

2.0 CONTINUATION OF EXISTING MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND ACTIONS

This Chapter includes provisions of the Pinedale Resource Management Plan (RMP) and additional management direction and actions that have been implemented since the adoption of the original RMP in 1988. The chapter is divided into three sections: Section 2.1 contains the original RMP, with each resource planning and management action arranged in alphabetical order; Section 2.2 contains the maintenance actions that have taken place after the RMP record of decision (ROD) was signed in 1988; Section 2.3 contains content on initiatives and additional current management actions not described or included in the original RMP. Collectively, those sections represent current BLM management of the RMPPA. This management direction would continue into the future without additional RMP changes. Each section is developed in the alphabetical format mirrored in Chapters 3.0 and 4.0 to assist in cross-referencing the original RMP actions with amendments and maintenance actions, new initiatives, and the current management actions.

2.1 EXISTING MANAGEMENT DECISIONS FROM THE CURRENT RMP

Section 2.1 contains the RMP as it was signed in 1988. The Pinedale RMP, as maintained since 1988, represents a compilation of management actions intended to resolve resource management conflicts, provide for multiple use management of the public lands and resources, and provide a basis for resource decision making on public lands administered by BLM within the Pinedale Field Office (FO) area. All appendices referred to in this section have been renamed from the original RMP and can be found in the Appendices section of this document. All maps referred to in this section are from the original RMP and are not included in the Maps section of this document. Maps can be found on the BLM Internet site at: <http://web.ead.anl.gov/rmpweb>. Updated maps for BLM resources can be found in a comparable section in Chapter 3.0.

The RMP is designed to avoid or minimize environmental harm where practicable, and applicable specific mitigation measures are included in the plan. Required monitoring standards and interventions are identified and established in the RMP as well.

2.1.1 Air Quality

Management Objectives

Air quality will be maintained within or above required standards through cooperative management of emissions with industry, the State of Wyoming, and other federal agencies. Objectives will include the protection of public health and safety and the well-being of sensitive natural resources. The BLM will strive to minimize, within the scope of its authority, any emissions that may add to acid rain, cause violations of air quality standards, or degrade visibility (see Appendix C).

Management Actions

The BLM will continue to:

Cooperate and coordinate with the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and State of Wyoming in monitoring for atmospheric deposition (acid rain) and its impacts on the Class I airsheds of the Bridger and Fitzpatrick wilderness areas;

Cooperate in the operation of the National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP)/National Trends Network acid rain monitoring site; and

Cooperate in the collection of basic climate and meteorological data from remote automatic weather stations.

The data collected from the NADP/National Trends Monitoring site will be used to determine actual or potential impacts from air pollutant emissions and to provide information on proposed emission sources.

Special requirements to alleviate air quality impacts will be included on a case-by-case basis in use authorizations (including lease stipulations; Appendix E). Examples of such requirements would include: limiting emissions, spacing of source densities, requiring the collection of meteorological data, covering conveyors at mine sites (to lower dust emissions), and placing restrictions on flaring of natural gas (to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions). Specific guidance for the application of air quality protection measures is found in Appendix C.

2.1.2 Cultural Resources

Management Objectives

The cultural resources will be managed to: 1) resolve conflicts between cultural resources and other resource uses; 2) provide appropriate levels of protection for significant cultural resources; 3) design cultural resource management actions to maintain the value of cultural resources; and 4) provide for the scientific and educational use of cultural resources.

Management Actions

The various uses of the BLM-administered public lands will be managed to avoid damage to cultural resources; minimize conflicts between uses of cultural resources and other uses of the public lands; provide for appropriate mitigation of unavoidable adverse effects on cultural resources prior to their disturbance or destruction; and identify and protect cultural resources. The cultural resource management process is described in Appendix F.

Cultural resource management activity plans (such as the Oregon/Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails Management Plan) will be completed and implemented to identify, salvage, and protect cultural and historical sites. Activity plans will be prepared

for any current or future sites listed on, or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), including sites 48LN300, 48SU350, and 48SU301, and the Overlook Rock Shelter, the Aspen Stone Circle site, the Cora Butte alignment site, the Willow Lake site, and the Boulder Lake site. Site specific management prescriptions will be developed in the activity plans.

Significant cultural resource sites will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

As necessary, withdrawal from exploration and development of locatable minerals on significant cultural resource sites will be pursued.

Cultural resource management activity plans will be developed and implemented to identify, salvage, and protect cultural and historical sites.

Cooperative agreements will be pursued with local historical and archeological societies and other interested parties for attaining mutual historic preservation goals.

Lands actions (e.g., exchanges) in support of cultural resource management objectives will be pursued, as appropriate.

Compliance with the cultural resource management decisions and other requirements will be monitored on 1) the performance of cultural resource use permittees, and 2) stipulations on BLM leases and other use authorizations and selected sensitive sites.

2.1.3 Fire

Management Objectives

The fire program will be managed to protect public safety, life, and property while providing the maximum benefits of both prescribed fire and wildfire to overall resource management.

Management Actions

Fire will be considered a management option for vegetation manipulation to:

- Convert brush to other desired species,
- Rejuvenate desired species,
- Increase forage,
- Increase vegetation nutrient value and palatability,
- Promote wildlife habitat diversity,
- Improve vegetation cover on areas with insufficient protective ground cover, and
- Maintain or improve range, wildlife habitat, and watershed condition.

Fire will also be considered a management option for disposal of timber slash, seed bed preparation, hazard reduction, control of disease or insects, thinning, or species manipulation in support of forest management objectives.

In preparing activity plans, consideration will be given to fire applications in meeting resource management objectives.

A fire management action plan will be written for the planning area. Specific boundaries and fire management prescriptions will be consistent with or in support of the other identified resource values and management objectives (Appendix G).

Areas will be identified where a prescribed set of conditions will be acceptable in the event of an ignition. Prescribed fires will generally be confined to 200 acres or less in areas where current vegetation stages are desirable.

Fire protection on public lands will be managed by taking appropriate suppression actions through the fire management plan. Resource and operational support for presuppression and suppression planning will be coordinated with the Forest Service, Sublette County Sheriff's Office, Wyoming State Forestry Division, and local fire protection districts.

Wilderness areas will be managed as prescribed fire areas. Fire suppression in wilderness areas requires restraint in suppression methods. In any designated wilderness areas, the fire management objective will be to manage fire in ways that will cause the least degradation to wilderness values.

Prescribed burning will be conducted so as to: 1) not violate ambient air quality standards, 2) avoid visibility impairment, 3) minimize public nuisance, and 4) minimize smoke intrusions into sensitive areas.

2.1.4 Forestry

This subheading corresponds to the Forest Management subheading in the 1988 RMP.

Management Objectives

Forest resources will be managed to provide a supply of forest products to the various segments of the public (individual and commercial vendors) and to maintain or enhance other resource management objectives.

Management Actions

Consistent with forest management and other resource management objectives, the forested lands are classified into four management categories:

Category 1, Intensive Management, will include areas where the forested lands would be managed for multiple-use, but with emphasis placed on forest product utilization and forest management activities.

Category 2, Restricted Management, will include forested lands where wildlife, watershed, and recreation resource values will be emphasized and actions such as partial cutting, extended forest crop rotations, etc., or other restrictions to forest management, would be applied.

Category 3, Management to Enhance or Maintain Other Resources, will only allow forest management activities (e.g., harvesting or thinning) on lands in this category when such activities will benefit resources or values other than forestry or will promote public safety. All forest lands included in this category are not included in the forest management base or in timber harvest calculations.

Category 4, No Forest Management, includes all areas where forest management is excluded.

Table 2.1.4-1 (revised June 1993) shows the acreage distribution by management category. Approximately 24,223 acres of commercial conifer would be available for production of forest products. Of this 24,223 acres, approximately 20,836 acres would be subject to harvest method/equipment use and minimum cover level restrictions (Category 2). The remaining 3,387 acres would be unrestricted, except for general forest management guidelines applicable to all forest management activities (Category 1).

(Note: Table 2.1.4-2 outlines the original 1988 RMP decisions for timber harvest levels and thinning levels per decade. In categories 1 and 2, approximately 4,405 acres was designated for timber harvesting per decade with a total harvest volume of 9.1 million board feet (9.1 MMBF). Precommercial thinning to support the sustainable harvest level and to promote forest health was prescribed to occur on approximately 600 acres per decade.)

Approximately 13,506 acres of woodland (Categories 1 and 2) will be available for forest product disposals on a demand basis. An additional 3,113 commercial conifer and woodland acres will be removed from the forest base (Categories 3 and 4). The 1,611 acres in Category 3 will be available for forest management activities when such activities are deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the resource being protected (e.g., wildlife, watershed) or to promote public safety. All forest lands in categories 1, 2, and 3 will be available for emergency salvage of timber damaged or killed through insects, disease, wildfire, or other such events.

Sales of forest products (sawtimber, firewood, Christmas trees, posts, poles, and wildlings) will be made available to individuals and to commercial vendors. Forest product sales will be conducted on all forest areas, except where specifically excluded (e.g., the Rock Creek drainage and 7,636 acres in the Scab Creek area).

In addition to harvest, approximately 1,200 acres of precommercial thinning will occur during the 20-year period (USDI 1985a). Precommercial thinning projects will generally be designed to achieve an 8-foot spacing (e.g., roughly 680 trees per acre would be left uncut) and should not significantly affect cover levels (Table 2.1.4-2).

Specific harvest and thinning sequences will be established in a forest management plan, which will establish a 20-year harvest schedule. Any forest management plans developed will be coordinated with adjacent landowners, the Forest Service, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and other interested parties.

Specific items to be addressed in any individual timber sale plan and environmental assessments will include

- Approximate harvest units and proposed harvest methods.
- Existing road locations.
- Proposed new roads.
- Roads to be closed.
- Harvest acreages.
- Environmental mitigations.
- Coordination with other resource programs and interests.

All forest management activities authorized under this plan will adhere to the following restrictions. Exceptions will require supporting environmental analysis.

No clearcutting or tracked or wheel-type equipment operations will be allowed within a 100-foot buffer of riparian areas.

Logging operations on slopes steeper than 45 percent will be limited to technologically, environmentally, and economically acceptable methods such as cable yarding and(or) horse skidding.

No logging activities will be allowed from November 15 through April 30 in crucial elk winter ranges and feedgrounds, and from May 1 through June 30 in elk calving areas.

Generally, individual clearcut units will not exceed 25 acres.

Regeneration in harvest units and burned areas must provide elk hiding cover (vegetation capable of hiding 90 percent of an adult elk at a distance equal to or less than 200 feet), or must achieve preharvest stocking levels (numbers of trees per acre) with 12- to 15-foot tall trees, before timber harvesting will be allowed in adjacent stands. Exceptions will be allowed for emergency salvage of insect- or disease-infested timber and weather- or fire-damaged timber.

Slash disposal will be tailored to the individual harvest unit to promote reforestation, minimize erosion, and allow big game movement. Methods that will be employed include broadcast burning, piling and burning, lopping and scattering, chipping, and roller chopping.

Timber harvesting practices will be consistent with accepted silvicultural guidelines for each species but will also reflect individual stand conditions or other resource and environmental concerns.

Artificial reforestation will be conducted to the extent necessary to eliminate the reforestation backlog and to ensure that minimum stocking levels on new clearcuts are achieved within 15 years after harvesting.

Individual timber sale and general forest management plans will evaluate areas for possible management as old growth timber.

Aspen stands will be managed to maintain or enhance wildlife values; however, they will also be used to produce wood products on a demand basis.

Forest Management Units

Within the general forest management objective and guidelines, each of the following four management units has separate sub-objectives and planned actions.

Deadline-Pinegrove Unit

The Deadline-Pinegrove unit will be managed to give full protection to the Colorado River cutthroat trout in the Rock Creek drainage and to maintain October 1985 levels of forest cover for wildlife in the remainder of the unit. Approximately 953 acres will be available for harvest over a 20-year period.

All forest management activities will be excluded in the Rock Creek drainage.

A minimum of 90 percent of the conifer acreage in the Graphite and Riley Ridge crucial elk winter ranges will be maintained. Annual cover level fluctuations will not be allowed except for emergency salvage.

No clearcutting or road construction will be allowed within 1,000 feet of Beaver Creek. Exceptions will be granted only if additional site-specific analysis verifies that such actions will not adversely affect crucial Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat.

North Piney Unit

The North Piney unit will be managed to give full protection to the elk feedgrounds and to maintain October 1985 levels of forest cover for wildlife, primarily elk.

All forest management activities will be excluded from the Finnegan and North Piney elk feedgrounds, except when such management would be necessary to maintain the integrity of the feedground environment.

Approximately 680 acres will be harvested for forest products over a 20-year period.

Miller Mountain Unit

The Miller Mountain unit will be managed to provide full protection to forested portions of the Fort Hill-Fontenelle elk winter range and to maintain approximately 90 percent of the conifer acreage in the remainder of the unit in cover for wildlife.

Forest management activities will be excluded from the Fort Hill elk winter range. Exceptions will be allowed for emergency salvage when the wildlife will benefit.

Approximately 396 acres or 10 percent of the conifer base, excluding the Fort Hill winter range, will be harvested over a 20-year period.

Eastside-Hoback Unit

The Eastside-Hoback unit will be managed to give full protection to the forested portions of the elk feedgrounds and to manage the remaining forested lands for forest products on an allowable harvest/sustained yield basis.

