

1 **3.13.2.2 Cave Creek ACEC**

2 The Cave Creek Cave ACEC is located within the Shirley Mountain SRMA and contains Cave Creek
3 Cave. Due to ground water conditions near Cave Creek, temperatures and humidity are conducive for
4 supporting a hibernaculum and roost site for multiple species of bats, including some that are on the
5 BLM sensitive species list. Cave Creek Cave also provides recreational opportunities for spelunkers. A
6 management plan for the Cave Creek Cave ACEC is available online at
7 <http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/rfo.html>.

8 The management goal of the Cave Creek ACEC is to protect the hibernaculum and maternity roost for
9 several bat species, as well as maintain back country recreational opportunities. The following three
10 objectives have been identified by the BLM to accomplish this goal: 1) maintain and protect the cave
11 ecosystem for wildlife species, especially bats; 2) accommodate recreation demand for caving while
12 protecting sensitive cave resources; and 3) acquire legal public vehicle access to the cave entrance.

13 **3.13.3 National Scenic Trails**

14 The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) is the only National Scenic Trail that occurs
15 within the planning area. The CDNST is approximately 3,100 miles long, traveling from Canada to
16 Mexico through the states of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico.

17 The nature and purposes of the CDNST are to provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and
18 horseback riding opportunities and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the CDNST
19 corridor (USFS 2009). Currently within the Rawlins Field Office, the CDNST is managed as a SRMA.
20 The 0.25-mile-wide corridor (centered on the trail) of the CDNST SRMA is managed as a significant
21 recreational resource to maintain or enhance a diversity of recreational opportunities and benefits while
22 providing trail users opportunities to view the diverse topographic, geographic, vegetative, wildlife, and
23 scenic phenomena that characterize the CDNST (BLM 2008b).

24 As set forth in NSHT guidance (BLM 2012a), the BLM shall establish a National Trail Management
25 Corridor through the land use planning process. This corridor should be located to avoid, insofar as
26 practicable, highways, roads, mineral rich areas, power transmission lines, commercial and industrial
27 developments, range fences and improvements, private operations, and any other foreseeable activities
28 that would be incompatible with the purposes of the trail, the natural condition, and use for outdoor
29 recreation. The width of the National Trail Management Corridor should be established based on the
30 presence of the resources, qualities, values, and associated settings and the primary use or uses. The
31 BLM may consider different sizes or configurations of land within the corridor through the alternative
32 development and analysis process. However, all National Trail resources, qualities, values, and
33 associated settings must be contained within the corridor. To the greatest extent possible, during the
34 land use planning process, utility corridors, energy development zones, and exclusion areas for solar,
35 wind, oil and gas, and similar types of uses should be considered simultaneously with the establishment
36 of the National Trail Management Corridor to ensure National Trail protections and energy development
37 objectives are compatible (BLM 2012a).

38 The land use plan and associated NEPA analysis should also consider the following guidance for scenic
39 and visual resource decisions for National Trails: 1) the BLM should consider establishing VRM
40 Classes I and II to retain or improve the integrity of the associated settings and scenic values for which
41 the National Trail was designated where not adversely impacted by existing cultural modifications; 2) the
42 BLM should consider establishing VRM Class III or classes which are more visually protective to retain or
43 improve the existing visual setting of the areas along a National Trail, where permanent cultural
44 modifications currently exist. VRM Class IV should not be considered for use within the National Trail
45 Management Corridor; and 3) the BLM should maintain naturally appearing landscapes that are
46 associated with the National Scenic Trial, regardless of scenic quality rating, to provide premier
47 recreation experience opportunities (BLM 2012a).

1 **3.13.4 Other Management Areas**

2 The three NNLs within the planning area (Big Hollow, Sand Creek, and Como Bluff) were designated for
3 a variety of reasons ranging from scenic and scientific values to paleontological and geologic values. The
4 management objectives are to preserve the natural values within these sites.

5 Other management areas in the planning area include five WHMAs. The five WHMAs, which focus on
6 management of wildlife habitat values associated with big game and other wildlife, include: Chain Lakes,
7 Laramie Peak, Laramie Plains Lakes, Shamrock Hills, and Wick-Beumee.

8 **3.14 Transportation and Access**

9 Section 3.14 from Chapter 3.0 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a, pp. 3-100) provided
10 information on the roadway network, including access and transportation trends (Section 3.14.1,
11 pp. 3-100). Relevant information is summarized in this section.

12 Transportation resources affect the visual character of the area and often provide key observation points
13 of public views into the planning area. The transportation network within the planning area is associated
14 with a variety of resource uses such as mineral extraction, livestock grazing, and recreation. There are
15 two interstate highways, I-80 and I-25, traversing westward from Nebraska and northward from
16 Colorado, respectively. Two U.S. highways, and multiple state highways as well as numerous
17 maintained and non-maintained BLM, county, and private roads also are present throughout the planning
18 area. Public access can be difficult within the checkerboard landownership pattern. Where easements do
19 not exist, access through private land to public land is only available with private landowner permission.
20 Use of the transportation network is increasing as energy development and recreational use by the
21 general public increases.

22 RFD/RFA for transportation and access resources in the planning area include maintaining 120 miles of
23 existing resource roads per year as well as any new roads added to the network.

