the temporary loss of vegetation and/or the loss of land available for grazing; 2) the possible disruption of livestock practices; and 3) the possible loss of grazing capacity due to changes in land management. These are minor, unless well densities are higher than projected, and are routinely mitigated. Reclamation can result in more palatable forage Livestock grazing and the development of oil and gas and coal bed methane, deposits are assumed to be generally compatible</p>	X

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>term and extraction activities and impacts are expected to have relatively small footprints for equipment and machinery. Development of phosphate, Gilsonite, tar sands, and oil shale resources would result in the long-term removal of lands from grazing activity to a greater extent than the above resource extraction processes. Presently, it does not appear that there is a viable market for tar sands or oil shale. In general, livestock grazing on rangeland would be expected to continue at some level during the development of oil and gas, and coal bed resources, which mitigates displacement."</p>	<p>uses in most cases, as exploration activity would be short-term and extraction activities and impacts are expected to have relatively small footprints for equipment and machinery. Development of phosphate, Gilsonite, tar sands, and oil shale resources would result in the long-term removal of lands from grazing activity to a greater extent than the above resource extraction processes. In general, livestock grazing on rangeland would be expected to continue at some level during the development of oil and gas, and coal bed resources, which mitigates displacement."</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG290A	<p>This section overstates the impacts, largely because the market for tar sands and oil shale remains speculative. As noted above, the RMP overstates the conflicts in some areas while understating the conflicts in others.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG77 (R-GC1)	<p>[T]he phenology criteria described in Alternative A are an appropriate consideration in setting seasons of use for an allotment but not as an across-the-board prescription for the entire planning area. As used, the RMP does not allow managers or permittees sufficient flexibility to accommodate yearly variations in weather, precipitation, and plant phenology or variations of elevation, topography or aspect within the identified areas.</p>	<p>The stated seasons of use are not proposed to be applied on a planning area wide basis. Instead, seven geographical areas, considering topography, climate and other resource and management consideration, are identified in figure 7 and area specific seasons of use are identified. Extended seasons of use are also identified when range management practices such as deferment and rest are implemented.</p> <p>In area number 6, the end date for the season of use has been extended from 2/28, as stated in the existing land use plan, to 5/1 to provide for existing livestock operations while maintaining or enhancing rangeland conditions. Only in a few isolated instances where BLM has identified concerns regarding the season of use and rangeland health</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>standards will current seasons of use be affected. In addition, the plan proposes, under Section 2.4.7.2, that seasons of use could be authorized outside of those proposed when certain criteria are met. These criteria can be found in Section 2.4.7.3 of the PRMP/FEIS. These criteria give the Authorizing Officer adequate flexibility to manage BLM lands on a site-specific basis while avoiding seasons of use that may be detrimental to the health of the public rangelands.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG78 (R-GC2)	<p>The analysis in the RMP is entirely inadequate. The Analysis of the Management Situation merely refers to an earlier study done for the Diamond Mountain RMP, which in turn refers to the 1980 study. The RMP assumes, based on that study, that the river segments are still suitable for designation. Much has changed in 25 years and the failure to actually conduct the necessary study violates BLM policy regarding assessments and renders the EIS legally inadequate as well.</p>	<p>The FLPMA gives the BLM broad authority to manage the public lands, including management of eligible and suitable river segments. For eligible rivers, it is BLM's policy to protect certain values identified in the eligibility determination process to ensure that a decision on suitability can be made. To accomplish this objective, the BLM's management prescriptions must protect the free-flowing character, tentative classifications, and identify outstandingly remarkable values of eligible rivers according to the prescriptions and directions of the current, applicable land use plan per BLM Manual Section 8351.32C. The BLM Manual further states that should a determination on suitability not be made during the planning process, "the RMP must prescribe protective management measures to ensure protection shall be afforded the river and adjacent public land area pending the suitability determination" (Section 8351.33A).</p> <p>The NEPA specifies that while work on the EIS is in progress, BLM cannot undertake or authorize any actions in the interim that would prejudice the RMP decision or, in this case, the suitability determination</p>	

## Livestock Grazing

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				<p>(40 CFR 1505.1 (c)(3)). A case-by-case evaluation of potential impacts resulting from a proposed action must be made to ensure that all eligible rivers are not limited from being considered for suitability among the range of RMP alternatives, thus eliminating the opportunity to prejudice the decision. Implementation of the interim management to protect eligible rivers, therefore, is applied through site-specific NEPA analysis of environmental impacts on a case-by-case basis. The NEPA compliance, required for all Federal actions that could significantly affect the environment, ensures that BLM consider alternatives to the proposed action and provides BLM an opportunity to apply mitigation measures that will reduce impacts on a given resource such as an eligible stream. This mechanism of applying management must be in conformance with the current land use plan. Protective prescriptions would be applied to rivers determined suitable in the ROD for the Field Office RMP. Resource allocations (such as those for visual resources, OHV use, and mineral leasing) compatible with protecting river values would be prescribed for suitable river corridors as part of the decision. In addition, no special management objectives would be applied to eligible rivers determined not to be suitable in the ROD. Instead, they would be managed without additional consideration according to the provisions of the plan.</p>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG82 (R-AT8)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by bolded additions and strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>“This alternative would provide resource protection for</p>	Section 4.7.2.6.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised as suggested.	X

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>livestock grazing by maintaining forage utilization at proper use, while allowing low impact to rangeland health. However, there would be see a 3-4 percent anticipated loss of AUMs from mineral development and the least number of acres treated for improvements under rangeland improvement management actions.”</p> <p>It is not accurate to state that livestock grazing harms rangeland health. The RMP provides little resource protection for grazing and leaves an operator vulnerable to conflicts with big game and wild horses, inability to manage or use riparian areas and water resources, while being subject to arbitrary standards that are applied without regard to the site.</p>		
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG83 (R-AT9)	<p>Modify the following statement as indicated by the strikethrough deletions:</p> <p>“Alternative D-No Action would provide the least number of acres for fire treatment, and produce the greatest long-term adverse impacts to rangeland health. This alternative would provide for rangeland improvements greater than Alternative A, but less than Alternatives B and C.”</p> <p>This paragraph contradicts most other portions of the DEIS. It is not clear why the BLM would conclude Alternative D would not benefit rangeland health when elsewhere it has the largest number of acres subject to vegetation treatment. Moreover, rangeland health standards are enforced by rule and apply to Alternative D. The statement is inaccurate.</p>	Section 4.7.2.6.4 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised as suggested.	X
Vermillion	O-33	LG84	Add the following language:	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Ranch Limited Partnership		(R-AT5)  This is AT95 in BLM Table 9-30.	For all alternatives, the vegetation treatments and range improvement projects are merely projections and are not a ceiling on possible projects.”	changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG84A (R-AT5)  This is AT95 in BLM Table 9-30.	The discussion regarding range projects needs to be prefaced with an explanation that these are anticipated projects but are not intended to set a limit, when designing grazing management plans. As written, the discussion appears to set ceilings on range projects. The discussion is also troubling in that it fails to show how BLM would actually accomplish these objectives. Unfortunately planned projects are often not funded or not approved due to lack of resources to complete NEPA evaluation. The agriculture industry should not suffer if BLM fails to secure the funding or uses the funding for other priorities.	The entire RMP and the management actions within it are predicated upon the base assumption that the BLM will have the funding and staffing necessary to accomplish the decisions enacted upon issuance of the Record of Decision.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LG85 (R-AT5)	The number of acres for vegetation treatment, especially the differences between Alternatives D and A, make no sense. Vegetation treatment can be equally or even more beneficial for wildlife. There is no explanation for fewer acres.	See comment response LG48.	
Center for Native	O-38	LG177 (JLG-4)	Grazing practices should not be permitted to pose a threat to white-tailed prairie dogs. With proper stocking levels and avoidance of white-tailed prairie dog habitat	The Fire, Drought, and Natural Disasters subsection of Table 2.1.1 (Management Common to All Alternatives) in the PRMP/FEIS indicates that	

## Livestock Grazing

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Ecosystems			that already requires rehabilitation, prairie dogs and livestock should be able to coexist. When prairie dog declines occur, local grazing practices should be reviewed and altered if necessary. Livestock grazing pressure should always be reduced in drought years.	adjustments to livestock grazing would also occur in times of drought.	
Center for Native Ecosystems	O-38	LG178 (JLG-5)	Livestock grazing rates should be adjusted before wildlife herds are culled. Page 2-4 suggests that wildlife herds could be culled in response to drought. Reduction of livestock stocking rates would be employed first.	See comment response LG177.	
Center for Native Ecosystems	O-38	LG179 (JLG-6)	Voluntary retirement of permits should be encouraged. We applaud TNC and RMEF for voluntarily retiring their grazing permits upon adoption of this RMP. We hope the recently announced changes in grazing permit management by the BLM will not hinder this plans.	See comment response LG4.	
Center for Native Ecosystems	O-38	LG180 (JLG-7)	Allowing grazing to threaten special status species under all of the alternatives is irresponsible and violates NEPA. The Grazing in River Corridors section on page 2-19 is completely vague and non-committal about how grazing in this most potentially damaging area will be addressed. Page 2-32 presents two yellow-billed cuckoo prescriptions that are completely contradictory: "Fence riparian areas to reduce or eliminate grazing pressure on young trees, especially willow and cottonwood;" and "Apply rotation grazing or consider eliminating hot-season grazing in riparian areas to allow young trees to become established." Which is it, will grazing be allowed or not in riparian areas? BLM must seriously consider impacts of grazing on each special status species and provide real mitigation.	<p>Additional management actions related to riparian corridors can be found in Table 2.1.16 (Riparian Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS . This table provides information regarding management prescriptions and stipulations for grazing within riparian corridors.</p> <p>The prescriptions regarding yellow-billed cuckoo are not contradictory. The prescriptions would be implemented on a case-by-case basis, applying the prescription most appropriate to the situation; fencing, which creates its own level of environmental disturbance, may be less desirable in some situations that rotation grazing or seasonal restrictions, which are actions involving less disturbance.</p> <p>The analysis of anticipated impacts of grazing management decisions on special status is provided</p>	X

## Livestock Grazing

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				<p>in Sections 4.15.1.2 and 4.15.2.2. Anticipated mitigation for impacts on special status species from all activities is outlined in Section 4.15.3.</p> <p>Section 4.15.3 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to add additional mitigations for grazing and other activities for special status species in Section 4.15.3.</p>	
Ranges West	O-43	LG133 (ALG-26)	On page 2-75 (Wildlife) why is BLM even dealing with the issue of bear-baiting permits? This is a UDWR issue or prerogative.	<p>Table 2.1.26 (Wildlife and Fisheries Resources) of the PRMP/FEIS under the subsection entitled Mountain Lion and Black Bear states:</p> <p>“Placement of bear bait on public land would require a permit.”</p> <p>Any bear bait permit would be issued though the UDWR.</p>	
Ranges West	O-43	LG138 (ALG-5)	Note the proposed failure to carry on the grazing permit AUMs that were suspended after 1995 (Range Reform Regs). Need to check the US Supreme Court decision in PLC vs Babbitt (Bremmer case). I question BLM’s authority to drop suspended AUMs from the permit.	The requirement to hold decreased AUMs in suspended use was dropped in the 1995 changes to the grazing regulations. This was not challenged in PLC v. Babbitt (No. 95-CV-165-B) and as a result was never addressed in the subsequent US Supreme Court decision. The preamble to the Final Rules on February 22, 1995, explain that the “Department does not believe that it serves the best interests of the rangeland or the operator to continue to carry suspended numbers on a permit”. Since the changes to the regulations in 1995 there is no regulation providing for placing reductions of permitted use in suspension. At this time, it would not be appropriate to carry reduced AUMs as suspended use. If changes to the regulations once again provide for suspended AUMs then this LUP	

## Livestock Grazing

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				would be maintained to be in accordance with the new grazing regulations.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG139 (ALG-6)	<p>This paragraph should also include a statement like this:</p> <p>“BLM will, when feasible, conduct vegetation management practices to maintain the productivity and desired plant community where woody plant successional processes have adversely impacted watershed values or livestock and wildlife habitat.”</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>This issue is addressed under the Utah Standards for Rangeland Health &amp; Guidelines for Grazing Management.</p>	
Ranges West	O-43	LG140 (ALG-7)	<p>Both sets of numbered items (1,2,3) seem appropriate. Item 1 (1 set of numbered items) is very important. The next paragraph on voluntary relinquishment of a grazing permit probably raises legal questions as to who gets the AUMs.</p>	See comment response LG4.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG141 (ALG-8)	<p>The 3rd paragraph from the page bottom is troublesome precedent. Grazing in Browns Park along the river has been historic tradition and culture since 1849 when a band of Cherokee Indians first wintered cattle in the Park.</p>	As the commenter does not specifically identify what it is about the paragraph that sets a "troublesome precedent," the BLM is unable to respond.	

## Livestock Grazing

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Ranges West	O-43	LG142 (ALG-9)	The 2nd paragraph from page bottom: Vermillion Ranch has a grazing plan with the Vernal District and UDWR that provides for periodic TNR use of Red Creek Flat.	Comment noted.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG143 (ALG-10)	Last paragraph: Is this relinquishment of the TNC and RMEF permits and the reallocation of 8264 AUMs legal? Both of these permits are in common use allotments with other cattle permittees.	See comment response LG4.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG144 (ALG-11)	Need a more appropriate goal and objective. Suggest "To promote the stability of the public land grazing industry by maintaining, through management practices, the historic livestock forage allocations consistent with sustainable resource constrains and multiple use values".	Comment noted.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG145 (ALG-12)	It is irrational to make compliance with rangeland health standards a prerequisite to a change in season of use. In fact, a change in season of use frequently is necessary to achieve standard compliance.	.See comment response LG87.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG146 (ALG-13)	Permittee-requested changes in season of use should not require outside funding to pay BLM to do the assessment. BLM is saying that, if a permittee needs to change grazing season, then that permittee must pay the BLM to consider the request.	If a permittee requests that an environmental assessment (EA) be completed, there are two options that need to be considered. The first option is to have the BLM to do the NEPA work. In such a case, when the BLM could work on the EA would be based on management decisions and work load priorities. The second option is to have the permittee to have a 3rd party contractor do the NEPA work for them and at the permittee's own expense. The permittee is not required to choose the second option, but must decide if it is in their best interest to do so.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG147 (ALG-14)	BLM is proposing to require health certificate and proof of vaccinations for all permittee horses used in grazing management on allotments within HMAs. There is no	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

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			precedent for this.		
Ranges West	O-43	LG148 (ALG-15)	The BLM is proposing to blackmail permittees who need to change class of livestock by requiring them to pay entirely for any needed fencing.	The BLM is merely stating the policies agreed upon with the Grazing Advisory Board.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG149 (ALG-16)	<p>What is the definition of the terms phenology, billed use, adjudicated and permitted as used in this table? These terms are used again on page 2-86, Table 2.5, and 4-166 to specify available livestock AUMs.</p> <p>There apparently is no explanation in this draft RMP (that I could find) to discuss these so-called "systems" for allocating livestock forage.</p>	The terms are used in Table 2.3 of the Draft RMP as simple headings referring to the basis, by alternative, for the specific management actions related to livestock and grazing seasons of use that are outlined in the table. "Phenology" refers to the management of livestock grazing based upon the physiological requirements of forage/vegetation. "Billed Use" refers to management based upon how the permittees are actually billed, regardless of phenology. "Adjudicated" refers to management of livestock grazing based upon the 1960s adjudication of seasons of use. "Permitted" refers to the management of livestock grazing seasons of use as outlined under the current permits. Clarification of these terms has been added as a footnote to Table 21.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) in the PRMP/FEIS.	X
Ranges West	O-43	LG150 (ALG-17)	All Alternatives state that livestock grazing "would be allowed in Area 1 under the discretion of the VFO". Grazing is not at the discretion of a BLM field office but is regulated by the CFRs, the grazing permit and a grazing plan.	See comment response LG88.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG151 (ALG-18)	Season of use is specified as to exact dates. This does not allow sufficient flexibility to accommodate yearly vagaries of weather and plant phenology or variations of elevation, topography or aspect within the identified areas.	The season of uses is based on phenology, which is based off of weather and plant phenology.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG152 (ALG-19)	Are future range improvement projects limited to what is listed in this RMP? Much too specific for an RMP and decidedly limits future management options.	See comment response LG47.	