Approximately 781 acres will be harvested for forest products over the next 20 years, based on and prorated from figures in USDI 1985a (adjusted operational limits solution).

Forest management activities will be excluded from the Franz and Scab Creek elk feedground, except for salvage and sanitation harvests when necessary to maintain the integrity of the feedground environment to benefit the elk.

Other than for emergency salvage of damaged or dead trees and for public protection, no forest product harvesting will be allowed in the Scab Creek campground. Campers will be allowed to obtain firewood from designated areas.

Table 2.1.4-3 displays the timber harvest objectives for each management unit. The “Proposed Percent Out-of-Cover” column reflects the maximum yearly out-of-cover objective for the Deadline-Pinegrove, North Piney, and Miller Mountain units. The Eastside-Hoback unit shows a harvest projection based on the sustained yield for the unit (not a harvest objective).

2.1.5 Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials were not covered in the 1988 RMP.

2.1.6 Lands and Realty*Management Objectives*

The lands and realty management objective will be to provide land use authorizations in support of public needs. This is to be done in consideration of and in compliance with the various management decisions, goals, objectives, and resource restrictions required to protect or maintain the multiple uses and resource values as described in the approved Pinedale RMP. The right to occupy or acquire public lands will be authorized under the appropriate realty actions within a multiple use management concept and within the objectives and guidance provided under all resources.

*Management Actions**Land Tenure Adjustment*

Proposals for the disposal of public lands will be considered on a case-by-case basis (e.g., transfer from the administration of the BLM to other federal agencies, or local or state governments, or disposal through methods such as Desert Land Entry, public sale, exchange, state indemnity selection, or Recreation and Public Purposes leases or patents). Generally, the preferred method of disposal will be exchange; however, any of the

available methods may be used, as appropriate to individual situations. Prior to taking any disposal action, an environmental analysis will be conducted on the proposal and the involved lands will be evaluated for compliance with the disposal criteria listed in Appendix H and for consistency with objectives of this RMP.

Approximately 6,400 acres have been identified as suitable for future consideration for disposal, and another 14,500 acres have been identified as suitable for consideration for disposal only by exchange. Proposals to dispose of any other BLM-administered public lands will be considered and evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Special attention will be given to retaining enough public lands at the Cora Y highway crossing, at the south end of Fremont Lake, and at other important wildlife migration routes to provide for free movement of migrating big game animals.

Acquisition of nonfederal lands will be pursued by BLM, if needed, to accomplish management objectives of this RMP. Such acquisition will primarily be considered in areas of predominantly federal ownership, when other management options such as cooperative agreements are not available, and then primarily through exchange. Lands needed for wildlife habitat enhancement are identified in Appendix I. Other areas may be identified in the future.

Lands actions (e.g., exchanges) will be pursued to enhance and maintain key wildlife habitats. Land exchanges to acquire state and private lands in crucial habitats in important and predominantly federal management areas (e.g., Rock Creek ACEC, New Fork Potholes, key riparian areas) will be pursued.

Desert Land Entry petition applications will be disqualified when the public lands are identified as:

1. Lands within the capability classes that the Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, is seeking to remove from cultivation under the Conservation Reserve Program.
2. Lands that the Department of the Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service show as being “nonirrigable.”
3. Lands identified as sensitive, unique, or necessary to fulfill the management objectives of this RMP.
4. Agricultural land entry petition applications will also be disqualified when the public lands would be utilized for the growth of government price-supported crops, or when use of water supplies would deplete an underground water supply beyond its annual recharge capability, thus threatening existing water users.

Withdrawals and Classifications

Whenever necessary, withdrawals in support of other resource management objectives and actions will be pursued.

Public lands within active livestock driveways that are continuing to serve their designated purpose (Map 14), will continue to be segregated from all forms of disposal under the public land laws. The withdrawals for stock driveways that are not serving their designated purpose will be terminated. Mineral locations on stock driveways will be handled under 43 CFR 3815. Disposal proposals that will not be compatible with the continued use or purpose of stock driveways will not be approved.

Existing land withdrawals (held by agencies other than BLM) currently encumbering public lands will be reviewed to determine the need for continuation, modification, revocation, or termination of the withdrawals.

Classification and Multiple Use Act retention and disposal classifications (Orders W-19140, W-25810, and W-12668) in Sublette and Lincoln counties will be terminated. In areas covered by these orders, discretionary management under the provisions of the Federal Land Management Policy Act (FLPMA) will be consistent with the provisions of the RMP.

Rights-of-Way

Applications for rights-of-way and other land use authorizations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. They will be processed consistent with the objectives of this RMP and will include any necessary mitigation requirements (Appendix E), offset retrogression, or displacement of natural resource and economic values.

To the extent possible, linear rights-of-way (e.g., pipelines, powerlines, roads) will be routed where impacts will be least disturbing, taking into account point of origin, point of destination, and purpose and need of the project.

Areas closed to mineral leasing, having a no surface occupancy (NSO) restriction, or otherwise identified as unsuitable for surface disturbance or occupancy in other sections of this RMP will be managed as avoidance or exclusion areas for rights-of-way. Such areas include, but are not limited to, recreation and cultural sites, the Rock Creek ACEC, and the Deadline Ridge-Graphite evaluation area.

However, following a supporting environmental analysis, some types of rights-of-way projects may be allowed in such areas if they: would not create substantial surface disturbance; would be located in areas with a high potential for reclamation; would have impacts which would be temporary in nature; and would be compatible with the resource values being protected.

Areas requiring mitigations and restrictions for surface-disturbing activities will be managed as restricted areas for rights-of-way. Restrictions include, but are not limited to: seasonal restrictions for wildlife, sensitive watersheds, steep slopes, ORV designations, and other measures necessary to prevent degradation of cultural, historical, and recreational sites. Restricted areas for rights-of-way include wildlife crucial winter ranges, the Beaver Creek ACEC, the Upper Green River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), and the Soap Holes area.

Areas that are not identified as avoidance, exclusion, or restriction areas are considered open to rights-of-way.

Two transportation/transmission corridors are designated. Actual corridor widths will be flexible within the constraints provided in the various resource objectives of the RMP.

Corridors are preferred routes for transportation and transmission facilities. Identification of corridors does not preclude location of transportation and transmission facilities in other areas, if environmental analysis indicates that the facilities are compatible with other resource values and objectives. Further identification of corridors does not mandate that transportation and transmission facilities will be located there if they are not compatible with other resource uses, values, and objectives in and near the corridors or if the corridors are saturated. Each right-of-way application will be reviewed and analyzed using the environmental data which exist for the area as a basis to determine compatibility with existing uses and resource values.

2.1.7 Livestock Grazing

Management Objectives

Vegetation will be managed to maintain or improve ecological range condition, and to maintain or increase forage for livestock grazing, while providing for the maintenance or improvement of wildlife habitat, watershed values, and riparian areas.

Objectives of the livestock management program in riparian areas will include maintenance, restoration, and improvement of riparian values where livestock grazing has contributed to riparian management problems.

Management Actions

Grazing Preference

Forage will be made available for livestock grazing use. Management will also provide for protection or enhancement of other resource values. The current seasons of use, kinds of livestock, and amount of grazing use will continue until monitoring indicates a modification can be accommodated, or is necessary. The current grazing preference objective of 107,907 animal unit months (AUMs) (Appendix J) will be maintained or increased through implementation of allotment management plans (AMPs), range improvements, and vegetation manipulation. If these measures fail to provide the grazing preference objective, while providing for protection of other resource values as established in the plan, livestock reductions may become necessary. Any adjustments in livestock grazing use will be made as a result of monitoring and in consultation with grazing permittees and other affected interests.

All developed and semi-developed recreation sites will be closed to livestock grazing.

Unallotted Public Lands

The 20,991 acres of unallotted forage on public lands will be considered for allocation on a case-by-case basis in accordance with RMP goals and objectives. The number of AUMs to be allocated will be determined after the lands have been evaluated.

Stock Trails

Adequate stock trails will be maintained to support livestock trailing needs.

Elk Winter Range

Adequate forage for wintering elk will be provided to the extent possible (population levels based on Wyoming Game and Fish Department 1987 population objectives) in the Bench Corral, Miller Mountain-Fort Hill, Riley Ridge, and Graphite elk winter ranges.

In cases where adequate forage for wintering elk is not available, adequate forage could be provided through a combination of management practices, including livestock grazing systems, grazing adjustments, and vegetation manipulation.

Livestock water developments on crucial elk winter ranges will only be allowed if they do not result in adverse impacts to the crucial range.

Allotment Management Plans

All allotments have been placed into a category based on the established criteria in Appendix K. As conditions change, and following consultation with the affected parties, an allotment may change from one category to another. Initial categorization is 41 I allotments, 141 M allotments, and 26 C allotments.

New allotment management plans (AMP) will be written and implemented on I allotments (current list of priority shown in Appendix L). Existing AMPs on I allotments will be modified to meet livestock objectives and incorporate wildlife and watershed objectives to be attained through livestock management. Existing AMPs on M category allotments will not be modified, unless monitoring and evaluation indicate a change in management is needed. New AMPs or activity plans will require environmental analyses.

All grazing systems will be designed to maintain or improve plant diversity. Specific objectives will be determined during AMP preparation to provide forage diversity for antelope, mule deer, and sage grouse as well as livestock. Grazing systems will be designed to limit forage competition for forbs and other desirable plants, particularly in the spring of the year.

Interagency Cooperative Management Plans

Any cooperative allotment management plans prepared with other agencies, such as the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service, will be consistent with this land use plan.

Range Improvements

New range improvements will be implemented on I category allotments as first priority. The range improvements on M and C category allotments will be funded as priorities allow, or they could be implemented with other funds from permittees, other agencies, or grazing boards. First priority within M and C allotments will be given to projects that have contributed funds. New range improvements (e.g., vegetation manipulation, water developments, and fencing) will be designed to the extent possible to meet multiple use objectives for all resources. The maintenance responsibility of range improvements will be assigned to the benefiting users. The maintenance and reconstruction of range improvements will be accomplished as needed.

Approximately 98,552 acres have been identified as suitable for vegetation manipulation to increase forage production in the I and M allotments. Brush control guidelines (Table 2.1.7-1) will be applied to acreages determined suitable for vegetation manipulation (Appendix L). The acreage figures in Appendix L were derived from computer-generated data (Geographic Information System and satellite imagery), which overlaid crucial wildlife ranges and areas with greater than 35 percent brush canopy.

The acreage displayed for each allotment (Appendix L) is considered a target figure for potential range improvements. Development of AMPs and other activity plans will further refine the acreage according to livestock grazing, wildlife, and other resource objectives. Some allotments have very small acreages available for treatment. Because of the high cost of treating such small areas, they are not likely to be treated. Other allotments containing large acreages may not receive the total projected treatment due to resource considerations (e.g., sage grouse nesting areas and erodible soils) (Table 2.1.7-1). Acreage of brush control may increase or decrease on certain allotments depending on rangeland management needs addressed in AMPs and other activity plans.

All brush control projects will involve site specific environmental analysis; coordination with affected livestock operators and the WGFD; and will include multiple use objectives for other resource uses including livestock, wildlife, and watershed.

Vegetation manipulations in I allotments will be financed by BLM monies and other monies, if available. BLM range improvement monies will generally not be used to finance vegetation manipulations in M allotments until all the range improvements are accomplished in I category allotments. The vegetation manipulations in M category allotments could be financed by other sources such as permittees, other agencies, or grazing boards.

Prescribed fire will generally be the preferred method of vegetation manipulation for the conversion of brushland to grassland. Wildfires occurring in areas with a fire prescription will be allowed to burn as long as they remain within the prescriptions and meet land use objectives. Other vegetation manipulation methods will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

All new project development will be required to meet the criteria in Appendix M and Appendix N. Range improvements will be done in accordance with RMP and activity plan objectives and priorities. Total project needs will be considered for each allotment before public funds are spent. A cost/benefit analysis will be completed on an allotment basis before range improvements are constructed with government funding.

To reduce streambank degradation, salt blocks for livestock and wildlife use will not be placed within 500 feet of live water, wetland, or riparian areas, unless activity plans show that it is necessary to meet management objectives.

Forage Increase

Any forage increases realized from management prescriptions and range improvement practices will be allocated to wildlife, watershed, and livestock. Site specific objectives for wildlife, watershed, and livestock grazing will be developed to identify each resource use to receive a forage allocation.

Actual forage allocation from forage increases will be based on site specific analysis and must conform to the multiple use objectives of the activity plans. The allocation of forage resulting from treatments financed by permittees, as in M category allotments that do not have crucial wildlife ranges, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. More forage may be allocated to livestock grazing than to other resource uses, in accordance with the current federal grazing regulations, including consistency with the multiple use management objectives set forth in this document. Consultation with the affected parties will be necessary at the outset of planning for the project allocating increased forage to ensure satisfactory proportioning of the additional forage.

Combining and Splitting Allotments

Any combining or splitting of allotments to meet management objectives will be consistent with this plan. Such actions will include consultation and coordination with the affected parties.

Rangeland Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the range and the vegetation resource will be conducted at a level sufficient to detect changes in grazing use, trend, and range conditions. These data will be used to support and direct grazing management decisions consistent with national policy (Appendix O). Ecological range site condition mapping will be completed.

Conversions in Kind

Conversions from one type of livestock to another will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, including an environmental analysis, and will be allowed if in conformance with the goals and objectives of the RMP. Conversions from cattle to sheep will generally not be allowed on the crucial antelope and deer winter ranges.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds will be controlled through continuation of the existing noxious weed program within the PFO area. The authorization of and guidelines for noxious weed control are documented in the Northwest Area Weed Control Program EIS (USDI 1987a).