24 **3.15 Vegetation**

25 Section 3.15 from Chapter 3.0 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a, pp. 3-101 to 3-119) provided
26 an extensive general description of vegetation resources in the planning area, and is herein incorporated
27 by reference. The Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a) also provides a discussion of ecological
28 provinces (Section 3.15.1, pp. 3-101 to 3-102); general vegetation map zones (Section 3.15.2, pp. 3-103
29 to 3-112); riparian Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) (Section 3.15.3, pp. 3-113); noxious and invasive
30 weed management (Section 3.15.4, pp. 3-113 to 3-115); poisonous plants (Section 3.15.5, pp. 3-115 to
31 3-116); and special status and sensitive plant species (Section 3.15.6, pp. 3-116 to 3-118). Relevant
32 information is summarized in this section.

33 Vegetation communities within the planning area exist within three ecological provinces, which include
34 the Intermountain Semi-Desert Province (sagebrush steppe), the Great Plains Dry Steppe Province
35 (mixed- and shortgrass prairie), and the Southern Rocky Mountain Steppe-Open Woodland-Coniferous
36 Forest Province (transition from grass and shrub dominated areas to shrub and tree dominated areas).
37 Vegetation types are a product of precipitation, elevation, aspect, temperature extremes, wind, and soil
38 properties. Vegetation resources influence the visual character of the planning area, and VRM can affect
39 how vegetation management activities are conducted. Map 3-10 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS
40 (BLM 2008a) displays vegetation resources in the planning area.

41 The Intermountain Semi-Desert Province lies below 8,000 feet and is dominated by sagebrush, saltbush
42 and a mix of grasses and forbs. Wet valley bottoms produce rushes, sedges, and willows, and the drier
43 streams and ephemeral washes produce greasewood and saltgrass (Bailey 1995; Knight 1994).
44 Wind-distributed snowfall provides most of the moisture for spring plant growth.

1 The Great Plains Dry Steppe Province lies between 5,500 and 7,500 feet in elevation and dominates the
2 Laramie Basin and the prairie east of the Laramie Range as far as Nebraska. Dominant vegetation types
3 consist of buffalo grass, grama grasses, wheatgrasses, and needle grasses with Indian grass and little
4 bluestem growing in deeper, wetter soils. Big sagebrush, sand sagebrush, and rabbitbrush are scattered
5 throughout the landscape. The riparian areas produce cottonwood, sumac, willow, and alder (Bailey
6 1995; Knight 1994). The majority of this area is privately owned and is used for livestock grazing,
7 irrigated cropland, and dryland farming.

8 The Southern Rocky Mountain Steppe-Open Woodland-Coniferous Forest Province lies between
9 8,000 and 12,000 feet in elevation and makes up most of the mountain ranges in the planning area. The
10 lower elevations (8,000 to 9,000 feet) are dominated by brome and fescue grasses, mountain
11 mahogany, sagebrush, aspen, and juniper. Higher elevations (Medicine Bow National Forest) in the
12 southern and eastern portion of the planning area contain spruce and pine forests. This province
13 provides increased diversity and productivity used as summer forage for wildlife and livestock.

14 Due to the semi-arid climate, wetlands and riparian areas throughout the entire planning area are
15 important vegetation communities. Emphasis is placed on their Proper Functioning Condition (PFC).
16 PFC surveys determine whether wetlands and riparian areas are meeting the minimum requirements for
17 proper ecological and physical processes. Emphasis is also placed on the control of noxious and
18 invasive weeds.

19 Approximately 18 different noxious and invasive weeds are known to occur within the planning area.
20 Additionally, several species of poisonous plants are known to exist within the planning area as well as
21 several species of threatened, endangered, candidate, and sensitive plants.

22 Rangelands are managed to achieve Desired Plant Community (DPC). Vegetation treatments including
23 mechanical, biological, chemical, and prescribed fire are utilized to meet standards for rangeland health
24 and watershed function and to achieve DPC.

25 There is one endangered plant species (blowout penstemon) and two threatened plant species (Ute
26 ladies'-tresses and Colorado butterfly plant) that are located within the planning area. Blowout
27 penstemon occurs within a moving band of sand dunes in the northern portion of the planning area. Ute
28 ladies'-tresses and the Colorado butterfly plant occur in riparian habitats. The Ute ladies'-tresses plant is
29 known to occur in Laramie County. No populations of Colorado butterfly plant are known to occur on
30 public lands; however, they are located on private lands in the planning area. There are seven sensitive
31 plant species in the RFO: Laramie columbine, cedar rim thistle, Gibben's beardtongue, persistent sepal
32 yellowcress, meadow milkvetch, limber pine, and Laramie false sagebrush. Habitat exists for the many
33 stemmed spider flower and dune wild rye; however, the presence of these plants has not been confirmed
34 in the RFO. Known habitat for BLM Wyoming State sensitive plant species is open to development
35 activities; however, intensive management of surface disturbing activities applies.

36 Vegetation treatment projects do occur within the planning area. These projects include fuels reductions,
37 improving vegetation health, and noxious weed control, and are conducted under the protocols
38 established in the Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States FEIS. The RFD/RFA
39 for vegetation has changed, as follows, due to the size of projects getting smaller, changes in the fire
40 program, Greater Sage-Grouse management, and increased costs of treatments:

- 41 • Prescribed fire treatments: 2,800 acres/year or 56,000 acres over 20 years;
- 42 • Chemical Treatments: 4,000 acres/year or 80,000 acres over 20 years;
- 43 • Mechanical Treatments: 200 acres/year or 4,000 acres over 20 years; and
- 44 • Total vegetation treatments: 7,000 acres per year.

