

**PREPARATION PLAN
FOR
MODIFICATION OF THE
PINEDALE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

PINEDALE FIELD OFFICE

WYOMING

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Concurred: _____ **Field Manager** _____ **Date**

Approved: _____

State Director

Date

PREPARATION PLAN FOR MODIFICATION OF THE PINEDALE RMP

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Preparation Plan is to identify the needs for updating the Pinedale Resource Management Plan (RMP) through modification (maintenance, amendment, or revision). Plan modification work will be coordinated with ongoing Planning Support Projects (PSPs). The PSPs address planning needs by issue or resource on a statewide basis rather than plan by plan. Tackling these issues on a statewide basis will yield efficiencies and shorten the time to modify all of Wyoming's RMPs. Integration of PSPs and the Pinedale RMP modification are identified in the Issues Section of this Preparation Plan.

Other specific objectives of the Preparation Plan are to:

Identify the process for conducting the Pinedale RMP planning review and modification.

Identify data, information, or decision needs, and recommend tasks and approaches to efficiently collect necessary data.

Identify schedules and budgets for the plan modification work.

Make staffing and workload evaluations and identify potential shortages.

Identify participants in the planning project and prepare a public participation plan.

The majority of the plan review and modification, including National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, will be performed by a contractor, with oversight provided by Pinedale Field Office personnel.

BACKGROUND

The Pinedale RMP provides guidance and direction for management of approximately 931,000 acres of BLM-administered public land surface and 1,185,000 acres of BLM-administered federal mineral estate in Sublette, Lincoln, and Fremont counties. Approximately 919,000 acres are both federal surface and federal mineral estate (Map 1, Table 1). The Pinedale planning area includes two wilderness study areas (WSA--Scab Creek and Lake Mountain), two areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC--Rock

Creek and Beaver Creek), and three special recreation management areas (SRMAs -- Scab Creek, Upper Green River, and Boulder Lake).

Areas administered by other federal agencies within the planning area are the Bridger-Teton National Forest and the Seedskaadee Reclamation Project, administered by the Bureau of Reclamation, and very small withdrawals associated with the U.S. Air Force Detachment 489. BLM land use plan decisions, for either surface or mineral estate, do not apply to these areas.

TABLE 1

LAND AND MINERAL OWNERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTIONS WITHIN THE PINEDALE RMP PLANNING AREA

Jurisdiction	Acres
Areas the Pinedale RMP Decisions Will Cover:	
A. Federal land/Federal minerals	918,137
B. Federal land/Non-federal minerals	10,648
C. Non-federal land/federal minerals	226,340
Total BLM-administered federal land surface to be covered by RMP decisions	928,137
Total BLM-administered federal mineral estate to be covered by RMP decisions	1,144,477
Areas the Pinedale RMP Decisions Will NOT Cover:	
D. USFS land/BLM minerals	1,009
E. BOR land/BLM minerals	1,494
F. USFWS land/BLM minerals	0

Total BLM-administered federal mineral estate that will NOT be covered by RMP decisions	2,503
G. Private land/private minerals	396,699
Total land surface areas in the Pinedale RMP planning area (all ownerships)	1,324,836

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the Pinedale RMP was signed on December 12, 1988. Seven maintenance actions have been completed since the ROD was signed. New issues and concerns identified during the recent preliminary RMP evaluations conducted throughout the state have necessitated a planning review of the Pinedale RMP to determine modification needs (see Issues section). Note -- As used in this Prep plan, "planning review" means a detailed evaluation of the existing Pinedale RMP. The preliminary evaluations have helped to clarify the planning issues and have pointed to some possible solutions. The recommendations in this Preparation Plan are related directly to these preliminary RMP evaluations. The final report for the Pinedale RMP preliminary evaluation will be completed by September 2001. The boom in mineral development activity, combined with the age of the RMP, made the timing of the preliminary evaluation urgent, and the evaluation findings are indispensable to this Preparation Plan. When the preliminary evaluations are completed, the Pinedale evaluation report will be added to this Preparation Plan as an appendix.

Recent studies on the adequacy of Wyoming RMPs contributed to the recent evaluation findings. Those other studies have included:

Southwest Wyoming Resource Evaluation Report and Recommendations (February 1999) Addressing the Green River, **Pinedale**, Kemmerer, and Great Divide RMPs, it was determined that: (1) Oil and gas-related decisions in the four resource management plans are uniformly consistent with only minor technical differences in the application of mitigation measures. (2) BLM's methods and practices of both assessing impacts from oil and gas development in southwest Wyoming and complying with NEPA are reasonable and appropriate. (3) The number of oil and gas wells in each of the four field office areas is below the level of development projected in the RMP EISs. However, the number of wells in the four field offices could exceed the projected development levels in the near future. (4) The **Pinedale RMP** should be evaluated to determine whether there have been any unacceptable environmental effects during plan implementation. The evaluation should focus on multiple use decisions including resource allocations and planned mitigation measures.

Plan Maintenance Needs Identified in the Wyoming Planning and Environmental Coordination Core Group Workshop (June 1999) The participants of this workshop recommended that: (1) Wild and Scenic river (WSR) reviews need to be conducted in the Kemmerer, **Pinedale**, Washakie, Great Divide, Lander, and Platte River RMP planning areas. This may involve amendments to some plans if the reviews identify any BLM-administered lands that meet the WSR eligibility criteria and suitability factors. (2) When completed, national policy on the management of off-highway vehicles (OHV) needs to be incorporated into Wyoming RMPs. (3) A withdrawal

review of lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation will be needed for Washakie, Grass Creek, Great Divide (possibly with Little Snake RMP), Green River, **Pinedale**, and Kemmerer RMPs. (4) Several field offices need to address the revocation of oil shale, coal, and phosphate withdrawals on an estimated 11.5 million acres.

Report to Congress, Land Use Planning for Sustainable Resource Decisions (February 2000) This report indicated the need for planning and NEPA actions in Wyoming, to include during FY 2001: (1) Southwest Wyoming resource assessment and subsequent plan amendments identified for the Rawlins, Kemmerer, **Pinedale**, Lander, and Rock Springs field offices to address oil and gas leasing, air and water quality, wildlife habitat, vegetation, and special status species. (2) Wyoming and other state resource assessments and conservation strategies for special status species (for example, mountain plover, prairie dog, and sage grouse). (3) BLM-wide land use plan evaluations for OHV decisions.

The following are ongoing and future planning and NEPA actions in the Pinedale planning area:

- Pinedale Anticline Natural Gas Project EIS (ROD: Appeal period closed 09/06/00. Lawsuit filed on decision).
- Planning for mineral leasing along the Wind River Front (now subject to a leasing moratorium).
- Collaborative Planning with Counties (counties are starting land use plan revisions).
- Environmental analysis for fire fuels reduction along Hoback Rim.
- Pinedale Off-Highway Vehicle use plan.
- New Fork/Green River Recreation Plan (Expected DR June 2004).
- Bench Corral CAP (At scoping phase. Expected DR June 2006).
- Other agency planning efforts in or near the planning area include the development of an oil and gas leasing EIS for the Bridger-Teton National Forest (DEIS published in December 2000), and a Bridger-Teton forest plan update.
- Consistency review of decisions across BLM Field Office administrative boundaries.

ANTICIPATED PLANNING ISSUES AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

The process for developing, amending, or revising an RMP begins with identifying the issues (40 CFR 1501.7; 43 CFR 1610.4-1).