## Livestock Grazing

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			Potentially very troublesome (case in point is the Owyhee RMP in Idaho).		
Ranges West	O-43	LG153 (ALG-20)	Browns Park to be managed for “enhancement of resources and activities...cultural and historic interpretation”. Livestock grazing IS the oldest cultural and historic activity in Browns Park. Documented livestock grazing started in 1849 when a band of Cherokee Indians wintered their cattle and horses in the Park. Yet, this RMP proposes to severely limit and/or retire livestock grazing in the Park.	See comment response LG117.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG154 (ALG-21)	Browns Park south of the river to be managed as VRM1 under alternative A (preferred). This is inappropriately restrictive for Browns Park (except those portions along the river in the narrow rock canyons). This statement also does not agree with the VRM map for Alternative A Figure 29. (Also see page 2-56).	Map 29 shows the correct VRM classifications. It is not in conflict with Alternative A, Table 2.1.13 (Recreation Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG155 (ALG-22)	This section specifies riparian grazing use limits and residual stubble heights. The RMP should not specify grazing management prescriptions but rather should set outcome goals and provide adaptive management approaches to achieve the goals.	Broad goals for riparian resource management under all alternatives can be found in Table 2.1.16 (Riparian Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS; however, the PRMP must also include concrete measures for achieving those goals as considered at a landscape/programmatic level.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG156 (ALG-23)	The riparian grazing use standards (4” stubble or 30% utilization on key species or 6” stubble or 20% utilization) as stated here on page 2-53, again on page 2-86 and 2-93 DO NOT agree with the riparian standards stated on page 4-238, 4.15.2.2.1 Alternative A (also see line 2 page 4-239).	Table 2.1.16 (Riparian Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS outlines the alternatives considered in the PRMP/FEIS. Pages 2-86 and 2-93 of the DEIS are part of Table 2.5 (renumbered as Tables 2.2.7 (Livestock and Grazing) 2.2.12 (Riparian Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS), which merely summarizes (in abbreviated fashion) the anticipated impacts described in Chapter 4 and does not include new alternatives or management actions. As such, there is no contradiction between Table 2.1.16 and Table 2.2.12 in the PRMP.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Ranges West	O-43	LG156A (ALG-23)	The differences in wording regarding key species vs. woody species are significant and could lead to very troublesome interpretations by staff.	Table 2.1.6 (Riparian Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS and Section 4.15.2.2.1 in the PRMP have been revised to correct a discrepancy between woody and herbaceous species.	X
Ranges West	O-43	LG157 (ALG-24)	Pg 2-54, Table 2.3 Soil and Water- Again, need definitions of surface disturbance	See comment response GC15.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG158 (ALG-25)	Total acres of ACEC by alternatives amounts to 20%, 10%, 40% and 10% of the total public lands in the Vernal planning area. See pages S 3-5, 2-91 and 2-104. Livestock grazing would become more restricted or even removed. No grandfather status for grazing makes future use even more uncertain than normal uncertainties associated with public land grazing.	See comment response LG131.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG159 (ALG-26)	Pg 2-67 thru 2-79, Alternative Elements Eliminated from Detailed Analysis: What does this table signify? For example, on page 2-72 the table identifies 50,299 AUMs of existing livestock preference for all alternatives and then under rationale for elimination it is stated that this action is moved to "management common to all". What does this mean to livestock permittees or the public, especially when Table 2.5 page 2-86 indicates the following livestock AUMs for each alternative (A-137, 838, B-139,163, C- 77,294 and D-146161) and on page 3-35 current actual use is 78,500 AUMs? There are numerous other items in Table 2.4 that raise concerns or serious questions.	See comment response LG57.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG160 (ALG-27)	What species of plants does the riparian grazing use standard (30% or 50%) apply to and where in the riparian zone does this apply (greenline or terrace meadows)?	The plant species would be determined at the AMP/Grazing management plan level as the key species may be different by location. See Table 2.1.16 (Riparian Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS to see where the use levels apply.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG161	The analysis of impacts to soil and water and	Table 2.2.14 (Soils and Water Resources) in the	X

## Livestock Grazing

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		(ALG-28)	vegetation resources indicates that the AUM allocation (Alt A) and the grazing use limits of 30% “riparian vegetation” would adversely impact soils and vegetation. Yet on page 2-108 the AUM allocations and the “30% riparian vegetation” use limit would be beneficial to habitat and wildlife resources. These are contradictory conclusions and illogical. Grazing under Alternative A is subject to Rangeland Health Standards which assures healthy riparian and upland habitat or soils and vegetation.	PRMP/FEIS has been revised to accurately describe the impacts (30% limitations would be more beneficial than the No Action alternative). The Preferred Alternative has been revised to read as follows:  “30% forage utilization of riparian areas would benefit soils through reduction in loss of cover and trampling and subsequent sedimentation.”	
Ranges West	O-43	LG162 (ALG-29)	Chapter 3 is supposedly a description of the “affected environment” yet there is no discussion of historical, economic and cultural importance of ranching to the Uinta Basin or the interdependence of private ranch lands and maintenance of open space agriculture.	An RMP/EIS need not include an exhaustive history of the study area, but must include a description of the nature and condition of resources (including land uses) within the area within which such resources could be affected by actions under consideration. With regards to the agricultural industry in the Vernal planning area, information is contained in Section 3.3.3 in the form of known historical site types, in Section 3.7 and its subsections, and in Sections 3.12.4.2.1, 3.12.2.2.2, and 3.12.3.2.2.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG163 (ALG-30)	Grossly inadequate discussion. Many BLM actions impact directly on intermingled private rangelands and prime farm lands. There is an inevitable linkage between public rangelands and private agricultural lands throughout the West. This linkage should be acknowledged at the very least.	See comment response LG56.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG164 (ALG-31)	The last sentence of this paragraph does not compute: “Minor indirect impacts as a result of implementation of Alternative A would occur to the ranching community but not individual ranchers due to the reduction in AUMs”. In the 5th paragraph, last sentence, it states just the opposite.	Section 4.7.2.2.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to clarify the analysis.  The point of the statement in question is that the reduction in AUMs would be spread across permit holders and would not be targeted at any one	X

## Livestock Grazing

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				holder.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG165 (ALG-32)	Historic actual use is not an appropriate basis for allocating livestock forage. Permittees take voluntary non-use for many reasons (drought, economic, range improvement, family, age or health or operator convenience). Forage production, range condition and trend are the appropriate basis for forage allocation.	The grazing regulations provide for criteria to authorize or deny non-use.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG166 (ALG-33)	This is an inappropriate assumption regarding Alternative C. Rangeland health standards apply equally to all alternatives as per the CFRs and BLM policy.	Section 4.7.2.2.3 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to delete the statement beginning with "...rangeland health would be the driving force".	X
Ranges West	O-43	LG167 (ALG-34)	Contradictory statements in 2nd paragraph, next to last sentence and 3rd paragraph, last sentence. Either Alternative D will maintain rangeland health or it won't.	Section 4.7.2.6.3 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to correct the contradictory statement as suggested	X
Ranges West	O-43	LG168 (ALG-36)	This is a remarkably biased statement. According to this analysis, livestock have adverse impacts to fossils whether the livestock are present or removed from an area. After 130 years of livestock grazing and millions of years of bison, mammoths, giant ground sloths and other large critters roaming unregulated across the western landscape, it is indeed wonderful that ANY of these fragile fossils remain.	The commenter has incorrectly interpreted the statement in question. The statement indicates that excluding livestock from some areas would change their travel patterns, potentially forcing them into and concentrating their movement in areas containing fossil-bearing outcrops, where fossils could be impacted.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG169 (ALG-37)	2nd sentence is not correct as Alternative C does not meet current actual use that has occurred during the recent several years of drought. There will be an even greater shortfall as AUM demand increases with more favorable weather cycles.	Comment noted.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG170 (ALG-38)	Last 2 sentences: Incorrect statements. Alt C does not fulfill the ranching community's goal for AUMs and the county or local economy is certainly impacted by the current drought-induced reduction in livestock grazing.	Comment noted.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG171	1st paragraph, last sentence- Biased statement that assumes any foraging subjects soils to erosion. No	Section 4.13.1.3 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to clarify that foraging has the potential to	X

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
		(ALG-39)	science base to this statement. Rangeland ecosystems evolved with large animal grazing and animal foraging on vegetation is a natural and fundamental biological process. Grazing is functionally positive or negative to vegetation depending on many things such as intensity and timing.	impact soils but that it is not a given.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG172 (ALG-40)	This paragraph is eco-bio gobbledygook with only a selective-science basis. Grazing is a fundamental biologic process at the base of the natural food chain. It is not something man invented to assault nature. Herbivory is functional to plants in many ways that the author of this paragraph apparently never noticed, such as enhanced seed germination and transport, planting, fertilizing, tillering and subsequent increase in reproductive stalks. The effects of grazing can range from positive to negative depending on amount, timing, species of plant and the grazing animal, etc. The statement in this paragraph is, at best, unprofessional and more likely dangerous.	Section 4.15.1.2 in the PRMP/FEIS has been modified for clarity.	X
Ranges West	O-43	LG173 (ALG-41)	This definition of riparian grazing use standards is different than those found on pages 2-53, 2-86 and 2-93.	See comment response LG156.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG-35	This sentence implies that livestock grazing and rangeland health are inversely related. This is not necessarily true. Rangelands evolved with large animal herbivory.	Comment noted.	
Ranges West	O-43	LG76 (AGC-6)	For the most part, this paragraph is appropriate. Adjustments to either livestock or wildlife grazing should be based on monitoring data. The exclusion of areas with less than 25 lbs/ac, greater than 50% slope and more than 4 miles from water has been historically very troublesome when BLM applied these suitability criteria to forage carrying capacity inventories in the late 1960s-1980s. These criteria were an open	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			invitation for anti-livestock grazing agendas. However, as stated in this paragraph, the application of these suitability criteria to allocation of additional forage is not very significant. Forage increases on these low potential ranges are not likely.		
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG187 (NLG1)	We hope that the BLM will bear in mind that energy development, ORV use, and livestock grazing in the Vernal Resource area, must be undertaken and managed in a way that does not cause irreparable harm to the wildlife and wildlands in the planning area.	See Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management), Table 2.1.9 (Minerals and Energy Resources), and Table (Travel – Roads and Trails) in the PRMP/FEIS for proposed management actions related to energy development, OHV use, and livestock and grazing. See also Sections 4.7.3, 4.8.3, and 4.10.2.11 regarding proposed mitigation measures for anticipated impacts from these land uses.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG188 (NLG2)	We encourage the BLM to ensure that livestock grazing occur only in the many areas where they will cause fewer impacts to key wildlife species, riparian areas, and wilderness-quality lands.	Comment noted.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG189 (NLG3)	Livestock grazing should be limited to levels of use that ensure diverse plant community composition, forage production at potential, and unimpaired riparian areas.	See Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Localities), Table 2.1.8 (Livestock and Grazing Management) Sections 2.4.5, 2.4.7 and 2.4.15 for management actions common to all alternatives regarding management of grazing, forage, and vegetation to maintain appropriate vegetation communities. See also Table 2.3 (Forage, Livestock and Grazing, and Vegetation).	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG190 (NLG4)	Livestock grazing can have negative impacts on arid lands and their flora and fauna.	Comment noted.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG191 (NLG5)	The assessment of grazing in the DEIS is deficient and must be improved.	Without specific identification of the perceived deficiencies, the BLM cannot address this comment.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG192 (NLG6)	BLM must consider the significant impacts of grazing and develop appropriate measures to manage and mitigation those impacts. NEPA requires BLM to assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts and effects of potential actions on other resources, including ecological values “such as the effects on natural resources and on the components, structures, and functioning of affected ecosystems.	The anticipated impact of livestock grazing on resources and uses with the planning area can be found in Chapter 4, under each resource heading. Mitigation of impacts is also discussed resource by resource in Chapter 4.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG193 (NLG7)	For each allotment pasture, the plan should assess the plant community’s level of ecological function and the true livestock grazing capacity for that pasture.	This is done at an activity plan level, not in an RMP.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG194 (NLG8)	Drought is not fully planned for in the land use plan. From 2000 to mid-2004, the western states have endured a period of serious drought.	The Fire, Drought, and Natural Disasters subsection of Table 2.1.1 in the PRMP/FEIS (Management Common to All Alternatives) describes planned responses to drought conditions.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG194A (NLG8)	While grazing stocking numbers declined early in this period, for one year during the drought grazing numbers increased above historic levels in normal precipitation years. BLM needs to explain this anomaly.	This is beyond the scope of the RMP.	
Wilderness	O-46	LG195	We recommend that the preferred alternative	See comment response LG195.	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems		(NLG9)	recommend that stocking numbers should be reduced to a level that can be supplied by 25% of the forage grown during a drought. Such a reduction should take place immediately once drought condition forage production is known. Once the drought ends, grazing stocking should be at a red level until the productivity of the range is at or near its potential.		
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG196 (NLG10)	A combination of factors has placed many key species at risk in the VRA, but BLM does not often acknowledge the role that livestock grazing has in the demise of these species.	The anticipated impacts of livestock and grazing management decisions on special status species, vegetation, and wildlife are discussed in Sections 4.15.1.2, 4.15.2.2, 4.16.7.4 and 4.19.1, respectively.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG197 (NLG11)	We ask that a section be added to Section 2.4.7 regarding the process for renewing grazing permits that adheres to the following steps: Determine which lands are capable for livestock grazing; for lands capable of grazing, determine which are suitable for livestock grazing; where practicable, allotment boundaries are redrawn to exclude those lands, which are both unsuitable and incapable. Those lands occurring outside an allotment are designated as not available for livestock grazing; stocking levels for livestock will be calculated based in ecological standards. Use Table 1 of our comment letter, to determine the percent of forage that can be allocated for livestock grazing; environmental analysis will be published and circulated for public comment; the grazing permit will be issued with standard stipulations described later; records of the permit and annual grazing use will be made publicly available by way of the web for each allotment.	The RMP, in conformance with current BLM policy, proposes to adjust livestock numbers as needed to meet LUP objectives through the evaluation of monitoring data. One time inventories and assessments, such as the one suggested, have not proved to be accurate or supportable in the past. BLM's monitoring program is ecologically based as objectives, monitoring data and assessments are based on the capability of the affected land and its ability to support the proposed use while maintaining its productivity and health.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project,	O-46	LG198 (NLG12)	This section describes goals for rangeland improvements. There are a number of goals that may be in conflict with the standards for rangeland health.	The commenter does not identify which goals may be "in conflict with the standards for rangeland health." The BLM declines to modify this section of	

## Livestock Grazing

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Center for Native Ecosystems			We recommend that this be reworded to indicate that all the goals and subsequent range improvement projects be consistent with meeting the standards for rangeland health. The argument for this suggested language change is that lands converted to maximize forage production are highly likely to lack the structure and function needed for native wildlife.	the document as requested, as the goal of meeting the Utah Rangeland Health Standards is already established for all alternatives in Table 2.1.6 (Forage – All Localities) under the subsection entitled Management Action Common to All Alternatives in the PRMP/FEIS.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG199 (NLG13)	We recommend that the final RMP include the means for incorporating additional ecology-based methods into decisions on stocking levels and seasons of use for each allotment. Such methods are described in the grazing management recommendations that Wild Utah Project prepared for the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument ( <a href="http://rangenet.org/directory/jonesa/sulrprec/index.html">http://rangenet.org/directory/jonesa/sulrprec/index.html</a> ). These tools include a biologically based GIS tool to more accurately assess allotment grazing capacity based on wildlife habitat function, range productivity, and other ecological needs, as well as an objective method to help determine when grazing is the cause of impaired lands failing to meet the standard.	The BLM has a method in place called “Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health.” This process is updated periodically to remain current with any new information.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG200 (NLG14)	If the grazing AUM allocations described in the table in Appendix L are not based on analysis, then the environmental analysis suggested by the EIS does not reflect the proposed action.	Comment noted.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG201 (NLG15)	There is an obvious alternative missing from the DEIS, what might be called the “Multiple Use Alternative”. We strongly recommend that the Vernal Field Office consider and adopt as preferred an alternative that manages livestock grazing consistent with BLM's multiple use mandate and manage grazing so that rangelands meet rangeland health standards the	The current range of proposed alternatives do meet the requirements of BLM's multiple use mandate as the array of valid uses are all permitted at varying levels under the RMP while protections against and mitigation for impacts to resources are included. The BLM has set meeting the Utah Rangeland Health Standards as found in Table 2.1.6 (Forage –	

## Livestock Grazing

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			productivity and the values of BLM lands will not be permanently impaired.	Common to All) in the PRMP/FEIS.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG202 (NLG16)	We recommend that the environmental analysis use AUMs for an allotment based on the ecological carrying capacity of the allotment and that this same number of AUMs appear on the final grazing permit.	Comment noted.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG291 (NSO4)	We request that BLM provide the public with that analysis which would include current forage productivity for each allotment, which lands are both capable and suitable, and, based on utilization, the forage that can be allocated to livestock under this alternative. The DEIS does not indicate that such analysis has been conducted.	The PRMP/FEIS is a programmatic level document that establishes general management practices on a landscape level. Subsequent NEPA documents and site-/resource-specific plans developed under the umbrella of the PRMP address individual allotments.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	LG80 (NAT14)	We recommend the following language for the preferred alternative:  “livestock grazing would be allowed in both quantity and timing that would ensure that for rangelands meeting rangeland health standards, those standards are continued to be met and for lands where standards are not now met, grazing use be changed to ensure that as rapidly as is practical, rangeland standards be met.”	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project,	O-46	LG81 (NAT15)	We recommend that the plan prepare a drought response plan that establishes the reserve/resilience needed during the time of drought, methods to predict	The Fire, Drought, and Natural Disasters subsection of Table 2.1.1 in the PRMP/FEIS (Management Common to All Alternatives) addresses	

## Livestock Grazing

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Center for Native Ecosystems			<p>prior to cattle on the range a drought, reductions in use in the first year where precipitation is less than 2" of normal, range capacity be reduced based on forage production during the drought period, and recovery ensure stocking levels are reduced until the range is recovered.</p>	<p>management actions to be taken with regards to drought on BLM lands within the Vernal Field Office. After coordination with affected permittees temporary reductions in authorized use would be used to mitigate grazing impacts during drought conditions on an allotment specific basis. This direction is in conformance with BLM policy as stated in Washington Office IM 2003-074 and BLM regulations at 43 CFR 4110.3-2.</p> <p>The severity of drought is affected by many factors including the amount and timing of precipitation, temperatures and conditions of the rangeland. Precipitation events can also be very sporadic so production on one allotment or even within one allotment may be drastically different than on an adjacent allotment or between areas within an allotment. Precipitation levels and drought indices can be used to help identify broad areas that may be affected by drought but may not be accurate at the allotment level. For these reason drought restrictions on a planning wide basis would not be appropriate and would not comply with BLM direction.</p> <p>BLM regulations, (43 CFR 4110.3-2, Decreasing permitted use) provide for the suspension of use on a temporary basis, as needed, to protect the rangeland resources from grazing impacts during drought periods. Allotment closures are also provided for in both the regulations and the DRMP when soil, vegetation or other resources on the public lands require immediate protection due to drought. Coordination and consultation with the</p>	

### Livestock Grazing

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				affected permittees is also a requirement of the regulations and can only be accomplished on an allotment specific basis.	