45 Since the 2008 RMP/ROD, the following changes have occurred to special status plants:

- 1 • As of 2011, there have been several new discoveries of special status plant populations within
2 the planning area (both BLM sensitive and federally listed). These new discoveries are likely
3 attributable to new plant inventories being conducted.
- 4 • The RFO updates the special status plant database as new populations are discovered. In 2011,
5 three new sub-populations of blowout penstemon were discovered. Two of these occur outside
6 the Blowout Penstemon ACEC. While all occur on public lands, one sub-population occurs on
7 lands administered by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Blowout Penstemon Statewide
8 Programmatic Biological Opinion was completed on July 8, 2013. A maintenance action was
9 completed to incorporate the revised conservation measures into the Rawlins RMP (BLM
10 2008b)
- 11 • The Colorado Butterfly Plant Biological Opinion was completed in December 2010. A
12 maintenance action was completed to incorporate the revised conservation measures into the
13 Rawlins RMP (BLM 2008b).

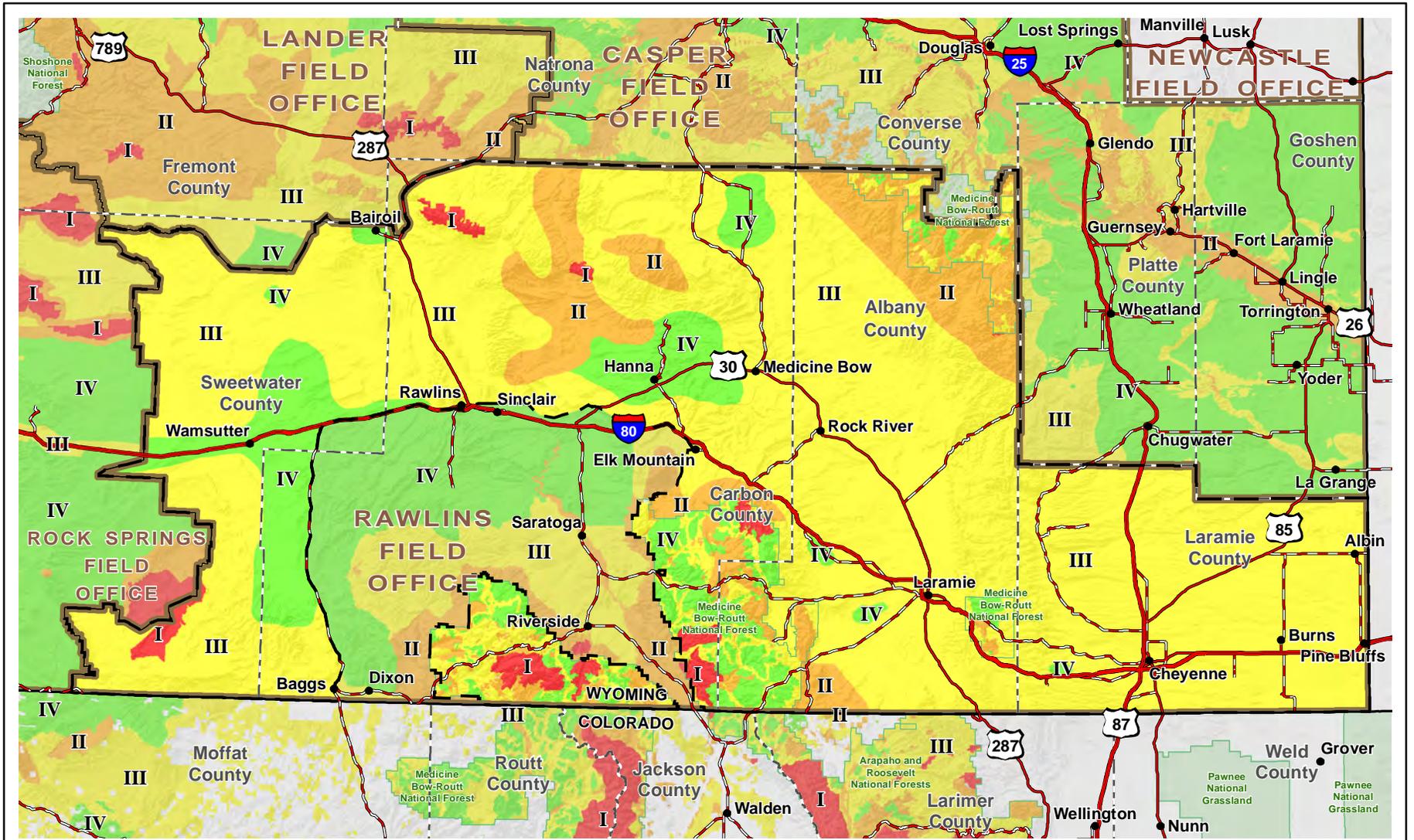
14 **3.16 Visual Resources**

15 Section 3.16 from Chapter 3.0 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a, pp. 3-120 to 3-122) provides
16 a general description of visual resources in the planning area and is herein incorporated by reference.
17 The Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a) provides a discussion of natural settings and scenic views
18 (pp. 3-120); visibility (pp. 3-120); a description of the VRM system (pp. 3-120 to 3-121); and visual
19 resource trends and issues (pp. 3-122). Relevant information is summarized in this section and
20 augmented by information from the VRI (Otak, Inc. 2011).