Issues express concerns, conflicts, and problems associated with the management of public lands. Issues are related to how some land and resource uses affect other land and resource uses. Issues also reflect new data, new or revised policies, and changes in resource uses affecting the planning area.

The issues addressed in the EIS for the current Pinedale RMP (1988) were reviewed and found to be applicable to this planning review. Additional issues have subsequently been identified through the RMP evaluations discussed earlier, and may, in several cases, reflect national concerns described in BLM's February 2000 "Report to the Congress, Land Use Planning for Sustainable Resource Decisions."

The ongoing Planning Support Projects (PSP) relate to the issues: color IR photography, Wyoming ethnohistoric report, National Historic Trails report, regional trails context report, GIS updates, MSA/existing environment reports, O&G resource assessment, coal resource assessment, Section 7 Program Consultation-T&E species, Section 7 Consultation-Other species, watershed mapping, soil survey by NRCS, wild and scenic river inventory, analysis of non-market values, IMPLAN, range economic model, national wetland maps (may be done), invasive weed assessment, OHV implementation strategy, maintain fire LUP decisions, ESI, migratory bird monitoring, mountain plover habitat monitoring, paleontology resource assessment, visibility monitoring, and WARMS.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR PURPOSES OF THIS PLANNING REVIEW

The first four issues described here are the basic issues that were addressed in the 1988 Pinedale RMP. Because of changing levels of public demand for land and resource uses, these preliminary issues are restated to reflect the current situation. Additional preliminary issues 5-8 were also identified through the preliminary RMP evaluation.

ISSUE 1: DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY MINERALS AND RELATED ISSUES

Special attention is needed to address mineral development (i.e., oil/gas, coalbed methane, coal, solar, and wind energy, diamonds and gold) and related transportation network conflicts with other land and resource uses and values. Principal considerations include disruptive activities and human presence (1) in elk, deer, and fisheries habitat, big game (i.e., moose, elk, deer, antelope) crucial habitat (crucial winter range and birthing areas), and other important wildlife species habitats (e.g., sage grouse, plovers, raptors); and (2) on recreation values, forage uses, air quality, sensitive vegetation types, and sensitive watersheds. Areas where surface-disturbing activities (e.g., mineral exploration and development activities, right-of-way construction activities, etc.) are suitable, not suitable, or should be restricted, need to be identified. Questions to be answered include:

- Do current management decisions correctly balance elk, moose, mule deer, antelope, and fisheries habitat issues with other resource uses and demands?

- Are sufficient measures being taken to ensure air quality and watershed protection?
- What areas are suitable, not suitable (particularly No Surface Occupancy areas), or restricted for development activity? Should these areas be reviewed or changed?
- Are current decisions regarding what public landmark available for oil and gas leasing still appropriate?
- Should areas with "no surface occupancy" or other conditions of use for mineral leases and other surface uses be readdressed or changed ?
- Are there areas being leased for mineral development without special conditions? Should these areas be reviewed or changed?
- Should withdrawals be pursued, and if so, where?
- What areas of Federal coal in the Resource area are acceptable for development and for further consideration for leasing?
- What areas are unsuitable for coal development?
- How should minerals such as sand and gravel be managed?
- What special operating conditions, if any should be applied to geophysical operations?
- What special operating conditions, if any should be applied to coal bed methane operations?
- What types of restrictions should be applied to future mineral development to insure maintaining air and water quality values?
- Are appropriate areas available for mineral leasing consideration?
- Are the decisions made in the 1988 RMP still adequate?

For mineral development, Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) projections will be made for use in this planning review. For minerals and all other programs and activities, reasonably foreseeable actions or activity projections will also be made for the review. An oil and gas resource assessment, to be completed in FY 2003, will be used to check and adjust the Preliminary oil and gas RFD.

ISSUE 2: LAND TENURE ADJUSTMENT

There are some areas in the Pinedale Resource Area that are isolated and difficult to access (i.e., legal and physical access) and manage. Land disposals and acquisitions could provide improved access and manageability of public lands. Questions to be answered include:

- Should parcels of public land in the planning area that are identified as suitable for consideration for disposal (exchange, sale, R&PP sale or lease, etc.) to other federal agency administration, to local or state governments, private organizations, or private individuals, be modified?
- Should parcels of land identified for acquisition by BLM be changed?
- Where should physical or legal access, or both, be obtained? Are access needs identified still appropriate?

- Are the decisions made in the 1988 RMP still adequate?

ISSUE 3: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

There are conflicting demands for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of the vegetation resources in the planning area. The basic problem is maintaining resource values and nonconsumptive uses while allowing for consumptive uses. Resource values include vegetative cover; watershed protection; maintenance and enhancement of riparian areas; soil stabilization; and maintenance and enhancement of wildlife habitat (particularly big game crucial winter range and habitat for candidate, sensitive, proposed, or threatened and endangered wildlife and vegetative species). Consumptive uses include livestock grazing, off-road vehicle use, and vegetation removal by mineral development, rights-of-way construction, and other surface disturbing activities. Vegetation is also removed by wildlife foraging. Questions to be answered include:

- What are the current vegetation uses and what are the capabilities to meet current and future demands?
- Should vegetation communities still be managed for the types of uses identified?
- What is the desired future condition of the vegetation communities?
- What types and levels of livestock grazing use should be allowed and what accommodations should be made to provide for wildlife and T&E species habitat, and watershed protection?
- Should the objectives and parameters developed for vegetation manipulation be changed?
- Should improved or increased forage still be allocated as defined in the 1988 RMP?
- What management practices and resource development projects will help achieve new management objectives for livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, reintroduction of non-threatened and endangered species, and watershed enhancement on public lands?
- How should habitat diversity be provided for nongame populations?
- How should vegetation and other resource uses be managed to minimize wildlife habitat fragmentation?
- Are management practices or restrictions designed to maintain or improve habitat for elk, mule deer, antelope, sage grouse, and fish still adequate? Should the areas where these management practices or restrictions are applied be changed?
- Are updated management practices or restrictions needed to provide essential habitat for threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife species? In what parts of the planning area should these management practices or restrictions be applied?
- Where and under what conditions should fire be used as a vegetative management tool? What areas should be identified for either full suppression or limited suppression of wildfire?
- Are there areas where fire should be allowed to burn with virtually no suppression activity?

- Are the decisions made in the 1988 RMP still adequate?

ISSUE 4: RECREATION, CULTURAL RESOURCES (INCLUDING NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS), AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

There are certain resources and areas that need protection while others need to be considered for more public and recreational uses. Off-highway vehicle (Glossary) use can conflict with other land and resource uses and can cause damage to resources, including wildlife and watershed values and other recreation values. Principal considerations include providing for suitable and sufficient recreation uses and facilities (both dispersed and commercial), visual resource management direction, off-road vehicle use designations, management of paleontological resources, and management of cultural and historical resources (of particular concern is the need for protection of Congressionally designated National Historic Trails, other significant emigrant trails, such as the Lander Trail, other historic transportation resources in the region, including prehistoric and historic Indian trails, early historic exploration trails, Expansion Era roads, and Native American respected places). Visual intrusions along these trails and surrounding Native American respected places are also an issue.

- What are the current recreation values and what are the capabilities to meet current and future demands?
- Where is vehicular use, including geophysical exploration, causing resource damage or conflicting with other resource uses?
- Are areas identified as open, limited, or closed to off-road vehicular use still appropriate? Where should vehicular use be allowed to occur and under what conditions or designations?
- Is there a need to provide for visitor health and safety within the planning area?
- How should historic trails be managed?
- How should cultural properties and Native American respected places be managed?
- What management actions are needed to manage paleontological resources?
- Are there other socioeconomic issues regarding visual resources and open space that should be reviewed?
- How should other linear historic features, such as ditches and powerlines, be managed?
- How have public values of open space and visual resources changed, and how should these changes be addressed?
- Should the decisions made in the 1988 RMP be reviewed or changed?

