

## **What is the landownership in the Planning Area?**

Landownership in the Planning Area includes a mixture of public, private, and state land, each with different laws and regulations. Whereas BLM-administered lands are managed for multiple-use, in accordance with the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act, intermingled private and state lands are protected by their own property rights.

## **What is checkerboard landownership?**

The checkerboard pattern of alternating public and private land is a remnant of the land grants to finance the transcontinental railroad under the Union Pacific Act of 1862. Congress granted every other section (one square mile) of land both 20 miles north and 20 miles south of the railroad to Union Pacific, with the intent that those grant lands would be sold to raise capital for the venture. However, many sections in remote areas remain unsold and in private possession. When homesteading and government land sales ceased many areas were left in a permanent checkerboard pattern of alternating public and private land.

## **How is checkerboard landownership considered in VRM?**

Visual resources can be difficult to manage in areas with checkerboard landownership or other fragmented landownership patterns. The BLM has no, or very limited, authority to modify or regulate activities on private land. Except when requested, or agreed to, by the private landowner, the authorizations on public lands may not be used to condition activities on non-federal land.

The VRM (visual resource management) decisions will direct management of visual resources on public lands and resources administered by the BLM within the boundary of the Rawlins Field Office. The VRM management class decisions made in the Rawlins RMP (Resource Management Plan) amendment will not apply to private or state lands.

BLM resource management is complicated by the often-times differing goals and objectives of private landowners, where those private land goals and objectives are not compatible with public land's multiple-use goals and objectives. In some instances, opportunities for compatible management are available where resources on private land may be protected through local or private management tools, such as zoning regulations or private conservation easements. In other instances, where a fragmented or checkerboard landownership pattern exists and few, if any, sensitive resource values occur on public land, the landownership pattern may actually make it easier to jointly develop projects that are consistent with both public and private land goals and objectives.

