

Lander Draft Resource Management Plan and
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

NAVIGATING THE DOCUMENT

DOCUMENT LAYOUT

Volume 1

- + Executive Summary
- + Chapter 1
- + Chapter 2
- + Chapter 3

Volume 2

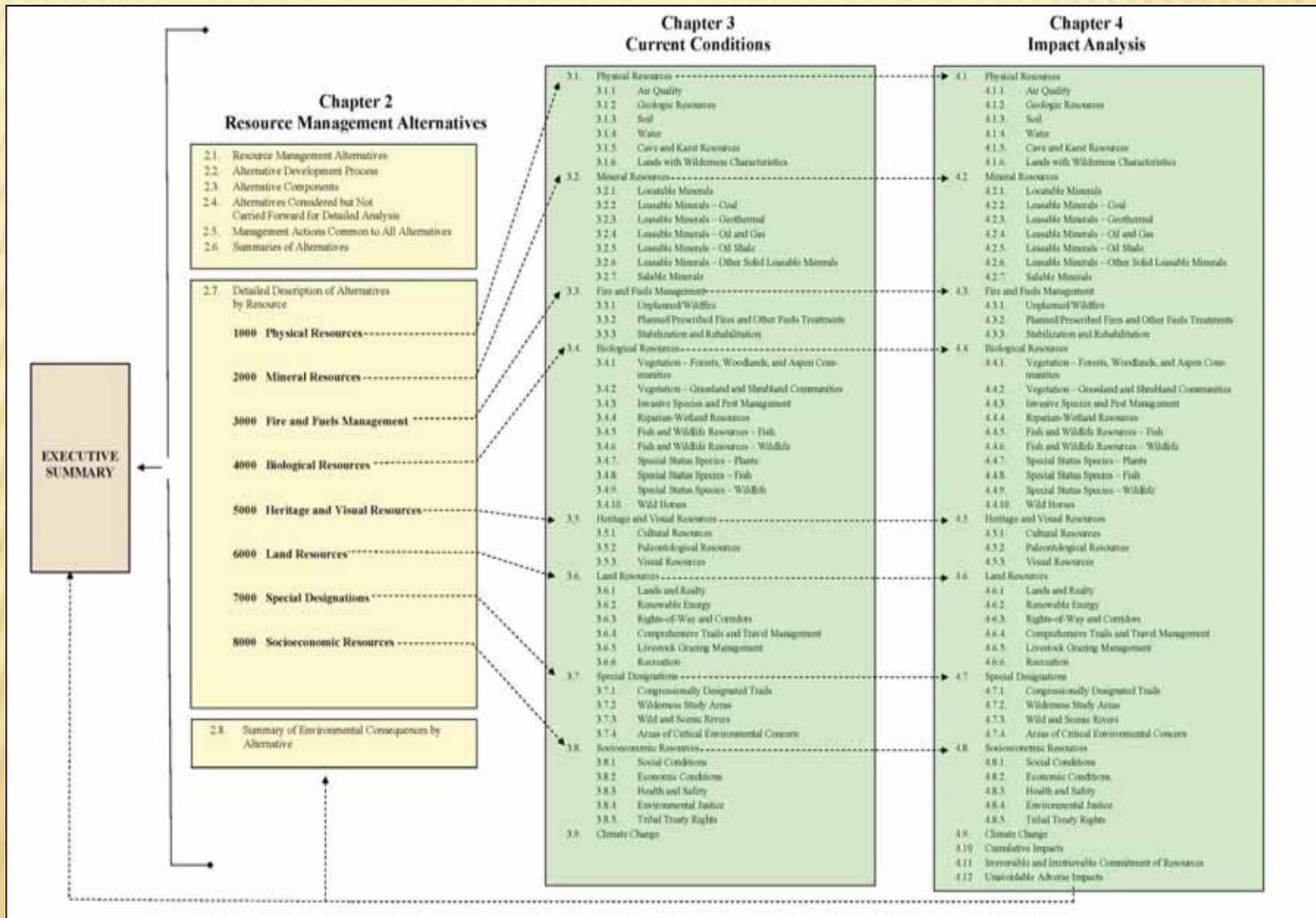
- + Chapter 4
- + Chapter 5
- + Chapter 6