ISSUE 5: WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE

New demands are being placed on public lands due to accelerated growth in and around cities and towns in the planning area. Growth has changed the way communities relate to surrounding public lands and has changed the communities' expectations. The basic problem is providing for public land management along with increased demands for public land and resource uses. Principal considerations include providing for healthy air and water quality, preventing water source depletion, and preventing fragmentation of wildlife habitat. Considerations also include providing for development patterns, transportation and utility corridor planning, and demands for open space and recreational uses, land tenure adjustments and wildland fire management. Specific questions include:

- What parcels of land in the planning area that, in the current RMP, are identified for transfer to other Federal agency administration or disposal to local or state governments, private organizations or private individuals are still appropriate? What new parcels should be identified?
- Are there new areas where emphasis should be placed on land acquisition?
- Where should physical or legal access, or both, be obtained?
- Are the utility corridors identified in the RMP still valid? Should new corridors be established?
- Where are rights-of-way allowed and where should they be avoided? What types of restrictions should be applied to such activities and where?
- Where and under what conditions should fire be used as a vegetative management tool?
- What areas should be identified for either full suppression or limited suppression of wildfire?
- Are there areas where fire should be allowed to burn with virtually no suppression activity?
- Should wildlife migration corridors be given special recognition?
- Should the decisions made in the 1988 RMP be reviewed or changed?

ISSUE 6: SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Attention is needed to address management of special status species (threatened and endangered, proposed, candidate, and sensitive plant and animal species) and the interrelationships of these species with other resource uses and activities. Principal considerations include management of species habitat to ensure continued use by these species. Areas where other resource activities may conflict with special status species and their habitat requirements need to be identified.

- What threatened and endangered, candidate, proposed and sensitive species are present in the planning area?

- What management actions should be taken to ensure habitat is available, and adequate, for these species?
- Should the decisions made in the 1988 RMP be reviewed or changed?

ISSUE 7: WATER QUALITY

There are concerns with maintaining or improving water quality, and complying with State and Federal requirements.

- What conditions of use should be applied to activities to avoid or minimize adverse effects to surface and subsurface water quality and quantity?
- What actions should be taken to improve water quality, fisheries habitat, and riparian health where conditions are unsatisfactory?
- What watershed management practices are needed to reduce soil erosion, sedimentation, and salinity contributions to the Green/Colorado River systems?
- Should the decisions made in the 1988 RMP be reviewed or changed?

ISSUE 8: SPECIAL MANAGEMENT DESIGNATIONS

There are unique areas or sensitive lands and resources in the planning area that meet the criteria for protection and management under special management designations. There are two areas designated as areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC -- Rock Creek and Beaver Creek) that contain unique resources requiring special management attention. There are three special recreation management areas (SRMA-- the Upper Green River, Boulder Lake, and Scab Creek SRMAs) containing recreation values that require special management attention. In some places, unique or sensitive lands and resources are in danger of being lost or compromised. Ross Butte, Milleson Draw, Bench Corral and Graphite Hollow are other areas that may warrant special management designation. There are also concerns that special management area designations may result in too many restrictions on the use of public lands.

- Are the existing management practices or restrictions for the existing ACECs adequate?
- Should other areas be designated for special management?
- What designations are appropriate and what should the management emphasis be for those areas?
- Should the decisions made in the 1988 RMP be reviewed or changed?

PRELIMINARY PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that are developed to guide and direct the planning review for and modification of the Pinedale RMP. The planning criteria serve to:

- Ensure that the planning effort follows and incorporates legal requirements, provides for management of all resource uses in the planning area, is focused on the issues, and is accomplished efficiently;
- Identify the scope and parameters of the planning effort; and
- Inform the public of what to expect of the planning effort.

Planning criteria are based on laws and regulations; guidance provided by the BLM Wyoming State Director; results of consultation and coordination with the public, other agencies and governmental entities, and Indian tribes; analysis of information pertinent to the planning area; public input; and professional judgement.

The planning criteria focus on the development of management options and alternatives, analysis of their effects, and selection of the Preferred Alternative and the Proposed RMP. Additional planning criteria may be identified as the planning process progresses.

PLANNING CRITERIA FOR SPECIFIC RESOURCE PROGRAMS

All program specific guidance that apply, as noted in land use planning manual 1601 and handbook H-1601-1, Appendix C.

- (1) **Criteria for Use of Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing** - The Wyoming BLM has developed "mitigation guidelines" for use in determining the types and levels of mitigation needed to protect important resources from actions involving surface-disturbing and other human-presence disturbance or disruptive activities. These guidelines are used in the planning/NEPA process for (1) developing management options and alternatives and analyzing their impacts ; and (2) as part of the planning criteria for developing the options and alternatives and for determining mitigation requirements. The "Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines for Surface-disturbing and Disruptive Activities" are provided in Appendix 1, which also contains further information on how they are used in the planning/NEPA process.

Criteria for Coal Planning/Screening Process - The coal planning/screening process (including application of the coal unsuitability criteria) under 43 CFR 3461) will

not be conducted for the planning effort. Any interest in exploration for or leasing of federal coal will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If an application for a federal coal lease is received sometime in the future, an appropriate land use and environmental analysis will be conducted (which will include conducting the coal screening/planning process), to determine whether or not the federal coal areas applied for are acceptable for development and leasing consideration. The Pinedale RMP will be amended as necessary. To date, there has been no interest expressed to the BLM for leasing and development of federal coal in the planning area. It is noted that the coal occurrence potential in the planning area must still be determined because of the interest in coal bed methane development. Thus, the Notice of Intent to conduct a planning review and modification of the Pinedale RMP will include a call for any available coal and other resource information for the planning area.

Criteria for Healthy Rangelands - The Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming (S&Gs) were approved by the Secretary of the Interior on August 12, 1997. They have been included in this document as Appendix 2.

The Secretary of the Interior approved the Wyoming BLM S&Gs to aid in achieving the four fundamentals of rangeland health outlined in the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4180.1). These four fundamentals are: (1) watersheds are functioning properly; (2) water, nutrients, and energy are cycling properly; (3) water quality meets state standards; and, (4) habitat for special status species is protected. The standards apply to all resources and land and resource uses on the public lands, while the guidelines apply specifically to livestock grazing practices. The S&Gs are used to aid in developing options and alternatives for analysis and in considering appropriate management options necessary to implement the S&Gs.

Management objectives and actions described in each alternative addressed in the EIS would be subject to the standards for healthy rangelands. In addition, the livestock grazing management objectives and related actions for each of the alternatives would be subject to both the standards for healthy rangelands and the guidelines for livestock grazing management. Therefore, because the S&Gs are policy guidance, they are common to all alternatives. However, specific actions to implement the S&Gs may vary by alternative.

Criteria for Multiple Use Considerations - Multiple use is defined in the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as the management of public lands and

their various resource values so they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit output. BLM policy requires that BLM-administered public lands be managed under this multiple use concept. As appropriate, management objectives and actions described for each alternative addressed in the planning/NEPA process will consider all resources and resource uses in the planning area, (physical, biological, and socioeconomic).