# Lands and Realty

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
State of Utah	G-1	LR16	The State of Utah requests that language be added to the final PRMP/EIS that is broad enough to cover both scenarios for land exchange between the BLM and the Trust Lands Administration (TLA) without having to do plan amendments.	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the PRMP/EIS.	
State of Utah	G-1	LR16A	In this regard, the state recommends the BLM evaluate areas "classroom" of land, such as the following: lands the BLM would never consider available for exchange, such as historic sites or special land formations. TLA lands the BLM would like to acquire for consolidation of management purposes, such as lands in Wilderness Study areas, or certain riparian riparian areas, areas the BLM would like to dispose of the various reasons, such as areas BLM parcels surrounded by TLA or fee lands, and all other lands, which should be considered available for exchange between these governmental agencies. These various classes should be broadly defined so that when the time comes to consider an exchange, the risk/step involving consideration of the public interest is considered accomplished and no plan amendment is thereafter required.	Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS outlines general categories of land or situations in which land exchanges would be considered under the RMP.  There is always the opportunity of the State to have a land exchange done legislatively, which would not have to adhere to the RMP criteria, but it is hoped that BLM would have input into the process proposed for exchange and acquisition.	
State of Utah	G-1	LR17	Land exchange/acquisition actions common to all alternatives (32-3-15) should include an additional consideration. Lands with critical habitat values for big game and sensitive, threatened, and endangered wildlife species should only be considered for disposal or exchange after wildlife objectives are worked out among USFWS and the parties to the exchange.	Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS under the subsection entitled Management Actions Common to All Alternatives, note that lands containing T&E species habitat would be retained in federal ownership. Table 2.1.7 also identifies that programs may be considered for exchange, but the agency BLM would consult with the T&E habitat in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.	
Duchesne County	G-9	LR1	No lands acquired through land lease adjustments would be classified or opened for agricultural entry or leasing in the RMP planning area.  At a minimum, Duchesne County would request the addition of the bolded phrase into this sentence. However, Duchesne County questions whether such restrictions should be imposed across the board.	The suggested wording change has been made in Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS under the subsection entitled Land Tenure Adjustments (E,TA).	<b>X</b>
Duchesne County	G-9	LR2	Duchesne County requests that the Land Tenure Adjustments and Exchange/Acquisition policies of the RMP be revised to be consistent with Duchesne County policies, which are as follows:  Whereas more than fifty percent of Duchesne County consists of public lands managed by federal and state agencies, further loss of private property will result in a diminution of the economic base and cultural values. It is the position of Duchesne County that:  a. Private property shall be protected from coerced acquisition by federal, state and local governments;  b. The County shall be compensated for loss of private lands or tax revenues due to land exchange;  c. Private lands shall not be converted to state or federal ownership in order to compensate for government activities outside of Duchesne County;  d. Any conversion from private property to public lands shall result in no net loss of private property. No net loss shall be measured both in terms of acreage and fair market value; and  e. A private property owner has a right to dispose of or exchange property as he/she sees fit within applicable law.	The Land Tenure Adjustments listed in Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS and Exchange/Acquisition policies listed in the same table do not conflict with the essence of Duchesne County policies as stated in the comment and do not preclude the County's maintenance of those policies. BLM is only interested in acquiring private property from willing sellers.	
Duchesne County	G-9	LR2A	Duchesne County requests that the Land Tenure Adjustment policies listed on Page 3-15 and the Exchange/Acquisition policies on Page 2-16 and 2-17 of the RMP be revised to be consistent with the above Duchesne County policies.	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the PRMP/EIS.  The BLM is aware that there are specific County and State plan decisions relevant to aspects of public land management that we decline from, and independent of, Federal law. However, the BLM is bound by Federal law. The FLPMA requires that the development of an RMP for public lands shall be coordinated and consistent with County plans, to the maximum extent possible by law, and furthermore stresses Federal and non-Federal government plans be flexible to the extent practical (FLPMA, Title 4, Sec. 202 (j)(5)). As a consequence, where State and local plans conflict with Federal law there will be an inconsistency that cannot be resolved or reconciled.  Thus, while County and Federal planning processes, under FLPMA, are required to be an integrated and consistent as practical, the Federal agency planning process is not bound by or subject to County plans, planning processes, or planning situations. The BLM will identify those conflicts with the FLPMA, so that the State and local governments have a complete understanding of the impact of the RMP on State and local management options. A consistency review of the RMP with the State and County Master Plans is included in Chapter 5.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR10	The County objects to Alternative A under "Withdrawals." This alternative results a continuing attitude and intent to hold and manage old BWS's and closed proposed wilderness areas under a non-regiment management standard, which was outlined under the April, 2000 Wilderness Reclamation Agreement. As the strategy figure for the BWS should be revised. As an example it appears that 125 acres per mile was used to calculate the acreage withdrawal for the White River BWS designation. This is incorrect as the acre and the area to be withdrawn should reflect line of sight up to 15-mile, not to exceed 200 acres per mile. Additionally, here it propose to withdraw 11,200 acres on the Lower Green for ACEC.  As per our previous comments, ACEC's are created to protect resources from irreparable damage not to manage for non-impairment.	Comment noted.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR11	On the Figure 4 map, the area withdrawn indicated appears to be much greater than 5,048 acres. Additionally the proposed withdrawal is for localities interests, which is not indicated on Figure 5.	Figure 8 illustrates both existing and proposed withdrawals. Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS, reflects only proposed withdrawals, there would be no change to existing withdrawals. It is unclear where the commenter obtained the 5,048 acre figure.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR12	State  "Access should be closed or restricted"  Replace with:  "No solutions when BLM is not required to grant a right-of-way pursuant to law or regulation, BLM can close or limit access. BLM cannot deny access to or holdings or be treated to another right."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the PRMP/EIS.	

# Lands and Realty

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
UBAOG	G-22	LR12A	The action vests BLM's authority and is limited to situations when BLM issues a Title V right of way and there is no other legal basis to require BLM's grant access, e.g. telecommunications or pipeline rights of way.	BLM does not deny access to holdings when there is no other access. BLM also does not deny access if related to another right.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR3	The RMP/EIS states, "In case or more of the above criteria are not met, proposed land ownership changes outside of designated transfer areas would not be approved or would require a plan amendment."  Date:  "If one or more of the above criteria are not met"  Add after "amendment"  "unless it was determined to be in the best interests of the affected landowners and in the public interest as well."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/EIS.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR34	All acreage figures for the WFR should be rounded. As an example it appears that 320 acres per mile was used to calculate the average withdrawal for the White River WFR designation. This is closer to the A-1 and the acres to be withdrawn should reflect line of sight as to 1/10 mile not rounded 320 acres per mile. Additionally, here is a proposal to withdraw 1,100 acres on the Lower Green for AGCC.	The acreage calculation used to determine areas of withdrawal along the White River and other rivers was calculated based upon the maximum allotment withdrawal of 320 acres per mile. At the programmatic level represented by the RMP, such assumptions are appropriate for general management considerations, and line of sight evaluations will be made on a case-by-case basis as the need arises.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR3A	As per our previous comments, ACECs are created to protect resources from irreparable damage not in manage for risk impairment.  As written, the LTA criteria is too limiting and prescriptive. LTA standards should also consider the interests of local governments, both in terms of land management and protecting the local tax base.	The Local Tenure Acquisition (LTA) criteria contained in the RMP were prepared to be consistent with LMAPs and to achieve the overall management goals of the Vernal Field Office (VFO). Under LMAPs, the VFO notifies government entities with zoning or other land use management jurisdiction over the general geographic area within which adjustments would take place such that those entities may coordinate the exchange with their policies.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR4	"No lands would be classified or opened for agricultural entry or leasing in the RMP planning area." If the RMP plans to authorize land exchanges, it is unreasonable to preclude agricultural entry.	See comment response L21.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR5	The Uintah County General Plan is in direct conflict with removal of desert land entry status (Protestant Act). Acquired land should be governed by the same as other public lands. Strike the provision.	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/EIS.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR6	In the last sentence, the stated acreage of 26,402 does not match the acreage stated on Figure 6, which states 24,021 acres. There should be a table developed which lists these facts by their location as it is not possible to determine from the map which facts there are.	Table 2.1.7.7 Lands and Realty Management of the RMP/EIS under the substitution entitled (Chowdhury) has been revised to match the acreage stated on Figure 6. Specific acres of land suitable for disposal will be identified at the time a specific disposal or exchange is proposed, and the potential impacts of that disposal or exchange will be assessed through site-specific NEPA processes and documents.	X
UBAOG	G-22	LR7	Non-federal lands to be acquired through both Bureau and public-related exchanges must have at least one of the following characteristics:  Add after "exchanges must"  "be in the public interest and have at least one of the following characteristics"  BLM does not recognize efficiency as a criterion for land acquisition; instead it must be in the public interest.	Table 2.1.7.7 Lands and Realty Management of the RMP/EIS under the substitution entitled Exchanges/Acquisitions has been revised as suggested.	X
UBAOG	G-22	LR8	The section provides for acquisition of easements for public access to approximately 70,700 acres of public lands. Chapter 4 fails to analyze the impacts of such acquisitions. Furthermore, more specific descriptions should be made with respect to the location, size, and purpose of such acquisitions.	The specific locations of individual access routes, and therefore acquisitions, are not known at this time and are not required to be identified or evaluated within the RMP. The acreage identified within the RMP is a rough estimate of the total area needed for the easements and is not specific to a particular route or access corridor. The potential impacts of such acquisitions and related uses will be analyzed and discussed in the NEPA documents prepared in advance of the acquisition and implementation of the intended management actions.	
UBAOG	G-22	LR9	"Hobby Creek drainage, White River, Jackson Creek, Warner Creek, Allen Creek, Reed Mountain, West Mountain-South Pine Creek, Spring Creek, New Mile, Red Mountain East and West, and Moon Shive areas." The emphasis on acquiring easements lacks of any discussion of public road and R/C 2471 rights of way.	In the Development of Planning Criteria, it was identified that the RMP will not address R/C2471 issues. However, if in the course of trying to establish easements, BLM finds that a county claims a public road to where BLM desires to acquire access to, then BLM would work with the county to ensure that public access is indeed in place prior to proceeding with an agreement.	
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	LR14	The Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation (Ute Tribe) has previously informed the Vernal Field Office of the BLM of the need to have the RMP and EIS for the Vernal Field Office discuss the line relating to access to the surface estate of the Ute Tribe. Despite these previous requests, the RMP is completely silent concerning surface access to BLM lands. The Ute Tribe requires acknowledgment of its rights as a surface owner within the area of the RMP. Failure to set forth these rights within the text of the RMP will render the document incomplete and inadequate.	Acreage under jurisdiction of the Ute Tribe are included in Table 1.1; however, language has been added to Section 1.4.1 of the RMP/EIS clarifying the role of the Ute Tribe as holder of surface estate within the area to be managed through the RMP.  See comment response L137.	X
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	LR15	The RMP on pages 4-27 to 4-29 states that the BLM would pursue acquisition of Indian trust lands under Alternatives A and C, whereas under Alternative B only administrative access to Indian trust lands would be pursued. The Ute Tribe prefers Alternative A or C in which land exchange would be pursued. We are also considering a land exchange proposed by the State for the State's minerals south of Township 13 South.	Comment none.	
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray	G-30	LR37	The Ute Tribe is a Cooperating Agency in the revision of the RMP. Despite this status, the Ute Tribe does not believe that it concerns about land use affecting that lands have been addressed in the RMP process. As the owner or administrator of much of the surface area within the planning area, the Ute Tribe is entitled to comment on any right-of-way or other surface use of those lands. The Ute Tribe also requested to ensure the proper and efficient development of those resources, while protecting the interests of the Ute Tribe and its members, their land management processes that are consistent with the special status of that lands. The Ute Tribe again requests that the RMP include a clear acknowledgment of the rights of the Ute Tribe to manage access to those lands, and a discussion of the process by which the Ute Tribe and the BLM will cooperate in the management of the respective trust lands.	The following language has been added to Section 1.4.1 of the RMP/EIS:  "Discussions and actions of the RMP only fully apply to BLM lands. In cases of split estate lands, such as lands within the planning area that are split between the BLM and the Ute Tribe, actions affecting the surface must be coordinated with the surface owner. Understanding contractor or lands not owned or partly administered by the BLM are subject to the same regulations, conditions, and process of the relevant land management agency or other agencies."	X

## Lands and Realty

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Reservation					
PacifiCorp	O-7	LR23 (NLR1)	According to the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook in 1001-1, decisions made for Lands and Realty pertaining to right-of-way corridors need to identify "right-of-way corridors, avoidance areas, exclusion areas, and any general terms and conditions that may apply."	See Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS under the subsection entitled Transportation/Utility Corridors for overall management decisions relative to right-of-way corridors.	
PacifiCorp	O-7	LR24 (NLR2)	The plan should identify resources of site-specific rights-of-way grants and authorizations.	The final EIS/EIS in a programmatic planning document. The identification of site-specific resources of rights-of-way, grants, and authorizations are beyond the scope of this document. Site-specific rights-of-way resources, grants, and authorizations would be analyzed and identified in site-specific NEPA documents and processes.	
PacifiCorp	O-7	LR25 (NLR3)	The BLM should consult with parties to emergency agreements or MOUs relating to color identification of use, and the Western Utility Group must be consulted when developing decisions affecting utility use.	As identified in Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS under the subsection entitled Transportation/Utility Corridors, the BLM acknowledges existing utilities rights-of-way, including the Western Utility Group update to the Western Regional Corridor Study, and would designate additional corridors in coordination with existing corridors, subject to physical barriers and sensitive resource values.	
PacifiCorp	O-7	LR26 (NLR4)	As documented in the Pre-Plan Analysis, one of the main planning issues identified for the RMP address future energy needs stating "community growth and development and increased use of public lands dictate the update of many goals and objectives in lands and reactivity management portion of the RMP. The planning effort will ensure that the following are appropriately addressed: transportation and utility rights-of-way corridors (including avoidance and exclusion areas); specific land use authorizations/permissions determined to be appropriate in meeting specific resource goals and objectives; access needs." PacifiCorp was unable to find in the RMP the section(s) where the above-mentioned items were addressed regarding existing utility rights-of-way corridors and potential new utility corridors and urge the final RMP to appropriately address these issues.	Existing and future rights-of-way for utilities and other facilities are discussed in Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS under the subsection entitled Transportation/Utility Corridors and illustrated in Figure 5.	
Duchesne County Water Conservancy District	O-10	LR36 (SO-H)	As the Duchesne County General Plan has a "no net loss" policy, both in regard to amount of acreage and fair market value, DOWCD would like the Land Tenure Adjustment policies listed on Page 2-15 and the Exchange/Participation policies on Page 2-16 and 2-17 of the RMP to be revised as necessary to be consistent with the Duchesne County General Plan policies.	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the PRMP/EIS.  See comment responses LR2 and LR2A.	
IPAMS	O-14	LR13 (LLR-1) (JLR-5)	Lands managed by the State of Utah Division of Wildlife Resources have also not been accurately portrayed within Figure 1 (Land Ownership) of the RMP. The School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) website contains an accurate map of these lands within the planning area. Alternatively, a map can be obtained directly from the Division. These lands need to be accurately portrayed because of development restrictions inherent to them.	Figure 1 has been updated to reflect the State of Utah's land ownership as indicated on maps obtained from the SITLA website.	X
Lexco	O-24	LR13 (LLR-1) (JLR-5)	Lands managed by the State of Utah Division of Wildlife Resources have also not been accurately portrayed within Figure 1 (Land Ownership) of the RMP. The School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) website contains an accurate map of these lands within the planning area. Alternatively, a map can be obtained directly from the Division. These lands need to be accurately portrayed because of development restrictions inherent to them.	Figure 1 has been updated to reflect the State of Utah's land ownership as indicated on maps obtained from the SITLA website.	X
Westport Oil and Gas Company	O-28	LR13 (LLR-1) (JLR-5)	Lands managed by the State of Utah Division of Wildlife Resources have also not been accurately portrayed within Figure 1 (Land Ownership) of the RMP. The School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) website contains an accurate map of these lands within the planning area. Alternatively, a map can be obtained directly from the Division. These lands need to be accurately portrayed because of development restrictions inherent to them.	Figure 1 has been updated to reflect the State of Utah's land ownership as indicated on maps obtained from the SITLA website.	X
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR27 (R-LR1)	"Active lands that would enhance management objectives of this RMP or dispose of lands to resolve unintentional trespasses."	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the PRMP/EIS.	
Vermillion Ranch Limited	O-33	LR27A (R-LR1)	There are a few cases in the planning area of long-standing unintentional trespasses where settlers have given by fee lands on land that is actually owned by the United States. The RMP needs to provide for disposal of these lands to resolve unintentional trespasses.	Unintentional trespasses is addressed in Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/EIS under the subsection entitled Trespasses Resolution.	