Volume 3

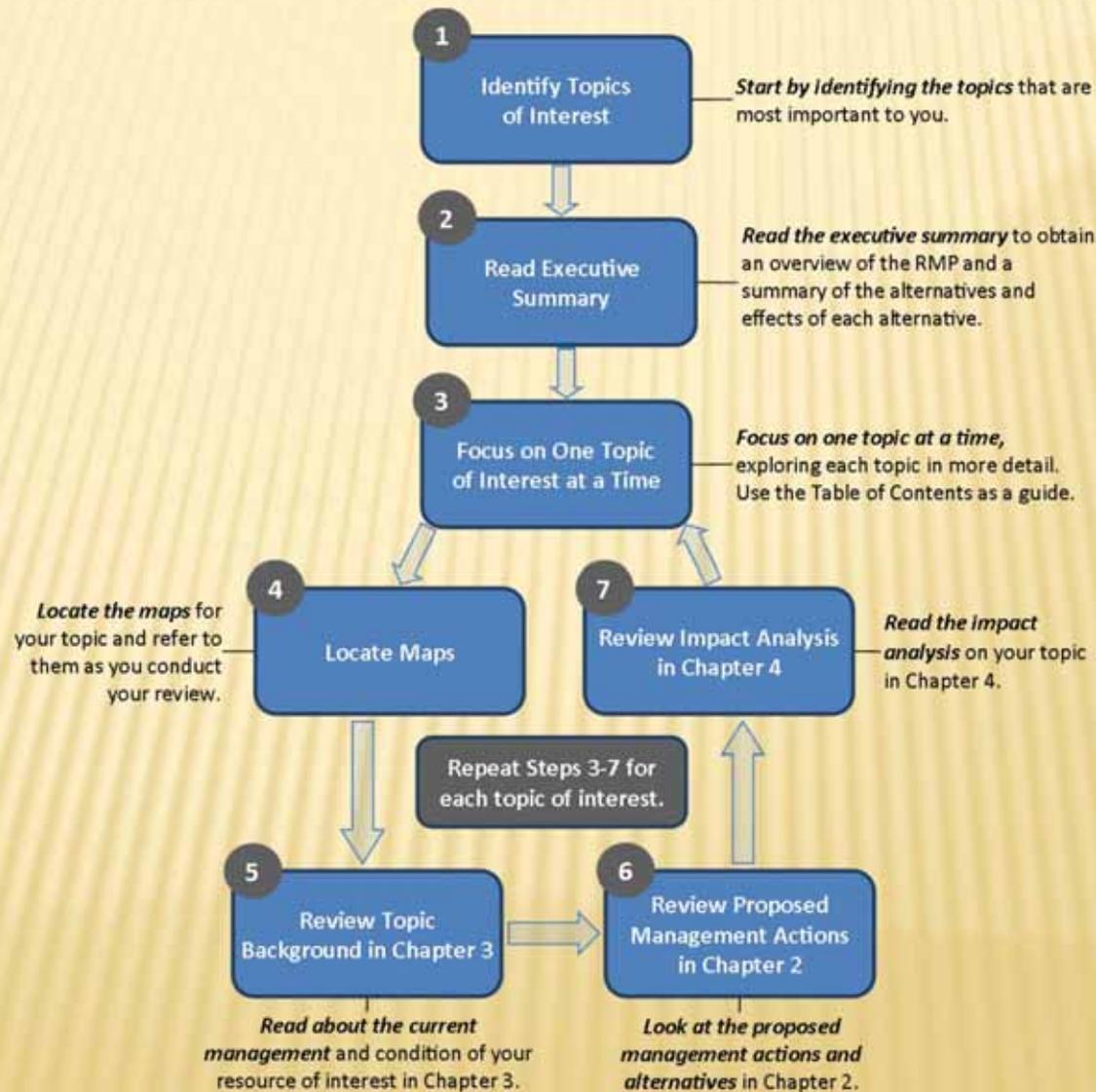
- + Glossary
- + Appendices
- + Maps



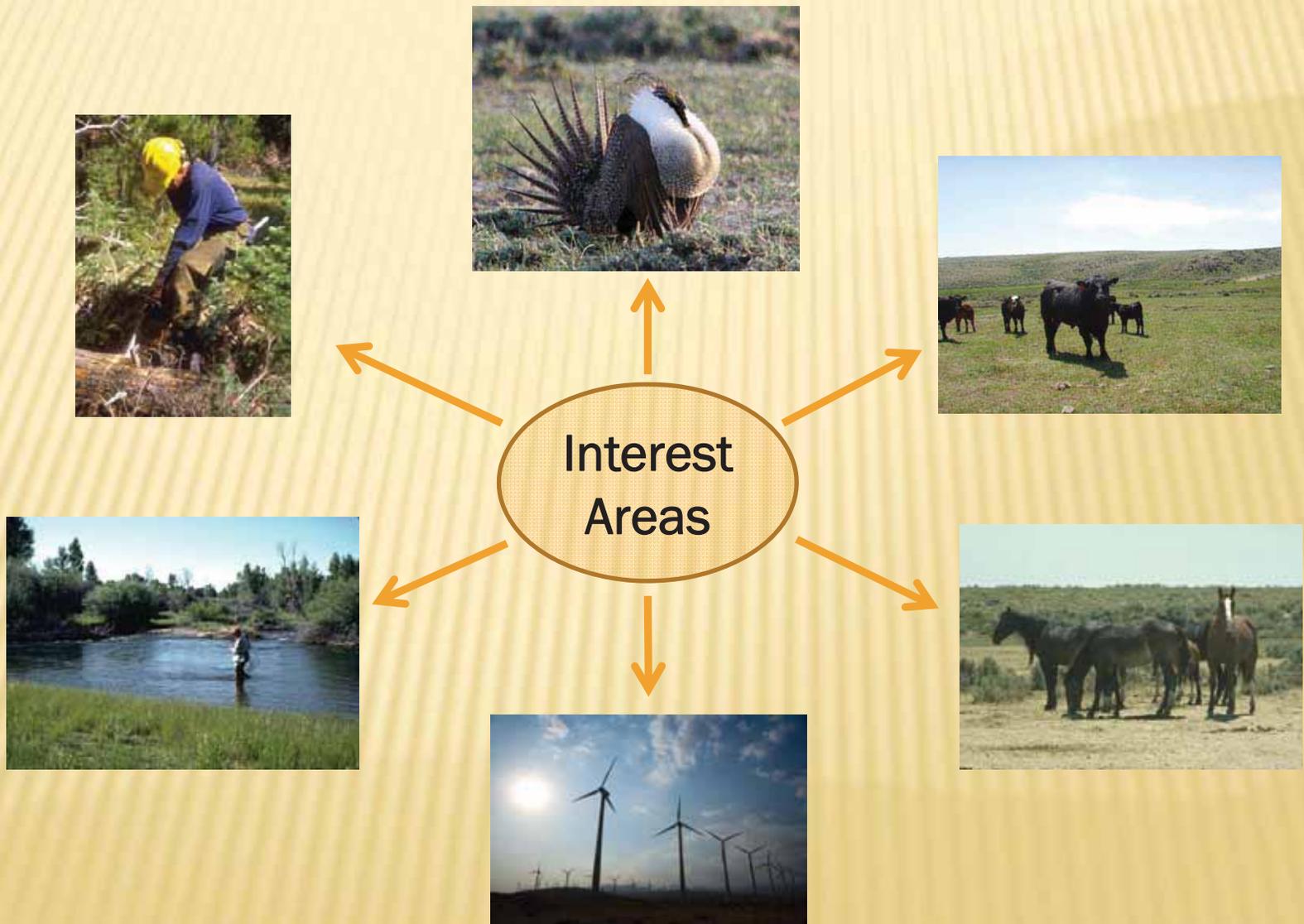
HOW DO THE CHAPTERS FIT TOGETHER?



SIMPLIFYING THE REVIEW PROCESS



STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR TOPICS OF INTEREST



STEP 2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Introduction

This Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describes and analyzes alternatives for the future management of public lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Lander Field Office. Located in west-central Wyoming, the administrative area covers approximately 6.6 million acres of land in Fremont, Natrona, Carbon, Sweetwater, Hot Springs, and Teton counties. Although Teton County is in the administrative boundary for Lander Field Office, no BLM-administered surface or mineral estate occur in Teton County and, therefore, no management is proposed for lands in this county. Of the total area administered by the Lander Field Office (planning area), approximately 2.4 million acres are BLM-administered federal surface estate and 2.8 million acres are BLM-administered federal mineral estate. BLM-administered lands in the planning area are intermingled with state and private lands, and are adjacent to the Wind River Indian Reservation (WRIR) and the Shoshone National Forest. While the BLM has Trust Duties for the management of minerals on the WRIR, the BLM does not make management decisions for the WRIR and Trust Duties are conducted independent of this RMP.

Revising existing land use plans is a major federal action for the BLM. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, requires federal agencies to prepare an EIS for major federal actions; thus, this Draft RMP and EIS is a combined document. The Draft EIS analyzes the impacts of four alternative RMPs for the planning area, including the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and the Preferred Alternative (Alternative D). The No Action Alternative reflects current management under the existing land use plan. The analysis considers a range of alternatives that provide for various levels of physical, biological, and heritage resource protection as well as opportunities for motorized and nonmotorized recreational activities, leasing and development of mineral resources, livestock grazing, and other land use activities.