Criteria for Hydrocarbon Potential - To aid in the planning review and RMP modification criteria will be developed for leasing and development of hydrocarbon-based minerals (oil and gas, and coal bed methane). Using available geologic information, reports of past production, and information from the minerals industry, areas of high, moderate, and low potential for the occurrence and development of hydrocarbons in the planning area will be identified. Estimates of reasonably foreseeable oil and gas (including coalbed methane) exploration and development activity will be developed from analysis of past activity and production. These estimates will be used to aid in the analysis of environmental consequences. Because they are general, these occurrence and development potential classifications and production estimates are appropriate for planning purposes, but they are not appropriate for, nor are they intended to predict, future specific activity or the specific locations of new discoveries.

Criteria for Other Leasable Minerals - Other leasable minerals (coal, phosphates, geothermal, etc.) will not be addressed in this planning review. There is no known development potential in the planning area for other leasable minerals.

Criteria for Salable Mineral Potential - Information on salable minerals (sand, gravel, decorative stone, et al.) occurrence potential and records of past minerals activities will be used to estimate what types and amounts of future saleable mineral development would take place in the planning area. Estimates of reasonably foreseeable mineral development will be used to aid in the analysis of environmental consequences.

(2) **Criteria for Locatable Minerals Potential** - Criteria will be developed for determining the occurrence and development potential of locatable minerals such as gold, diamonds, uranium and bentonite. Areas of high, moderate, and low occurrence and development potential will be determined to facilitate analysis of the effects that the variety of other land and resource uses and management actions would have on locatable minerals development and vice versa. This will only be based on a representative analysis by inference and does not imply that there may or may not be undiscovered locatable minerals of economic value in the planning area.

Criteria for Withdrawals and Classifications - Under sections 202(d) and 204(1) of the FLPMA, any classification or withdrawal on BLM-administered public land is subject to periodic review to determine whether or not it is serving its intended purpose and is still needed. These reviews will be conducted during the planning effort and may result in determining that some classifications and withdrawals should be modified or terminated. During the planning effort, the need for new or expanded withdrawals may also be identified. Where the need for new withdrawals is identified that overlap existing withdrawals that should be terminated, the new withdrawals will be put in place before terminating old withdrawals on the same areas.

The criteria for conducting these reviews in the course of the planning effort are presented below. For purposes of providing an adequate comparison of impacts ,for the planning effort, all existing withdrawals and classifications and their segregation effects will be assumed to continue in effect in the description of continuation of existing management direction.

- (3) **Withdrawals Under Other Agency Jurisdiction** - The withdrawal review requirement of the FLPMA has not yet been completed on those federal lands withdrawn for purposes of other federal agencies (i.e., those under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense or Bureau of Reclamation). For the purposes of this planning effort, it must be assumed that these withdrawals will remain in effect, and that the planning and management authorities for these withdrawn lands will remain with those agencies. Thus, the planning effort will not include consideration of any planning or management decisions for either the federal land surface or federal minerals within these withdrawn areas. These lands will, however, be considered in conducting the environmental analysis for the planning effort in terms of cumulative impacts and in terms of how they may be affected by management in the planning area or vice versa.

Withdrawals and Classifications Under BLM Jurisdiction - The review of withdrawals and classifications on any lands under BLM jurisdiction may result in a determination that withdrawals or classifications are no longer serving their intended purposes and should be terminated (either all or in part). This review will include consideration of whether new withdrawals or classifications, for other purposes, are needed and should be put into place before terminating old withdrawals on the same areas.

Criteria for Wild Horse Management - There are no wild horses or wild horse “herd management areas” in the planning area. Historic wild horse “herd areas” will be identified and existing land use plan decisions will be revisited.

Criteria for Wilderness Management - There are two wilderness study areas (WSA–Lake Mountain and Scab Creek) on BLM-administered public lands in the planning area. These WSAs were established in accordance with the requirements of Section 603(c) of FLPMA and section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. These WSAs will continue to be managed under the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP) until Congress either designates all or portions of the WSAs as wilderness or releases the lands from further wilderness consideration. There may be instances where resource values within WSAs will require RMP management decisions or prescriptions that are more stringent than the IMP.

While there have been no other areas with wilderness characteristics identified on public lands in the planning area, such additional lands could be identified during the planning effort (per the general provisions of Section 202 of FLPMA).

- (4) **Criteria for Wild and Scenic Rivers** - Any public land surface found to meet the suitability factors to be given further consideration for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System (being handled under separate contract) will be addressed in the RMP modification effort in terms of developing interim management options in the alternatives for the EIS (in accordance with Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, BLM Manual 8351, and Instruction Memo. However, for purposes of providing an adequate comparison of impacts for the planning effort, the description of continuation of existing management direction (No Action Alternative) will not include any consideration of wild and scenic rivers. The only planning decision to be made in the RMP is the interim management prescription to maintain or enhance the outstandingly remarkable values and WSR classifications for those public land surface areas that meet the Wild and Scenic River suitability factors.

Criteria for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) - The relevance and importance criteria for ACEC designation, found in BLM Manual 1613, will be applied to BLM-administered public lands in the planning area to determine if any areas have the potential for ACEC designation. An ACEC designation alone does not change the allowed uses of the public lands involved (FLPMA-Sec.201(a) and 43 CFR 1601.0-5a). An ACEC designation is not a substitute for a WSA or wilderness suitability recommendation (BLM Manual 1613.06). Protective measures for ACECs are not applied or required simply because of the designation; rather, the nature of the values, resources, or natural hazards they contain are the bases for determining the appropriate types and levels of management needed. The only automatic requirement due to an ACEC designation is that a “plan of operations” must be submitted for any degree of mining claim development in the area (43 CFR 3809.1-4).

This planning effort will recognize valid existing rights.

- (5) Actions must comply with laws, executive orders, and regulations.
- (6) Lands covered in the EIS for the planning effort include any/all lands that may affect, or be affected by, the management occurring on the BLM-administered public lands in the planning area. However, the planning decisions in the RMP will apply only to the BLM-administered public lands and federal mineral estate in the planning area. This includes decisions on the BLM-administered federal minerals that underlie non-federal lands (split estate) in the planning area. Within the planning area, there will be no RMP decisions made on non-federal land surface or mineral estate, on federal lands administered by other federal agencies, or the federal mineral estate underlying federal lands administered by other federal agencies.
- (7) A collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach will be used, where possible, to jointly determine the desired future condition and management direction for the public lands.

To the extent possible and within legal and regulatory parameters, BLM management and planning decisions will complement the planning and management decisions of other agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes, with jurisdictions intermingled with and adjacent to the planning area.

Planning and management direction will be focused on the relative values of resources and not the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or economic output.

Where practicable and timely for the planning effort, current scientific information, research, and new technologies will be considered.

Reasonably Foreseeable Action or Activity (RFA) scenarios for all land and resource uses (including minerals) will be developed and portrayed based on historical, existing, and projected levels for all programs.

Existing endangered species recovery plans, including plans for reintroduction of endangered species and other species, will be considered. Consultation, coordination and cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service will be in accordance with the 2000 BLM/FWS Interagency Memorandum of Understanding regarding Section 7 Consultation. All existing biological assessments and biological opinions regarding areas within the planning area will be reviewed for adequacy and possible consolidation and update.

PLANNING CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES

If the Pinedale RMP is to be amended or revised, the following will be considered in one or more of the alternatives to be developed.