## Lands and Realty

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Partnership					
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR28 (R-LR2)	<small>In Utah, the State and Institutional Trust Lands Administration ("SITLTA") administers four sections out of each township and enjoys rights of access to develop these lands. State of Utah vs. rel. Cedar Corp. v. Archuleta, 487 F. Supp. 855 (D. Ut. 1975).</small>	<small>Comment noted.</small>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR29 (R-LR3)	<small>Add the boxed language to the following sentence:  "If one or more of the above criteria are not met, proposed land ownership changes outside of designated transfer areas would not be approved or would require a plan amendment unless it was determined to be in the best interests of the affected landowners and in the public..."</small>	<small>The proposed changes have been implemented as suggested.</small>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR29A (R-LR3)	<small>As written, the land lease adjustment (LTA) criteria are too limiting and prescriptive. LTA standards should also consider the interests of local and tribal governments, both in terms of land management and protecting the local tax base.</small>	<small>See comment response LR2A.</small>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR30 (R-LR4)	<small>"No lands would be classified or opened for agricultural entry or leasing in the RMP planning area, unless consistent with the proposed land exchange or sale."</small>	<small>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following: The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate. The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion. The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect. The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences. The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FIS.</small>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR30A (R-LR4)	<small>If the RMP plans to authorize land exchanges, it should allow agricultural entry consistent with the proposed land exchange. It is not clear what kind of leasing is meant here. Generally, BLM will withdraw the land to preclude mineral entries or lease sales that are inconsistent with land exchanges.</small>	<small>See comment response LR1.</small>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR31 (R-LR5)	<small>FLPMA criteria for land exchanges differ from the criteria in the RMP. 43 U.S.C. §1716 for non-federal land exchanges to be acquired through both BLM and public-landed exchanges.</small>	<small>The comment does not indicate how the commenter believes the criteria differ from or are otherwise inconsistent with FLPMA. The VFC developed the language of the RMP based upon standard agency policy, which conforms to the mandates of FLPMA regarding land exchanges and acquisitions.</small>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR31A (R-LR5)	<small>These land exchanges should also be consistent with local government and tribal land use plans.</small>	<small>See comment response LR2A.</small>	
Vermillion Ranch Limited	O-33	LR32 (R-LR6)	<small>BLM should not be in the business of acquiring land solely for big game habitat due to adverse impacts on the local tax base.</small>	<small>Comment noted.</small>	

## Lands and Realty

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Partnership					
Vermillion Ranch Limited Partnership	O-33	LR33	<p>Add the following language as a requirement of land exchange:</p> <p>"The land exchange is consistent with state, local, government, and tribal plans."</p>	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>The BLM is required to engage in land exchange in accordance with FLMRA, not with non-federal parties. The BLM is, however, required to notify government entities that have zoning or other land use regulatory jurisdiction within the geographical area of the exchange/partition, which the BLM does as a matter of standard procedure not dictated by the prescriptions of the BLM.</p> <p>See comment response LR24.</p>	
Outdoor Industry Association	O-35	LR22 (JLR-5)	<p>BLM has a mandate to manage for multiple uses. In affording access to as much as 30% of the area to oil and gas leasing and 91% to OHV use, BLM has recognized two primary uses and benefits. In keeping with agency mission, mandate and practice, BLM must also recognize the user opportunities and benefits related to active outdoor recreation present in the Vermilion FPO area.</p>	<p>See Table 2.1.13 (Discussion Resources) as well as 3.10, and 4.10 of the PRMP/FEIS, for management alternatives related to recreation within the FPO.</p>	
Center for Native Ecosystems	O-38	LR19 (JLR-2)	<p>Public Lands supporting special status species should be retained. BLM is obligated to retain habitat for special status species.</p>	<p>See comment response LR17.</p>	
Center for Native Ecosystems	O-38	LR20 (JLR-2)	<p>Page 4.2 clarifies that cultural resource clearance is required before disposal of land; the final RMP should clarify that lands should be cleared for special status species prior to serious consideration of disposal as well.</p>	<p>The BLM is required to prepare a NEPA document for all releases of land disposal prior to the actual disposal. The analysis conducted as part of the preparation of that document would include assessments of the presence/absence of and potential impact upon special status species and other resources.</p>	
Center for Native Ecosystems	O-38	LR21 (JLR-4)	<p>Please see and consider the use of federal lands. The BLM agrees to work off areas that have been released, but in reality the agency still has the responsibility to ensure compliance with ESA, CWA, etc. with other laws/regulations. Do not expressly protect these resources. The BLM should formulate plan for the responsible management of an individual, whether or not they occur in leased areas. Leases expire, after all. It is inconceivable that the very best "Acquiescent Acceptor" held in "All resource actions recognize valid existing rights." The RMP should clarify that lease rights are subject to the ESA, CWA and CWA, etc.</p>	<p>The acquisition that all resource actions recognize valid existing rights acknowledges that new management actions implemented through the RMP do not apply retroactively to existing leases. That is, existing leases are not subject to new restrictions or conditions. However, the BLM has always reserved and will continue to reserve the right to implement management actions when incompatible or prohibited activities affect existing federal law or regulations, regardless of lease regulations. All leases granted after the establishment of the ESA, CWA, CWA, and other federal regulations are subject to the requirements of these laws and regulations.</p>	
Center for Native Ecosystems	O-38	LR35 (JLR-2)	<p>BLM's recent proposal for a shooting range on white-tailed prairie dog colony, with notes that the land could be transferred to City of Denver, see issues for concern.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	
Enduring Resources	O-40	LR18 (JLR-1)	<p>DEIS says "This RMP recognizes existing right of way corridors, and would designate additional corridors subject to physical barriers and sensitive resource values." What are "sensitive resource values"?</p>	<p>Sensitive resource values such things as T&amp;E species, cultural and paleontological resources, sensitive soils, riparian areas, areas of high VNM classification, etc.</p> <p>Language has been added to Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) of the PRMP/FEIS under the subsection entitled Transportation/Utility Corridors to read as follows:</p> <p>"Sensitive resource values would include, but are not limited to, threatened and endangered species habitat, cultural and paleontological resources, sensitive soils, riparian areas, areas possessing high scenic quality, and areas of critical environmental concern."</p>	X

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
State of Utah	G-1	ME22	The DEIS/RMP fails to analyze the impacts on oil & gas development [of special designations] and comply with EPCA and IMs directing incorporation of EPCA into RMPs. It requires that management restriction be the least restrictive necessary to protect documented and supportable needs.	The integration of EPCA into the RMP is discussed in Section 1.12. EPCA does not prohibit the use of special designations or multiple overlapping prescriptions, but requires that these prescriptions are the minimum necessary to maintain sustained yield. The BLM believes it has met this mandate and has only identified special designations where such designations are necessary.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME69	In general, the DRMP and the associated mineral report correctly identify the occurrence of the energy and mineral commodities in the VFO planning area, but significantly underrate the oil and gas development potential of the planning area. This failure to properly assess the potential for oil and gas development leads to a skewed analysis of impacts from other activities on these resources of the state.	Section 4.1.2 presents information about the [RFD] assumptions. Tables 4-1 through 4-4 shows information about potential development over the life of the plan. Section 4.8.2 presents information about mineral's impacts under alternatives.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME70	Although the RFD appears to have been developed using generally accepted technical principles, the forecast for development is conservative to the point of being painfully low based upon the anticipated drilling proposals that have been submitted by industry to date. The RMP is intended to last 15-20 years, allowing only about 300 wells on average per year to be drilled under the maximum RFD under Alternative B. The current rate of filing for drilling permits statewide is running about 25% ahead of 2004, giving a potential of 1,375 permits statewide for 2005. The VFO will continue to be the focus of 80-85% of this activity, bringing a possible total of 1,170 new drilling applications for the VFO in 2005. Given this projection, the maximum RFD of roughly 6,500 wells under Alternative B could be permitted within the next 5.5	See comment response ME7.	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			years. Further, this does not account for any accelerated industry activity with higher oil and gas prices, or improved and enhanced recovery.		
State of Utah	G-1	ME71	Oil and gas are not really treated as natural resources in this document, instead, the development of oil and gas is viewed as a negative impact to other natural resources. This comes to light in the Socioeconomics section where there is no mention of the costs imposed on oil and gas development as a result of restrictions due to protection of other resources such as visual, recreation, wildlife, etc. All time delays, access restrictions, and mitigation measures cost money – and ultimately could curtail oil and gas development. This reality is not addressed in the document.	See comment response ME65.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME73	The DRMP implies that only those lands that fall along the course of known gilsonite veins, as depicted on the minerals and energy maps, would be available for prospecting and leasing even though the preferred alternative allows for prospecting and leasing of gilsonite veins not shown on the DRMP maps. For clarification, the maps should show a larger contiguous block of lands which includes all known gilsonite leasing areas that are open to gilsonite prospecting and leasing and not just the veins which may be visible on the surface.	See comment response ME25.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME74	There is increasing interest in the development of tar sands and oil shale deposits as changing demands and technology are elevating the importance of this resource. Given the potential economic value of these resources and their known presence in the VFO, placing a high priority on these commodities in the final RMP is warranted.	All decisions related to oil shale and tar sands leasing in this PRMP/FEIS are being deferred to the ongoing PEIS for Oil Shale and Tar Sands Leasing. For more information please see Section 1.10.9.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME75	There is considerable renewed interest in reopening the White River Mine and the use of existing stockpiles	See comment response ME74.	