2.1.8 Minerals***Management Objectives***

The public lands and federal mineral estate will be made available for orderly and efficient development of mineral resources. All minerals actions will comply with goals, objectives, and resource restrictions (mitigations) required to protect the other resource values in the planning area.

Management Actions*Leasable Minerals*

Generally, the planning area will be open to consideration for exploration, leasing, and development for all leasable minerals, which include oil, gas, coal, oil shale, and geothermal steam, in accord with all applicable provisions (e.g., restrictions, prohibitions). All activities will be conducted in accordance with the guidance for mitigation of surface-disturbing activities in Appendices E and C.

Oil and Gas

The 7,636-acre Scab Creek area will be closed to oil and gas leasing. The remainder of the planning area (approximately 1,185,000 acres) will be open to consideration for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas.

Once an oil and gas lease has been issued, it constitutes a valid existing right and BLM cannot unilaterally change the terms and conditions of a lease. Therefore, in areas where oil and gas exploration and development activities are restricted or in areas closed to oil and gas leasing, an existing lease in the area would not be affected by the closure and restrictions cannot be added to the lease.

Closures and additional lease restrictions could not be fully implemented until after a lease expires and new leases are issued for the same area. However, additional restrictions can be applied at the Application for Permit to Drill (APD) stage, and at subsequent development stages, that would mitigate potential impacts from oil and gas operations within existing lease areas so long as rights to develop the leases remain intact (Appendices E and C).

The BLM will evaluate industry-proposed measures to protect health and safety through the drilling permit process (Appendix P). Of particular concern will be the requirements of approved contingency plans for hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) release. Requirements of

operators could include conducting dispersion analyses to determine ambient H₂S concentrations during well blowouts, collecting onsite meteorological data, preparing detailed evacuation plans, and placing offsite warning signs.

The Riley Ridge Project Monitoring Program will be continued. Further monitoring will include gathering of geological data in the Deadline Ridge-Graphite Hollow crucial elk winter range to aid in preparation of the proposed activity plan. Monitoring will be coordinated with other resource monitoring programs such as wildlife, surface and ground water quality, grazing, and cultural resources, as appropriate.

Geophysical Exploration

Geophysical notices of intent will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. All acreage in the planning area will be subject to various appropriate limitations (e.g., vehicle use restrictions), including about 517,170 acres subject to seasonal limitations. In addition, the use of explosive charges may not be allowed in any area if analysis determines that unacceptable adverse impacts would occur.

Generally, all authorizations will be issued with appropriate application of surface disturbance mitigation requirements as presented in Appendix E.

Specific limitations include:

- Approximately 7,636 acres in the Scab Creek area will be closed to geophysical activities.
- Areas closed to ORV use will also be closed to vehicle use for geophysical activities.
- In the Beaver Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), geophysical vehicles will be restricted to existing roads and trails.
- Geophysical vehicle travel through developed and semi-developed recreation sites will be restricted to established roads and trails.
- Geophysical activities in the remaining NSO areas (mostly cultural sites and elk feedgrounds) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may be restricted if unacceptable impacts would occur to other resources (e.g., water quality, cultural, wildlife, recreation, and visual resource values).

Oil and Gas Leasing and Geophysical Activities in the Rock Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern and Surrounding Area

The Rock Creek ACEC and surrounding area (about 17,000 acres) will be available for consideration for oil and gas leasing with appropriate stipulations, following the completion of an activity plan and associated environmental analysis.

That portion of the Rock Creek ACEC within the Rock Creek watershed boundary (Map 6) will be leased with a no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation for protection of the pure strain of Colorado River cutthroat trout in Rock Creek (see Appendix E).

Leasing guidelines and objectives in the remaining parts of the Rock Creek ACEC and portions of the adjacent Deadline Ridge-Graphite Hollow crucial elk winter range will be established in a site-specific minerals/wildlife management plan (activity plan) and environmental analysis. This plan will include an evaluation of the ongoing elk habitat use study and compilation of geologic data (Map 6 depicts the evaluation area).

The plan will also include the following direction:

Oil and gas leasing direction, regarding related activities in the evaluation area east of the Rock Creek ACEC, will be designed to ensure continued elk winter use in the Deadline Ridge-Graphite Hollow area. Oil and gas development will be allowed if determined to be compatible with continued elk use of the crucial winter range. No substantial adverse impacts to this elk habitat will be allowed.

Oil and gas leasing direction, regarding related activities in the evaluation area west of the Rock Creek ACEC, will be guided by the RMP multiple use guidelines and objectives. Evaluation may allow for some development on this portion of the crucial elk winter range, as long as RMP planning objectives are met.

The Deadline Ridge-Graphite Hollow wildlife/leasing study and activity plan will identify any suitable areas for surface occupancy based on the previously mentioned mineral leasing guidelines and objectives. Any requests for relief from leasing restrictions which are in conflict with these guidelines and objectives will be analyzed on an individual basis. Based on the analysis, either the conflicting actions would be denied or a plan amendment would be initiated to modify the plan objectives.

Upon completion of the Deadline Ridge-Graphite Hollow activity plan, large contiguous areas may be offered for lease with the NSO stipulation. These areas may only be accessed through directional drilling. The NSO stipulation would be used, rather than a no lease provision, under the assumption that industry is the best judge of whether technology would enable access to the oil and gas resources in compliance with the terms of the lease.

Leasing with the NSO stipulation could become necessary if the area is characterized by steep, and in many cases unstable slopes, with stream/riparian zones “filling” the valley bottoms. Any disturbance on the steep slopes or in the riparian zone threatens the crucial elk and cutthroat trout habitats directly.

Leasing with the NSO stipulation could also become necessary if deep gas is of primary interest in the evaluation area. Drilling to these reserves requires more than a year’s time, which appears to make seasonal restrictions inadequate mitigation to protect the wildlife values. The objective of the evaluation will be to find potential areas for deep drilling access while still protecting wildlife values. Input from industry as well as from concerned public groups or individuals will be sought for this evaluation.

Leasing with an NSO restriction may occur prior to completion of the evaluation in those areas where drainage of federal oil or gas is occurring.

That portion of the Rock Creek watershed boundary within the Rock Creek ACEC (4,200 acres) will be open only to portable geophysical activities. Activities in the remainder of the Rock Creek ACEC (outside the drainage, approximately 1,000 acres) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may be restricted if analysis determines that restrictions are necessary.

Other Leasable Minerals

Should interest in other leasable minerals materialize in the future, leasing will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the RMP will be amended as appropriate and necessary. The same surface-disturbance restrictions presented in Appendix E will be used in analyzing leasing proposals and determining the issuance of any leases (e.g., geothermal steam, coal, sodium, oil shale, phosphate).

The existing withdrawals for phosphate, coal, and oil shale will be revoked. These mineral resources no longer need such protection as they are now made available for development under mineral leasing regulations. Mineral leases, other than oil and gas, will be subject to the same resource constraints as established for other surface-disturbing activities.

Locatable Minerals

With the exception of withdrawn lands, the planning area will be open to mineral location. Areas identified in the future as needing total protection from locatable mineral activities will be closed to mineral location and considered for withdrawal. For example, if analysis of the Rock Creek drainage portion of the Rock Creek ACEC indicates that this level of protection is necessary, a withdrawal from mineral location will be initiated on the area (approximately 4,200 acres).

Surface-disturbing activities on mining claims require a notice submitted to BLM for a cumulative surface disturbance of 5 acres or less and a plan of operations for disturbances of more than 5 acres as outlined in 43 CFR 3809. In designated special management areas, such as areas of critical environmental concern, a plan of operations is required for any surface disturbance activities, regardless of acreage involved, in accordance with 43 CFR 3809.

Salable Minerals

Applications for mineral sales (e.g., sand, gravel) will be analyzed and processed on a case-by-case basis and appropriate surface disturbance mitigation requirements will be included in permits (Appendices E and C). The established common use area in sections 15, 22, 27, and 34, T. 27 N., R. 115 W., will remain available for development. However, those portions of the common use area in sections 15 and 22 will be managed under the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review until Congress acts upon the wilderness recommendations.

Regular field monitoring of salable mineral permit areas will be conducted to ensure permit compliance.

Geological Hazards

Not addressed in 1988 Approved Resource Management Plan.

Fluid Mineral Management Objectives and Restrictions Resulting From the ROD for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS.

Not addressed in 1988 Approved Resource Management Plan.

Natural Gas Management Decisions Specific to the Jonah Field II Natural Gas Project ROD

Not addressed in 1988 Approved Resource Management Plan.

Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions

The surface disturbance restrictions are necessary to protect certain sensitive resources and areas from adverse effects of surface-disturbing activities and human presence, and are inclusive of the various management actions developed in and analyzed for the RMP. These restrictions apply to all types of activities involving surface disturbance or human presence impacts and are applied in accordance with the guidelines described in the Wyoming BLM Standard Mitigation Guidelines for Surface-Disturbing Activities (Appendix E). The guidelines include, where applicable, proposals for waiver, exception, or modification, based on analysis for individual actions. This would allow for situations where a surface-disturbing activity may actually benefit sensitive resources, and allow for those occasions when analysis determines that an activity will not affect those resources.

Appendix E will be used, as appropriate, to condition development activities in all programs where surface-disturbing activities occur and where the objectives of the RMP include the protection of important resource values. On a case-by-case basis, activities will be conditioned by any one or more of the mitigations in Appendix E to avoid or minimize impacts to other important resource values and sensitive areas. Use restrictions (e.g., dates, distances) may be made more or less stringent depending upon the needs of specific situations. The restrictions identified under the various resource programs are complimentary to the standards in Appendix E and are not all-inclusive. They represent both actual requirements applicable to specific circumstances, and examples of requirements that will be considered and that may be applied, if necessary. Additional restrictions may be placed on surface-disturbing activities as necessary.

The mitigations identified in the RMP serve to provide a degree of protection to affected resources, not to unnecessarily restrict activities. The RMP provides the flexibility for modifications or exceptions to restrictions in specific circumstances where a restriction is determined not to apply or is not needed to achieve a desired objective.

Surface disturbance is characterized by the removal of vegetative cover and soil materials. Where actual excavation does not occur, activities may be allowed to occur with less stringent limitations provided that the objectives and purpose for the surface disturbance restrictions are met. Timber harvesting within 500 feet of streams or riparian areas and on slopes greater than 25 percent are examples where less stringent application of the standard mitigation guidelines (Appendix E) would apply. This would be applicable to those timber harvest activities, such as tree cutting, skidding, and slash disposal, that do not fully remove vegetative cover and soil materials. In the past, allowing these activities with a 100-foot streamside buffer distance and on slopes greater than 25 percent have proven effective. However, road construction or staging/loading areas for logging equipment would not meet the less stringent definition and would be subject to the standard requirements of 500 feet and 25 percent slope.

The mitigations prescribed for federal mineral development on split estate lands (federal mineral/nonfederal surface) apply only to the development of the federal minerals. These mitigations do not dictate the surface owners' management of their lands. The mitigations present restrictions on only those surface activities conducted for purposes of developing the federal minerals and that are permitted, licensed, or otherwise approved by the BLM.

When the BLM is considering issuing a mineral lease, the agency has a statutory responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act to assess the potential environmental impacts of the federal undertaking. It also has the statutory authority under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts that may result from federally authorized mineral lease activities. This authority exists regardless of whether or not the surface is federally owned.

The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 are not the only statutes that establish such authority. Other statutes that may be applicable include the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976, and the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. Moreover, the recently enacted Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987 specifically requires the BLM to regulate surface disturbance and reclamation on all leases.

Necessary protection from surface-disturbing activities will be provided for wintering wildlife on about 461,090 acres of crucial and noncrucial winter range (Table 2.1.8-1, Maps 2, 3, and 4). Seasonal restrictions will be incorporated into all land use authorizations where appropriate. This includes approximately 13,440 acres of noncrucial elk winter range in the Bench Corral area; approximately 3,400 acres of noncrucial elk winter range in the Miller Mountain area; and approximately 12,800 acres of noncrucial deer winter range in the Mesa area.

No surface occupancy will be allowed on elk feedgrounds (Appendix Q). Exceptions may be allowed if analysis indicates that proposed activities will either benefit or cause no adverse impacts to the elk. Further public input will be required for exceptions that are not designed to specifically benefit elk.

No activity or surface disturbance will be allowed in elk calving areas during periods of use, usually between May 1 and June 30 (Table 2.1.8-1 and Appendix E).

Sage grouse leks (occupied strutting grounds) and related nesting areas will be protected in accordance with the Wyoming BLM mitigation guidelines (see Table 2.1.8-1 and Appendix E). Activity will generally be restricted to existing roads and trails. Other activities may be allowed if environmental analysis indicates that nesting sage grouse concentrations will not be adversely affected. Activity between the hours of 12 midnight and 9:00 a.m. will not be allowed within approximately one half mile of leks (e.g., during strutting season).

Seasonal restrictions will be applied to active raptor nests. Priority for further inventory of raptor nest locations will be given to areas where activities and surface disturbance are proposed.

No surface disturbance will be allowed within 500 feet of riparian habitat, wetland, and (or) live water unless a high potential for successful rehabilitation exists and (or) impacts will be temporary in nature.

No surface disturbance will be allowed on the Upper Green River special recreation management area, except as identified in a management plan for that area.