- (1)** Special or other management areas and their potential management.
- (2)** Intensive management of significant cultural, historic, and paleontological resources, including Native American respected places and trails.
- (3)** The use of prescribed fire, chemical, and mechanical treatments to improve natural resources.
- (4)** The reduction of hazardous fuels on BLM-administered lands near wildland interface communities that are at high risk from wildfire, such as Hoback Rim.
- (5)** Fire suppression management options.
- (6)** Management options for the protection and enhancement of riparian and wetland areas.
- (7)** Management options for reducing the spread of noxious weeds.
- (8)** Management options for the protection of habitat for threatened, endangered, sensitive, and other important wildlife and plant species.
- (9)** Management options for protection of wild and scenic river values.
- (10)** Various types of vegetation uses, including wildlife habitat, watershed protection, livestock grazing, etc.
- (11)** Various levels of livestock grazing.
- (12)** Identification of lands suitable for minerals exploration and development, off-highway vehicle use, rights-of-way construction, and other activities that may result in surface disturbance.
- (13)** Identification of rights-of-way concentration areas, exclusion areas and avoidance areas to provide for development needs and protection of resource values.

- (14) Opportunities for enhancing recreation.
- (15) Opportunities for land exchanges that could be useful in meeting goals for resource manageability and public access.
- (16) Providing or improving access to public lands for reasonable levels of public use and for resource development and manageability.
- (17) Management of recreational use and designation of Special Recreation Management Areas.
- (18) Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications will be evaluated and modified, as necessary, to reflect present conditions and future needs. Areas where specific land uses need to be modified or restricted to resolve conflicts will be identified.
- (19) Watersheds and watershed needs will be considered in the development of management options and alternatives for all resource and land.
- (20) Vegetation management objectives or objectives for desired future condition will be included in all alternatives. Mitigation of surface disturbing activities will also be considered.

PLANNING CRITERIA FOR ANALYZING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following potential effects will be addressed:

- (1) Effects of opening or closing BLM-administered lands to some uses or activities.
- (2) Effects of resource protection measures on land and resource uses and activities.
- (3) Effects of surface-disturbing uses and other disruptive human activities on air quality, cultural resources, recreational opportunities, watershed, and wildlife/fish resources, including special status species.
- (4) Effects of land tenure adjustments, livestock grazing, and OHV use on other land and resource uses.

- (5) The socioeconomic effects of the alternatives in the EIS will be addressed.
- (6) The effects of mineral development on other resources and land uses.
- (7) Effects of all types of land and resource uses on the diversity of plant and animal species.
- (8) Effects on land and resource uses from retention or termination of existing withdrawals and classifications.
- (9) Effects of all types of land and resource uses on the vegetation, water, soil, and air resources.

PLANNING CRITERIA FOR SELECTING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The following considerations will guide selection of the preferred alternative:

- (1) Levels of land use restrictions needed to protect resources and keep lands and resources available for public use.
- (2) The potential for the occurrence and development of mineral resources.
- (3) Consistency with the land use plans, programs, and policies of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes.
- (4) The potential for sustaining the productivity and diversity of ecosystems while providing for human values, products, and services.
- (5) Social and economic values.
- (6) Existing law, regulations, and BLM policy.
- (7) Public input, welfare and safety.
- (8) Environmental impacts.
- (1) Consistency with the objectives of the National Fire Plan and the 10-year Comprehensive Fire Strategy.

- (2) Consistency with existing conservation strategies/recovery plans for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.

PLANNING CRITERIA FOR USING THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS PROCEDURE TO DEVELOP LAND USE PLAN (RMP) PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

- (1) The Management Situation Analysis (MSA) procedure and documentation consist of a detailed evaluation and description of (1) the Continuation of Existing Management Direction (or “No Action”) Alternative (this alternative will have a 20-year projection or analysis period); (2) the description of the affected or existing environment; and (3) the description of the impact analysis of the No Action Alternative (including the input of both informal and formal public scoping conducted to that point). The results of this analysis and scoping provide (4) the basic determination of the problems, concerns, conflicts and issues associated with continuation of existing management direction in the planning area, upon which the remainder of the planning effort will be focused. The MSA procedure and documentation also includes (5) the planning criteria for conducting the planning effort; (6) a record data/information compiled and new data/information gathered or specifically needed for the planning effort; and (6) a record of resource management options, opportunities, and limitations to respond to and resolve the issues, concerns, etc. At this point in the process, a determination will be made on whether the RMP modification will be an amendment, or a complete revision. Regardless of that determination, the environmental analysis level for the Pinedale RMP modification will be an EIS (rather than an environmental assessment or EA).
- (2) Upon completion of the MSA, alternatives (i.e., alternatives to existing management direction, or alternatives to the No Action Alternative) will be developed for detailed impact analysis (as with the MSA, all alternatives will have a 20-year projection or analysis period). An alternative is a comprehensive and complete “alternative RMP” and is made up of resource and land use “management options” among the various programs of resource and land uses occurring in the planning area. In compliance with NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and the BLM planning regulations and guidance, alternatives must be reasonable and must be capable of implementation. Two basic alternative “themes” will be used to formulate the first two alternatives – one that emphasizes

development and intensive management and de-emphasizes environmental protection (within the parameters of law and regulation), and one that emphasizes environmental protection and de-emphasizes development and intensive management (within the parameters of law and regulation). The basic objectives of these alternatives is to try to resolve the issues, concerns, problems and conflicts associated with the No Action Alternative; to provide an adequate range of alternatives to analyze in detail; and to provide a good basis for comparative impact analyses. A detailed analysis of each of these alternatives is conducted and documented. It is possible that other alternative themes could be identified as a result of these analyses. Other management options and alternatives that are “considered,” but not analyzed in detail, are also documented, along with the reasons and rationale for not conducting a detailed analysis on them.

- (3)** Based upon the analyses of the above alternatives, the Preferred Alternative (i.e., the BLM’s preferred alternative) will then be selected and analyzed in detail. Usually, none of the above alternatives can, individually, represent the BLM’s preferred alternative and another alternative is formulated as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative is usually made up of a combination of management options from the other alternatives that provide the best mix and balance of multiple land and resource uses to resolve the issues with existing management in the planning area, based on the Planning Criteria for selection of the Preferred Alternative.
- (4)** The draft EIS for the RMP will then be prepared. The descriptions of all the alternative RMPs analyzed in detail (including the Preferred Alternative) make up Chapter 2 of the EIS. The description of the affected or existing environment is Chapter 3 of the EIS, and the descriptions of the environmental consequences of the alternatives is Chapter 4 of the EIS. Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter describing the planning issues and planning criteria, and Chapter 5 is a description of the public involvement and coordination occurring to this point in the planning process.
- (5)** Following the public review and comment period on the draft EIS, the final EIS will be prepared. The final EIS will be a complete, stand-alone document (not an abbreviated document). The final EIS has the same basic outline and content as the draft EIS. The primary difference between the draft and final EISs is that the focus of the final EIS is on the “Proposed RMP Decisions or Proposed RMP Modification,” which is included in Chapter 2 of the final EIS. Based upon public comment, any new

information and correction of errors in the draft EIS, the final EIS will present the Proposed RMP Decisions or Proposed RMP Modification (which is usually a refinement or modification of the Preferred Alternative in the draft EIS), along with the other alternatives.

- (6) Following a concurrent 60-day Governor’s consistency review and a 30-day protest period on the Proposed RMP and final EIS, any protests submitted will be resolved and both the Record of Decision (ROD) for the EIS and the Approved RMP Decisions, or RMP Modification, will be prepared in one document and issued to the public.

DATA AND GIS NEEDS

As applicable, the following map data themes may be used in the planning/NEPA effort to support RMP decisions.