## Minerals and Energy

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			<p>as well as in reopening the tar sands mine and plant near Vernal. Given that these commodities require large acreage for development and given that the extraction technique will create large areas of surface disturbance, it would be prudent to consider how the development of these resources would impact other management prescriptions. While it is likely that development of oil shale resources of the Uinta Basin will take place over many decades, it is important to envision how this development might proceed and ensure that management impediments on this resource are not included in the RMP without proper attention given to the impacts to future development.</p>		
State of Utah	G-1	ME76	<p>The RMP/DEIS should incorporate the information gathered during the BLM's 2001 and 2005 calls for information and comments on coal resources in the VFO. The State of Utah will have more comments to provide once this information on coal resources has been incorporated into the document and has been reviewed.</p>	<p>The Vernal Field Office put out a call for information and comments on coal resources in a Federal Register notice dated March 8, 2005. No comments were received.</p>	
State of Utah	G-1	ME77	<p>State of Utah plans, as outlined by state law, look for certain analysis to be performed by the BLM as part of its analysis of the impacts of the management prescriptions proposed as part of the RMP. For example, Utah Code Section 63-38d-401(8)(m)(D) through (H) require the BLM to consider all restrictions and moratoria on mineral exploration or production to determine whether the restrictions are still necessary, or can be modified or eliminated. BLM is asked to demonstrate that any restrictions proposed are the least restrictive necessary, and is asked to analyze whether any "no-surface occupancy" restrictions effectively sterilize fluid minerals and gases under the area because directional drilling is not feasible from an economic, ecological, or engineering standpoint. The</p>	<p>See comment response ME22.</p>	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			state cannot locate any such analyses in the draft RMP, and would ask the BLM to work with the state to insure that such analyses are conducted prior to the FEIS for the plan.		
State of Utah	G-1	ME78	The State of Utah encourages the BLM to adopt a maximum development scenario.	Comment noted.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME79	The BLM needs to establish and define their monitoring program that will ensure compliance on any level of total surface disturbance related to deer and elk winter ranges.	Comment noted.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME80	Please, clarify the analysis for spacing patterns on oil and gas development to ensure accurate assessment of projected impacts. Table 4.1 on page 4-3 lists disturbance levels, but does not specify the spacing level used in the analysis. Analysis for Section 4.15 and 4.19 assumes a 160-acre spacing pattern for wells. Current leases allow for 40-acre spacing in some fields. Use of the 160-acre spacing level for analysis purposes may lead to an underestimation of the impacts to wildlife from disturbances and habitat fragmentation, which would occur in areas under a more intense spacing order. Allowable spacing under all alternatives should be identified, and analyses must be consistent with the actual and proposed spacing patterns.	Establishing spacing for oil and gas development is beyond the scope of the RMP since spacing is reflective of reservoir parameters. BLM establishes spacing for Federal and Indian trust mineral estate utilizing the processes of the State of Utah Board of Oil, Gas, and Mining in reaction to requests submitted by industry.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME81	The stipulation regarding no surface disturbing activities on crucial elk calving and deer fawning habitat from May 15-June 30 cannot be found in the management common to all section or in Appendix K. Please, clarify that this timing restriction be will be implemented in all alternatives and list it in Section 2.4.18.2.8	Table 2.1.26 (Wildlife and Fisheries Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS) under the subsection entitled Habitat Protection states:  "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."	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
State of Utah	G-1	ME82	The State of Utah favors the option of granting a variance to seasonal stipulations related to wildlife, as long as the UDWR is consulted on a case-by-case basis as each variance is considered, and that the UDWR concurs with each variance before it is granted. If variances are granted, a monitoring program must be in place to assess cause and effect from an overall herd unit basis.	Comment noted.	
State of Utah	G-1	ME83	If the concern with wells is the total amount of surface disturbance allowed, has the BLM considered using well pads rather than the term "wells" to allow for possible additional drilling of multiple wells from the same pad, if it is economically feasible to do so.	See comment responses ME47, ME88, ME173 and ME174.	
Regional Council on Workforce Services, Uintah Basin	G-3	ME89 (ME-A)	We are concerned that the RMP does not fully comply with the Energy and Policy Conservation Act, which requires governmental entities to analyze restraints and impediments to energy development, and remove them if unnecessary.	See comment response ME22.	
Vernal Area Chamber of Commerce	G-4	ME89 (ME-A)	We are concerned that the RMP does not fully comply with the Energy and Policy Conservation Act, which requires governmental entities to analyze restraints and impediments to energy development, and remove them if unnecessary.	See comment response ME22.	
Duchesne County	G-9	ME10	Duchesne County supports Alternative B for all types of mineral and energy use. This alternative best complies with the Duchesne County General Plan policies.  Alternative B also appears to best comply with Executive Order 13212, BLM Instruction Memorandum 2003-233 and the Energy Policy and Conservation Act. Duchesne County understands these documents require that access to public lands for energy exploration and development not be unduly restricted.	Comment noted.	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			President Bush has made it clear that new RMP's should eliminate impediments to energy development and not create new ones. Alternative B should be selected, as the supply of oil, natural gas and other energy sources, at reasonable prices, is critical to the economy of our nation.		
Duchesne County	G-9	ME31	The analysis concludes that Alternative C would reduce long-term adverse impacts on the Oil, Gas and CBM resources "by ensuring that the resource was available to support a viable, long-term mineral industry." This conclusion is based on the assumption that minerals that cannot be used today could be used in the future. However, there is no guarantee that lands deemed unsuitable for such use under Alternative C today will ever be made available for future resource extraction, that other sources of energy may be developed and the National immediate energy need.	Section 4.8.2.1.3.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to delete the statement in question.	X
Duchesne County	G-9	ME31A	The statements fail to consider EPCA directions requiring impediments to energy development be reduced and management restrictions be the least restrictive.	See comment response ME22.	
Duchesne County	G-9	ME34	If Alternative C would close 48,801 acres to oil and gas leasing, how can that acreage be included in the total number of acres available for oil and gas leasing in Table 4.8.1?	The acreage closed to oil and gas leasing under Alternative C is included in the "Closed to Leasing" line item in Table 4.8.1, not in the acreage open to leasing under standard, timing and controlled surface use, or no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations.	
Duchesne County	G-9	ME35	In the alternatives there are proposed management prescriptions such as VRM, NSO, and oil and gas closures. If these are for recreational purposes they must be analyzed here. If they are for other resources then they should be removed. As written, when analyzing it is difficult to determine the purpose for the NSO's, etc. All actions proposed for recreation should	See Table 2.1.3 (Recreation Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS.  See Table 2.1.14 (Recreation – Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)) in the PRMP/FEIS.	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			be limited to management of recreation not other resources.	<p>See Table 2.1.18 (Special Designations – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in the PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>See Table 2.1.19 (Special Designations – Wild and Scenic Rivers (SWR)) in the PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>See Table 2.1.20 (Special Designations – Wilderness Study Areas (WSA)) in the PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>See Table 2.1.24 (Visual Resource Management) in the PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>Management decisions related to NSO and oil and gas closure are primarily related to special designations, special status species and wildlife decisions, and VRM classification. NSO stipulations and oil and gas closures may overlap with areas within which recreation is anticipated, but are not implemented specifically for the purpose of recreation.</p>	
Duchesne County	G-9	ME42	The statement that none of the alternatives would result in more than a 0.4% net decrease in the number of predicted oil and gas wells is deceiving. Based on the information in Tables 4.8.2, 4.8.3, 4.8.4 and 4.8.5, Alternatives A, B and C all provide more opportunity for oil and gas well drilling than Alternative D. However, the difference between Alternatives B and C is about 2.5%.	<p>Sections 4.8.3 and 4.8.4 in the PRMP/FEIS have been revised to read:</p> <p>"Under all action alternatives there would be a net increase in the number of predicted oil, gas, and CBM wells as compared to the No Action alternative."</p>	X
Duchesne County	G-9	ME45	This text implies that Alternative B will have substantial impacts and jeopardize plant species when compared to the impacts of Alternative A, yet Tables 4.8.2 and	The small increase in the number of wells between Alternatives A and B is not as important as are the locations of those additional wells. As stated in	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			4.8.3 indicate that Alternative B anticipates only 13 more oil wells, 34 more gas wells and 2 more coal bed methane wells than Alternative A in the vast southern part of the VPA. The alarming text in this paragraph should be toned down.	Section 4.15.2.3.2.1:  “...the increase in mineral and energy development is concentrated in the southern part of the VPA, which would place the Book Cliffs soil endemics at substantial risk and potentially result in jeopardy to listed species and/or the listing of previously candidate or sensitive species as threatened or endangered.”	
Duchesne County	G-9	ME8	This principle should be amended to contain a commitment to process [lease] authorizations in a timely manner. [We] understand there is a growing backlog of authorizations and that private industry has contributed funds in an effort to reduce the backlog. The agency must ensure that it has adequate resources to serve its clientele.	The issue is beyond the scope of the RMP.	
Duchesne County	G-9	ME9	Revise this section as follows:  “...any lands known to contain federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or their proposed or designated critical habitat; and...”	The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:  The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.  The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.  The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.  The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.  The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.	
Duchesne County	G-9	ME9A	A plan of operation should not be required when the species is merely proposed as threatened or	Since proposed species are in jeopardy it is important to treat them in such a way as to not lead	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			endangered.	to the listing of the species. Requiring a plan of operations would be one of the measures to help protect the species from listing.	
National Park Service, Dinosaur National Monument	G-10	ME1	The impact of mineral and energy development on Dinosaur National Monument is not analyzed in the RMP/DEIS. Impacts on the view sheds, soundscape, and night sky of the Monument from mineral and energy development decisions must be addressed.	Appendix K in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to include information of mineral and energy development near Dinosaur National Monument by alternative.  See comment response ME2.	
National Park Service, Dinosaur National Monument	G-10	ME2	Dinosaur National Monument requests "no surface occupancy" (NSO) restrictions of ½-mile adjacent to the Monument for mineral and energy development.	No surface occupancy around the borders of Dinosaur National Monument is provided for under Alternative C. Under Alternatives A and B, surface occupancy is subject to either standard stipulations or timing and controlled surface use (CSU) stipulations.	
Carbon County	G-11	ME90 (ME-B)	It is our contention that it is in the best interest of the local communities as well as our nation for the BLM to adhere to Congressional dictates that require that federal planning create the least impact on the continued reasonable use of renewable and extractive resources in any long term land use plan.	Comment noted.	
Daggett County	G-13	ME13	The Clay Basin and Brown's Park areas should be managed in a way to continue resource development.	Comment noted.	
Wyoming Natural Gas Pipeline Authority	G-14	ME91 (ME-C)	The major transportation/utility corridors are adequately addressed but should allow for future pipeline expansions and additions beyond those anticipated in the scope of the draft document as new discoveries and field extensions encountered, or as technology enhances production. The document should define how the BLM would manage new pipelines that cross or intersect historic trails or monuments.	Table 2.1.7 (Lands and Realty Management) in the PRMP/FEIS under the subsection entitled Transportation/Utility Corridors states that the BLM would designate:  "...additional [utility] corridors subject to physical barriers and sensitive resource values."	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>This table also states that:</p> <p>"...major linear [rights-of-way] meeting [certain] thresholds that are proposed outside of [currently] designated corridors would require a plan amendment."</p> <p>The intersection of historic trails and monuments by future utility corridors would be managed through the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act. The historic resources would be evaluated for their importance under the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, anticipated impacts to them would be identified, and mitigation measures (including avoidance, restoration, etc.) for any identified adverse impacts would be implemented.</p>	
Wyoming Natural Gas Pipeline Authority	G-14	ME92 (ME-D)	The BLM should honor existing rights, contracts and leases purchased under previous management plans.	See comment response ME3.	
Wyoming Natural Gas Pipeline Authority	G-14	ME93 (ME-E)	The WPA believes that lands within the Vernal RMP have the potential to contain large reserves of natural gas and could add to the future energy security of the county.	Comment noted.	
Wyoming Natural Gas Pipeline Authority	G-14	ME94 (ME-F)	Increasing restrictions on existing leases or decreasing lease acreage does not meet the intentions of the National Energy Policy and the Presidential Executive order mandating increasing domestic supply and lessening dependence upon foreign oil.	See comment response ME89.	
USFS—Ashley	G-19	ME60	Much mineral development would occur in watersheds with 303(d) listed streams (impaired water bodies	The commenter failed to identify which water bodies could be impacted. Consequently, the BLM is	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
National Forest			under the Clean Water Act), including those listed for salinity and Total Dissolved Solids. Please clarify how the alternatives accommodate increased minerals management under all alternatives with “erosion, loss of soil productivity, increased runoff, landslides, flooding, and water quality degradation” increasing with increased well development (including potential groundwater impacts) -- and still be consistent with State water quality standards and laws/treaties relating to salinity in the Colorado River.	unable to add clarification to the RMP.	
USFS— Ashley National Forest	G-19	ME60A	Please include relevant mitigation measures and BMPs. These may help prevent “improper road building” (along with the Gold Book already referenced in a previous chapter) and reduce erosion consequences. As the Gold Book is under revision, it would be good to note that the new edition would be incorporated when finalized.	Table 2.1.17 (Soil and Water Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS states that the Gold Book would be complied with under all alternatives and does not specify a version or date of publication for the book. This provides the BLM with the necessary flexibility to adopt revised versions of the document as they are developed.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME14	Continue to meet local and national non-renewable and renewable energy and other public mineral needs. Ensure a viable long-term mineral industry related to energy development while providing reasonable and necessary protections to other resources. "Add following "resources" that are based on science and represent the least restrictive standard to protect the resource."	The commenter’s additional language suggestions for Goals and Objectives are covered in Section 1.11 of the RMP. It states the following:  “The President’s comprehensive National Energy Policy, issued in May 2001, directed the Secretary 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).””	
UBAOG	G-22	ME15	National Energy Policy. 1, 2, & 3 does not give a full summation of the National Energy Policy. Either expand or remove all 3 points. Remove the word "by" and add a period after policy. Rewrite to include all	BLM believes that the RMP is in compliance with the law and all of the directives associated with it. As a programmatic document, the RMP need not restate all policy in its entirety. The RMP references	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			policy and directives and re-analyze all proposed management prescriptions in compliance with the law and directives associated with them.	the general nature of the law.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME16	This section fails to include the requirements in instructional memorandums which directs the integration of EPCA into the Land Use Planning process. It also fails to include provisions of Executive Order 13212 which states that agencies expedite their review of permits or take other action necessary to accelerate the completion of (energy related projects) while maintaining safety, public health, and environmental protections. In addition, this section fails to address the fact that the Vernal Resource Area is a focus area with respect to EPCA.	Integration of EPCA into the PRMP/FEIS is explained in Section 1.12 How Vernal Field Office Considered EPCA Inventory Information and Concerns.  See comment response ME-231.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME17	1st sentence Insert between "applied to leases" and "in the form" "issued after the date of this RMP" 2nd sentence strike "generally reflect the minimum requirements" and replace with "are necessary to protect the resource and would contain provisions/criteria to allow for waiver and modification if warranted."	Section 2.4.8.2.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to read as follows:  "Mitigation of oil and gas impacts developed under the plan and applied to leases issued after the record of decision in the form of stipulations would adhere to BLM's standard format. Stipulations generally reflect the minimum requirements necessary to protect or minimize the impacts to the resource and would contain provisions/criteria to allow for waiver and modification if warranted."	X
UBAOG	G-22	ME17A	BLM cannot lawfully retrofit new terms and conditions into existing leases. Union Oil Co. of Calif. v. Morton, 512 F. 2d 745, 750 (9th Cir. 1975); National Wildlife Federation, et al., 150 IBLA 385 (1999). Nor is it accurate to say that lease stipulations are the minimal requirements to protect the resource.	See comment response ME3.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME18	There are no socioeconomic impacts listed in Actions	Table 2.1.9 (Minerals and Energy Resources) Section 2.4.8.2.1 refers to Management Actions	

## Minerals and Energy

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			Common to All.	Common to All Alternatives, not impacts common to all alternatives. The socioeconomic impacts of proposed management actions under the various alternatives are discussed in Section 4.12 and its subsections and summarized in Table 2.2.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME19	Strike #'s 1 & 2. Part 3809 rules cannot be unilaterally amended to require plans of operation when notice is otherwise all that is required.	Items 1 and 2 are from 43 CFR 3809.11(c). These two items are not unilateral amendments; the finalization of the regulations in January 2001 was preceded by publication of a programmatic EIS and public comment periods for the Draft EIS as well as for the proposed rules.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME20	"The plan would recognize the opportunity for alternative energy development such as wind, solar and geothermal. Individual proposals would be evaluated based on conformance with other program goals and objectives stated in the plan." BLM actively support, the analysis and permitting of such projects.	Comment noted.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME21	An NSO classification for the Pelican Lake area is inappropriate because that would illegally withdraw this land from FLPMA's multiple use mandate without Congressional approval. The area has potential for gas production. FLPMA mandates consistency with the County Plan, which calls for mineral development of areas like this. The FLPMA multiple use mandate requires that you manage for both recreational and mineral values side by side, not that one should exclude the other. After initial development, the presence of a well head in the area would not be intrusive on recreational and other values and uses. The proposal here lacks the analysis required in EPCA, executive order, and other BLM direction.	FLPMA mandates that multiple uses and sustained yield for public lands be considered in management decisions applied to those lands. It does not mandate that all uses occur on all lands. FLPMA also mandates that federal agencies consider the plans of local and adjacent jurisdictional entities and make an effort to be consistent with them where practical.  In addition, the continued management of the 1,020 acre Pelican Lake SRMA as an area of No Surface Occupancy to oil and gas does not preclude industry from drilling into and below the site.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME22	The DEIS/RMP fails to analyze the impacts on oil & gas development [of special designations] and comply with EPCA and IMs directing incorporation of EPCA	The integration of EPCA into the RMP is discussed in Section 1.12. EPCA does not prohibit the use of special designations or multiple overlapping	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			into RMPs. It requires that management restriction be the least restrictive necessary to protect documented and supportable needs.	prescriptions, but requires that these prescriptions are the minimum necessary to maintain sustained yield. The BLM believes it has met this mandate and has only identified special designations where such designations are necessary.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME23	Provide a map for each mineral as you did for oil and gas, and for each alternative A, B, C, D. The maps, as they are, are impossible to read.	<p>The BLM declines to make the suggested wording changes for a variety of reasons including but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>The BLM does not find the suggested changes necessary or appropriate.</p> <p>The suggested wording change does not substantively contribute to or clarify the discussion.</p> <p>The commenter did not provide any rationale why the suggested change is necessary or how the current data and analysis is incorrect.</p> <p>The suggested change expressed personal opinions or preferences.</p> <p>The suggested change had little relevance to the adequacy or accuracy of the RMP/FEIS.</p> <p>However, BLM did review the maps for clarity.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	ME24	It is impossible to find a corresponding classification (combined hydrocarbon areas) on the maps. What are combined hydrocarbon areas; are they the combined areas set forth in figures 11-14? Are they oil shale and tar sands? Do they include oil and gas and coal bed methane? The acreage figures on page 2-7 for open standard lease, open controlled surface and open NSO, don't reconcile with the combination of the other numbers on page 2-7 for the other minerals. In short, the whole Minerals section is confusing when it comes to clear classification of mineral classes' types and	<p>Figures 15-18 in the PRMP/FEIS have been revised to correct the acreage figures and to show Special Tar Sand Area leases.</p> <p>Combined Hydrocarbon areas are the areas designated as Special Tar Sand Areas, which are not shown in Figures 15-18 (can somewhat be implied from leasing decisions). Coal Bed methane natural gas is considered to be part of the oil and gas estate.</p>	X

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			when it comes to acreage figures.	All decisions related to oil shale and tar sands leasing in this PRMP/FEIS are being deferred to the ongoing PEIS for Oil Shale and Tar Sands Leasing. For more information please see Section 1.10.9.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME25	In these alternatives it provides that a certain number of miles would be open for gilsonite leasing and that additional veins located through field study or prospecting, not shown on Figure 15, would be available if such are within open category lands. As described above the method of identifying areas that would be available for prospecting, leasing and development of gilsonite do not properly describe all possible gilsonite occurrence areas. It is our recommendation that a Northwest Southeast rectangle that would encompass all of the potential occurrence area be developed to identify areas for prospecting, leasing and development of gilsonite.	Areas closed to gilsonite leasing were determined based on the analysis of exploration and development impacts to other resources.  Table 2.1.9 (Minerals and Energy Resources) states:  "172 miles or 36,846 acres would be available for prospecting, leasing, and development of gilsonite (additional veins located through field study or prospecting not shown on Figure 15 would also be available if such are within "open" category lands)."	
UBAOG	G-22	ME26	This paragraph fails to mention that these resources are located in an EPCA focus area.	Section 3.8.1.1.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised mineral and energy resources are located in the EPCA focus area.	X
UBAOG	G-22	ME27	As written, increased royalties are listed as a benefit. Local tax base severance tax source and supply sales also increase benefits and are not listed. This statement appears in other resources and should be corrected.	Direct or indirect contributions to local communities from sales, severance taxes, and other royalties are addressed in Section 4.12.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME28	Here it is stated that there is a 19.4% increase in tar sands available for lease for Alternative A as compared to Alternative D. Between Alternative D and Alternative A there is an increase of 34,391 acres or 9% in the total acres of tar sands. The impacts are hidden because the acreages have increased. Percentage of change should be based on the same acres as in no	The section in question actually states that there is a 16% increase in acres open for tar sands leasing under Alternative A over Alternative D. Under Alternative D, 229,076 acres would be open to special tar sands leasing. Under Alternative A, 263,468 acres would be open to special tar sands leasing. This is an increase of 34,392 acres open	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			action to disclose impacts of proposed management prescriptions.	<p>for leasing, which represents approximately 15% of the total acres open under Alternative D, and the percent of increase over Alternative D that Alternative A represents. Acres closed to tar sands leasing under each alternative are irrelevant for the statement in question, which is only discussing acres open to tar sands leasing. Differences in the total acres of tar sands areas under each alternative are also irrelevant for the same reason—the percentage in question is only related to actual acres open for leasing.</p> <p>In addition, all decisions related to oil shale and tar sands leasing in the PRMP/FEIS are being deferred to the ongoing PEIS for Oil Shale and Tar Sands Leasing. For more information please see Section 1.10.9.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	ME29	Figure 15 shows veins open and closed. New veins are unlikely to be open as they would have to lay over, under, or beside the ones indicated! There is no indication of the width of veins shown on Figure 15. As written, new veins would be closed unless they lay under or over those veins identified. It is impossible to determine the location and size of open veins.	<p>See comment response ME 23.</p> <p>Note: Section 4.8.2.1.1.2 discloses the impacts from proposed management to Gilsonite leasing for Alternative A only.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	ME30	The total acres open and closed has increased between Alternative D and Alternative A, thereby hiding the actual impacts. Percentage of change should be based on the same acres as in no action to disclose impacts of proposed management prescriptions.	See comment response ME28.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME31	The analysis concludes that Alternative C would reduce long-term adverse impacts on the Oil, Gas and CBM resources “by ensuring that the resource was available to support a viable, long-term mineral industry.” This conclusion is based on the assumption that minerals	Section 4.8.2.1.3.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to delete the statement in question.	X