No surface disturbance will be allowed within one-quarter mile or the visual horizon (whichever is closer) of contributing segments of historic trails (Map 5).

Waste disposal facilities (e.g., drilling fluid pits, solid waste, and sanitary facilities) will not be authorized on floodplains, wetlands, and related riparian zones (Table 2.1.8-1).

Surface disturbance will be minimized in crucial watersheds, such as Soap Holes Basin and Tip Top, with emphasis on reducing soil erosion and sediment and salinity contributions to the Green River Basin water system (Table 2.1.8-1). Surface-disturbing activities will be appropriately restricted in accordance with the Standard Mitigation Guidelines and standard practices applied to surface-disturbing activities (Appendices E and C).

No surface occupancy will be allowed on cultural sites 48SU301, 48SU350, and 48LN300, and on developed and semi-developed recreation sites. No exceptions will be allowed without further public input. The intent of the NSO is to prohibit surface occupancy on the physical cultural resource properties of the site. It is also intended to prohibit surface occupancy within the immediate viewshed of the various site properties (i.e., that portion of the viewshed that occurs within the NSP boundary). It was not intended to prohibit surface occupancy in those portions of the NSO that occur outside the viewshed and that contain no cultural properties.

Surface disturbances will not be allowed within one-quarter mile of developed and semi-developed recreation sites unless activities were determined to be compatible with recreation objectives for the area.

No surface occupancy will be allowed in the Rock Creek drainage within the Rock Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) (approximately 4,200 acres). The only exceptions are activities proposed to benefit the Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat. No exceptions will be allowed without further public input.

Surface disturbance will not be allowed within 1,000 feet of streams and on slopes of 25 percent or greater within the Beaver Creek ACEC.

2.1.9 Off-Highway Vehicle Use

This section is addressed as Off-Road Vehicle Management in the 1988 RMP.

Management Objectives

The objective of off-road vehicle (ORV) management will be to allow the legitimate use of off-road vehicles where possible (43 CFR 8340.0-5), and provide adequate protection to identified sensitive resources.

Management Actions

The ORV designations for the entire planning area will be as described in Table 2.1.9-1.

The entire planning area is designated as either “open,” “closed,” or “limited” to ORV uses. The majority of the area is designated as “limited” (i.e., having travel limited to existing roads and trails, except for over-the-snow vehicles) (Map 11).

The Bench Corral elk winter range will be closed to all ORV use, including over-the-snow vehicles, from November 15 through April 30. Lands around the Franz, Finnegan, Scab Creek, Fall Creek, and North Piney feedgrounds will also be closed to ORV use and unauthorized human presence from November 15 through April 30.

The Deer Hills, Oil Field, and Mesa deer and antelope winter ranges will have a winter travel limitation restricting vehicle travel from November 15 through April 30 on an as-needed basis. These seasonal limitations will be implemented in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department during severe winters or periods of disturbance of the wildlife wintering in these areas of concern.

About 120 acres in the Holden Hill area will be closed to all ORV use.

ORV open use areas will be provided to allow for recreational ORV uses. The two initial areas (Mount Airy and Big Piney) will be established adjacent to the towns of Pinedale and Big Piney. These areas will be established to provide intensive use areas for ORVs after a site specific environmental analysis is considered and an activity plan is prepared.

Precise boundaries for the areas will be determined in the course of preparing and analyzing the activity plan.

The Desert General Use area will remain open to generalized ORV uses. This is an area of over 224,000 contiguous acres of public land (Map 11). The Desert Open Area will be monitored to determine if unacceptable impact levels are occurring or being approached, which will require that ORV use be re-evaluated and limited accordingly.

In general, off-road vehicle use will be monitored periodically to determine actual use and public demands. Monitoring of high density roaded areas will be conducted as described in the section on Access Management.

2.1.10 Paleontology and Natural History

This section corresponds to the Natural History and Paleontological Resource Management section of the 1988 RMP.

Management Objectives

Natural history and paleontological resource values will be managed to protect and preserve representative samples of these values that are present in the planning area.

Management Actions

Paleontological sites will be protected through the use of surface and subsurface protection stipulations and discretionary management authority. Any actions to close or restrict areas for fossil protection will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. All collection of vertebrate fossils requires a paleontological collection permit. Collection of invertebrates and plant fossils “of significant interest” requires a collection permit. Permits are required for Mapping and reconnaissance work as well as for collection and (or) evaluation work.

As areas of unique natural history or particular natural interest are identified, they will be nominated for designation as National Natural Landmarks, Research Natural Areas, or areas of critical environmental concern and managed for protection of the unique values. Interpretation of the natural features and public use will be emphasized.

The Pinedale-Boulder Glacial area has been proposed for designation as a National Natural Landmark (NNL). The area will be studied in conjunction with the Forest Service to determine applicability of the designation. Should the designation occur, the site will be managed to protect the unique geological and ecological features and provide for public interpretation of these features.

2.1.11 Recreation Resources

Management Objective

Recreation values will be managed to accommodate existing uses, prevent or mitigate environmental degradation resulting from recreation and other uses, and provide for the anticipated recreation uses and use levels in the PFO area.

Management Actions

Management emphasis will be placed on the current recreation management areas including Scab Creek, the Green and New Fork rivers, Oregon Trail routes, and Boulder Lake.

Recreation facilities will be installed where needed to accommodate the anticipated recreation uses and use levels and to provide for adequate public health and safety (Map 12).

The order of priority for recreation management will be: 1) Congressionally designated areas, 2) major rivers and lakes where BLM has clear jurisdiction, 3) areas with outstanding recreation resource values not already provided for in the area, and 4) areas where the recreation capacity is regularly exceeded, threatening other important resource values.

Cooperative recreation projects and those with contributed funding can be given priority for development in conformance with established recreation objectives and priorities.

Withdrawals from exploration and development of locatable minerals will be pursued, as necessary, on developed and semi-developed recreation sites (currently about 585 acres).

Recreation management for the Scab Creek area, the Green and New Fork rivers, and the Oregon Trail routes will emphasize maintaining or improving the quality of the sites and the recreation experience.

Public lands along the Green and New Fork rivers will be managed to provide fishing and floatboating opportunities. Necessary facilities will be developed to provide for protection of users and the resources.

Boulder Lake will be established as a special recreation management area and related recreation facilities will be developed to improve public access and use opportunities.

A maximum 16-day camping limit will be implemented throughout the planning area. Areas requiring shorter limits will be posted. Written authorizations will be required for longer periods. A temporary, no overnight camping stipulation may be imposed in an emergency.

Where applicable, recreation facilities will be developed and managed in a manner that will maintain, restore, and improve riparian values.

Special recreation permits commercial recreation uses and major competitive recreation events will include mitigations developed to ensure the protection of other resources in accordance with objectives of all resource values involved.

2.1.12 Socioeconomics

The BLM does not actively manage socioeconomic resources in the RMPPA.

2.1.13 Soils

Management Objectives

Management objectives will be to maintain or enhance the quality of surface and ground water. Watersheds will be managed to maintain or improve channel stability and overall watershed conditions. Soil conservation will be provided through managing for maintenance of soil productivity and stability, and to allow water infiltration to provide for optimal plant growth.

Management Actions

Management actions will emphasize the reduction of soil erosion and sediment and salinity contributions to the Green River Basin water system. Practices applied to surface-disturbing activities to help achieve this are found in Appendix C. Of particular importance will be those areas with highly saline soils such as the Soap Holes Basin and crucial watersheds where surface disturbance will be minimized. These crucial watersheds are generally found within the boundaries of the ground water recharge zones (Map 7).

Corrective measures to be applied wherever unsatisfactory watershed conditions are identified will be developed and implemented through activity plans (e.g., watershed, habitat, allotment, or timber management plans). Such measures will also be implemented through stipulations attached to permits, leases, and other authorizations.

The Wyoming BLM Standard Mitigation Guidelines for Surface-Disturbing Activities (Appendix E) and the standard practices applied to surface-disturbing activities (Appendix C) are used to control nonpoint sources of water pollution. These are examples of best management practices (BMPs) relative to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended. As other BMPs for nonpoint sources of water pollution are developed, they will be incorporated into the guidance for this plan where they conform with the RMP objectives.

Projects proposed on BLM-administered lands will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for affects on soil and water resources. Soil management practices will be applied on a site-specific basis using soil survey data, and will be related to the soil characteristics such as the steepness of slopes, the length of slope, and soil chemistry and composition. Watershed management practices will follow similar guidelines.

Examples of management practices to be applied throughout the PFO area include seasonal closures due to saturated soil conditions and the standard practices applied to surface-disturbing activities (Appendices E and C). (At certain times of the year, use will be precluded until soil moisture is such that the use or activity will not result in degradation of the soil resource and watershed condition. These closures occur predominately in the spring and autumn.)

A monitoring program for specific surface waters will be continued to identify trends on water quality. Public drinking water at recreation sites will also be protected and monitored to be in compliance with EPA safe-drinking water standards.

A Level II ground water study of the Riley Ridge/LaBarge area will be completed to define the ground water resource and to determine what additional ground water monitoring and protective measures are necessary in regard to subsurface activities conducted in the area (e.g., oil and gas drilling activities).

Ground water protection will continue to be provided by applying the procedures described in Appendix R. Special precautions will be taken to ensure protection of ground water quality when surface disturbance is to occur on ground water recharge zones (Map 7). Criteria for determining depth of fresh water are found in Appendices P and R.

An activity plan for reducing erosion and channel degradation will be prepared for the Tip Top watershed (Map 7). Specific actions could include road maintenance, recontouring, and reseeded of disturbed sites to help achieve soil stabilization.

A watershed/recreation plan will be prepared on the Stuart Point-Mount Airy area for reducing sedimentation while still allowing off-road vehicle (ORV) use. A more detailed description of this area can be found in the ORV section.

All actions will comply with Executive Orders 11988 Floodplain Management and 11990 Protection of Wetlands, and the State of Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality water quality standards.

2.1.14 Transportation and Access

This subheading corresponds to the Access Management section of the 1988 RMP.

Management Objectives

The objective for access management is to provide suitable public access to BLM-administered public lands. This may include acquiring new access where needed, maintaining existing access and expanding existing access facilities, or abandoning and closing access where it is not compatible with resource values and objectives.

Management Actions

Access across private lands will be pursued as needed through a variety of methods, including but not limited to purchase of rights-of-way or easements, land exchange, reciprocal rights-of-way, and other statutory authorities. Refer to USDI 1985b for a description of specific access acquisition procedures.

Map 16 and Table 2.1.14-1 show general locations of possible access routes or areas where legal access is needed. Specific routes and acquisition procedures for securing access will be determined through route analyses and environmental analyses as part of specific project and activity planning. Where appropriate, land exchanges or cooperative agreements will be considered to provide access needs.

A detailed evaluation of high density roaded areas in the planning area will be completed to determine needs for specific road closures and(or) rehabilitation. Priority evaluation areas include the Red Canyon, Red Castle Creek, and Fish Creek areas, as well as oil and gas fields in the southwestern portion of the PFO area. Some existing roads may be closed except for administrative purposes. Specific mitigation measures and design requirements for roads will be developed through environmental analyses as part of specific project or activity planning.

Access closure, abandonment, and acquisition will be considered and established through activity planning and environmental analysis processes. Road or trail closure and abandonment will be based on desired road or trail densities; demands for new roads; closure methods (e.g., abandonment and rehabilitation, closures by signing, temporary or seasonal closures); type of access needed; resource development or protection needs; and existing uses.

2.1.15 Vegetation

Vegetation is addressed within the Livestock Grazing Management section.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious Weeds are addressed within the Livestock Grazing Management section.

Special Status Plant Species

Special status plant species were not yet an issue, and were not discussed in the 1988 RMP. Threatened and endangered plant species were mentioned in the wildlife section.

2.1.16 Visual Resources

Management Objectives

The objective of visual resource management (VRM) will be to maintain overall integrity of visual resources while allowing for modification and changes to occur to meet other resource objectives.

Management Actions

VRM classes have been established in line with overall resource management objectives of the approved Pinedale RMP. Table 2.1.16-1 shows the classification acreages and Map 10 shows the classification area boundaries. These are subject to change and further definition as more inventories and evaluations are conducted.

A program will be initiated to improve the visual quality of oil fields in the planning area by working with the companies to reduce the visual impact of existing facilities.

Projects of all types within established VRM class areas will generally be required to conform with the objectives and characteristics of the classification, or the project will be modified in order to meet the VRM class objective. Short-term modifications in portions of visual class areas may be approved if a site specific environmental analysis determines that impacts would be acceptable.

The VRM class areas will be monitored periodically for cumulative impacts which may potentially conflict with their classifications.

2.1.17 Water Quality and Watershed

This subheading corresponds to the Riparian Management section of the 1988 RMP.

Management Objectives

Management objectives will be to maintain, improve, or restore riparian values to provide enhanced forage, habitat, and stream quality.

Management Actions

Priority for riparian management will be given to those areas identified as Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat. Management actions may include reductions in livestock numbers, adjustments in grazing distribution patterns, fencing, herding, livestock conversions, etc. Unallotted public lands containing riparian areas will be managed according to the same objective, with emphasis on wildlife and watershed objectives, but not necessarily to the exclusion of livestock uses.

Refer to management actions described under all other programs for accomplishing riparian objectives. Riparian management is an integral part of all resources and related management programs. Those activities that affect or are affected by riparian values, will take into account the riparian objectives and direction. Resource values and uses that affect or are affected by riparian values include: wildlife and fisheries habitat, forest resources, livestock grazing, ORV use, visual resources, cultural and historical resources, minerals exploration and development activities, lands and realty activities, watershed and soils resources, recreation uses, fire management, and access.