21 Visual resources within the planning area are influenced by a wide variety of topographic, geologic,
22 hydrologic, vegetative, and other characteristics of the region. The planning area topography ranges
23 from relatively flat land with low rolling or flat-topped hills to higher elevations containing mountain shrub
24 vegetation and alpine forests in the highest areas. The type of vegetation varies and is dependent on the
25 amount of precipitation received in any given area. Vegetation patterns affect color, form, line, and
26 contrast, which shape the basis for analysis of visual resources in the area. The excellent air quality in
27 the area allows for mostly unobstructed views. The quality, sensitivity, and management objectives of
28 visual resources vary widely throughout the planning area. Visual resources are a component of the
29 landscape that influences human activities. Recreational opportunities and experiences that rely on
30 quality natural settings are intended to be protected by VRM objectives. Resource uses affecting visual
31 resources include, but are not limited to, increased OHV use, wind energy and mineral development, and
32 utility construction. **Figure 3-5** illustrates the existing/remanded VRM classes in the RFO boundary, and
33 on the surrounding lands just outside the area.

34 A VRI was conducted in July and August 2010 within the planning area, with findings published in
35 February 2011. The VRI was conducted to determine the visual (scenic) values within the RFO. The
36 three primary components to a visual resource inventory include scenic quality evaluation, sensitivity
37 level analysis, and distances zones.

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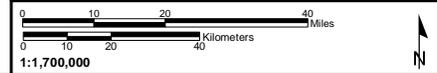


Legend

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Interstate Highway | Class I |
| U.S. Highway | Class II |
| State Highway | Class III |
| BLM Field Office Boundary | Class IV |
| Planning Area | |

**Rawlins Field Office
RMP-A/EA**

**Figure 3-5
VRM Classes
Surrounding the Planning Area**



1 For the scenic quality evaluation, public lands are rated as Class A, Class B, or Class C. Lands are
2 reviewed and rated using seven key factors: landforms, vegetation, water, color, influence of adjacent
3 scenery, scarcity, and cultural modifications.

4 **Figure 3-6** illustrates the scenic quality classifications for the scenic quality rating units in the planning
5 area.

6 The sensitivity level analysis measures public concern for scenic quality. Public lands are assigned high,
7 medium, or low sensitivity levels based on consideration of the following factors: types of users, amount
8 of use, public interest, adjacent land uses, special areas, and other factors. Sensitivity level rating units
9 may not have the same boundaries as scenic quality rating units. **Figure 3-7** illustrates the sensitivity
10 levels for the sensitivity level rating units in the planning area.

11 Distance zones are delineated to subdivide the landscape based on relative visibility from travel routes or
12 from Inventory Observation Points. The three distance zones include:

- 13 • Foreground-Midground Zone: This is an area that can be seen from each travel route for a
14 distance of 3 to 5 miles;
- 15 • Background Zone: This is the remaining area which can be seen from each travel route for a
16 distance of approximately 15 miles; and
- 17 • Seldom Seen Zone: These are areas that are not visible within the foreground-midground
18 and background zones and areas beyond the background zones.

19 All lands in the planning area were delineated as the Foreground-Midground distance zone.

20 The scenic quality evaluation, sensitivity level analysis, and delineation of distance zones are combined
21 to develop VRI classes (**Figure 2-1**), which represent the relative value of the visual resources. VRI
22 Classes I and II are the most valued, Class III represents a moderate value, and Class IV represents the
23 least value. VRI classes provide a baseline to develop a reasonable range of alternatives for VRM
24 classes during the planning process and during the analysis of impacts associated with the various
25 alternatives. However, VRI classes are informational in nature and do not establish management
26 direction. **Table 3-3** summarizes the percent of the planning area categorized into each VRI component
27 and the resulting VRI classes.

