

**APPENDIX N. U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE BIOLOGICAL
OPINION COVER LETTER (BO AVAILABLE ON CD)**

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PROJECT FILE



United States Department of the Interior FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

UTAH FIELD OFFICE
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WEST VALLEY CITY, UTAH 84119

SURNAME

October 23, 2008

In Reply Refer To
FWS/R6
ES/UT
08-F-0057
6-UT-08-F-0025

Memorandum

To: Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Vernal Field Office, 170 South 500 East Vernal, UT 84078

From: Utah Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, West Valley City, Utah

Subject: Biological Opinion for BLM Resource Management Plan (RMP), Vernal Field Office (VFO)

This document transmits the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Biological Opinion based on our review of potential activities described under the Resource Management Plan of the Utah Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Vernal Field Office (VFO) and their potential effects on the federally threatened Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*), Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*) and clay reed-mustard (*Schoenocrambe argillacea*); and federally endangered black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*), bonytail (*Gila elegans*), Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), humpback chub (*Gila cypha*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*) and shrubby reed-mustard (*Schoenocrambe suffrutescens*) in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Critical habitat was designated for the Mexican spotted owl on February 01, 2001 and was re-designated August 31, 2004 (66 FR 8530, 69 FR 53181). Critical habitat was designated for the listed Colorado fish (Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail, and razorback sucker) March 21, 1994 (59 FR 13374). Your August 22, 2008 request for formal consultation for all aforementioned species was received on August 25, 2008.

Vernal FO BLM Resource Management Plan proposed activities are categorized into the following 18 programs:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Paleontological Resources
- Fire and Fuels Management

Lands and Realty Management
Livestock and Grazing Management
Minerals and Energy Resources
Recreation and Travel Management
Riparian and Wetland Resources
Soil and Water Resources
Special Designations Areas
Special Status Species Management
Vegetation Resources Management
Visual Resources Management
Wild Horse Management
Wildlife and Fisheries Management
Woodlands and Forestry Management
Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

This Biological Opinion and Conference Opinion is based on information provided in the August 22nd Biological Assessment, personal communications between the USFWS biologists and the BLM biologists, telephone conversations, email correspondence, conference calls, planning meetings, and other sources of information. A complete administrative record of this consultation is on file at this office.

Consultation History

This section summarizes significant steps in the consultation process. Additional correspondence, and email transmissions, that occurred between May 8, 2008, and September 25, 2008 are documented in the administrative record for this consultation.

- March 5, 2008: BLM electronically sent a draft Biological Assessment for the Vernal BLM Field Office Resource Management Plan to the USFWS for review;
- March 2008 through August 21, 2008: The USFWS reviewed and provided comments on the draft Biological Assessment;
- August 25, 2008: We received the final version of the VFO Biological Assessment and began formal consultation.