Land and Mineral Ownership	Important and crucial big game
Boundaries	seasonal ranges and parturition
Planning Area	areas
Political	Migration corridors
Other federal agencies	Herd units and hunt areas
Vegetation	Sage grouse leks, nesting,
Special status species and habitat	wintering, and brood rearing
Slope (Digital Elevation Models)	habitats
Aspect	Raptor nests and roosting areas
Flood Plains	Prairie dog towns
Surface Water	T&E species habitat
Perennial Streams	Special status species habitat
Intermittent Streams	Soils
Standing Water	VRM Management Classes
Watershed boundaries	ORV Designations
Fencing	Recreation
Grazing Allotments	SRMA
Range Improvement Projects	ERMA
Wildlife Areas	Recreation sites -
Antelope	developed/undeveloped
Deer	ROW Corridors and Exclusion,
Elk	Avoidance, and Open Areas
Moose	Land Tenure Adjustment
	Acquisition and disposal areas
	Withdrawals

Public Water Reserves	Pipelines
R&PP lands	Power lines
BOR Seedskadee Project	Railroads
withdrawal review lands	Historic trails
USAF withdrawal	Communication sites
Transportation and Transmission systems	Mineral Occurrence and Development Potential
Roads	Forestry
Solid minerals	Paleontology
Fluid minerals	Fire Occurrence
Locatable minerals	Wildland/Urban Interface Areas
Salable minerals	ACECs and Proposed ACEC areas
Oil and Gas Well Information	WSAs and Proposed Areas
Geologic Hazards	Fisheries
Landslides	Wild and Scenic Rivers
Active faults	
Wind blown sand deposits	
H2S production areas	
Oil and Gas Unit Boundaries	
Cultural	
National Historic Trails	
Other sites	
Air Quality	

The meta data and actual electronic data for these themes are being compiled. When the compilation is completed it will be added as an appendix. Throughout the planning process a list of currently available data, data gaps, and a data inventory and collection activity plan will be maintained. Appendix 4 is an example of the 40 standard GIS Themes used in the Green River RMP Preparation Plan. The Wyoming metadata standards will be used for naming GIS databases.

The Wyoming State Office is developing a GIS web page with downloadable maps listed by field office. The site, recently located at <http://www2.wy.blm.gov>, has the potential of becoming a complete inventory of GIS data available for land use planning. See Appendix 5 for further discussion on GIS data and information.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROCESS

The participants in the planning process include the public, required reviewers of the planning/NEPA documentation products, the contractor, and the planning team. Public participation is described and required reviewers are identified in Appendix 6.

The BLM planning teams are discussed below and the team members are listed in Appendix 7.

This RMP modification will be conducted by contract. Thus, the planning team will have less responsibility for direct writing of the document, but more responsibility for document review and contract oversight. The contracted RMP process is largely an untried one, and unforeseen problems may develop over the course of the RMP modification. The planning team will have to deal with these as they occur.

PLANNING TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The planning team consists of the State Director and State Office staff, Field Manager and Field Office staff, Contractor, and interdisciplinary team as described below.

The State Director, with the SO Staff, is responsible for providing technical and policy guidance during the planning effort. The State Director shares quality control responsibilities with the Field Manager.

Interdisciplinary Team

Members of the interdisciplinary planning team (ID Team) will supply technical data, draft narratives, impact analyses, and other information in approved formats and in time to meet established deadlines. This includes working with the contractor(s) hired for the planning effort. Team members are responsible for consulting with the RMP Team Leader and Technical Coordinator, in advance of deadlines, on any questions and on any anticipated needs or shortfalls. Members will also meet with the public and industry to acquire information and input.

During the course of the planning effort, ID team members, with emphasis on “team,” will work in an interdisciplinary manner, consult with other professionals as needed or required, and make full use of other Field Office and State Office expertise assigned to the planning team.

A. The Field Manager

The Field Manager has overall responsibility for the planning effort. Specific responsibilities of the Field Manager include:

1. Providing overall guidance, making Field Office staff assignments as necessary, and setting the overall goals of the planning effort.

2. Providing input to key portions of the planning/NEPA process, particularly updating of issues and planning criteria, MSA direction, alternative formulation, and selection of the preferred alternative.
3. Direct supervision of the field office team members to the extent of their participation in this project. Directing the day-to-day activities of the interdisciplinary team involved in the planning/NEPA process.
4. Participating with the State Office and zone coordinators in establishing the scope and level of detail of the planning effort. The Field Manager is also responsible for product and process quality control at the Field Office level.
5. Keeping local interest groups and key individuals informed of, and, to the extent possible, involved in the general progress of the planning/NEPA effort.
6. Reviewing Federal Register notices and news releases before issuance.
7. Maintaining a general awareness of the progress of the planning/NEPA effort.

B. Team Leader

The Team Leader has the primary responsibility for directing the planning effort through the planning/NEPA process and for the preparation of the EIS and RMP documentation and ensuring that schedules are met. He/She recommends planning direction and the resolution of management conflicts to the Field Manager. The Team Leader will report to the Field Manager, who is the responsible line official. The Team Leader will be the primary spokesperson for the planning/NEPA effort and will direct all public involvement connected with the project. The Team Leader will direct the day-to-day activities of the ID team when they are involved in the planning process. Typing assistance and other critical support needs will be coordinated by the Team Leader. It is the responsibility of the Team Leader to keep the Field Manager informed and involved at key process points and work closely with all. He/She is responsible for the coordination among various agencies, industry and interest groups, the planning team, and the general Public.

The Team Leader ensures the planning process is conducted and the EIS and RMP are prepared within the technical and procedural quality standards which meet the requirements of NEPA, CEQ, BLM, and departmental guidelines. His/Her duties include ensuring deadlines are met, overseeing day-to-day work,

complying with the approved preparation plan, communicating any changes in preparation, and maintaining interdisciplinary coordination.

Other responsibilities include:

1. Supervising and directing any contractors hired to assist BLM in the land use planning process.
2. Coordinating with Field Managers and State Office staff throughout the process.
3. Ensuring that mapping, documentation, and printing schedules are identified and maintained.
4. Identifying staffing needs for special tasks.
5. Compiling, reviewing, and analyzing public comments on the DEIS and FEIS for the Field Manager and the State Director.

C. State Office and Zone Coordinators

The State Office and Zone Coordinators are the State Director and Field Manager's representatives on the interdisciplinary team and are responsible for ensuring that clear project assistance, quality control, and policy and guidance requirements are met. This may include coordinating the assignment of needed personnel from the State and Field Offices and the coordination of timely State Office review to ensure processing and quality control. Such reviews will be coordinated through the Field Manager and Team Leader. Specific functions of the State Office and Zone Coordinators would include:

1. Resolve differences among State and Field Office specialists. Ensure that specialists' comments guide conformance of the planning/NEPA process with policy, individual program requirements, particularly the Planning Manual and Handbook (1601 and H1601-1).
2. Provide orientation, planning/NEPA procedural guidance and training for the planning team.
3. Ensure that review comments include positive suggestions for revision, improvement, solution, etc.

4. Ensure consistent, legal, and accurate interpretation of policy and State Director guidance and that process review is focused on content and substance.
5. Ensure all comments provide clear direction on what needs to be done.
6. Maintain familiarity with the planning effort so that they can serve as the contact points with State and Field Office staffs.
7. Serve as main contact points with State government for consistency review.
8. Serve as main contact points with Washington Office for protest resolution.