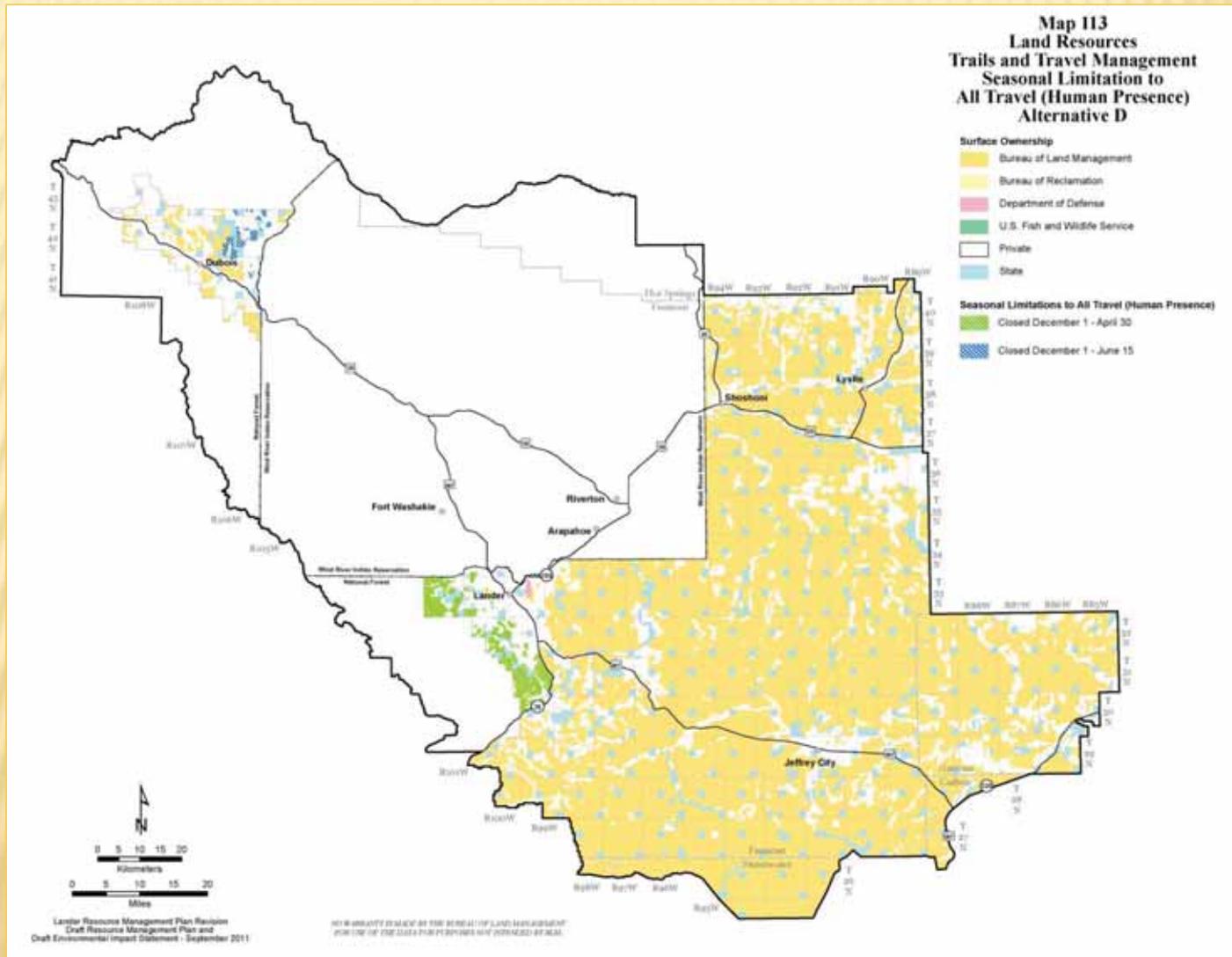
Purpose and Need

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires developing, maintaining, and, as appropriate, revising land use plans for public lands. BLM-administered lands within the planning area are currently managed according to the 1987 Lander Field Office RMP (existing plan). Since the Record of Decision (ROD) for the existing plan, new data have become available and laws, regulations, and policies regarding management of these public lands have changed. In addition, decisions in the existing plan do not satisfactorily address all new and emerging issues in the planning area. These changes and potential deficiencies created the need to revise the existing plan. The Lander Field Office RMP revision is anticipated to be completed by September 2012.