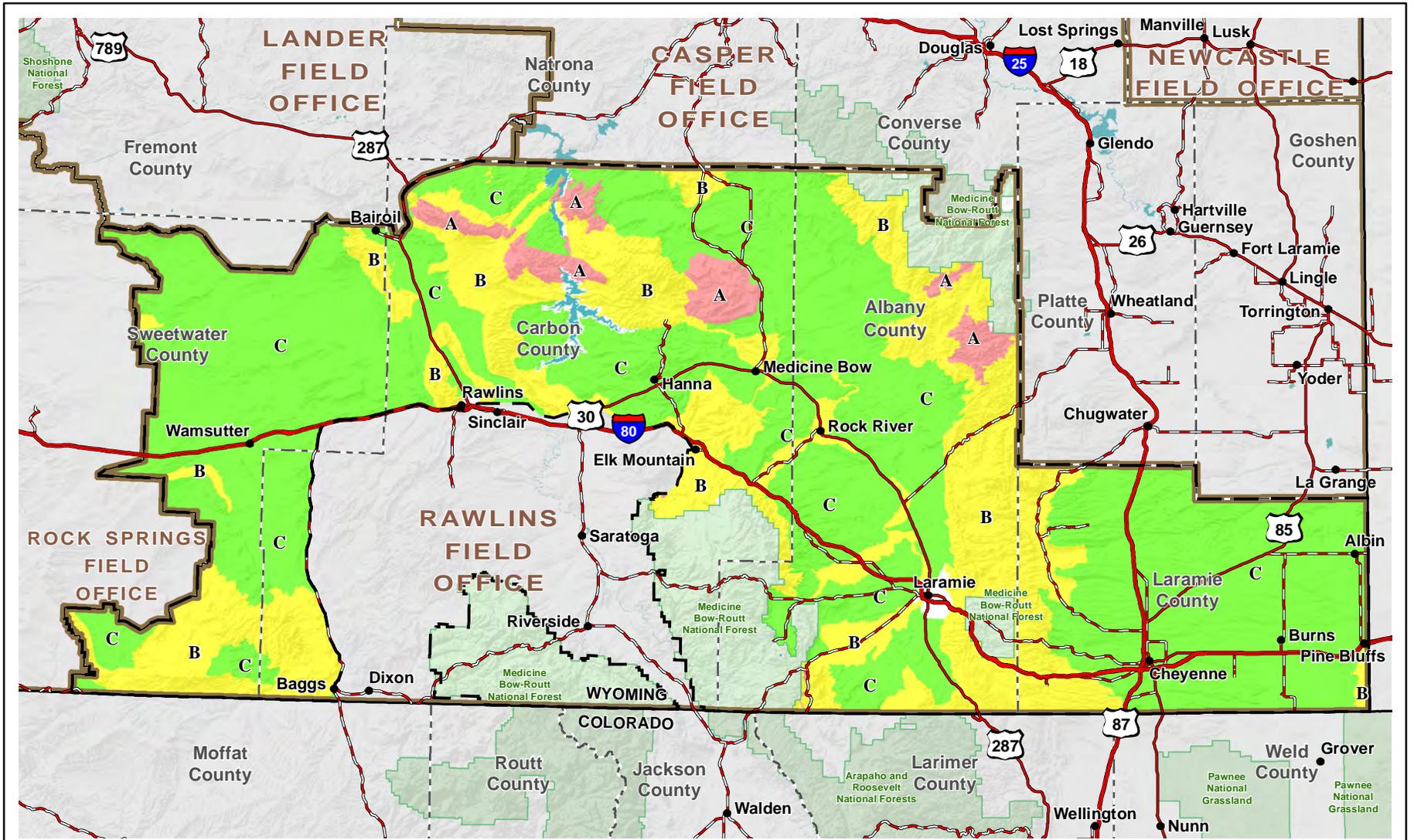
28 The assignment of VRM classes is made during the RMP process, which considers the value of visual
29 resources and management priorities for land uses. During the RMP process, VRM class boundaries
30 can be adjusted as necessary to reflect resource allocation decisions made in the RMP. Management
31 objectives established for each VRM class in the BLM Handbook H-8410-1, Visual Resource Inventory,
32 are summarized in **Table 2-1**. VRM decisions only apply to public lands in the planning area.

33 Recent VRM concerns include an increase in unmanaged, unmonitored OHV use within the planning
34 area for recreation. Additionally, widespread development of petroleum, natural gas, and coal in the
35 planning area is creating direct, negative visual impacts to visual resources. Effective mitigation of visual
36 impacts associated with mineral development and transportation corridors is needed to prevent conflicts
37 with VRM class criteria. Increased wind energy development proposals will also influence visual
38 resource management as areas are developed.

39 As stated in the 2008 RMP Appendix 33, RFD/RFA for visual resources in the planning area includes
40 conducting reclamation and closing roads where necessary to mitigate visual impacts.

41

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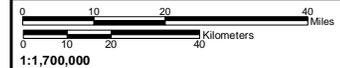


Legend

- Interstate Highway
 - U.S. Highway
 - State Highway
 - BLM Field Office Boundary
 - Planning Area
-
- Visual Resource Inventory Scenic Quality Rating**
- Class A
 - Class B
 - Class C