D. Public Affairs Officer

The Public Affairs Officer develops a public participation plan, coordinates public meetings, handles Congressional and media inquiries, and prepares media releases with help from the planning team leader. He/She provides assistance to the team leader and writer-editor for Federal Register notices, newsletters, public correspondence, etc.

E. Technical Coordinator

In the absence of the Team Leader, the technical coordinator acts in the Team Leader capacity in all respects.

The Technical Coordinator assists the Team Leader in developing time schedules, ensuring schedules are met and assignments completed, and in providing team guidance.

The Technical Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that information is technically correct and scientifically consistent throughout the planning effort. He/She will have the responsibility for management of inventory and data collection and interpretation. The Technical Coordinator will provide guidance to the specialists in regard to how information is to be presented and will have responsibility for reviewing and editing specialist's work for technical accuracy and consistency. He/She will coordinate mapping and information needs and products with the ID team, contractors, and WSO technographics and printing support. He/She will work closely with the Team Leader and the Editor.

F. GIS Coordinator

The GIS Coordinator is responsible to the Team Leader. General responsibilities include:

1. Coordinating with the State Office on all GIS data needs.
2. Determining the level of detail of GIS information to be input into the system.
3. Coordinating product proofing with the ID Team and the State Office. Provides guidance on inventory and data collection and technical guidance.
4. Creation of maps needed for the EIS and RMP documents and for ID team use. Analysis of GIS information to assist ID team in impact analysis and description of the affected environment.

G. Writer/Editor

The Writer/Editor (Editor) is responsible for providing planning/NEPA document editorial management of style, tone, format, and readability. The Editor is the principal determinant concerning layout, assembly, and printing of the planning/NEPA and RMP documents, and assists in the preparation and cataloging of public comment summaries. He/She provides the technical editing expertise necessary in all sections of the planning/NEPA and RMP documents and assumes the load in coordinating the preparation of graphics and illustrations. He/She recommends and assembles the bibliography and glossary contents and format. The Editor directly assists the Team Leader and Public Affairs Officer in the implementation of the Public Participation Plan.

The Editor has overall responsibility for the format of typing submissions for the word processor. The Editor schedules and coordinates typing submissions.

H. Resource Specialists

The resource specialists participate in the planning process in the following steps: issue identification, development of planning criteria, analysis of the management situation, formulation of alternatives, analysis of alternatives,

responses to comments, and changes and modifications to the draft and final EIS documents.

The resource specialists are responsible for knowing schedule deadlines and completing all draft and final write-ups for their disciplines and resource components in a usable form and according to schedule. They are responsible for review and input into products provided by contractors.

Each resource specialist is responsible for one or more resources and/or programs to be addressed in the planning/NEPA process. They are also responsible for the related data accumulation and recommendations to be made.

The resource specialists identify program and resource component mapping needed for the planning effort and EIS.

The resource specialists are responsible for attendance at small group or public meetings as required. The resource specialists are responsible for making public, peer, and agency contacts for acquiring and sharing resource information.

The resource specialists are responsible for attending ID team meetings.

The resource specialists will supply additional assistance when necessary and requested by the Team Leader.

Support

A. Other Support

Others may be requested to provide support to the planning effort at the request of the Field Manager or Team Leader.

B. State Office Review Team

The State Office Review Team is responsible for review of preliminary documents and providing program and State Director guidance. Specific functions of the State Office Review Team include:

1. Ensure that review comments include suggestions for revision, improvement, solution, etc.
2. Ensure consistent, legal, and accurate interpretation of policy and State Director guidance and that process review is focused on content and substance.
3. Ensure all comments provide clear direction on what needs to be done.
4. Maintain familiarity with the planning effort so they can coordinate with other State Office staffs.
5. Ensure conformance with policy, the planning/NEPA process individual program requirements, and the Planning Manual and Handbook (1601 and H1601-1).

FORMAT AND PROCESS FOR THE PLANNING EFFORT

PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

The BLM land use (or resource management plan -- RMP) planning process, explained in 43 CFR 1600, BLM 1601 Manual, and BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), falls within the framework of the NEPA environmental analysis and decision making process described in the CEQ regulations of 40 CFR 1500-1508, the Department of the Interior NEPA Manual (516 DM 1-7), and the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1.

Procedural requirements for land use planning in 43 CFR 1600 are the same as procedural requirements of the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1500), except as outlined below. The following list includes only requirements of the BLM planning process that are not imposed by the NEPA guidance.

1. A Notice of Intent (NOI) is published in the *Federal Register* to begin an EA-level plan amendment because the planning regulations mandate an NOI to initiate public participation in the planning process (see 43 CFR 1610.2 (c)). For EIS-level plans, revisions, or amendments, the NOI must meet the requirements of both the CEQ regulations and the planning regulations. The NOI should identify preliminary issues and planning criteria. Simultaneously with the *Federal Register* NOI, submit an NOI for circulation among State agencies. In addition, submit this notice to Federal agencies, the heads of county boards, other local governmental units, and Tribal representatives who have requested such notice, as well as any other entities or individuals the manager feels would be concerned with the planning effort (see 43 CFR 1610.3-1(d)).
2. Planning criteria are prepared to ensure decision making is tailored to the issues pertinent to the planning effort and to ensure BLM avoids unnecessary data collection and analyses. BLM gives public notice and an opportunity for review of, and comment on, the planning criteria before they are approved (see 43 CFR 1610.2 (f) (2) and 1610.4-2). In giving public notice, BLM will use whatever means are needed to reach the audience. Use of e-mail and web pages is encouraged, but by themselves, these are not sufficient to notify the public.
3. At least a 90-day public review and comment period is allowed on draft EISs prepared to analyze alternative land use plan decisions (see 43 CFR 1610.2(e)).
4. BLM land use plans and amendments must be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans of Indian tribes, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments to the maximum extent practical, given that BLM land use plans must also be consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of FLPMA and other Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands (see 43 CFR 1610.3-2 (a)).

If these other entities do not have officially approved or adopted resource-related plans, then BLM land use plans must, to the maximum extent practical, be consistent with their officially approved and adopted resource-related policies and programs. This consistency will be accomplished so long as BLM land use

plans are consistent with the policies, programs, and provisions of public land laws and regulations (see 43 CFR 1610.3-2 (b)).

5. Before BLM approves proposed land use plan decisions, the Governor(s) must have 60 days to identify inconsistencies between the proposed plan and State plans and programs and to provide written comments to the State Director. (The BLM and the State may mutually agree upon a shorter review period satisfactory to both.) If the Governor(s) does not respond within this period, it is assumed that the proposed land use plan decisions are consistent. If the Governor recommends changes in the proposed plan or amendment that were not raised during the public participation process, the State Director shall provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the recommendations (see 43 CFR 1610.3-2 (e)). This public comment opportunity will be offered for 30 days and may coincide with the 30-day comment period for the Notice of Significant Change. If the State Director does not accept the Governor's recommendations, the Governor has 30 days to appeal in writing to the BLM Director (see 43 CFR 1610.3-2(e)).
6. The public must have 60 days to review any proposed ACEC designations (see 43 CFR 1613.)
7. There is a 30-day protest period for proposed land use plan decisions (see 43 CFR 1610.5-2). Protests must be filed with the BLM Director.
8. Before a land use plan decision is approved, the BLM must give public notice and provide a 30-day public comment period if there has been any significant change to the proposed plan (see 43 CFR 1610.5-1(b)). Comments in response to this Notice of Significant Change will be addressed by the State Director.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS, DOCUMENTATION, AND REVIEW

Preplanning -- Development of the Management Situation Analysis

The ID team, in collaboration with a contractor, will be involved in preplanning as follows: The ID Team will begin the planning effort by developing the management situation analysis (MSA) for the planning area. The MSA will begin with a comprehensive description of the existing management direction in the planning area. This description will eventually become the "No Action Alternative" to be included in the description of the alternatives section of the environmental analysis document (EA or EIS) for the planning effort. The description of existing management direction is comprised of brief statements of management actions and objectives. This section

should follow the format used in recently published Wyoming BLM EISs for RMPs (such as the Grass Creek and Newcastle RMPs). The description of existing management direction should identify the land use activities and production levels that are anticipated to occur during the analysis period of the EIS. These Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) and Reasonably Foreseeable Action (RFA) scenarios are important “assumptions for analysis” that are needed to formulate and understand environmental consequences.