2.1.18 Wild Horses

Management Objectives

The management objectives will be to resolve conflicts for water and forage between wild horses and other resource uses.

Management Actions

All wild horses will be removed from the PFO area and made available for adoption through the BLM Adopt-A-Horse Program. The wild horse herd areas (Map 8) will no longer be utilized by wild horses.

No forage will be allocated for wild horses in the Desert and LaBarge Herd areas. Wild horse roundups will be conducted in the Desert and LaBarge areas.

2.1.19 Wildlife and Fisheries

This section corresponds to the Wildlife Habitat Management section of the 1988 RMP.

Management Objectives

To the extent practicable, wildlife habitat management will be oriented toward the maintenance of fish and wildlife habitats to support populations at 1987 Wyoming Game and Fish Department planning objective levels. Activity planning will emphasize habitat enhancement and protection. Changes within Wyoming Game and Fish Department planning objective levels will be considered, based on habitat capability and availability.

Wildlife habitat activity planning will include other species as well as federally listed threatened and endangered species and the Colorado River cutthroat trout.

Management Actions

In the Deadline Ridge-Graphite area, management emphasis will be placed on maintaining crucial elk winter habitat.

In elk feedgrounds, management emphasis will be on maintenance of habitat quality and continued use of the areas as elk feedgrounds. To maintain the integrity of the elk feedgrounds, certain activities would be constrained on lands near them. The NSO restriction (Appendix E) would be imposed on the lands described in Appendix Q, for all activities except those which have impacts that are temporary in nature or that are compatible with elk habitat management.

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species and their habitats will be protected. Actions which would degrade habitat to a point of jeopardizing the continued existence of a T&E species will not be allowed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be consulted on any action with reasonable potential to affect endangered species or their habitats. A biological assessment will be prepared on all proposals where T&E species habitat will or may be affected and a biological opinion will be requested from the USFWS.

All actions will include consideration for T&E plant and animal species. The PFO area will continue to be inventoried to identify potential habitat and occurrence of T&E species. Identification of habitat occupied by T&E species and habitat with potential to help support these species would be managed in accordance with the national recovery plans. Potential habitat includes high density prairie dog towns for black-footed ferrets, wetlands for whooping cranes, high cliffs over riparian zones for peregrine falcons, and cottonwood stands along the Green, New Fork, and East Fork rivers for bald eagles. Management prescriptions for potential habitat will include consideration for future occupancy by T&E species. Key habitat characteristics will be identified to help ensure maintenance of high quality areas for natural reoccupation. Proposals for introductions of plant and(or) animal T&E species on BLM-administered lands will be evaluated and analyzed, considering the impact of other activities.

Habitat occupied by federally listed T&E plant and animal species will be monitored to ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act. The Colorado River cutthroat trout (a Category 2 species) will be monitored in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Areas with habitat having potential to support transplanted or introduced wildlife species (other than T&E species) will be identified in the development of activity plans and managed in accordance with the RMP objectives. Proposals for introductions or species transplants to BLM-administered public lands will be evaluated and analyzed, and the impact to and of other resources will be considered. Cooperative agreements will be developed, if necessary, to facilitate species transplants and habitat management.

Mule deer, elk, antelope, and sage grouse use patterns will be monitored. Habitat trend for the species will be interpreted through survey data collected, in cooperation with livestock and watershed studies and monitoring activities. Interdisciplinary selection of key areas and plant species will ensure that crucial habitats are monitored.

The East Front Aquatic Habitat Management Plan (HMP) will be implemented to promote riparian habitat management and protect the Colorado River cutthroat trout. In addition, this HMP and the Upper Green River HMP will include consideration of habitat improvement and related projects for enhancing habitat for waterfowl and aquatic species.

Riparian area maintenance, improvement, and restoration will help promote quality fish habitat on streams and lakes. Coordination with WGFD will continue on the Comprehensive Management and Enhancement Plan for the Colorado River cutthroat trout in Wyoming to improve habitat and expand the range of these trout so they are no longer in threat of extinction. Efforts to control siltation into the East Fork and New Fork rivers will be pursued to improve the water quality of these fisheries. Water Quality

Standards for other fishing streams and lakes will be coordinated with WGFD and the State Department of Environmental Quality. Adherence to these standards will help maintain existing fish habitat.

High priority will be given to improvement of wildlife habitat through vegetation manipulation. Table 2.1.19-1 presents identified opportunities by vegetation type and animal species seasonal habitat. Any areas identified in the future as suitable for treatment to benefit wildlife will be considered.

Vegetation treatments for livestock grazing and other resource objectives will include consideration of wildlife objectives and related restrictions. Table 2.1.7-1 describes restrictions for vegetation manipulation necessary to provide protection for wildlife in sagebrush types.

Habitat will also be enhanced by other improvements, such as development of water facilities. During development and implementation of activity plans (e.g., allotment, timber, watershed, or wildlife habitat management plans), consideration of habitat improvement needs and locations will be included.

Waterfowl habitat will be considered for enhancement through improvements, specifically the Upper Green River HMP and East Front Aquatic HMP update, will provide waterfowl and fisheries habitat improvement projects. Road closures may be imposed to protect fisheries and elk habitat. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is conducting a study of big game response to oil and gas development on the Riley Ridge natural gas project area. Findings and recommendations from this study will be used in considering future development of minerals on big game ranges (Appendix G).

Predator control programs will be coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and conducted in accordance with the Rock Springs District Animal Damage Control Plan.

2.1.20 Special Management Areas

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Rock Creek ACEC

The Rock Creek ACEC designation is retained.

Objective

The objective for managing the Rock Creek ACEC is protection of the Rock Creek drainage to assure quality aquatic habitat for the sensitive Colorado River cutthroat trout and to provide crucial winter range for a portion of the Piney elk herd.

Management Actions

The existing boundaries of the 5,264-acre Rock Creek ACEC are retained (Map 18). Constraints will be applied to competing activities accordingly.

The entire ACEC area and the Deadline-Graphite elk winter range area (approximately 17,100 combined acres) will be deferred from mineral leasing until a mineral and wildlife evaluation is completed.

The entire ACEC will be managed as a right-of-way avoidance or exclusion area, where rights-of-way will not be allowed unless a supporting environmental analysis indicates that the action meets the objective for the ACEC, minimal impacts would occur, and(or) the action would benefit the Colorado River cutthroat trout or elk habitat.

Management Actions Within the Rock Creek Watershed (Drainage) Area of the ACEC

A No Surface Occupancy (NSO) restriction for leasable minerals and other surface-disturbing activities will be applied in the 4,200-acre Rock Creek drainage (unless activities are for the purpose of benefiting the Colorado River cutthroat trout). (see Map 6)

Geophysical exploration activities in this area are restricted to portable methods only. The use of explosive charges will be prohibited if analysis determines that unacceptable adverse resource impacts would result.

If analysis indicates this level of protection is necessary, the drainage area will be closed to exploration and development of locatable minerals, and a withdrawal from mineral location and surface entry will be pursued.

Livestock grazing and related improvements will continue to be allowed, provided no adverse affects occur to the Rock Creek drainage.

No forest management activities will be allowed within the drainage.

The drainage will be managed as a Class I VRM area and will be closed to ORV use, including over-the-snow vehicles (43 CFR 8340.0-5).

Management Actions in the Remainder of the ACEC (Outside the Rock Creek Watershed)

Approximately 1,000 acres of the ACEC (that portion outside the drainage) will be evaluated to identify any locations where surface occupancy can be allowed. Geophysical exploration activities in this area will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and will be restricted if analysis determines that unacceptable adverse impacts would occur to the water quality, fisheries, wildlife, recreation, or visual values in the area.

This portion of the ACEC will be open to exploration and development of locatable minerals. A plan of operations will be required for any locatable minerals activities in the area.

This portion of the ACEC will be managed as a Class II VRM area, and ORV use will be limited to existing roads and trails with seasonal restrictions to protect wintering wildlife.

Beaver Creek ACEC

Approximately 3,548 acres will be designated as the Beaver Creek ACEC.

Objective

The objectives for managing the Beaver Creek ACEC are to assure quality aquatic habitat for the sensitive Colorado River cutthroat trout and to protect elk calving habitat.

Management Actions

The area is open for consideration of mineral leasing and related activities.

All vehicle use, including geophysical exploration vehicles, will be limited to existing roads and trails.

This area will be closed to the use of explosive charges if analysis determines that unacceptable adverse impacts would occur to the water quality, fisheries, wildlife, recreation, or visual values in the area.

The Beaver Creek ACEC will be managed to maintain, improve, or restore riparian habitat conditions.

The ACEC will be managed as a Class III VRM area.

A detailed activity plan will be prepared to establish guidelines for uses which could affect or jeopardize habitat quality for the Colorado River cutthroat trout and elk calving. Management prescriptions in the activity plan will include identifying specific transportation routes to reduce the potential for spills of toxic materials, and needs for seasonal use or other types of restrictions, in compliance with the decisions stated above.

Surface disturbance within 1,000 feet of the streams and on slopes of 25 percent or greater will be prohibited.

Partial timber cutting will be allowed provided that no adverse impacts will occur to the Colorado River cutthroat trout. Clearcutting or road construction within 1,000 feet of Beaver Creek will not be allowed. Exceptions will be granted only if additional site-specific analysis verifies that such actions will not adversely affect crucial Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat.

Roads and rights-of-way will follow existing alignments unless design criteria will preclude adverse impacts to the trout and elk calving habitat.

Stream crossings will be limited to lower elevations and gentler slopes.

Use of equipment and vehicles, including geophysical exploration activities, will be allowed if consistent with the objectives of the ACEC.

Wilderness Study Areas and Wilderness

This section corresponds to the Wilderness Management section of 1988 RMP.

Objective

Proposed wilderness areas will be managed for wilderness values in accordance with the decision of Congress. The two wilderness study areas (WSA) in the planning area, the Scab Creek WSA and the Lake Mountain WSA (Map 9), were evaluated in two previous wilderness environmental impact statements (USDI 1981b and USDI 1983). As a result of these analyses, the BLM recommended the Scab Creek WSA for designation as wilderness and the Lake Mountain WSA for nondesignation as wilderness. Both recommendations are pending further processing and Congressional decision.

Management Decision

Until Congress acts, these WSAs will be managed under the “Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review” (USDI 1987b).

Congressional decisions on the Scab Creek and Lake Mountain WSAs (Map 9) will be incorporated into the approved Pinedale RMP.

Should Congress designate one or both of the WSAs (partially or wholly) as wilderness, the management of the designated areas will be for wilderness values, as described in the appropriate wilderness EIS.

Should Congress not designate one or both areas (partially or wholly) as wilderness, the management of the nondesignated areas will be in accordance with the approved Pinedale RMP. The undesignated areas will lose their identity as WSAs and will be managed along with the adjoining area as prescribed in the approved Pinedale RMP.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Objective

Any rivers or river segments designated or studied under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act will be managed in accordance with their classification or Congressional designation as a wild, scenic, or recreational river.

Management Action

The 19-mile segment of the Green River from Warren Bridge to the Forest Service boundary will be further studied for its potential designation as a wild, scenic, or recreational river. This segment will be studied in conjunction with a 30-mile segment on Forest Service land that is also proposed for study. Table 2.1.20-1 reflects the analysis and conclusions of this proposal for further study (see Map 12). The Upper Green River wild and scenic river study segment will be managed to protect the integrity of the identified river segment until the study is completed and Congress acts on the study recommendations.

Until the study is complete and Congress issues a decision, this segment of the Green River will be managed in accordance with the interim management guidance for wild and scenic rivers, in accordance with Public Law 90-542.

Should Congress decide not to designate the Upper Green River segment as a wild, scenic, or recreational river, this segment will continue to be managed as a Special Recreation Management Area as described in the Recreation Management Decisions.

Fontenelle Creek will not be recommended for further evaluation for potential wild, scenic, or recreation river study. No further study or action will be taken. That is, this area will lose its identity as a potential wild and scenic river and will be managed along with adjoining or encompassing areas as prescribed in the approved Pinedale RMP.

2.1.21 Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions

The surface disturbance restrictions are necessary to protect certain sensitive resources and areas from adverse affects of surface-disturbing activities and human presence, and are inclusive of the various management actions developed in and analyzed for the approved RMP. These restrictions apply to all types of activities involving surface disturbance or human presence impacts and are applied in accordance with the guidelines described in the Wyoming BLM Standard Mitigation Guidelines for Surface-Disturbing Activities (Appendix E). The guidelines include, where applicable, proposals for waiver, exception, or modification, based on analysis for individual actions. This would allow for situations where a surface-disturbing activity may actually benefit sensitive resources, and allow for those occasions when analysis determines that an activity will not affect those resources.

Appendix E will be used, as appropriate, to condition development activities in all programs where surface-disturbing activities occur and where the objectives of the RMP include the protection of important resource values. On a case-by-case basis, activities will be conditioned by any one or more of the mitigations in Appendix E to avoid or minimize impacts to other important resource values and sensitive areas. Use restrictions (e.g., dates, distances) may be made more or less stringent depending upon the needs of specific situations. The restrictions identified under the various resource programs are complimentary to the standards in Appendix E and are not all-inclusive. They represent both actual requirements applicable to specific circumstances, and examples of

requirements that will be considered and that may be applied, if necessary. Additional restrictions may be placed on surface-disturbing activities as necessary.