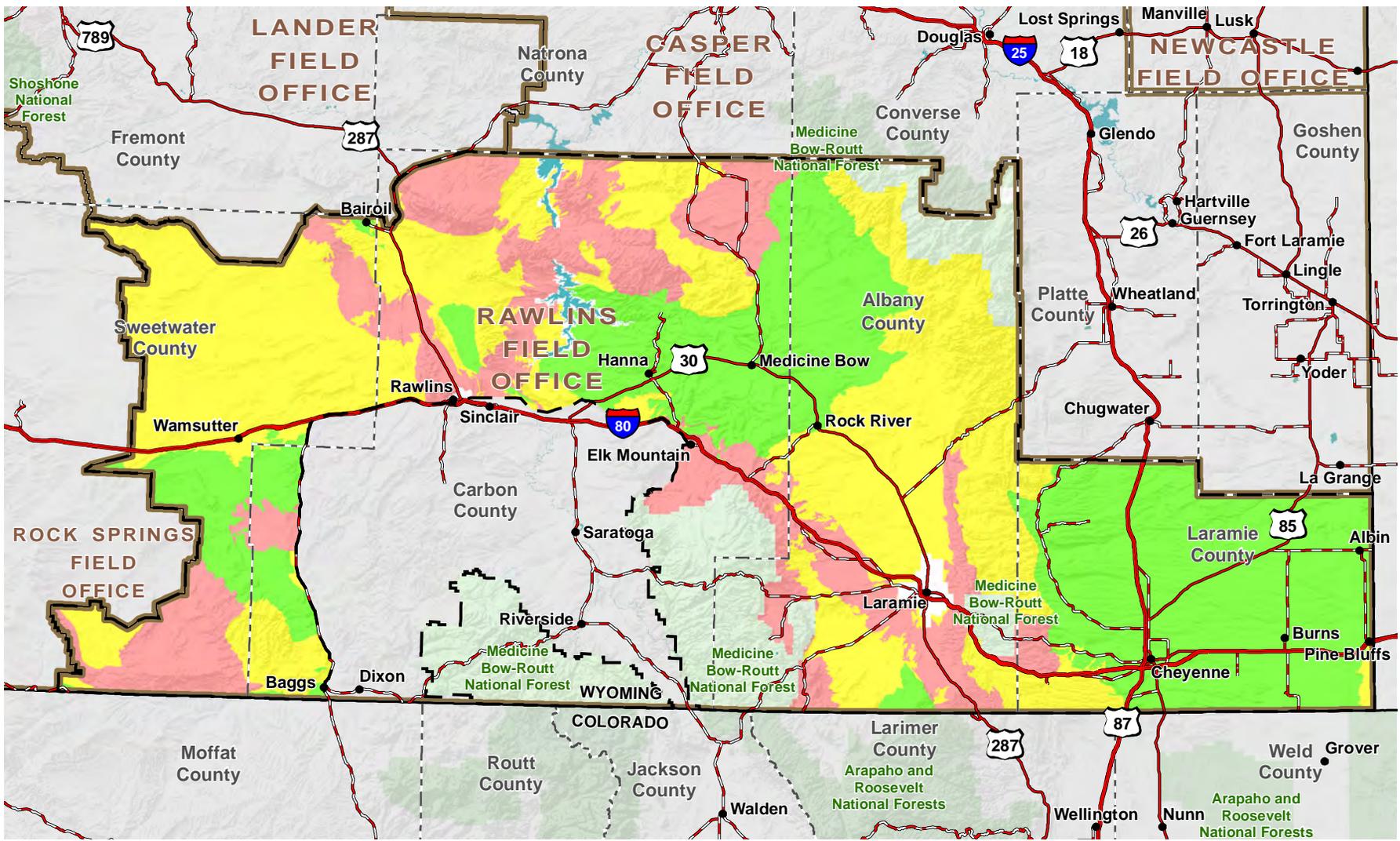
**Rawlins Field Office
RMP-A/EA**

**Figure 3-6
Scenic Quality Classifications
within the Planning Area**



1:1,700,000

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- Legend**
- Interstate Highway
 - U.S. Highway
 - State Highway
 - BLM Field Office Boundary
 - Planning Area
- Visual Resource Inventory Sensitivity Level Rating**
- High
 - Moderate
 - Low

Rawlins Field Office RMP-A/EA

Figure 3-7 Sensitivity Levels within the Planning Area

0 10 20 40 Miles
0 10 20 40 Kilometers

1:1,700,000

Table 3-3 Visual Resource Inventory Summary for Public Lands in the Planning Area

	BLM – Class A	BLM – Class B	BLM – Class C	Not Inventoried	Total¹	
Scenic Quality Evaluation	5%	32%	64%	0%	100%	
	High	Medium	Low	Not Inventoried	Total¹	
Sensitivity Level Analysis	31%	50%	18%	0%	100%	
	Foreground-Midleground	Background	Seldom Seen	Not Inventoried	Total	
Distance Zones	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	
	VRI Class I	VRI Class II	VRI Class III	VRI Class IV	Not Inventoried	Total¹
VRI Classes	0%	21%	26%	54%	0%	100%

¹ Totals may not exactly equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Otak, Inc. 2011.

1

2 **3.17 Water Quality, Watershed, and Soils**

3 Section 3.17 from Chapter 3.0 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a, pp. 3-123 to 3-138) provides
 4 a general description of water quality, watershed, and soils in the planning area and is herein
 5 incorporated by reference. The Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a) provides a discussion on water
 6 quality and watershed (pp. 3-123 to 3 124); surface water characteristics (pp. 3-124 to 3-129); surface
 7 water quality (pp. 3-129 to 3-131); and water management and monitoring (pp. 3-132 to 3-135).

8 Section 3.17.3 provides a discussion on soils information including soil conditions and characteristics
 9 (pp. 3-135); soil productivity (pp. 3-136); soil permeability (pp. 3-136 to 3-137); soil strength and stability
 10 (pp. 3-137); soil erosion (pp. 3-137); and soil salinity (pp. 3-137 to 3-138). Relevant information is
 11 summarized in this section.

12 Water resources in the planning area include lakes, rivers, reservoirs, streams, groundwater wells, and
 13 springs. Water resources in the planning area are important for wildlife habitat and as water sources for
 14 livestock, wildlife, and people in this arid and semi-arid environment. Three basins are located within the
 15 planning area, the Colorado, the Great Divide, and the North Platte. The Colorado River Basin and the
 16 Great Divide Basin forms the majority of the western half of the planning area. The Upper Green River
 17 and the White-Yampa River sub-basins are contained within the Colorado River Basin. The central and
 18 eastern portion is entirely within the Platte River Basin, which contains the North Platte and South Platte
 19 River sub-basins. The Great Divide Basin has no external surficial drainage. The largest water bodies in
 20 the planning area are the North Platte and Medicine Bow Rivers. Both of these rivers are in the North
 21 Platte River Basin and drain north into Seminoe and Pathfinder Reservoirs. The Colorado River Basin
 22 includes Muddy Creek and Savery Creek, which flow into the Little Snake River near Baggs. Map 3-11
 23 and 3-12 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a) displays major surface water basins and
 24 soil/precipitation zones, respectively.