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			that cannot be used today could be used in the future. However, there is no guarantee that lands deemed unsuitable for such use under Alternative C today will ever be made available for future resource extraction, that other sources of energy may be developed and the National immediate energy need.		
UBAOG	G-22	ME31A	The statements fail to consider EPCA directions requiring impediments to energy development be reduced and management restrictions be the least restrictive.	See comment response ME22.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME32	Here it is implied that the buffer is in alternatives other than "D" but the alternatives don't reflect that.	See comment response ME33.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME33	Here it is implied that Alternative A contains a 200-foot buffer zone but a check of the alternatives does not list one. Additionally it states that Alternative D does not require the buffer but it does.	The controlled surface use and NSO stipulations related to cultural resources are not related to buffer zones but to restrictions applied to OHV travel in areas of high cultural site density. Buffer zones are not implemented under any alternative. Please, see Section 4.3.2.1.1 for Alternative A.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME34	If Alternative C would close 48,801 acres to oil and gas leasing, how can that acreage be included in the total number of acres available for oil and gas leasing in Table 4.8.1?	The acreage closed to oil and gas leasing under Alternative C is included in the "Closed to Leasing" line item in Table 4.8.1, not in the acreage open to leasing under standard, timing and controlled surface use, or no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME35	In the alternatives there are proposed management prescriptions such as VRM, NSO, and oil and gas closures. If these are for recreational purposes they must be analyzed here. If they are for other resources then they should be removed. As written, when analyzing it is difficult to determine the purpose for the NSO's, etc. All actions proposed for recreation should be limited to management of recreation not other resources.	See Table 2.1.3 (Recreation Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS.  See Table 2.1.14 (Recreation – Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)) in the PRMP/FEIS.  See Table 2.1.18 (Special Designations – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in the	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>See Table 2.1.19 (Special Designations – Wild and Scenic Rivers (SWR)) in the PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>See Table 2.1.20 (Special Designations – Wilderness Study Areas (WSA)) in the PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>See Table 2.1.24 (Visual Resource Management) in the PRMP/FEIS.</p> <p>Management decisions related to NSO and oil and gas closure are primarily related to special designations, special status species and wildlife decisions, and VRM classification. NSO stipulations and oil and gas closures may overlap with areas within which recreation is anticipated, but are not implemented specifically for the purpose of recreation.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	ME36	A map should be included in the draft RMP that shows these areas of 40% slope and the acres of 40% slope calculated for analysis purposes. Such restriction, do to their existence along streams become linear features and become an impediment to developing roads and pipelines. In some cases considerable increase in disturbances to other resources will result when these areas must be circumvented.	Under Alternative A, exceptions and modifications are possible for the prohibition on development on slopes greater than 40% on a case-by-case basis. No such exceptions or modifications would be available under Alternatives C or D. Under alternative B, development on slopes greater than 20% would require an erosion control plan that was approved by the BLM prior to construction. Please, see Appendix K, Fragile Soils/Slopes for a summary of these management alternatives.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME37	Here it states "operators have demonstrated a willingness to comply with spatial and temporal restrictions." Strike this sentence as it is not true. The	Section 4.8.2.7 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to read as follows:	X

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			restrictions have been a point of contention since they were imposed and throughout the RMP process. Such acceptance does not equal an analysis of impacts such as affect on RFD and socio-economics.	“Operators have complied with...”	
UBAOG	G-22	ME38	The draft fails to analyze and disclose the impact of compressing development activity in short periods and the ability of industry to comply.	<p>The possible impacts to minerals activities are discussed in this section.</p> <p>As for ability of industry to comply, the mitigation measures would be reflected as lease stipulations, etc. Industry should be fully aware of what mitigation measures are associated with the lease when it is acquired.</p> <p>Well specific environmental reviews are conducted as applications for permit to drill are received and any site specific impacts based on dense drilling in limited time frames would be addressed at that time. Oil and gas operators are responsible for complying with lease terms and conditions of approval that are attached to approved APD’s.</p>	
UBAOG	G-22	ME39	When reviewing protection of raptors in the guidelines, BMP, Matrix, Appendix K, and here, the ability to modify Raptor Guidelines and Practices is confusing. In Appendix K, modifications are not permitted. Perhaps some wordsmithing would help, as it appears the word modification used in Appendix K stipulation descriptions are the same as discussed here.	All sections in the PRMP/FEIS relating to raptors have been revised or clarified.	X
UBAOG	G-22	ME40	This statement fails to address the fact that these restrictions have been placed on several hundred thousand acres and fails to consider overlap of such restrictions. There are some areas that will be open for only 4.5 months, this will increase impacts on other species and resources by concentrating activities in	<p>See comment responses ME41 and ME201.</p> <p>The section in question discusses the anticipated impacts of wildlife management decisions on mineral resources. The anticipated impacts of</p>	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			short time periods. The limited number of drilling rigs would reduce the number of wells that could be drilled in a given year.	wildlife management decisions on wildlife and on special status species are addressed in Sections 4.15.1 and 4.19.2.12.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME41	Here it states that impacts on mineral resources development from wildlife management decisions would not be substantive as there is only a 15-day increase in timing restrictions. The discussion fails to address the large increases in the sizes of these ranges. These impacts must be re-evaluated.	The section states that compared to Alternative D, wildlife management decisions on Alternative A would not have substantially more of an impact on minerals resources because of the 15-day increase in timing restrictions. It is unclear how the commenter arrived at the conclusion that the ranges to which the wildlife management timing restrictions apply are different for the different alternatives. The geographic areas to which the restrictions apply are the same for all alternatives (see Figure 34). If the commenter is referring to the differences between alternatives relative to the application of timing and controlled surface use stipulations as reflected in Figures 11 through 18, the reader should be aware that these differences reflect geographic differences in stipulations related to special status species. The impacts of these increased areas for seasonal and spatial buffers relative to special status species are addressed under Section 4.8.2.5 and its subsections.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME42	The statement that none of the alternatives would result in more than a 0.4% net decrease in the number of predicted oil and gas wells is deceiving. Based on the information in Tables 4.8.2, 4.8.3, 4.8.4 and 4.8.5, Alternatives A, B and C all provide more opportunity for oil and gas well drilling than Alternative D. However, the difference between Alternatives B and C is about 2.5%.	Sections 4.8.3 and 4.8.4 in the PRMP/FEIS have been revised to read:  "Under all action alternatives there would be a net increase in the number of predicted oil, gas, and CBM wells as compared to the No Action alternative."	X
UBAOG	G-22	ME43	Here it states "most of the riparian zone is listed as	See Appendix K (Riparian Resources) regarding	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			NSO.” Neither the Common to All in the Riparian portion or in the Matrix supports this statement.	NSO stipulations that apply throughout the planning area.	
UBAOG	G-22	ME44	This section implies that water used for drilling may impact the species. Given the number of wells proposed in the RFD to be drilled each year, the amount needed would be approximately 181 acre feet each year. As this water is taken from various locations throughout the VPA as well as the fee and Indian lands, the impact would be small and that fact should be listed here.	Section 4.15.1.3 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to show the acre-feet of water per well.  The commenter does not indicate how they calculated 181 acre- feet per year. BLM estimates that approximately .075 acre- feet of water per well is needed based on current trends. With an estimated 6,530 wells anticipated during the life of the plan this would total 4,897 acre -feet of water.	X
UBAOG	G-22	ME45	This text implies that Alternative B will have substantial impacts and jeopardize plant species when compared to the impacts of Alternative A, yet Tables 4.8.2 and 4.8.3 indicate that Alternative B anticipates only 13 more oil wells, 34 more gas wells and 2 more coal bed methane wells than Alternative A in the vast southern part of the VPA. The alarming text in this paragraph should be toned down.	The small increase in the number of wells between Alternatives A and B is not as important as are the locations of those additional wells. As stated in Section 4.15.2.3.2.1:  “...the increase in mineral and energy development is concentrated in the southern part of the VPA, which would place the Book Cliffs soil endemics at substantial risk and potentially result in jeopardy to listed species and/or the listing of previously candidate or sensitive species as threatened or endangered.”	
UBAOG	G-22	ME8	This principle should be amended to contain a commitment to process [lease] authorizations in a timely manner. [We] understand there is a growing backlog of authorizations and that private industry has contributed funds in an effort to reduce the backlog. The agency must ensure that it has adequate resources to serve its clientele.	The issue is beyond the scope of the RMP.	
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne	G-25	ME55	The DEIS/RMP fails to properly disclose the impacts of the proposed management prescriptions on mineral development. It appears that Table 5.1 on 5-3 and	Section 4.8 (Minerals and Energy Resources) discusses the effects of cultural, reaction, Soils, Special Status Species, Wildlife, and Visual	X

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Counties			<p>Table 4.8.1 on page 4-100 was an attempt to disclose these impacts as at 4.8.2.1.1.1 the text presents these changes form Alternative D, the no action alternative. These figures are simply a tabulation of acres assigned to each leasing category and not a disclosure of impacts required in IM 2004-089 on FRD. In the Chapter 4 analysis it is the only data presented to show impacts on oil and gas development with respect to the loss of wells and acreage for future development.</p> <p>IM 2004-089 requires the creation of a baseline of well numbers and acres that would be developed if such development were governed by BLMs standard lease form. As management prescriptions are proposed the baseline is to be reduced by the number of well and acres affected. The result of this analysis is a clear disclosure of the impact of proposed management restrictions on oil and gas development.</p>	<p>decisions on mineral development. Section 4.8 has been revised to discuss impacts of Special Designations on mineral development.</p> <p>Chapter 4.12 Socioeconomics discusses the loss or gain of revenue from oil and gas development by alternative.</p> <p>The reduction of wells imposed by management prescriptions can be seen in Table 4.8.2 (Alternative A), 4.8.3 (Alternative B), 4.8.4 (Alternative C), 4.8.5 (Alternative D), and 4.8.6 (Alternative E).</p>	
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties	G-25	ME56	<p>The tabulation of acres assigned to the mineral leasing categories in Tables 1 and 4.8.1 include 188,499 acres of split estate land where no management restrictions will be applied as a result of the RMP. Additionally approximately 80,000 of low mineral potential acres that were closed and moved to timing and controlled surface use, and heavily developed lands from controlled surface use to standard stipulation. These additions of acres mask the impacts of management decisions proposed in the draft, the preventing required analysis and disclosure. A map of current oil and gas leases and mineral occurrence potential was not included in the map section; this also hampers proper analysis and disclosure.</p>	<p>The 188,500 acres (which represents the Hill Creek Extension) is proposed as open to oil and gas development with timing and controlled surface use under all action alternatives (Alternatives A, B, C and E). The acreage for Hill Creek is not included in Alternative D and is noted in Section 4.1.1 (Analytical Assumptions). The 80,000 acres were included in the calculations and the analysis.</p> <p>A map of current oil and gas leases and mineral occurrence potential were not included in the Draft RMP due to space limitations but were utilized during alternative development and analysis.</p>	
Uintah,	G-25	ME57	The VFO is located primarily in the Uintah/Pieance oil	See comment responses ME165 and ME167.	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Daggett, and Duchesne Counties			<p>and gas basin, one of seven areas identified as priority basins in the EPCA inventory. As a focus area the basin must be reviewed for appropriate levels of stipulations or unnecessary impediments to oil and gas production. The EPCA inventory must be integrated into the planning process to determine oil and gas leasing stipulations and restrictions. Page 1-15 of the RMP discusses the President's National Energy Policy, issued in May 2001, which directed the Secretary 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)." This includes the evaluation of lease mitigation requirements to determine whether they are consistently applied, science based, appropriate and effective. While the RMP states that the VFO conducted an extensive review of the inventory regarding energy resources within the planning area, nowhere in the document is this review apparent. Information, clarification, and justification for leasing stipulations are not found in the document. In addition, stipulations not necessary to accomplish desired protection must be dropped. Without further information the counties cannot determine if the stipulations and mitigation measures laid out in the draft are the least restrictive possible as required by EPCA.</p> <p>FLPMA provides that land must be managed in a manner that recognizes the nations need for domestic sources of minerals. 43USC 1701(a)(12). EPCA provides that proposed actions must be analyzed to determine if the proposed actions are the least restrictive necessary and documents the scientific</p>		

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			basis for the restriction. The fact that the Vernal plan revision was classified as a Time-Sensitive Plan to address energy resources under EPCA does not allow BLM to merely reference the data on leasing constraints without further evaluation as required by law.		
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties	G-25	ME58	One component of EPCA is the development of outcome-based stipulations. The DEIS/RMP contain virtually no such stipulation and Appendix K offers opportunities for variances and waivers.	Comment noted.	
Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne Counties	G-25	ME59	The analysis required in IM 2004-089 must be accomplished and management restriction re-evaluated in accordance with IM 2003-233 to insure they are the least restrictive as required by EPCA. The reasonable foreseeable development (RFD) should be recalculated based on the most recent statistics on development.	See comment responses ME165 and ME167.  The RFD was developed from the Mineral Potential Report, which was completed in 2004 using the best available data. The RFD is merely a measure for estimating relative total surface disturbance by alternative and does not represent a cap or ceiling. As such, the BLM finds the existing RFD to be sufficiently accurate for evaluating the potential impact of management decisions on resources and land uses within the planning area.	
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	ME63	Page 3-39 identifies six RFD areas within the VPA that were evaluated for potential energy resources. It should be noted in the RMP/EIS that the Uintah & Ouray Indian Reservation is located in portions of the East and West Tavaputs Plateau, Monument Butte-Red Wash, Altamont-Bluebell, and Tabiona-Ashley Valley RFD areas. Oil and gas, CBM, tar sands, and mineral materials, such as sand gravel and building stone are potentially present within Reservation boundaries. The RMP/EIS should specify that all Tribal laws, regulations, conditions, and stipulations, would apply to energy and mineral resources, if operations are conducted on tribal land within the VPA.	Section 1.4.1 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to read as follows:  "Decisions and actions of the RMP only fully apply to BLM lands. In cases of split estate lands, such as lands within the planning area that are split between the BLM and the Uintah & Ouray Indian Tribe, actions affecting the surface must be coordinated with the surface owner. Undertakings conducted on lands not wholly or partly administered by the BLM are subject to the laws, regulations, conditions, and policies of the relevant	X

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				land management agency or other landowner.”	
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	ME64	Page 4-98 states that under Alternatives A, B, and C, approximately 188,500 acres of split-estate lands (Tribal surface-Federal minerals) within the Hill Creek Extension of the Uintah & Ouray Reservation would be available for minerals leasing. It is important to note that the Hill Creek Extension is known as a "Wildlife and Cultural Resource Protection Area" and was under a mineral development moratorium pursuant to Tribal Ordinance 83-02 and Resolution 83-184. The Tribe only granted exceptions for mineral development for projects in the Flat Rock area, because substantial financial compensation was received for surface use and access to Tribal lands. The Tribe wishes to minimize development in the southern portion of the Hill Creek Extension area, particularly south of Township 13 South. In addition, the Tribe is adamant about not allowing any development in Grand County for a number of environmental and cultural reasons.	<p>The Vernal RMP planning area does not include any BLM managed lands within the Hill Creek Extension in Grand County, so the comment is outside the scope of the RMP.</p> <p>For the remainder of BLM managed lands within the Hill Creek Extension, the BLM has worked with the Ute Tribe and BIA to determine appropriate leasing categories for BLM minerals underlying the Hill Creek Extension.</p>	
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	ME65	Page 4-98 states that the impacts of leasing of minerals would be beneficial to the Ute Tribe, including rentals or fees from the use of surface permits or other rights-of-way. However, it does not state that there would also be adverse impacts, including those to cultural resources, e.g. sacred sites, medicinal plants, and ancestral hunting grounds.	Section 4.8 in the PRMP/FEIS has been revised to add a footnote explaining that impacts from minerals leasing are discussed in other resource chapters as part of the area analysis.	X
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	ME66	<p>The Ute Tribe requests that the following Tribal requirements and stipulations for surface disturbance resulting from mineral development be included in the RMP/EIS and in Appendix K (surface stipulations applicable to all surface-disturbing activities), in order to ensure that surface disturbance on Tribal lands is avoided, where possible, or minimized:</p> <p>All Tribal laws and regulations shall apply to all oil and</p>	While the BLM supports the Tribe’s comment, the suggested language is more applicable to site - specific proposals. Also, since the BLM is not the surface management agency, it is more appropriate for the Tribe to develop these conditions of approval based upon current resource conditions and their desired land use objectives.	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>gas activities, including the Tribal environmental regulations that are presently being drafted by the Tribe;</p> <p>No geophysical or seismic activities are allowed on Tribal lands without first obtaining a Mineral Access Permit from the Tribe, including payment for surface disturbance;</p> <p>Applications for new road construction on Tribal surface shall be submitted to the Tribe for approval. Access to pristine areas or areas with cultural resources or sacred sites shall be limited (or denied) and multiple well drilling pads may be required to minimize impacts to wildlife, endangered plants or medicinal plants, cultural or historic areas, artifacts, and important visual resources;</p> <p>All contents of any reserve pit or similar pits and associated pit liners located on Tribal land shall be removed upon well completion and disposed of in an appropriate facility;</p> <p>A fugitive dust control and road maintenance plan shall be submitted by the operator to the Tribe for approval prior to use of Tribal roads; this may require selected roads to be paved by the Lessee;</p> <p>Vehicular traffic and equipment for oil and gas operations shall be subject to maximum daily quotas, noise reduction and road usage curfews, as necessary, established by the Tribe to minimize impacts to the wilderness experience now enjoyed by Tribal members on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation;</p> <p>A written agreement between the Tribe and the operator is required prior to drilling a water well(s) on Tribal lands. All water removed from the well shall be purchased from the Tribe;</p>		