The mitigations identified in the RMP serve to provide a degree of protection to affected resources, not to unnecessarily restrict activities. The RMP provides the flexibility for modifications or exceptions to restrictions in specific circumstances where a restriction is determined not to apply or is not needed to achieve a desired objective.

Surface disturbance is characterized by the removal of vegetative cover and soil materials. Where actual excavation does not occur, activities may be allowed to occur with less stringent limitations provided that the objectives and purpose for the surface disturbance restrictions are met. Timber harvesting within 500 feet of streams or riparian areas and on slopes greater than 25 percent are examples where less stringent application of the standard mitigation guidelines (Appendix E) would apply. This would be applicable to those timber harvest activities, such as tree cutting, skidding, and slash disposal, that do not fully remove vegetative cover and soil materials. In the past, allowing these activities with a 100-foot streamside buffer distance and on slopes greater than 25 percent have proven effective. However, road construction or staging/loading areas for logging equipment would not meet the less stringent definition and would be subject to the standard requirements of 500 feet and 25 percent slope.

The mitigations prescribed for Federal mineral development on split estate lands (federal mineral/nonfederal surface) apply only to the development of the Federal minerals. These mitigations do not dictate the surface owners' management of their lands. The mitigations present restrictions on only those surface activities conducted for purposes of developing the federal minerals and that are permitted, licensed, or otherwise approved by the BLM.

When the BLM is considering issuing a mineral lease, the agency has a statutory responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act to assess the potential environmental impacts of the Federal undertaking. It also has the statutory authority under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts that may result from federally authorized mineral lease activities. This authority exists regardless of whether or not the surface is federally owned.

The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 are not the only statutes that establish such authority. Other statutes that may be applicable include the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976, and the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. Moreover, the recently enacted Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987 specifically requires the BLM to regulate surface disturbance and reclamation on all leases.

Necessary protection from surface-disturbing activities will be provided for wintering wildlife on about 461,090 acres of crucial and noncrucial winter range (Table 1, Maps 2, 3, and 4). Seasonal restrictions will be incorporated into all land use authorizations where appropriate. This includes approximately 13,440 acres of noncrucial elk winter range in the Bench Corral area; approximately 3,400 acres of noncrucial elk winter range in the Miller Mountain area; and approximately 12,800 acres of noncrucial deer winter range in the Mesa area.

No surface occupancy will be allowed on elk feedgrounds (Appendix Q). Exceptions may be allowed if analysis indicates that proposed activities will either benefit or cause no adverse impacts to the elk. Further public input will be required for exceptions that are not designed to specifically benefit elk.

No activity or surface disturbance will be allowed in elk calving areas during periods of use, usually between May 1 and June 30 (Table 1 and Appendix E).

Sage grouse nesting areas will be protected in accordance with the Wyoming BLM mitigation guidelines (see Table 1 and Appendix E). Surface occupancy or use, including but not limited to the drilling of wells, the construction of well pads, roads, pipelines, or other types of rights-of-way, and/or the installation of permanent or high profile structures (buildings, storage tanks, overhead powerlines, etc.) within 1/4 mile of a sage grouse lek (strutting ground) will be restricted or prohibited unless the operator and Authorized Officer arrive at an acceptable plan to mitigate anticipated impacts. Activity will generally be restricted to existing roads and trails. Other activities may be allowed if environmental analysis indicates that nesting sage grouse concentrations will not be adversely affected. Activity between the hours of 12 midnight and 9:00 a.m. will not be allowed within approximately one half mile of leks (e.g., during strutting season).

Seasonal restrictions will be applied to active raptor nests. Priority for further inventory of raptor nest locations will be given to areas where activities and surface disturbance are proposed.

No surface disturbance will be allowed within 500 feet of riparian habitat, wetland, and/or live water unless a high potential for successful rehabilitation exists and/or impacts will be temporary in nature. Guidance is supplied in Appendix E.

No surface disturbance will be allowed on the Upper Green River special recreation management area, except as identified in a management plan for that area.

No surface disturbance will be allowed within one-quarter mile or the visual horizon (whichever is closer) of contributing segments of historic trails (Map 5).

Waste disposal facilities (e.g., drilling fluid pits, solid waste, and sanitary facilities) will not be authorized on floodplains, wetlands, and related riparian zones (Table 1).

Surface disturbance will be minimized in crucial watersheds, such as Soap Holes Basin and Tip Top, with emphasis on reducing soil erosion and sediment and salinity contributions to the Green River Basin water system (Table 1). Surface-disturbing

activities will be appropriately restricted in accordance with the Standard Mitigation Guidelines and standard practices applied to surface-disturbing activities (Appendices A-1 and A-3).

No surface occupancy will be allowed on cultural sites 48SU301, 48SU350, and 48LN300, and on developed and semi-developed recreation sites. No exceptions will be allowed without further public input. The NSO established for cultural resource site 48SU301 was established on a 160 aliquot part subdivision so that it could be readily and legally described in land description terms. The intent of the NSO is to prohibit surface occupancy on the physical cultural resource properties of the site. It is also intended to prohibit surface occupancy within the immediate viewshed of the various site properties (i.e., that portion of the viewshed that occurs within the NSP boundary). It was not intended to prohibit surface occupancy in those portions of the NSO that occur outside the viewshed and that contain no cultural properties.

Surface disturbances will not be allowed within one-quarter mile of developed and semi-developed recreation sites unless activities were determined to be compatible with recreation objectives for the area.

No surface occupancy will be allowed in the Rock Creek drainage within the Rock Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) (approximately 4,200 acres). The only exceptions are activities proposed to benefit the Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat. No exceptions will be allowed without further public input.

Surface disturbance will not be allowed within 1,000 feet of streams and on slopes of 25 percent or greater within the Beaver Creek ACEC.

2.2 RMP MAINTENANCE ACTIONS

Section 2.2 contains RMP maintenance actions completed since 1988. These maintenance actions can be found on the Web at <http://web.ead.anl.gov/rmpweb> and are summarized below. A comprehensive list of laws and regulations, including those that have been established since the RMP was approved in 1988, is in Appendix A.

The Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Wyoming was approved by the Secretary of the Interior August 12, 1997. These *Standards and Guidelines* were developed in compliance with the Department of the Interior's final rule for grazing administration effective August 21, 1995 (43 CFR 4180.1). Wyoming Instruction Memorandum 97-111, dated September 26, 1997, requires that the *Standards and Guidelines* will be incorporated in all Wyoming RMPs through plan maintenance. The RMP was maintained to show that the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands* apply to all resource programs and activities and the *Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* apply only to the livestock grazing program.

2.2.1 Air Quality

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.2 Cultural Resources

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.3 Fire

The Fire Management Implementation Plan (FMIP) for BLM-Administered Public Lands in the State of Wyoming was incorporated into the RMP in July 1998. The PFO is divided into 11 fire management areas. Each area describes resource management goals and fire management direction for wildfire suppression and prescribed fire use. The plan can be found at <http://www.wy.blm.gov/fire/docs/wyfireplan.pdf>.

2.2.4 Forestry

Table 4 (of the original RMP) shows the acreage distribution by management category. The 1988 Pinedale RMP erroneously included the acreage for the Scab Creek area in “Category 2” of Table 4. Category 2 specifically pertains to areas under restricted forest management. Because the Scab Creek area is the location for elk feedgrounds, the acreage belongs in Category 3. Category 3 specifies management decisions precluding forest management activities, unless they are specifically intended and designed to enhance resource values other than wood fiber production and/or utilization. The maintenance action made on April 23, 1998, corrects the error by modifying the RMP language to apply Category 3 management decisions to the Scab Creek elk feedgrounds. The sole purpose of this change is to correct the RMP error. This error occurred in Table 10 (page 22) of the Final EIS for the Pinedale RMP and in Tables 10 (page 74) and 20 (page 110), and was also corrected by this change.

An additional two maintenance actions applicable to the Eastside-Hoback Unit were made on June 1, 1993. The original text of the RMP excluded forest management activities from the Franz elk feedground, except for salvage and sanitation harvests, when necessary to maintain the integrity of the feedground environment to benefit the elk. The original language also described the Scab Creek area erroneously as being available for restricted forest management activities. It should have been included in the same Forest Management Category 3 with the other elk feedgrounds in the Pinedale FO. The change excluded the Scab Creek elk feedgrounds, precluding forest management activities, unless they are specifically intended and designed to enhance resource values other than wood fiber production and/or utilization. The sole purpose of this change is to correct the RMP errors. These same errors occur in paragraph 4, column 2, page 25, of the Final EIS for the Pinedale RMP and in paragraph 3, column 2, page 77, and were also corrected by the maintenance action.

The 1993 maintenance action modified the Table 4 of the original RMP in the Forestry section of the RMP to move the 1,764 acres in the Scab Creek area, erroneously assigned to Category 2 (Restricted Forest Management), to Category 3, applicable to elk feedgrounds. The language currently precludes forest management activities in the Scab Creek area unless they are specifically intended and designed to enhance resource values other than wood fiber production and/or utilization. The sole purpose of this change is to

correct the RMP error. This error occurred in Table 10 (page 22) of the Final EIS for the Pinedale RMP and in Tables 10 (page 74) and 20 (page 110) and was also corrected.

2.2.5 Hazardous Materials

There are no maintenance actions that correspond to this section.

2.2.6 Lands and Realty

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.7 Livestock Grazing

In addition to the Standards for Healthy Rangelands, the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management were incorporated as an RMP maintenance action in April 1998.

2.2.8 Minerals

On December 7, 1995, a maintenance action was made to the Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions in the RMP affecting surface occupancy on cultural site 48SU301. The original text prohibited any surface occupancy on the site without public input. The change added the following language:

The NSO established for cultural resource site 48SU301 was established on a 160-aliquot part subdivision, so that it could be described readily and legally in land description terms. The intent of the NSO is to prohibit surface occupancy on the physical cultural resource properties of the site. It is also intended to prohibit surface occupancy within the immediate viewshed of the various site properties (i.e., that portion of the viewshed that occurs within the NSP boundary). It was not intended to prohibit surface occupancy in those portions of the NSO that occur outside the viewshed and that contain no cultural properties.

The reason for this change refers to the Environmental Assessment to Construct a Road and Well Pad in Order to Drill a 12,500-foot Gas Well (EA Number: WY-046-EA-96-019). This maintenance action does not change the RMP decision to protect site 48SU301 with the NSO stipulation. It clarifies the intent of the decision, which is site protection, and provides for reasonable on-the-ground management actions.

2.2.9 Off-Highway Vehicle Use

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.10 Paleontology

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.11 Recreation Resources

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.12 Socioeconomics

There are no maintenance actions that correspond to socioeconomics.

2.2.13 Soils

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.14 Transportation and Access

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.15 Vegetation

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.16 Visual Resources

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.17 Water Quality and Watershed

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.18 Wild Horses

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.19 Wildlife and Fisheries

This program is not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.20 Special Management Areas

Special Management Areas are not affected by any other RMP maintenance actions.

2.2.21 Surface Disturbance Restrictions

On April 9, 1993, a maintenance action was made to the text under Surface Disturbance Restriction Decisions in the RMP, which provided clarification and more specificity for the protection of sage grouse leks. The original RMP wording referenced the *Wyoming BLM Standard Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing Activities*, which provides for lek protection through guideline 2c (page 59). Guideline 2c has been interpreted as an NSO requirement. However, contrary to BLM policy concerning NSO stipulations, it can be modified by the Authorized Officer. The refined wording eliminates the conflict with BLM's NSO policy but still provides for lek protection by controlling surface uses. The refinement still allows for exceptions, but only if potential impacts can be mitigated. This refinement of the lek protection requirements has undergone public review through the Decision Record and Approved Coordinated Activity Plan for the Big Piney/LaBarge

Area. Surface occupancy or use, including but not limited to the drilling of wells, the construction of well pads, roads, pipelines, or other types of rights-of-way, and/or the installation of permanent or high profile structures (buildings, storage tanks, overhead powerlines, etc.) within 1/4 mile of a sage grouse lek (strutting ground) will be restricted or prohibited unless the operator and Authorized Officer arrive at an acceptable plan to mitigate anticipated impacts.

Activity will generally be restricted to existing roads and trails. Other activities may be allowed if environmental analysis indicates that nesting sage grouse concentrations will not be adversely affected. Activity between the hours of 12 midnight and 9:00 a.m. will not be allowed within approximately one half mile of leks (e.g., during strutting season).

2.3 OTHER MANAGEMENT CHANGES SINCE THE 1988 RMP

This section is a synopsis of procedures and actions that have resulted from new laws, regulations or policies that have been implemented since 1988. New management objectives and actions are shown in this section and are alphabetized as in Section 2.1 and 2.2. Appendices referred to in this section are either modified versions of previous documents referred to in Section 2 new guidance documents that were not included in the original RMP or subsequent maintenance actions.

2.3.1 Air Quality

Air quality in the PFO is maintained within or above required standards through continued cooperative management with industry, the State of Wyoming, and other federal agencies in accordance with the management objectives set forth in the 1988 Pinedale RMP. Specifically, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)—

- Cooperates and coordinates with the Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and State of Wyoming in monitoring for atmospheric deposition (acid rain) and its impacts on the Class I airsheds of the Bridger and Fitzpatrick wilderness areas
- Cooperates in the operation of the National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP)/National Trends Network acid rain monitoring site
- Cooperates in collecting basic climate and meteorological data from remote automatic weather stations
- State of Wyoming Ambient Air Quality Standards (WAAQS) and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) set the absolute upper limits for criteria air pollutant concentrations at all locations to which the public has access. The WAAQS and the NAAQS are legally enforceable standards. Concentrations above the WAAQS and the NAAQS represent a risk to human health. State standards must be equally or more strict than federal standards.