STEP 3: FOCUS ON ONE TOPIC AT A TIME

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STEP 4: MAPS



STEP 5: CHAPTER 3 – CURRENT CONDITIONS

Wyoming, the lack of consistency and location of ROW corridors between field offices increases processing time and creates inefficiencies for both the BLM and private sector clients.

Increased demand for ROW authorizations and the management challenges described above place limitations on the ability of BLM personnel to process ROW applications in a timely manner, to conduct other lands and reality related actions, and to fulfill other BLM responsibilities. Management challenges associated with increased ROW applications and other demands on BLM personnel are expected to increase in the future.

3.6.4. Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management

Travel and transportation are a part of virtually every activity on BLM-administered public lands, including recreation, livestock management, wildlife management, management of commodity resources, ROWs to private in-holdings, maintenance of electronic sites, and management and monitoring of public lands. The transportation network on public lands in the planning area consists of federal and state highways, county roads, and roads built to facilitate industrial and commercial development (Map 81). Map 82 through Map 85 show the detailed transportation network in and around Jeffrey City, Lander, Lysite, and the Dubois areas.

Comprehensive trails and travel management is the proactive management of public access, natural resources, and regulatory needs to ensure consideration of all aspects of road and trail system planning and management. This includes resource management, road and trail design, maintenance, and recreational and nonrecreational uses of the roads and trails. Travel in the context of comprehensive trails and travel management incorporates access needs and the effects of all forms of travel, both motorized and nonmotorized. Comprehensive trails and travel management planning involves providing specific direction on the proper levels of land and water access for all modes of travel. Travel management objectives are the foundation for appropriate travel and access prescriptions.

Travel Management Designations

All public lands are required to have travel management designations. Federal regulations (43 CFR 8342.1, designation criteria) state that “the Authorized Officer shall designate all public lands as either open, limited, or closed to off-road vehicles. All designations shall be based on the protection of the resources of the public lands, the promotion of the safety of all the users of the public lands, and the minimization of conflicts among various uses of the public lands.” Subsequent travel guidance at the national level (e.g., the OHV management strategy [BLM 2001], the mountain bike action plan [BLM 2002b], and a nonmotorized/nonmechanized management strategy [in development]) has provided the BLM direction to proactively apply these designations to all forms of travel (mechanized and other forms of nonmotorized travel) where necessary to conserve natural resources while providing for ample recreation opportunities (BLM 2009b).

Travel management designations apply to existing ROWs in the following manner: The State of Wyoming and various counties in the planning area may hold valid existing ROWs in the planning area pursuant to Revised Statute (RS) 2477, Act of July 28 1866, chapter 262, § 8, 14 Stat. 252, 253, codified at 43 U.S.C. 932. On October 21, 1976, Congress repealed R.S. 2477 through passage of FLPMA. This RMP does not adjudicate, analyze, or otherwise determine the validity of claimed ROWs. However, nothing in the RMP extinguishes any valid ROW, or alters in any way the legal rights the state and counties have to assert and protect RS 2477 rights or to

challenge in federal court or other appropriate venue any use restrictions imposed by the RMP that they believe are inconsistent with their rights.

Open

Lands designated as open are available for travel, on or off established roads and vehicle routes, as long as this activity does not cause unacceptable levels of resource damage. Areas are designated as open to motorized travel based on analysis that determines there are no compelling resource protection needs, user conflicts, or public safety issues to warrant limiting cross-country travel. Demand for open areas in the Lander Field Office tend to be in locations close to towns. Potential does exist to explore options to manage open areas in the Coal Mine Draw area and lands outside of the town of Dubois.

There are no areas currently open to motorized travel in the planning area. The 1987 RMP did not limit, restrict, or close any areas to mechanized or nonmotorized travel. Therefore the entire planning area is open to mechanized and nonmotorized travel. This has proven to create resource conflicts especially where repeated use or illegal development results in creation of a trail. With trail development comes increased conflicts with natural resources and increased conflicts amongst users. Areas that are open to mechanized travel include Johnny Behind the Rocks/Blue Ridge, Sweetwater Mining District, Sinks Canyon Climbing Area, the Bus @ Baldwin Creek, and the Dubois Mill Site.