1 Protection of surface water is based on requirements with the State of Wyoming and the U.S.
2 Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA's) administration of the Clean Water Act, BLM guidance,
3 memoranda and directives, best available science/monitoring, and environmental planning documents.
4 Turbidity is the main water quality concern in the North Platte River Basin in the center portion of the
5 planning area, while salinity is the main water quality concern in the Colorado River basin in the
6 southwestern portion of the planning area.

7 Soil classifications are based on precipitation zones for which generalizations can be made about soil
8 productivity, permeability, infiltration, stability and strength, and erosion potential. Soils in the planning
9 area include shallow-to-deep and fine-to-coarse-textured soils which vary in salt and organic matter
10 content. Soils are classified as generally unproductive to moderately productive, less permeable to highly
11 permeable, and moderately erosive to highly erosive (BLM 1987). These conditions collectively influence
12 watershed function and the development of healthy vegetation, which together enable human uses and
13 provide wildlife habitat.

14 RFD/RFA for water quality, watershed, and soils in the planning area include stream restoration on
15 25 miles of streams, 10 headcut remediation projects, and groundwater monitoring, precipitation and
16 stream gaging at 50 sites.

17 **3.18 Wild Horses**

18 Section 3.18 from Chapter 3.0 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a, pp. 3-139 to 3-142) provided
19 a general description of wild horses and herd management areas (HMAs) in the planning area, and is
20 herein incorporated by reference. Relevant information is summarized in this section.

21 The Wild, Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 establishes national direction for the management
22 of wild horses and burros on public land. Map 2-21 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a) displays
23 HMAs in the planning area. Within the planning area, there are Four HMAs (Adobe Town, Antelope Hills,
24 Stewart Creek, and Lost Creek) totaling 981,500 acres.

25 The Adobe Town HMA totals 448,000 acres and is located in the southwest portion of the planning area
26 northwest of Baggs. Due to off-road restrictions and relatively rough terrain, the majority of the HMA
27 remains undisturbed. The Adobe Town WSA is entirely contained within the HMA. The majority of the
28 vegetation in the Adobe Town HMA consists of sagebrush dominated vegetation communities; however,
29 there are scattered patches of saltbush, greasewood, juniper woodlands, grasslands, and badland. A
30 few of the dependable water sources occur on private and state lands, which comprise 6 percent of the
31 entire HMA. The appropriate management level (AML) set for the Adobe Town HMA ranges from 610 to
32 800 adult horses plus the year's unweaned colts. Horse populations in this HMA have descended from
33 escaped domestic breeds. The average rate of increase is approximately 16 percent annually.

34 The Antelope Hills HMA totals 159,000 acres and is managed by the Lander Field Office (LFO).
35 Approximately 52,500 acres are located in the extreme northwest portion of the planning area, the
36 remaining 106,500 acres are located within the LFO. The majority of the vegetation in the Antelope Hills
37 HMA consists of sagebrush with a grass understory and infrequent riparian zones. The topography
38 consists of rolling flatlands, uplifted ridges and some abrupt rocky areas. The AML set for Antelope Hills
39 is 60 to 82 adult horses plus the year's unweaned colts.

40 The Stewart Creek HMA totals 231,000 acres and is located along the northern border of the planning
41 area west of SH 287. The majority of the vegetation in the Stewart Creek HMA consists of a
42 sagebrush/bunchgrass community; however there are isolated patches of greasewood, saltbush, and
43 some riparian communities (which serve as important water resources). The AML set for Stewart Creek
44 ranges from 125 to 175 adult horses plus the year's unweaned colts. Horse populations in this HMA
45 have descended from escaped domestic breeds. Overall, the wild horse population in Stewart Creek has
46 experienced an average increase rate of 18 percent annually.

1 The Lost Creek HMA totals 250,000 acres and is located in the northwest portion of the planning area
2 west of Stewart Creek HMA and is contained within the Great Divide Basin. The majority of the
3 vegetation in the Lost Creek HMA consists of a sagebrush/bunchgrass community; however there are
4 interspersed greasewood and saltbush communities, as well as playa lakes, and several sensitive desert
5 wetland/riparian areas that include ephemeral and intermittent streams and some ephemeral lakes.
6 Natural water sources are scarce and some are located on isolated parcels of state and private lands.
7 The AML set for Lost Creek ranges from 60 to 82 adult horses plus the year's unweaned colts. Overall,
8 the wild horse population in Lost Creek has experienced an average increase rate of 18 percent
9 annually.

10 The RFD/RFA for wild horses provided in Table A33-15 of the 2008 RMP/ROD (BLM 2008b, pp. A33-6
11 to A33-7) remains adequate.

12 **3.19 Wildlife and Fish**

13 Section 3.19 from Chapter 3.0 of the Rawlins RMP Final EIS (BLM 2008a, pp. 3-143 to 3-161) provided
14 a general description of wildlife and fish in the planning area, and is herein incorporated by reference.
15 The section contains detailed information on general wildlife species (Section 3.19.1, pp. 3-142 to
16 3-152); threatened, endangered, candidate, and proposed wildlife species (Section 3.19.2, pp. 3-152 to
17 3-155); and the BLM Wyoming State Director's Sensitive Species List habitat management
18 (Section 3.19.3, pp. 3-155 to 3-161). Relevant information is summarized in this section.