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			<p>Surface activities during wet or muddy periods or periods of high fire danger, may be curtailed or prohibited upon notice by the Tribe;</p> <p>No oil and gas development shall be conducted within 500 feet of a canyon rim or hilltop within the Uintah and Ouray Reservation to avoid or minimize impacts to visual resources. The construction of low-profile oil and gas facilities may be required;</p> <p>The minerals underlying leases on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation are subject to claim by the Tribe; and</p> <p>All oil and gas activities shall be in full compliance with Onshore Order No. 1 (25 CFR section 169) and other applicable rules and regulations, including the Tribe's right to receive full market value for all surface use of and access to Tribal lands (25 CFR Section 169).</p>		
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	ME67	Pages 4-101 to 4-109 discuss the alternatives and mention that each alternative would affect royalties paid to the federal government and/or the State of Utah. As the Tribe owns some mineral rights in the Hill Creek Extension, it should be noted that royalties paid to the Tribe would be affected as well.	The impacts to royalty payments in each alternative are associated with public minerals, i.e. leased by the BLM. As to the mineral estate held in trust for the benefit of the Ute Tribe, the RMP does not impact royalties paid as the determination as to what Indian trust minerals are available for leasing or not is a decision to be made by the Tribe, not the BLM.	
Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	G-26	ME68	Pages 4-101 to 4-109 propose, under Alternatives A, B, and C, timing and controlled surface use for the Hill Creek Extension, which is located on the East Tavaputs Plateau. However, several hundred wells would be drilled under all alternatives in East Tavaputs Plateau, some of which would be on Tribal surface lands. The Ute Tribe requests that the number of potential wells on Tribal lands be clearly identified in the RMP/EIS and appropriate mitigation measures	The mineral potential report identified potential future development within a region, but it is not specific as to location. Therefore, the RMP cannot reflect the number of potential wells upon Tribal surface. Appropriate mitigation measures, beyond what was identified in comment ME66, would be developed at the project proposal stage	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			should be included.		
JP Lee	I-4	ME95 (ME-G)	Several proposed wilderness areas in the planning area are part of America's Redrock Wilderness Act, a measure now pending in Congress. The DEIS is wrong to open much of this area to oil and gas leasing. The Vernal RMP should provide complete protection for the wilderness character of these areas by prohibiting oil and gas leasing and excluding Off Road Vehicles.	Comment noted.	
Willa H. Drummond	I-5	ME99 (ME-K)	The opening of [places such as the Red Rocks Wilderness] to noisy, polluting motorized intrusion and destructive development to feed an unsustainable and inherently dangerous national addiction to oil is unwise. Please do as the Native American ancestors would have done; think of your children and grandchildren seven generations in the future. What will be left for them?	See comment response ME61.	
Walter Merschat	I-21	ME110 (ME-V)	I am concerned that this DRMP and DEIS falls short with respect to numerous critical environmental impacts associated with CBM extraction	Comment noted.	
Ross Tocher	I-22	ME98 (ME-J)	Mineral leasing should be excluded from all areas proposed for wilderness designation in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act-25% of the planning area. It would be wiser to protect the 25% and allow leasing on the other 75% (instead of the 93% preferred plan) of the planning area as Utah citizen's groups have suggested.	Comment noted.	
Bill Walsh & Shirley Weathers	I-24	ME111 (ME-W)	Despite its cultural uniqueness, Nine Mile Canyon has become a staging area for gas development. The machinery and trucks using the Canyon road are degrading other resources. Even with watering and magnesium chloride, the road has never been in worse shape in our memory. Has developers should be held to stricter standards than they have been heretofore.	Comment noted.	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			When they act irresponsibly, they should be made accountable.		
Bill Walsh & Shirley Weathers	I-24	ME95 (ME-G)	Several proposed wilderness areas in the planning area are part of America's Redrock Wilderness Act, a measure now pending in Congress. The DEIS is wrong to open much of this area to oil and gas leasing. The Vernal RMP should provide complete protection for the wilderness character of these areas by prohibiting oil and gas leasing and excluding Off Road Vehicles.	Comment noted.	
James Wesley Winn	I-42	ME100 (ME-L)	Please allow the Uintah Basin to continue to be one of our nations richest producers of energy resources. I support the comments which are being submitted by the Uintah Basin Association of Government.	Comment noted.	
Fred Swanson	I-68	ME101 (ME-M)	I would like to see more of a balance between oil and gas development and leaving open space in a natural condition.	Comment noted.	
Name Withheld at commentor's request	I-75	ME96 (ME-H)	We are very concerned about the obvious bias towards mineral and energy development in the DEIS. Not only does this affect the rivers in the Vernal area, but it has an overall detrimental impact to the surrounding environment that is not clearly studied in the DEIS. The bias towards mineral exploration and development is made obvious by a quick glance at the "Impacts of Mineral Decisions on Riparian Resources (4.11.2.5) section.	Comment noted.	
Name Withheld at commentor's request	I-75	ME96A (ME-H)	The "environmentally sensitive" Alternative C actually allows more leasing than the "no action" alternative D.	See comment response ME136.	
Liz Thomas	I-95	ME101 (ME-M)	I would like to see more of a balance between oil and gas development and leaving open space in a natural condition.	Comment noted.	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
Tom Groene	I-97	ME102 (ME-N)	No leasing except NSO until you've conducted site specific NEPA	Comment noted.	
Justin Barnett	I-124	ME98 (ME-J)	Mineral leasing should be excluded from all areas proposed for wilderness designation in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act-25% of the planning area. It would be wiser to protect the 25% and allow leasing on the other 75% (instead of the 93% preferred plan) of the planning area as Utah citizen's groups have suggested.	Comment noted.	
Susan Lefler	I-156	ME61	Areas proposed for wilderness in America's Redrock Wilderness Act should be closed to oil and gas leasing.	Comment noted.	
Jack Dobbins	I-176	ME95 (ME-G)	Several proposed wilderness areas in the planning area are part of America's Redrock Wilderness Act, a measure now pending in Congress. The DEIS is wrong to open much of this area to oil and gas leasing. The Vernal RMP should provide complete protection for the wilderness character of these areas by prohibiting oil and gas leasing and excluding Off Road Vehicles.	Comment noted.	
Glen Jameson	FLA1-3	ME103 (ME-O)	The energy loss that will result from wasting gas resources will require that they be replaced by less clean energy sources. The use of some common energy like coal will have a far more adverse impact on the environment.	Comment noted.	
Laura Lindley	FLA1-4	ME104 (ME-P)	Development of natural gas is an appropriate multiple-use of federal lands and should be encouraged. We urge you to clarify in the FEIS that the RFD is an analysis tool, and not a cap on permissible development within the Vernal Resource Area.	Comment noted.	
Chris Malan	FLA1-5	ME105 (ME-Q)	I believe that responsible development of our natural resources is critically important to the continued health of our nation. Please clarify and consider the comments of IPAA and PLA as you formulate the final	Comment noted.	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			EIS/RMP.		
Debra Stanberry	FLA1-6	ME106 (ME-R)	In light of climbing costs of fuel sources and the increasing number of individuals living on fixed incomes with hard choices to make, it is more important than ever to be able to access these domestic fuel sources to supply power in the most economic fashion.	Comment noted.	
Robert L. Bayless, Jr.	FLA1-7	ME107 (ME-S)	Please speed up the process for clearing protested leases and approving APD's.	Comment noted.	
Jim Felton	FLA1-8	ME108 (ME-T)	For this country to have to face the possibility of importing natural gas when the USGS notes there to be decades if not centuries of supply reflects a pandering to special interest groups that hurt the poor and the small business owner more than anything else.	Comment noted.	
Bill Barrett	FLA1-9	ME109 (ME-U)	Not allowing energy development in one of the most prolific hydrocarbon basins in the US runs contrary to the BLM charter of many uses.	Comment noted.	
David Deal	FLA1-12	ME108 (ME-T)	For this country to have to face the possibility of importing natural gas when the USGS notes there to be decades if not centuries of supply reflects a pandering to special interest groups that hurt the poor and the small business owner more than anything else.	Comment noted.	
Dominion Exploration & Production	O-1	ME3	The RMP/DEIS does not explain whether proposed closures or restrictions apply to existing leases. This needs to be clarified.	See comment response GC24.	
Dominion Exploration & Production	O-1	ME4	The RMP/DEIS does not include any details regarding the nature of avoidance measures for adverse environmental impact from mineral leasing on split estate lands or detail how the BLM will make decisions to implement such measures. This information needs to be included in the document.	The RMP will determine the leasing category for all federal minerals, including split estate lands, to be leased by BLM within the planning area, except those areas managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Site- specific proposals will include mitigating measures from the surface management agency or surface owner that will address minimizing effects to	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				<p>other resource values.</p> <p>Information regarding leasing and development on split estate lands is found at the following Washington Office website:  <a href="http://www.blm.gov/bmp/Split_Estate.htm">www.blm.gov/bmp/Split_Estate.htm</a>.</p> <p>Instruction Memorandum No. 2003-202 outlines the policy, procedures and conditions for approving oil and gas operations on split-estate lands. In particular, the BLM will not consider and Application for Permit to Drill or a Sundry Notice administratively or technically complete until the Federal lessee or its operator certifies that an agreement with the surface owner exists, or until the lessee or its operator complies with Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1. Compliance with Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1 requires the Federal mineral lessee or its operator to enter into good-faith negotiations with the private surface owner to reach an agreement for the protection of surface resources and reclamation of the disturbed areas, or payment in lieu thereof, to compensate the surface owner for loss of crops and damages to tangible improvements, if any. In addition, the BLM will invite the surface owner to participate in the onsite inspection and will take into consideration the needs of the surface owner when reviewing the Application for Permit to Drill. The BLM will offer the surface owner the same level of surface protection BLM provides on Federal surface (Instruction Memorandum No. 89-201).</p>	
Dominion Exploration & Production	O-1	ME5	The RMP/DEIS does not provide information on how the BLM will handle situations of multiple mineral development conflicts or how the BLM will prioritize	BLM encourages companies with conflicting mineral development areas/proposals to resolve those conflicts between themselves. If requested, BLM	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			energy resources in conflict areas. This information needs to be included in the document.	<p>would assist in facilitating agreements between the competing parties. BLM would also exercise authority provided for in the leases, applicable statutes, and regulations to manage the federal mineral development in the public's best interest.</p> <p>BLM would seek to achieve the following goals in resolving development conflicts:</p> <p>Optimize the recovery of both resources in an endeavor to secure the maximum return to the public in revenue and energy production.</p> <p>Prevent avoidable waste of the public's resources utilizing authority under existing statutes, regulations, and lease terms.</p> <p>Honor the rights of each lessee, subject of the terms of the lease and sound principles of resource conservation.</p> <p>Protect public health and safety, and mitigate environmental impacts.</p>	
Dominion Exploration & Production	O-1	ME6	Clarify how oil and gas leases would gain access to leased lands where soils are deemed unsuitable for road construction.	Road placement and any mitigation developed associated with soils would be done when site-specific NEPA analysis is done.	
Newfield Exploration Co.	O-4	ME11	Throughout the RMP/DEIS, please clarify whether proposed stipulations will be applied to existing oil and gas leases and whether these stipulations will supercede existing lease notice provisions and/or stipulations contained in other NEPA documents. The applicability of the stipulations to existing leases should be clarified for every stipulation proposed.	See comment response ME3.	
Newfield Exploration Co.	O-4	ME12	The EIS does not adequately demonstrate that requiring costly "best available technology" to reduce noise and light pollution will benefit sensitive areas and	The Vernal RMP/EIS is a planning document that analyses the impacts of noise and light at a regional level. The specific location of BMPs to mitigate the	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
			wildlife. The suggested equipment is costly and difficult to maintain and sometimes is not capable of carrying out the job needed.	<p>disturbances caused by sound and light is beyond the scope of this document. However, Table 2.1.9 (Minerals and Energy Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS does provide direction when light and sound mitigation measures would come into play.</p> <p>Table 2.1.9 states the following:</p> <p>“The BLM would seek to minimize light and sound pollution within the planning area using best available technology such as installation of multi-cylinder pumps, hospital sound-reducing mufflers, and placement of exhaust systems to direct noise away from noise sensitive areas, e.g., sensitive habitat, campgrounds, river corridors, and Dinosaur National Monument. Light pollution would be mitigated by using methods such as limiting height of light poles, timing of lighting operations (meaning limiting lighting to times of darkness associated with drilling and work over or maintenance operations), limiting wattage intensity, and constructing light shields. If a determination is made that natural barriers or view sheds would meet these mitigation objectives, the above requirements may not apply.”</p> <p>The BMPs would be determined at a site-specific NEPA project level, and proposed specific light and sound sources located near sensitive areas would then be analyzed in project-level NEPA documents for their impacts, and the appropriate technologies or mitigation would then be applied.</p>	
Newfield Exploration	O-4	ME7	The RMP/DEIS shows an expected development of 1700 oil wells in the Monument Butte-Red Wash field.	RFD projections do not limit the number of wells the BLM may authorize. Total well counts or surface	

## Minerals and Energy

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Co.			Newfield owns leases for 1873 existing and permitted wells. Thus, the number of expected wells in the RMP is already exceeded for these fields. The document should clarify whether or not the RMP will enforce a cap on development within the Monument Butte field and clarify if the RMP will supercede the existing EIS for development of the field.	disturbance exceeding those projected do not automatically prompt a need for a supplemental planning document. Mitigation of environmental effects, for example, through successful reclamation, clustering of wells on shared well locations, and minimizing pad and road construction can prevent the level of impacts from substantially exceeding those originally analyzed in the RMP. Depending on a proposed project's level of significance, therefore, BLM may tier site-specific proposals that exceed RFD surface disturbance projections to the Vernal RMP/EIS by relying on a Determination of NEPA Adequacy, an Environmental Assessment, or project level EIS.	
Orion Reserves Limited Partnership	O-8	ME128 (ME-NN)	The DRMP foresees at most only limited oil shale development efforts for the near term. That view seems quite outdated given the reductions in supply and increase in cost of conventional liquid hydro-carbon fuels in recent years,	BLM's Washington Office is undertaking a national programmatic EIS addressing oil shale and tar sand leasing, which includes DOE. When complete, that EIS will amend all existing BLM plans that contain oil shale and tar sand resources.	
Orion Reserves Limited Partnership	O-8	ME129 (ME-00)	The BLM and the DOI should be key players in decision making respecting oil shale production. We urge cooperation w/ the DOE and DOD including revising the DRMP. (See attached information)	Please see response to ME128.	
Questar	O-12	ME42	The statement that none of the alternatives would result in more than a 0.4% net decrease in the number of predicted oil and gas wells is deceiving. Based on the information in Tables 4.8.2, 4.8.3, 4.8.4 and 4.8.5, Alternatives A, B and C all provide more opportunity for oil and gas well drilling than Alternative D. However, the difference between Alternatives B and C is about 2.5%.	Sections 4.8.3 and 4.8.4 in the PRMP/FEIS have been revised to read:  "Under all action alternatives there would be a net increase in the number of predicted oil, gas, and CBM wells as compared to the No Action alternative."	X
Newfield Exploration Co.	O-13	ME VI47	The EIS does not adequately demonstrate that requiring costly "best available technology" to reduce noise and light pollution will benefit sensitive areas and	The commenter does not provide any additional information or explain how Best Available Technology (BATs) would not benefit sensitive	

## Minerals and Energy

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		(VI-D)	wildlife. Additionally, multi-cylinder pumps and hospital mufflers referred to are costly and difficult to maintain. Often multi-cylinder pumps cannot be effectively used because they do not produce the same torque as standard wellhead engines.	areas and wildlife nor does he provide information to refute the EIS impacts analysis.	
Newfield Exploration Co.	O-13	ME112 (ME-X)	The Pariette Wetlands ACEC was created to protect a unique riparian habitat. However, this in itself does not justify the "NSO designation. The very fact that there is already oil and gas activity within the ACEC and critical habitat further proves that the habitat and special species can coexist. Furthermore, the ACEC boundary does not delineate a continuous riparian and wetlands habitat. Therefore, with the ACEC boundary there are lands that can be developed with no impact on the critical habitat or special species.	Comment noted.	
Newfield Exploration Co.	O-13	ME113 (ME-Y)	Throughout the document, it is unclear whether or not you intend to apply new stipulations to existing oil and gas leases and existing facilities. To do this would violate Newfield's existing lease rights and likely be inconsistent with Newfield's soon to be completed EIS. Please clarify whether or not you intend to supersede existing lease notice provisions and/or stipulations contained in other NEPA documents.	See comment response ME3.	
IPAMS	O-14	ME22	The DEIS/RMP fails to analyze the impacts on oil & gas development [of special designations] and comply with EPCA and IMs directing incorporation of EPCA into RMPs. It requires that management restriction be the least restrictive necessary to protect documented and supportable needs.	The integration of EPCA into the RMP is discussed in Section 1.12. EPCA does not prohibit the use of special designations or multiple overlapping prescriptions, but requires that these prescriptions are the minimum necessary to maintain sustained yield. The BLM believes it has met this mandate and has only identified special designations where such designations are necessary.	
IPAMS	O-14	ME42	The statement that none of the alternatives would result in more than a 0.4% net decrease in the number of predicted oil and gas wells is deceiving. Based on	Sections 4.8.3 and 4.8.4 in the PRMP/FEIS have been revised to read:	X