Limited

Motorized vehicle travel within specified areas and/or on designated routes, roads, or trails is subject to restrictions (see the Glossary for definitions of route, road, and trail). The “limited” designation is used where OHV use must be restricted to meet specific resource management objectives. Examples of limitations include number or type of vehicles; time or season of use; permitted or licensed use only; use limited to designated roads and trails; or other limitations if restrictions are necessary to meet resource management objectives, including certain competitive or intensive use areas that have special limitations (see 43 CFR 8340.05).

Limited to Existing Roads and Trails

Travel is limited to existing roads and trails on approximately 2,226,504 acres of BLM-administered surface. This designation was created to allow travel without increasing the number of acres disturbed by route creation. Unless otherwise noted, the BLM manages travel in the planning area as limited to existing roads and trails. In areas (and only in these areas) where motorized travel is limited to existing roads and trails, the BLM makes exceptions for the performance of necessary tasks requiring the use of motor vehicles (e.g., picking up big game kills, repairing range improvements, managing livestock, and mineral activities). This necessary task exemption has resulted in the creation of numerous new roads especially in areas receiving repeated travel for maintenance purposes (fence lines, salt licks, etc.). This RMP will clarify the process for receiving exemptions from travel restrictions and clarify what actions constitute a necessary task.

Field observations, documented increases in road densities, and public feedback has indicated that the “limited to existing” designation has not reduced route proliferation nor adequately mitigated travel conflicts with other resource values. The limited to existing designation has three major shortcomings: 1) the designation is hard to enforce, 2) the 1987 RMP provided no point of reference as to what constituted an existing road or trail, and 3) the “limited to existing”