Special requirements to alleviate air quality impacts are considered on a case-by-case basis in land use authorizations. Examples of such requirements include limiting

emissions, spacing emission source densities, requiring the collection of meteorological data, covering conveyors at mine sites (to lower dust emissions), and placing restrictions on flaring of natural gas (to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions).

BLM coordinates with the WDEQ in tracking total Nitrogen Oxide (NO_x) emissions as discussed in the ROD for Jonah II Natural Gas Development Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The ROD commits BLM to coordinating with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to monitor emission levels and to coordinate on maintenance for the NO_x emissions inventory.

Air quality standards are maintained by the State of Wyoming, which determines whether or not it is necessary to regulate emissions. When necessary to regulate emissions, the state will do so through its state. Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality by promulgating appropriate rule. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has oversight responsibility during this process and will approve the State of Wyoming SIP for air quality. Objectives will include the protection of public health and safety and the well-being of sensitive natural resources. The Bureau will strive to minimize, within the scope of its authority, any emissions that may add to acid rain, cause violations of air quality standards, or degrade visibility.

2.3.2 Cultural Resources

The cultural resource process is governed by the requirements of the *State Protocol Agreement Between the Wyoming State Director and the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer*, April 15, 1998 (the full text of the protocol agreement is contained in Appendix S), which supplements the National Programmatic Agreement, a series of Executive Orders (E.O.) and laws emphasizing Native American consultation, the *American Indian Religious Freedom Act (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [NAGPRA])*, and the *Sacred Sites Act*.

The State Protocol Agreement outlines and prescribes a series of coordinating activities for sharing information with SHPO concerning cultural and historical sites on public lands and for providing assurance that BLM will consider the effects of its undertakings on historic properties. It assures that BLM historic properties that may be affected by any land use activities are identified and evaluated in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800, and it encourages BLM applicants to develop discovery plans for large and complex undertakings. The BLM and SHPO are working jointly to develop standards and guidelines for developing historic context within the PFO, to share data, and to promote and enhance public education and outreach for historical preservation and cultural resource management.

During any outreach process, groups and individuals with historic, scientific, interpretative, Native American, and similar kinds of information and interests are invited to participate in identifying the cultural resources in the RMP area. The PFO is required to consider the short- and long-term management of cultural resources under Section 106 and 110 of the *National Historic Preservation Act*, Section 14 of the *Archeological Resources Protection Act*, and BLM's National Programmatic Agreement with the

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.

The ROD for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS established the 3,460 acres within 0.25 mile of the Lander Trail as one of nine management areas establishing restrictions on development to preserve the integrity of the trail and the trail viewshed. For example, no construction activities are allowed within 0.25 mile of the trail on federal lands and minerals, unless screened from the trail by topography.

2.3.3 Fire Management

Fire protection on public lands is managed by taking fire suppression actions appropriate to the terrain, taking into account resource management considerations and the need to protect health, safety and property. Resource and operational support for presuppression and suppression fire management planning are coordinated with the Forest Service, Sublette County Sheriff's Office, Wyoming State Forestry Division, and local fire protection districts in accordance with the National Fire Plan.

Wilderness areas are managed as prescribed fire areas. Fire suppression in wilderness areas requires restraint in suppression methods. In any designated wilderness areas, the fire management objective is to manage fire in ways that will cause the least degradation to wilderness values.

New Department of the Interior direction for implementing the National Fire Plan objectives contained in *Recent Changes in Management Direction: Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, National Fire Plan*, WO-IM WO 2002-034 has been issued. In accordance with this direction, fire management planning will be addressed.

2.3.4 Forest Management

The National Fire Plan has directed federal agencies to address fuel reduction in future land use planning efforts. Fuel reduction addresses overly dense forest vegetation that is the result of decades of fire exclusion from those lands by removing forest vegetation, including dead and downed timber as well as thinning of live trees. The overall objective is maintaining healthy forests while decreasing the risks of wildfire. Areas where forested land interfaces with urban land are areas of high priority for fuel reduction.

2.3.5 Hazardous Materials

The PFO has consistently adhered to the management decisions contained in the 1988 Pinedale RMP restricting the sale, exchange, or other transfer of public lands on which storage or disposal of hazardous substances has been known to occur. The provisions of *602 Departmental Manual (DM) 2*, a Pre-Acquisition Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) following the procedures of Manual H-2101-4 is required for all acquisitions of real property before acquisition.

Management objectives and actions are guided by BLM manuals MS-1703 (*Hazardous Materials Management, H-1703-1 CERCLA Response Actions Handbook*); H-2101-4 (*Pre- Acquisition Environmental Site Assessments*), and W.O. *Instruction Memorandum No. 2002-138 (03/29/02)*. Management objectives identified include:

- Protecting public health, safety, and the environment on public lands
- Emphasizing waste reduction for BLM authorized and initiated actions
- Complying with applicable federal and state laws
- Minimizing federal exposure to the liabilities associated with hazardous materials management and waste management on public lands
- Preventing waste contamination from BLM-authorized actions
- Maintaining the health of the land through assessment, cleanup, and restoration of contaminated sites
- Identifying and controlling imminent hazards or threats to human health and the environment from hazardous substance releases on public lands
- Ensuring that authorized activities on public lands comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, policies, guidance, and procedures
- Aggressively pursuing potentially responsible parties to correct their contamination of public lands and facilities or to recover the cleanup costs.

Management actions include the following:

- Precautions to prevent hazardous material releases into the environment and providing adequate warning to potentially affected communities should such a release occur
- Ascertaining through a pre-acquisition environmental assessment the nature and extent of potential liability resulting from hazardous substances or other environmental problems associated with real property during acquisitions and disposals
- Reporting, securing, and cleaning up public lands contaminated with hazardous wastes according to federal and state laws, regulations, and contingency plans, including the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)*
- Identifying parties responsible for contamination who will be liable for cleanup and resource damage costs, as prescribed by law
- Identifying appropriate mitigation for surface disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of hazardous materials and waste management and all types of fire management.

2.3.6 Lands and Realty

The Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act (FLEFA) passed in 1988 has changed how BLM handles land exchanges. The Recreation and Public Purposes Act was amended in 1988 affecting how BLM handles landfills and other sites with the potential of Hazardous Materials. The Land and Water Conservation Fund was amended in 1989 to include the BLM in the funding process for acquisition of lands, water, and interest in lands. None of these statutes have resulted in new policies, guidance or regulations affecting the Pinedale RMP planning decisions.

2.3.7 Livestock Grazing

The grazing regulations were amended in 1995. Although this change in the regulations resulted in modifications to the operation of the grazing program, these changes were for the most part within the parameters of the 1988 RMP. The one portion of the regulation changes that did require maintenance of the existing RMP involved the Standards for healthy rangelands, and guidelines for livestock grazing management which were identified under 2.2.7 of this chapter. One other significant change since the 1988 RMP involves the process for renewing grazing permits. As a result of an administrative appeal which resulted in the Combs Wash Decision, the potential impacts of grazing use are analyzed and disclosed in a site specific NEPA document prior to renewing existing grazing permits. This resulted in a much more formalized review process where changes in management could be considered.

2.3.8 Minerals

Oil and Gas

As a result of the ROD for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS (2000), a moratorium was placed on federal mineral leasing and associated activities on all federal lands and minerals that are unleased and/or that have expired leases in the Hoback Basin, southern foothills of the Gros Ventre Range, and the Wind River Front. This includes an area with a six-mile radius around the USAF Seismic Monitoring Station. The remainder of the planning area (approximately 1,185,000 acres) will be open to consideration for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas.

In 1994 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (BLM MOU #WY920-94-79) was signed and activated between the Wyoming BLM and the State of Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (WOGCC). In the MOU, BLM and the WOGCC agreed to develop and share information of common need; plan and implement oil and gas development in coordination with surface management issues; maintain a good faith effort to keep one another informed and advised of plans and actions that might affect each other; and to work in harmony to achieve the objectives of their policies and regulations. They also agree that the Reservoir Management Team (Casper Field Office) will be the WOGCC's local point of contact for disbursement of correspondence related

to the MOU. This agreement supplements oil and gas regulations and stipulations in the State of Wyoming.

Restrictions on surface disturbing and disruptive activities are included as stipulations in all fluid mineral leases and vary according to the surface resource protection needs of the areas being leased. For example, a lease located in crucial big game winter range would be constrained by a stipulation that prohibits surface disturbing and disruptive activities from November 15 through April 30. Refer to Appendix E for a comprehensive listing of stipulations used on a case-by-case basis.

A set of stipulations is included as a standard provision on all oil and gas leases processed by the PFO. These stipulations (see below) alleviate the effects of surface-disturbing and disruptive activities, unless other site-specific mitigation is approved, or unless a site-specific analysis indicates that the effects of the activity would be acceptable:

- In areas with a surface slope in excess of 25 percent
- Within 500 feet of surface water or riparian areas
- Within one-quarter mile or visual horizon (whichever is closer) from a historical trail during periods when soil material is saturated, frozen, or when watershed damage is likely to occur.
- With one-quarter mile of occupied dwellings
- Within 500 feet of Interstate highways and 200 feet of other existing rights-of-way (i.e., U.S. and State highways, roads, railroads, pipelines, powerlines)
- Material sites

(Note: refer to Appendix E for guidelines used in the analytical process to determine other site-specific mitigation requirements for surface disturbing and disruptive activities.)

The ROD for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS (July 2000) incorporated numerous restrictions and requirements affecting mineral development and exploration operations within the Pinedale Anticline Project area. Anticline management decisions governing development of the area are included as terms and conditions for APDs and are providing specific management actions for the affected management areas specified in the ROD.

The Pinedale Anticline updates the EIS for the 1988 Pinedale RMP by increasing reasonably foreseeable development projection for oil and gas wells to 2944, a 1044 well increase. Based on July 2002 Automated Fluid Minerals Support Systems (AFMSS) records for the PFO, the RMPPA contained approximately 2181 constructed, drilling, and/or producing well locations (pads). An additional 176 APDs were also approved at the time. The combined constructed, drilling, and/or producing well locations and approved APDs is 587 wells/locations below the 2944 RFD threshold.

The ROD for the *Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS* also included site-specific management decisions pertaining to the following Management Areas (MA): the Lander Trail, Mesa Breaks, Unleased Federal Land, Sensitive Viewshed, Crucial Deer, Antelope, Sage-grouse Habitat, additional Crucial Sage-grouse Habitat, Ross Butte/Blue Rim Sensitive Soils, Plants and Raptors Minimal Conflict Area, and Nonfederal Lands (see Figure 8, page 28 of the ROD for the *Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS*). The management decisions concerning fluid minerals development activities in these MAs are located in the *Pinedale Anticline ROD* document. A well pad density threshold is established for each specified MA (see Tables 2 and 3 of the ROD for the *Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS*). If the threshold for number of well pads is reached in an MA, no additional well pads will be authorized, until additional environmental analysis has been completed, examining the effects of development on resources and reasonable additional mitigation required.

The *ROD for the Jonah Field II Natural Gas Project EIS* covers a 29,200-acre area located within the south-central Sublette County, of which 26,640 acres are BLM-administered lands. The Modified Jonah II Environmental Assessment (EA) increases well density locations to a maximum of 16 well locations per section in the eastern half of the Jonah Field II project area but keeps the cap for the total number of well locations in the Jonah II area at 497.

The ROD for the Modified Jonah II Natural Gas Development Project prescribes numerous surface and subsurface management restrictions and limitations, some of which apply to the entire project area; areas apply to specific areas or concerns within the project area. The Decision Record for the Modified Jonah II incorporates management decisions, mitigation, restrictions, and limitations from the ROD for the Jonah II EIS, and develops new decisions, mitigation, restrictions, and limitations to reduce environmental impacts. The Decision Record for the Modified Jonah EA is incorporated into the Management Situation Analysis for the Pinedale RMP by reference.

The Decision Record for the Big Piney-LaBarge Coordinated Activities Management Plan specifies surface and subsurface management restrictions and limitations. Some restrictions and limitations apply to the entire CAP area, whereas others apply to the specific areas or concerns within the project area.

The Decision Record for the Infinity Oil and Gas of Wyoming, Inc.'s, Coal Bed Methane Pilot Test Project (EA No. WY 100-EA01-010) analyzed and approved the development of five test coal methane wells in the Riley Ridge area. The Decision Record prescribes mitigation, restrictions, and limitations to reduce environmental impacts, including a requirement that the produced water be reinjected into a geologic formation with poorer water quality than that being produced.

Portions of the lower Bench Corral area have been withheld from lease sales in the past and may be withheld from future sales pending consideration by BLM and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) to relocate the Bench Corral feedground away from Muddy Creek. If the feedground were to be relocated, the NSOs applied to the current

feedground location would be rescinded and applied to lands at the new feedground location.

Geophysical Exploration

Subsequent to the 1988 RMP, it has become a standard operating procedure in the PFO for all geophysical vehicle operations to be spread out so that the tire tracks of one vehicle do not follow the same path of another vehicle. This procedure was implemented to minimize the creation of new two-track roads and to reduce the effects on to visual quality of the project area.