Next, the MSA will include a description of the Affected Environment. This will become the existing or affected Environment section of the EA or EIS for the Planning effort. This will be prepared by the contractor in collaboration with the ID Team. Finally, the contractor, in collaboration with the ID Team, will prepare a comprehensive description of the environmental consequences associated with continuation of existing management. The analysis will become part of the environmental consequences section of the EA or EIS for the planning effort and will set the stage for developing the alternatives to existing management.

Alternative Formulation

The basic goal in formulating alternatives for the EA or EIS is to identify desired combinations of management options among the various resources and land uses (and the allowable public land uses and actions to achieve the desired outcomes) that respond to the planning issues. The alternatives should also address ways to resolve or mitigate the environmental consequences of continuing existing management that are described in the MSA.

Each alternative represents a complete and reasonable land use plan to guide future management of public lands and resources. The “No Action” Alternative represents continuation of existing management direction. Other alternatives provide a range of choices for solving problems associated with existing management. (The problems with existing management are identified through the MSA process, including scoping and other public involvement.)

The analysis of impacts that would be associated with each of the alternatives is required by BLM planning regulations and the CEQ regulations. Comparison of the differences of impacts among the alternatives is also required. With this analysis, BLM managers are able to choose a preferred alternative from one of the complete alternatives, from combined portions of the various alternatives, by modification of an alternative, or by development of a different alternative.

At least three alternative themes can be identified in the development of most RMPs.

Alternative A. This alternative would continue present management practices based on existing land use plans. The alternative is known as the Continuation of Existing Management Direction or “No Action” Alternative.

Alternative B. Compared to existing management, this alternative would focus on increasing resource yields and uses through fewer restrictions on activities such as mineral resource development, livestock grazing, and OHV travel.

Alternative C. Compared to existing management, this alternative would favor resources such as wildlife habitat, vegetative production, and opportunities for primitive recreation in resolving resource conflicts.

Development of the Preferred Alternative

The development and selection of the Preferred Alternative occurs after the previously formulated alternatives have been analyzed and their effects have been evaluated. After this analysis and evaluation, the Field Manager develops and selects the Preferred Alternative from various options among the alternatives considered or develops a different alternative as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative is then analyzed and the analysis is documented. The Preferred Alternative, in the manager’s judgment, best addresses the issues and management requirements of the planning area.

The Preferred Alternative may be one of the alternatives studied in detail; it may be developed from parts of the various alternatives; it may reflect management’s modification of options previously considered; or it may be developed from new options. The latter two situations could occur when management actions result in undesirable impacts in all of the alternatives and it becomes apparent that another management approach, or a management compromise, is needed.

The State Director reviews the Preferred Alternative in the Preliminary Draft EIS for the RMP and notifies the Field Manager of any required modifications. If necessary, a modified Preferred Alternative is again analyzed and the Draft EIS is submitted to the State Director for approval. When approved by the State Director, the Draft EIS is published and filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and made available for public review and comment.

PLAN PREPARATION SCHEDULE

The proposed schedule (Table 2) for the Pinedale RMP Modification will result in completion of the proposed RMP and Final EIS, including the 30-day protest period, in less than 36 months (completion date October 2004). The schedule includes all steps necessary to complete a plan review from Preparation Plan development through Protest of the Proposed RMP Decisions. An additional undetermined time period will be required to resolve any protests before issuing the ROD and RMP decisions for State Director approval.

TABLE 2

PINEDALE RMP MODIFICATION SCHEDULE

(Note that dates of actions prior to February 2002 are not current of accurate. While some in-house work on the project is in progress, some of the following dates may adjust accordingly. However, the completion date of October 2004 is fixed.)

DATE

Nov 01	NOI; SOW
Dec 01	NOI; Contract let
Jan 02	Scoping; No Action Alt
Feb 02	Scoping; No Action Alt
Mar 02	Impact Analysis of No Action; Assumptions for Analysis; Existing Environment; No Action alt
April 02	Impact Analysis of No Action; Assumptions for Analysis; Existing Environment; Planning Criteria
May 02	Impact Analysis of No Action; Assumptions for Analysis; Existing Environment; Planning Criteria
June 02	Prepare MSA; SD brief
July 02	NOI for MSA
Aug 02	Scoping on MSA
Sept 02	Scoping; summarize scoping comments
Oct 02	Summarize scoping comments

Nov 02	Alternative formulation
Dec 02	Alternative formulation
Jan 03	Alternative formulation
Feb 03	Analyze alternatives
Mar 03	Analyze alternatives
April 03	Public review of alts
May 03	Public review of alts
June 03	BA; Preferred alt and analysis
July 03	BA; Preferred alt and analysis; SO review
Aug 03	Typeset
Sept 03	Print; NOA
Oct 03	NOA
Nov 03	DEIS comment period
Dec 03	DEIS comment period
Jan 04	DEIS comment period; review, respond to comments
Feb 04	Review, respond to comments
Mar 04	Review, respond to comments; New info into FEIS
April 04	Typeset; Print
May 04	Governor's review; NOA
June 04	Governor's review; NOA
July 04	FEIS/Proposed RMP protest period
Aug 04	FEIS/Proposed RMP protest period
Sept 04	Resolve protests
Oct 04	Publish ROD and Approved RMP

Highlighted areas note the team leader's probable maternity leave.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACEC	area of critical environmental concern	MSA	management situation analysis
BA	biological assessment	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
BLM	Bureau of Land Management	NOI	notice of intent
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation	NRCS	National Resource Conservation Service
CAP	coordinated activity plan	OEPC	Office of Environmental Project Coordination
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	OHV	off highway vehicle
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	PSP	planning support project
DEIS	draft environmental impact statement	R&PP	Recreation and Public Purposes Act
DM	Departmental Manual (U.S. Department of the Interior)	RFA	reasonably foreseeable action or activity
EA	environmental assessment	RFD	reasonably foreseeable development
EIS	environmental impact statement	RMP	resource management plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	ROD	record of decision
ERMA	extensive recreation management area	ROW	right-of-way
ESI	ecological site inventory	S&G	standards and guidelines
FEIS	final environmental impact statement	SO	State Office
FGDC	Federal Geographic Data Committee	SRMA	special recreation management area
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act	T&E	threatened and endangered
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	USAF	United States Air Force
FY	fiscal year	VRM	visual resource management
GIS	geographic information system	WSR	wild and scenic river
H₂S	hydrogen sulfide	WARMS	Wyoming Air Resources Monitoring System
ID	interdisciplinary (team)	WO	Washington Office
IMP	interim management policy	WSA	wilderness study area
IMPLAN™	an economic impact assessment modeling system	WSO	Wyoming State Office
LUP	land use plan		

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