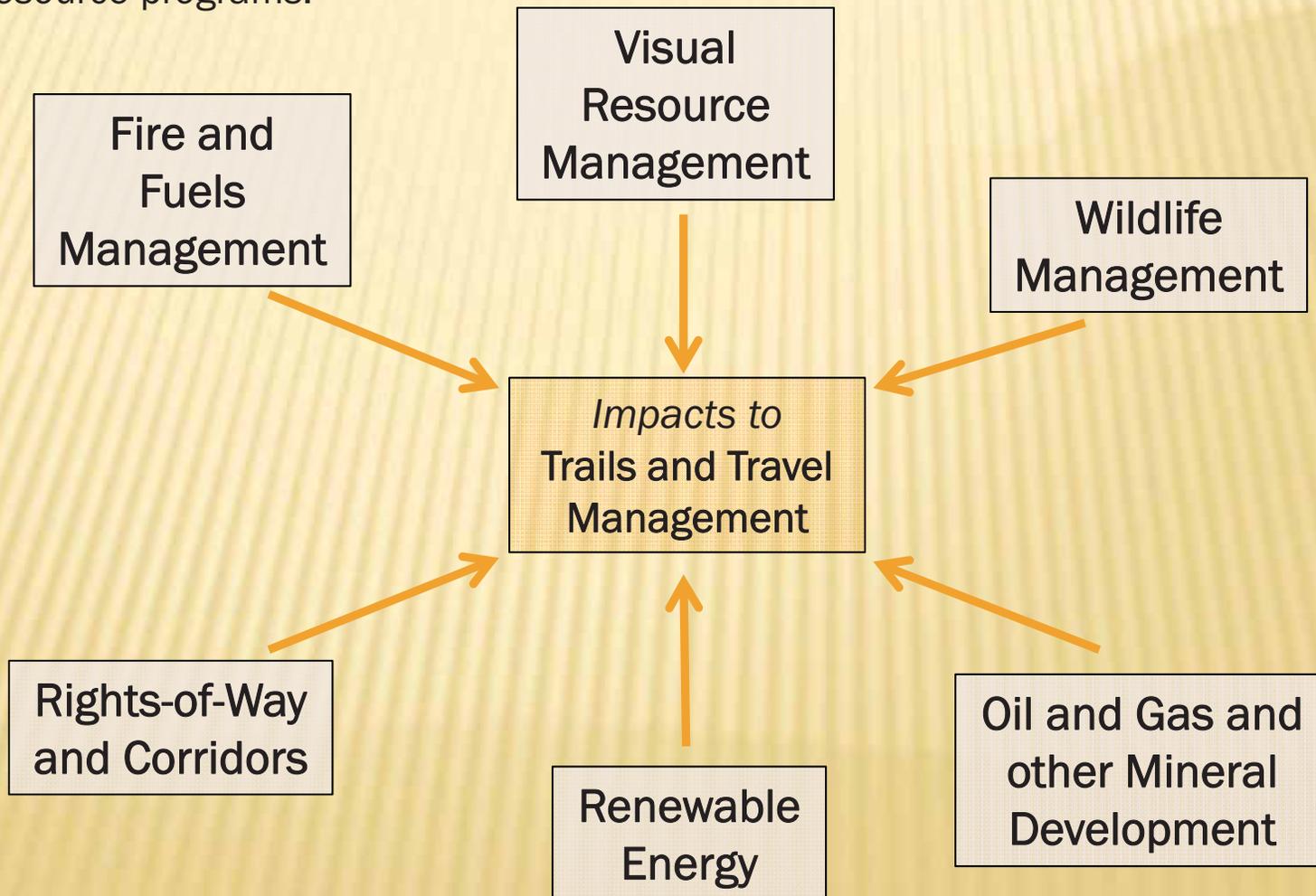
STEP 6: CHAPTER 2 – ALTERNATIVES

Table 2.27. 6000 Land Resources (LR) – Renewable Energy

| 6000 LAND RESOURCES (LR) – RENEWABLE ENERGY | | | | | |
|--|-----------|--|---|--|--|
| Record # | Goal/Obj. | Alternative A (Current Management) | Alternative B (Most Resource Conservation) | Alternative C (Most Resource Utilization) | Alternative D |
| Goal LR: 2 Provide opportunities for developing alternative energy resources. | | | | | |
| Objective: | | | | | |
| LR: 2.1 Identify areas suitable for locating alternative energy developments where important cultural and natural resource values will not be adversely affected by these facilities. | | | | | |
| MANAGEMENT ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES | | | | | |
| 6010 | LR: 2 | Management prescriptions for wind-energy development in important wildlife habitat, areas managed as VRM Class I and II, RMZs, areas with cultural resources, and special designations are found in those respective sections. | | | |
| 6011 | LR: 2 | Consider non-wind renewable energy development on a case-by-case basis consistent with management and objectives identified in the RMP. Approval of non-wind renewable energy development inconsistent with management and objectives in the RMP would require a Land Use Plan amendment. | | | |
| 6012 | LR: 2 | Programmatic policies and Best Management Practices for wind-energy development are identified in the ROD for Wind-Energy Development on Bureau of Land Management-Administered Land in the Western States (2006) and IM 2009-043. The ROD identified the following areas within the NLCS as wind-energy development exclusion areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSAs (55,338 acres) (Map 128) • CDNST (no buffer is identified) (Map 121) • NHTs (no buffer is identified) (Map 123) • NWSRS-eligible waterway segments (9,919 acres of BLM-administered surface) (Map 129) | | | |
| 6013 | LR: 2 | Initiate government-to-government consultation with the appropriate tribal governments if it is determined that wind-energy development proposals might directly and substantially affect tribes. | | | |
| 6014 | LR: 2 | Programmatic policies, Best Management Practices, leasing procedures, and stipulations identified in the ROD for the PEIS for Geothermal Leasing in the Western United States (2008) are analyzed in the minerals section. | | | |
| MANAGEMENT ACTION BY ALTERNATIVE | | | | | |
| 6015 | LR: 2 | Manage 2,113,512 acres as open to wind-energy development (Map 97). | Manage 41,372 acres as open to wind-energy development (Map 98). | Manage 2,284,235 acres as open to wind-energy development (Map 99). | Manage 459,720 acres as open to wind-energy development (Map 100). |
| | | Manage 64,816 acres as wind-energy development avoidance areas (Map 97). | Manage 23,887 acres as wind-energy development avoidance areas (Map 98). | Manage 15,818 acres as wind-energy development avoidance areas (Map 99). | Manage 961,696 acres as wind-energy development avoidance areas (Map 100). |
| | | Manage 215,882 acres as wind-energy development exclusion areas (Map 97). | Manage 2,328,951 acres as wind-energy development exclusion areas (Map 98). | Manage 94,157 acres as wind-energy development exclusion areas (Map 99). | Manage 972,794 acres as wind-energy development exclusion areas (Map 100). |

EFFECTS ANALYSIS ORIENTATION

Chapter 4 describes the adverse or beneficial impacts to a resource or resource use from other resource programs.



STEP 7: CHAPTER 4 – EFFECTS ANALYSIS

- Introduction to Resource
- Summary of Impacts
- Methods and Assumptions
- Detailed Analysis of Alternatives
 - Alternative A
 - Alternative B
 - Alternative C
 - Alternative D

The more an alternative manages ACECs as ROW avoidance or exclusion areas, the greater the adverse impacts to the ROW program. Areas designated as ACEC under alternatives A and D are managed as ROW avoidance or exclusion areas under those alternatives, while those same areas are managed as open to ROWs with standard stipulations under Alternative C. Alternative D management of ACECs includes 21 percent more avoidance areas than Alternative A and 1 percent fewer than Alternative B. Alternative D includes 013 percent fewer acres of ROW exclusion areas than Alternative B. The actual impact would depend on the degree to which there is demand for ROWs, if there is no demand there would be no adverse impact from ROW avoidance or exclusion areas.