Locatable Minerals

With the exception of withdrawn lands, the planning area will be open to mineral location pursuant to the provisions of the Mining Law of 1872 and 43 CFR 3809. Areas identified as needing total protection from locatable mineral activities will be closed to mineral location and considered for withdrawal. For example, if analysis of the Rock Creek drainage portion of the Rock Creek ACEC indicates that this level of protection is necessary, a withdrawal from mineral location will be initiated on the area (about 4,200 acres).

Surface-disturbing activities on mining claims require a notice for any disturbance of 5 acres or less and a plan of operations for disturbances of more than 5 acres as outlined in 43 CFR 3809. The purpose of the stipulations in 43 CFR 3809 is to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of public lands by operation authorized by the mining laws. Anyone planning to develop mineral resources on public lands in the PFO must prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the land and reclaim areas. They also must provide for maximum possible coordination with appropriate state agencies to avoid duplication and ensure that operators prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of public lands by operations authorized.

A plan of operation must be submitted to the PFO and approval must be obtained before beginning operations greater than casual use. A plan of operations must be submitted for any bulk sampling in which 1,000 tons or more of presumed ore testing is removed. A plan of operation also must be submitted for any operations causing surface disturbances greater than casual use in National Wild and Scenic River Systems; ACECs; areas designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System administered by the BLM; areas designated as closed to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use; any lands or waters known to contain federally proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or their proposed or designated habitat, unless BLM allows for other action under a formal land use plan or threatened or endangered species recovery plan; and National Monuments and National Conservation Areas administered by BLM.

Salable Minerals

The PFO applies the following stipulations to the extraction of salable minerals:

- Closures for critical big game winter habitat will occur between November 15 and May 1.
- Closures for sage-grouse nesting will occur between May 1 and July 31.
- Stockpiling of topsoil removed for drill pad construction or gravel mining operations is required.
- Documentation of the amounts of sand and gravel mine load counts is required.
- The reclamation of mined-out areas, including the returning of slopes to a 3:1 contour, replacement of topsoil, and reseeding of disturbed areas, is required.
- Debris and trash must be removed.
- Operations must conform to mitigation requirements EAs and/or Plans of Operation as submitted to the PFO.
- All operations will be suspended immediately upon the discovery of any paleontological or archaeological artifacts.
- Any discovery must be reported to the resident BLM archaeologist, who will take appropriate action to evaluate the site.
- All rejected material must be placed in the pit-bottom before recontouring the land.
- No unnecessary or undue degradation of the land is permitted.
- The purchaser of the extractable minerals shall have a copy of a sales contract available at the pit site.

Regular field monitoring of salable mineral permit areas will be conducted to ensure permit compliance.

Other Leasable Minerals

Mineral leases, other than oil and gas, are subject to the same resource constraints as established for other surface-disturbing activities. No coal, trona, or other mineral leases are in effect or under application.

2.3.9 Off-Highway Vehicle Use

About 2,500 acres located between Silver Creek and Cottonwood Creek in the foothills of the Wind River Range are closed to motorized access from November through January. This closure was implemented to improve elk herd management in this area. This seasonal closure is a temporary measure until the Pinedale RMP revision is completed.

2.3.10 Paleontology and Natural History

The Probable Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) system developed by the Paleontological Center of Excellence and Region 2 (U.S. Forest Service [USFS]), as modified by the Regional Paleontologist, Wyoming BLM in 2002, is used as the standard for the classification of probable paleontological resources.

Under this new guidance, paleontological inventories are conducted on a case-by-case basis for each proposed surface-disturbing activity to ensure maintenance of the integrity of paleontological values. If archaeological, historical, or vertebrate fossil materials are discovered, the operator is required to suspend all operations that further disturb such materials and immediately contact the authorized officer. Operations shall not resume until written authorization to proceed is issued by a BLM authorized officer. Within 5 working days, the authorized officer will evaluate the discovery and inform the operator of actions that will be necessary to prevent loss of significant cultural or scientific values. The operator is responsible for the cost of any mitigation, and BLM will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the BLM that mitigation has been completed, the operator is allowed to resume operations.

2.3.11 Recreation Resources

The 1988 RMP established a maximum camping limit of 16 days throughout the planning area. This was later changed to a maximum of 14 days to be in compliance with BLM policy.

A moratorium on the issuance of new commercial special recreation permits was implemented for certain segments of the Green River where the BLM administers commercial recreation use.

2.3.12 Socioeconomics

There are no management practices that correspond to socioeconomics.

2.3.13 Soils

The ROD for the *Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS* includes the following erosion management objectives and requirements for oil and gas exploration and development activities in the Mesa Breaks, Sage Grouse Strutting and Nesting Habitat, and Ross Butte/Blue Rim Management Areas:

- Avoid disturbance on slopes of 10 percent or greater on sensitive soils in the 7,366-acre Mesa Breaks Management Area to prevent erosion
- Ensure protection of the Green River and adjacent sub-basins from increased erosion and sedimentation in the 39,205- acre Sage Grouse Strutting and Nesting Habitat Management Area

- Avoid disturbance on highly erodible soils and maintain soil and productivity in the 10,953-acre Ross Butte/Blue Rim Management Area.

2.3.14 Transportation and Access

On June 25, 2002, Instructional Memorandum No. 2002-196 became effective, which provides new planning guidance on ROW corridor planning and ROW use planning and designation. The goal of this memorandum is to continue to make BLM-administered lands available for needed ROWs where consistent with national, state, and local plans and to designate common ROW corridors, where appropriate, to minimize environmental impacts and control the proliferation of ROWs. The memorandum requires BLM to ensure that sufficient means exist for energy development where ROWs are proposed (e.g., wind energy) and to transport energy supplies efficiently (e.g., oil and gas pipelines and electric transmission lines), while maintaining current environmental standards and good stewardship principles.

2.3.15 Vegetation

Special status species receive priority attention for inventories, research, monitoring, and for management decisions regarding surface-disturbing and disruptive activities. Consultation with federal, state, and nongovernment agencies helps direct the protection and management of plants. The BLM performs special status plant surveys before any land exchanges, range and wildlife projects, other surface-disturbing activities, or proposed mining operations take place.

Noxious Weeds

Grazing and fire management, along with chemical, mechanical, and biological control methods, are used as parts of an integrated weed management program. These methods are subject to site-specific determinations of appropriate techniques. The noxious weed species (e.g., perennial pepperweed, leafy spurge, knapweeds, and Dyer's woad) have the highest management priority in the RMPPA.

2.3.16 Visual Resources

Since 2000, Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) are managed as VRM Class I in accordance with new policy guidance provided in *Instruction Memorandum No. 2000-096* found in Appendix U.

The ROD for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS extended visual resource protection to specific areas, such as Mesa Breaks and sensitive viewsheds, to minimize the visual impact of gas field development. The ROD also established a "Lander Trail" management area as MA 1 to preserve the trail's integrity and viewshed. New construction activities are not allowed within 0.25 mile of the trail unless screened by topography. A Lander Trail viewshed is defined extending 3 miles north and south of the trail alignment within the PAPA in which a visibility analysis is planned.

Management Area 5 of the ROD for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS, encompassing the 7,366 acre Mesa Breaks, restricts disturbance on slopes of 10 percent or greater and on sensitive soils to prevent erosion and altering sensitive viewsheds.

The restrictions specified in the ROD for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Project EIS referring to Management Area 5 minimizes the effects on 67,801 acres of VRM Class III viewshed by placing conditions on 1) well pad locations; 2) new roads; 3) centralized production facilities; 4) buried pipelines; and 5) compressor stations. The authorization of these actions are subject to the operator developing and submitting a visual resource protection plan demonstrating that VRM Class III management objectives will be met to the extent reasonable and practicable.

2.3.17 Water Quality and Watershed

Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat is given priority for riparian management.

2.3.18 Wild Horses

All wild horses have been removed from the PFO administrative area, consistent with the 1988 RMP.

2.3.19 Wildlife and Fisheries

In March 1990, an MOU between WGFD and BLM provided for cooperation between the two agencies to benefit all Wyoming wildlife through improved planning, data sharing and other efforts. As a result, BLM tracks the status of populations and habitat for some species not listed as sensitive but listed as “Special-Concern” by the State of Wyoming.

An MOU between BLM and USDA/APHIS/WS was developed in April 1995 which spells out the authorities and responsibilities of the respective agencies regarding predator damage management. As a result of this MOU, annual animal damage control plans are developed jointly and implemented by WS.

The Wyoming BLM developed a Sensitive Species Policy and List on April 9, 2001, as a reaction to declining wildlife and plant species populations caused by a loss of habitat from the landscape. The intent of the sensitive species designation is to ensure actions on BLM administered public lands consider the welfare of these species and do not contribute to the need to list any other Special Status Species under the provision of the ESA.

2.3.20 Special Management Areas

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The BLM has conducted a study of all waterways for eligibility and suitability for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The findings of this report will be used

in developing interim management prescriptions for any waterway segments determined to be suitable for consideration for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

2.4 REFERENCES

Introduction

- Decision Record and Approved Coordinated Activity Plan for the Big Piney/La Barge Area, U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (Date: August 1991)
- Management Situation Analysis for the Snake River Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, (Date: December 2000)

Air Quality

- Standard Practices Applied to Surface-Disturbing Activities
- Wyoming Ambient Air Quality Standards (WAAQS)
- National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

Cultural Resources

- 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, amended April 28, 1998.
- State Protocol Agreement between the Wyoming State Director and the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer, April 15, 1998.
- 36 CFR Part 800, Protection of Historic Properties
- Cultural Resource Considerations Informational Bulletin No. 2002-101
- Overview of Bureau of Land Management National Environmental Policy Act Process, Desk Top Reference (Date: June 1999)
- National Historic Preservation Act as ammended, Section, 1966
- Archeological Resources Protection Act, 1979
- Pinedale Field Office Cultural Heritage Strategic Plan
- Oregon/California Trail Management Plan, 1978

Fire

- 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, amended April 28, 1998.

- Recent changes in Management Direction; Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, National Fire Plan, WO-IM WO 2002-034
- Fire Management Implementation Plan for the BLM-Administered Public Lands in the State of Wyoming, July 1998.

Forestry

- 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, amended April 28, 1998.

Hazardous Materials

- BLM Manual H-2101-4, 2000
- BLM Manual H-1703-1, 1994

Lands And Realty

- Recreation and Public Purposes Act are found in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR), Parts 2740 (Sales) and 2912 (Leases).
- Management Situation Analysis for the Snake River Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 2000

Minerals

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming, amended April 28, 1998.
- Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Modified Jonah Field II Natural Gas Project, Sublette County (Date: June 2000)
- Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Modified Jonah Field II Natural Gas Project, Sublette County (Date: March 2000)
- Standard Practices Applied to Surface-Disturbing Activities
- Record of Decision (ROD) for the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Development Project EIS, Sublette County Wyoming, US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (Date: July 2000)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 CFR 4321)
- Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.)
- Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands, as amended (30 U.S.C. 351 et seq.)

- Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)
- Clean Water Act, (1977)
- Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. s/s 7401 et seq. (1970)
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (amended 1992)
- Endangered Species Act of 1973
- Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976
- Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977
- Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987
- Mining Law of 1872
- BLM Surface Management Regulations 43 CFR 3809
- Memorandum of Understanding, BLM MOU # WY920-94-79
- Decision Record for Infinity Oil and Gas of Wyoming, Inc's Coal Bed Methane Pilot Test Project (EA No. WY 100-EA0—010)

Off-Highway Vehicle Use

- Mining Claims Under the General Mining Laws; Surface Management; Final Rule 43 CFR 8340.0-5
- National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan, 2001
- National Strategy for Motorized Vehicle Use on Public Lands, 2001

Paleontology

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming

Recreation Resources

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming
- Upper Green River Management Plan (WY-046-WHA-02/July 1993)

Soils and Watershed

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming

- Standard Practices Applied to Surface-Disturbing Activities
- Clean Water Act of 1972
- Draft Lakeview Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement
Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (Date: October 2001)
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 1977
- Executive Order 11988, Flood plain Management, 1977

Transportation and Access

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming
- BLM Instructional Memorandum No. 2002-196, 2002

Vegetation

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming
- Federal Noxious Weed Act (Public Law 93-629)
- Executive Order 13112 of February 1999, Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds

Visual Resources

- Visual Resource Management, Instructional Memorandum No. 2000-096, 2002

Water Quality and Riparian

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming

Wildlife and Fisheries

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming
- Endangered Species Act of 1973
- Wyoming Sensitive Species list and letter
- Game and Fish MOU
- Big Piney-La Barge CAP

- Colorado River Cutthroat Trout Inter-Agency Five Year Management Plan (1993-1997) Green River Westside Tributary Enclave
- Upper Green River Habitat Management Plan (WY-046-WHA/July 1993)

Wilderness

- Wilderness Act and Wilderness Regulations, 43 CFR 6300 and 8560, 1964
- BLM Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review, H-8550-1

Special Management Areas

- The Standards for Healthy Public Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming
- ORV use, 43 CFR 8340.0-5
- Wilderness Act and Wilderness Regulation contained in 43 CFR 6300 and 8560 et reg.
- BLM Interim Management Policy for Land Under Wilderness Review, H-850-1
- Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review 1987b, July 5, 1995
- Public Law 90-542, Bureau of Land Management, Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers
- 43 CFR 3815 Bureau of Land Management, Wild Horse and Burro Compliance Inspection Priorities and Procedures
- Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976
- Standard Practices Applied to Surface-Disturbing Activities