## Minerals and Energy

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			the information in Tables 4.8.2, 4.8.3, 4.8.4 and 4.8.5, Alternatives A, B and C all provide more opportunity for oil and gas well drilling than Alternative D. However, the difference between Alternatives B and C is about 2.5%.	"Under all action alternatives there would be a net increase in the number of predicted oil, gas, and CBM wells as compared to the No Action alternative."	
IPAMS	O-14	ME46	The table in the DEIS that depicts the "overall effect of spatial and temporal limitations on energy and mineral development" is limited and therefore totally inadequate. The DEIS needs to discuss and overlay, by alternative, the timing and spatial limitations in combination with other proposed management prescriptions that impact oil and gas development, including VRM, SRMA, and ACEC decisions. EPCA policy requires overlays to identify areas of conflict and opportunities for resolving specific issues. (BLM IM 2003-233, Attachment 2-1.) Taken together, proposed resource decisions may restrict or reduce areas of development that may otherwise appear accessible.	<p>The commenter is referred to Figures 11-18, wherein areas depicted as timing and controlled surface use and closed reflect the implications of management decisions under the alternatives for all other resource programs.</p> <p>With regard to the use of overlays, IM 2003-003 does not require the use of overlays but suggests they be used in scoping and pre-alternative development. For plans such as the Vernal RMP, which were beyond the scoping and pre-alternative development stage at the time EPCA was issued, agencies are only directed to, at a minimum, use the EPCA findings to "understand the full effects of existing stipulations and other management options."</p>	
IPAMS	O-14	ME47	Well projections must be adjusted in an EIS under each alternative to reflect administrative designations, management practices, and mitigation measures. (BLM IM 2004-089, Attachment 1-1). BLM does not disclose the methodology it used in projecting oil and gas well activity by alternative. It is unclear, therefore, whether the projected well activity was based on a thorough evaluation of leasing constraints as required by BLM policy, or merely tied to the increase of 188,500 acres of split estate lands available for leasing in the Hill Creek extension.	The reasonable foreseeable development (RFD) scenario used for comparative purposes in the RMP was derived from the Mineral Potential Report. This fact is discussed at the beginning of Section 4.1.2. This section also states that the RFD is based on surface disturbance and not on exact numbers of wells.	
IPAMS	O-14	ME48	The BLM failed to consider that once a well is plugged,	Reclamation activities, collocation, and other factors	

## Minerals and Energy

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			reclaimed, and abandoned, it has no adverse effect on the environment.	that reduce overall surface impacts were taken into account when developing the reasonable foreseeable development (RFD) scenario used in the analysis for the RMP.	
IPAMS	O-14	ME49	With respect to the RFD, the number of wells projected is the same as the number of well pads and well locations, which does not contemplate any co-location, twinning, or commingling, which would reduce the amount of surface disturbance. The occurrence of two or more well bores on a single location may incrementally increase the well pad size needed to accommodate two or more wellheads and production equipment, but it would also result in significantly less surface disturbance. The key element which must be considered in determining what level of oil and gas activity will be allowed over the life of the plan is not the number of wells which could be drilled, but rather the net effect of surface disturbance and activities.	See comment responses ME47 and ME48.	
IPAMS	O-14	ME50	The DEIS states that “it would be very rare for any one lease to have so many limitations as to render it inaccessible for energy development.” Clearly this statement is erroneous since the ½-mile restrictions around all raptor nests, in combination with big game crucial winter range restrictions, would render some oil and gas leases inaccessible to development. For example, seasonal restrictions for various species of raptors extend from January to August. Critical deer and elk winter range restrictions extend from November to the end of April. Based on these restrictions, there would be only 2½ months where oil and gas development would be allowed.	See comment responses ME181 and SS29.	
IPAMS	O-14	ME54	Appendices A and H must be rewritten; and, rather than instituting blanket stipulations, we recommend that BLM commit to developing stipulations (as well as the	Appendices A and H in the PRMP/FEIS have been updated to reflect BMPs for Raptors and Their Associated Habitats in Utah, IM UT 2006-096.	X

## Minerals and Energy

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			associated exception, waiver, and modification) for surface-disturbing activities resulting from oil and gas operations in cooperation with the oil and gas industry, other agencies, and other key stakeholders.		
IPAMS	O-14	ME85 (LAT-4)	BLM must clarify that the RFD was developed pursuant to the Mineral Potential Report that included tar sands.	Section 4.1.2 states that the RFD was derived from the Mineral Potential Report and notes that it includes all mineral resources for the VPA.	
IPAMS	O-14	ME86 (LAT-5)	Typical oil and gas operations are unlikely to meet the standard for unnecessary and undue degradation	Comment noted.	
IPAMS	O-14	ME90 (ME-B)	It is our contention that it is in the best interest of the local communities as well as our nation for the BLM to adhere to Congressional dictates that require that federal planning create the least impact on the continued reasonable use of renewable and extractive resources in any long term land use plan.	Comment noted.	
Western Gas Resources	O-16	ME124 (ME-JJ)	Specific conditions of approval or lease terms are often required in order to mitigate the adverse effects of development activities on "special status species". It is well established that BLM may not modify leases beyond the effective limitations of existing lease terms and conditions.	See comment ME3.	
Western Gas Resources	O-16	ME62	On 4-112 the document states "specific conditions of approval or lease terms are often required in order to mitigate the adverse effects of development activities on special status species." It is well established that BLM may not modify leases beyond the effective limitations of existing lease terms and conditions. Valid existing rights may be developed to the "extent authorized by the issuance of the approval document" and may not be regulated to the point where it unreasonably interferes with enjoyment and benefit of the right.	See comment response ME3.	
EOG	O-17	ME125	There is no consideration given to how proposed	Reasonable access to state and private lands must	

## Minerals and Energy

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Resources		(ME-KK)	constraints on oil and gas leasing and development would affect industry access to state and private land surrounded by BLM land. This should affect access to valid and existing EOG lease on state and private land surrounded by federal land if it were to be managed as NSO for protection of wilderness characteristics.	be granted. The Cotter decision is the court decision relating to this policy.	
EOG Resources	O-17	ME84 (GC-P)	No information is provided on the amount and distribution of current leases in Chapter 3 and no information is presented in Chapter 4 to document how many wells projected by the RFD would occur on existing leases. While it may be appropriate to implement some constraints through site specific Conditions of Approval, it cannot be assumed for analysis purposes that restrictions such as NSO would apply to an existing lease. Disallowing EOG's ability to physically access its existing leases disregards its valid existing rights and results in a taking.	The numbers of wells, developments, and explorations existing within the VPA changes rapidly and frequently. As such, presenting such information within the Chapter 3 of the EIS would be without merit, since said information would be outdated immediately upon issuance of the document.  As stated at the beginning of Section 4.1.1:  "All resource actions recognize valid existing rights."	
James W. Bunger and Associates	O-19	ME120 (ME-FF)	Based on the draft RMP, potential development of oil shale resources is not given adequate consideration. Based on its potential economic value and the principle of "highest and best use," placing a high priority on oil shale in the current RMP is warranted.	See comment response ME128.	
James W. Bunger and Associates	O-19	ME121 (ME-GG)	See potential characteristics of commercial oil shale development in Uinta Basin	Comment noted.	
James W. Bunger and Associates	O-19	ME122 (ME-HH)	A potential conflict exists with oil and gas production that penetrates the oil shale zones. For those oil shale areas that may be developed within the next 30 years, it is recommended that BLM manage these leases so as to minimize the number of wells penetrating the oil shale zones and consider giving priority to oil shale	Recent circumstances with the R&D lease have identified the need for Utah to issue an IM to address the comment. Because the BLM is currently unable to lease oil shale (leasing regulations are not in place), it is premature to address the comment at this time at the RMP level.	

## Minerals and Energy

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			leases in prime access areas.		
James W. Bunger and Associates	O-19	ME123 (ME-II)	To enhance the information database, the BLM should consider requiring lessees to report logs of oil shale and tar sands penetrated by oil and gas operations.	Comment noted.	
Uintah Mountain Club	O-20	ME97 (ME-I)	Dry Fork/Red Mtn ACEC should be removed from leasing, reflecting Alternative C's Figure 13. White River ACEC: should be removed from leasing. The White River is economically important to the recreation industry with increasing use by tours and private boaters.	Comment noted.	
Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvement and Conservation	O-21	ME95 (ME-G)	Several proposed wilderness areas in the planning area are part of America's Redrock Wilderness Act, a measure now pending in Congress. The DEIS is wrong to open much of this area to oil and gas leasing. The Vernal RMP should provide complete protection for the wilderness character of these areas by prohibiting oil and gas leasing and excluding Off Road Vehicles.	Comment noted.	
American Rivers	O-22	ME96 (ME-H)	We are very concerned about the obvious bias towards mineral and energy development in the DEIS. Not only does this affect the rivers in the Vernal area, but it has an overall detrimental impact to the surrounding environment that is not clearly studied in the DEIS. The bias towards mineral exploration and development is made obvious by a quick glance at the "Impacts of Mineral Decisions on Riparian Resources (4.11.2.5) section.	Comment noted.	
American Rivers	O-22	ME96A (ME-H)	The "environmentally sensitive" Alternative C actually allows more leasing than the "no action" alternative D.	See comment response ME136.	
Lexco	O-24	ME115 (ME-AA)	Under the section "Planning Issues identified for the VPA during the agency and public scope process are described below" you state, "assess known Gilsonite leasing area classification." The current "known	The known leasing area standards for gilsonite were published in the Oct. 4, 1995 Federal Register (60 FR 52006). The BLM is in the process of assessing known gilsonite leasing areas and has done field	

## Minerals and Energy

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			Gilsonite area" is totally inadequate for identifying a commercial deposit. Nowhere in the document can I find an assessment of this classification. Please provide an assessment of the current classification along with any proposed amendments.	work on five gilsonite veins in the Bonanza vicinity. After BLM State Office review and concurrence a formal designation of know gilsonite leasing areas will be published in the Federal Register. For more information on the status of the pending KGLA designations, contact the Utah State Office.	
Lexco	O-24	ME116 (ME-BB)	You state, "Gilsonite and Tar Sands would be inventoried and planning determinations would be made in the revised RMP." I have been unable to identify your inventory or planning determinations in the draft RMP. Please provide details of your inventory and determinations.	See comment responses ME115 and ME 128...	
Lexco	O-24	ME117 (ME-CC)	The scale of figure 15-18 is inadequate to identify the exact location and extent of veins and open vs closed areas. The open areas should be identified by survey and should extend a minimum of one fourth mile on each side of the strike of the vein and a minimum on one mile beyond the known vein terminations.	Figures 15-18 do not intend to show the exact location and extent of veins rather a general picture of general location and extent. The open areas will be identified by survey during site-specific NEPA.	
Lexco	O-24	ME118 (ME-DD)	Provides a description of gilsonite uses from information that is incorrect and very out dated, and in fact, quotes reports dated 1960 instead of information from existing produces. This document should use the most recent data available.	The RMP is not expected to be a compendium of past and current uses of minerals extracted from public lands.	
Lexco	O-24	ME119 (ME-EE)	States "Gilsonite" is allocated by non-competitive leasing only. Leasing actions may be initiated by Public interests or by the BLM. Allocation methods vary to suit different situations. Please provide an explanation of which situations affect allocation and how they affect it.	This is outside the scope of the RMP. Section 3.8.3 states gilsonite is allocated by non-competitive and competitive leasing only (the only two avenues available under the 43 CFR 3500 regulations).	
Cliffs Mining Services Company	O-25	ME114 (ME-Z)	A specific concern is the possibility of strict limitations on access and land use for BLM properties adjacent to Cliffs Synfuel property (T 10S-R24W and T10S-25E). Important access such as roads, power, water and fuel	Comment noted.	

## Minerals and Energy

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			between Synfuel's North and South blocks may actually be 'cut off' if rights to cross such areas cannot be secured. Any plan would have to recognize the need for, and offer mechanisms to secure, access across these strategic areas in the oil shale fields.		
Trout Unlimited	O-27	ME126 (ME-LL)	Trout Unlimited would like to see a selenium contamination management plan for selenium poisoning and watershed contamination addressed in the Final RMP.	This is outside the scope of the RMP.	
Westport Oil and Gas Company	O-28	ME88 (PR-O)	The DEIS fails to identify relevant Operator-committed mitigation measures routinely utilized during oil and gas exploration and development, and as a result, petroleum industry impacts are significantly overstated. For example, no mention is made of industry's contribution to a habitat enhancement fund that operators paid into for years. Monies from this fund have been used to improve big game habitat to offset current oil and natural gas activities. Also not mentioned are unrecorded habitat enhancement and other voluntary efforts undertaken by the industry, including, but not limited to, the creation of wildlife guzzlers and other water retention activities requested by BLM during well on-site inspections. We, therefore, recommend that Chapter 4 be revised to include all Operator-committed mitigation measures in the environmental consequences and cumulative effects analysis.	<p>Section 4..8.2.7 in the PRMP/FEIS states:</p> <p>“Operators have complied with spatial and temporal restrictions and over the years have developed strategies to minimize the economic risks associated with development.”</p> <p>However, there is no specific BLM tracking of on and off-lease operator committed mitigating measures [including payment into water depletion funds managed by other regulatory agencies] that current and past federal oil and gas lessees have instituted in order to make a quantitative and qualitative statement about such in Chapter 4.</p> <p>Operator committed measures are voluntary. For planning purposes, BLM must consider mitigating impacts which may not be voluntarily incorporated into proposals.</p> <p>In addition, enhancements, reclamation, and other mitigation efforts engaged in by operators were used in the calculation of the Reasonably</p>	

## Minerals and Energy

Commenter	Record ID & Comment Number	Resource Category	Comment Text	Response to Comment	Doc Mod
				Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenario used in projecting impacts from minerals and energy exploration and development. This is why the RFD projects area of disturbance rather than numbers of wells or developments and why the RFD does not represent a ceiling or cap.	
KerrMcGee Oil and Gas Onshore LLC	O-29	ME88 (PR-O)	The DEIS fails to identify relevant Operator-committed mitigation measures routinely utilized during oil and gas exploration and development, and as a result, petroleum industry impacts are significantly overstated. For example, no mention is made of industry's contribution to a habitat enhancement fund that operators paid into for years. Monies from this fund have been used to improve big game habitat to offset current oil and natural gas activities. Also not mentioned are unrecorded habitat enhancement and other voluntary efforts undertaken by the industry, including, but not limited to, the creation of wildlife guzzlers and other water retention activities requested by BLM during well on-site inspections. We, therefore, recommend that Chapter 4 be revised to include all Operator-committed mitigation measures in the environmental consequences and cumulative effects analysis.	<p>Section 4..8.2.7 in the PRMP/FEIS states:</p> <p>“Operators have complied with spatial and temporal restrictions and over the years have developed strategies to minimize the economic risks associated with development.”</p> <p>However, there is no specific BLM tracking of on and off-lease operator committed mitigating measures [including payment into water depletion funds managed by other regulatory agencies] that current and past federal oil and gas lessees have instituted in order to make a quantitative and qualitative statement about such in Chapter 4.</p> <p>Operator committed measures are voluntary. For planning purposes, BLM must consider mitigating impacts which may not be voluntarily incorporated into proposals.</p> <p>In addition, enhancements, reclamation, and other mitigation efforts engaged in by operators were used in the calculation of the Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenario used in projecting impacts from minerals and energy exploration and development. This is why the RFD</p>	

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				projects area of disturbance rather than numbers of wells or developments and why the RFD does not represent a ceiling or cap.	
Cripple Cowboy Cow Outfit	O-30	ME127 (ME-MM)	Just because an area is closed to OHV use is not a reason to close it to mining claims.	Table 2.1.9 (Minerals and Energy Resources) in the PRMP/FEIS under the subsection entitled Locatable relays information about when a plan of operation is needed to operate. Not all lands closed to OHV are also withdrawn from the location of mining claims or sites.	
Wilderness Society, Wild Utah Project, Center for Native Ecosystems	O-46	ME12	The Wilderness Society encourages the BLM to ensure that energy development, ORV use, and livestock grazing occur only in the many areas where they will cause fewer impacts to key wildlife species, riparian areas and wilderness-quality lands.	Comment noted.	