4.6.4. Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management

The travel system is managed to achieve the goals and objectives of each alternative and to provide for appropriate public access. This program is considered a support function for all BLM programs. Therefore, the goals of the trails and travel management program (as discussed in Executive Order 11644 and 43 CFR 8340) are as follows:

- Provide and improve sustainable access for public needs and experiences.
- Protect natural resources and settings.
- Minimize conflicts among the various users of BLM-administered lands.

As a result of the (sometimes divergent) program goals discussed above, impacts to travel management cannot be completely labeled as adverse or beneficial, instead impacts to travel management represent a given areas travel management focus or priority. To facilitate impact analysis of the various alternatives, the following impact parameters would be the focus of this analysis:

- The minimum standard for protecting natural resources is planning for route densities and locations that meet or exceed Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands. Travel management to protect resources beyond the minimum is considered an increased resource protection focus. Areas with an increased protection focus will be managed to meet minimum standards for providing sustainable access for public needs and experiences. When conflicts between travel and resources exist within this area, travel would be constrained by the needs of the resource(s). Such a decision would result in a beneficial impact to the comprehensive trail and travel management goal of protecting natural resources, but would result in an adverse impact to visitor access.
- The minimum standard for providing sustainable access for public needs and experiences is planning for route densities and locations in consideration of primary travelers. Travel management to enhance access beyond the minimum objective is considered an increased access focus. Areas with an increased access focus will be managed to meet minimum standards for resource protection. When conflicts between travel and resources exist, mitigation of existing laws and is a beneficial impact to the access, but would result in an



SIMPLIFYING THE REVIEW PROCESS



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PREPARING SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS

THE BLM DECISION AREA

- ✘ 44 broad resource areas over 2.4-million acres of BLM-administered surface and 2.8-million acres of mineral estate.
- ✘ The BLM does not have the authority or capability to manage all aspects of every resource described in the RMP.
- ✘ Management of some resources may fall under the purview of state, local or other federal government agencies.
- ✘ Please contact a BLM Interdisciplinary (ID) Team members for additional information.

WHY ARE PUBLIC COMMENTS SO IMPORTANT?

- + BLM is a federal land management agency tasked with managing public lands in the public interest.
- + BLM factors in public issues and concerns through the public comment process.
- + Comments are most useful that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail.

WHAT IS A SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT?

- + Questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the RMP and EIS
- + Questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis
- + Presents new information relevant to the analysis
- + Presents reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the EIS
- + Causes changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives.

THE DOS AND DON'TS OF COMMENTING

THE DOS

- ✘ Suggest specific changes in the document, and provide the page number and section of the document in your comment.
- ✘ Clearly identify:
 - Where the issue or error is located.
 - Why you believe there is an error.
 - Alternative ideas about how to address issues or errors.
- ✘ Provide constructive solutions with documentation or resources to support your recommendations.
- ✘ If applicable, include your formal and informal education or training as it relates to your observations and comments.

THE DON'Ts

- ✘ Avoid vague statements or concerns. Vague statements do not suggest a specific change or give the BLM direction on which to act.
- ✘ Understand that a comment is not a vote for or against one of the alternatives. The BLM must rely on supporting information, not on the number of comments received. Numerous comments expressing the same concern or issue is considered to be one comment.
- ✘ Avoid using form letters to convey your point. Your unique way of writing or phrasing a comment is important for understanding your point of view.

EXAMPLE COMMENT

HELPFUL COMMENT

I disagree with the visual resource management class II designation for the area between Low Valley and Dry River. This area contains radio towers, power lines and fences which detract from the view already. This area also contains valuable mineral deposits which are currently being developed and that development is expected to continue. The classification should be changed to class III.

NOT SO HELPFUL COMMENT

The preferred Alternative has too much Visual Resource Management Class II.

Why is this comment not helpful?

This comment is not specific enough for the BLM to consider in balance with other resource issues. It does not contain supporting information or rationale.

NEXT STEPS

- ✘ Review the document.
- ✘ Contact BLM specialists with questions.
- ✘ Submit comments by December 7, 2011.
- ✘ Proposed RMP and EIS expected Spring 2012.