19 The vast acreage of public lands in the planning area provide important habitat for wildlife and fish
20 species. Small mammals within the planning area include cottontails, jackrabbits, snowshoe hares,
21 squirrels, ground squirrels, mice, voles, and shrews. Other species include badger, bobcat, marten,
22 weasel, coyote, raccoon, red fox, swift fox, gray fox, skunk, beaver, mink, and muskrat. Big game
23 species in the planning area include pronghorn, deer (mule deer and small numbers of white-tailed
24 deer), elk, moose, black bear, mountain lion, and bighorn sheep. Black bear and mountain lion are
25 classified as trophy game animals in Wyoming statutes. The big game populations evaluated most
26 extensively are pronghorn, mule deer, and elk, due in part to their large populations. Maps 2-53
27 (pronghorn), 2-54 (mule deer), 2-55 (bighorn), and 2-56 (elk) of the Rawlins RMP ROD (BLM 2008b)
28 display big game habitats in the planning area, as of 2008.

29 A variety of avian species occur within the planning area. Raptors in the planning area include owls,
30 harriers, hawks, kites, eagles, and falcons; however, kites are incidental to the region. Nesting sites for
31 these species include cliffs, trees and shrubs, rock outcrops and ground substrate, and man-made
32 structures. Other birds include songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and upland game birds. A complete list
33 of species can be found in the 2008 Rawlins RMP.

34 Amphibians with the potential to occur in the planning area include the tiger salamander, five species of
35 toads (plains spadefoot, Great Basin spadefoot, boreal toad, Wyoming toad, and Woodhouse's toad),
36 and four species of frogs (bullfrog, northern leopard frog, wood frog, and boreal chorus frog).

37 Reptiles in the planning area include three species of turtles (Western painted turtle, western spiny
38 softshell turtle, and common snapping turtle), six lizard species (many-lined skink, northern sagebrush
39 lizard, red-lipped prairie lizard, northern prairie lizard, eastern short-horned lizard, and northern earless
40 lizard), and eight snake species (plains hognose snake, western smooth green snake, pale milk snake,
41 Great Basin gopher snake, bullsnake, wandering garter snake, western plains garter snake, and prairie
42 rattlesnake).

43 Fish habitat in the planning area includes perennial and intermittent streams, springs, and flatwater
44 (lakes and reservoirs) that support fish through at least a portion of the year. Condition of the fish
45 habitats is related to hydrologic conditions of the upland and riparian areas associated with a specific
46 stream or water body. In addition to several introduced trout species, public lands within the planning
47 area provide habitat for eight fish families.

1 There are multiple threatened, endangered, candidate, and/or proposed fish and wildlife species that are
2 known to occur or have the potential to occur in the planning area. Currently, 18 mammal, bird,
3 amphibian, fish, and plant species in the planning area are federally listed or are candidates and must be
4 taken into consideration for management activities. In addition, the BLM Wyoming State Director's List of
5 Sensitive Species has also identified an additional 10 state sensitive mammal species, 17 bird species,
6 3 amphibian species, 5 fish species, and 7 plants. Most notable BLM Wyoming sensitive species include
7 the mountain plover, long-eared myotis, fringed myotis, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat,
8 white-tailed prairie dog, black-tailed prairie dog, Wyoming pocket gopher, pygmy rabbit, swift fox, and
9 Greater Sage-Grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, and western boreal toad. A complete list of
10 threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, and sensitive species can be found in the 2008 Rawlins
11 Approved RMP.

12 The Greater Sage-Grouse was placed on the candidate species list on March 4, 2010. Core Population
13 Areas (Core Areas) were delineated and the results were provided to the Wyoming Game and Fish
14 Department, and approved by the Wyoming Governor's Greater Sage-Grouse Implementation Team.
15 The Core Areas include areas with the highest densities of breeding Greater Sage-Grouse in the state,
16 as well as identified areas important for connectivity between populations. The Core Areas include
17 roughly 25 percent of the state but contain approximately 83 percent of the Greater Sage-Grouse
18 population. The planning area includes portions of four Core Areas: Greater South Pass, Natrona,
19 Hanna, and North Laramie.

20 Changes to wildlife and fisheries from the 2008 RMP/ROD include the following:

- 21 • As of 2011, there have been reduced populations of both pronghorn and mule deer within the
22 planning area. These reductions are mostly due to normal periodically severe winters, but may
23 be exacerbated by human disturbance from development of infrastructure.
- 24 • The State of Wyoming has been cleared for wild populations of black-footed ferrets. The BLM
25 RFO has defined the maps for the Continental Divide, Desolation Flats, Dad, Seminoe, and
26 Shamrock Hills complexes, which may be important in the future for the re-introduction of the
27 black-footed ferret due to the high number of prairie dogs found in these areas. These maps
28 have refined the actual white-tailed prairie dog towns and have reduced the need to consult with
29 the USFWS for projects located outside of identified black-footed ferret habitats.

30 The RFD/RFA for fisheries provided in Table A33-16 of the 2008 RMP/ROD (pp. A33-7, BLM 2008b)
31 remains adequate.

32 **3.20 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics**

33 Section 201 of the FLPMA requires the BLM to maintain, on a continuing basis, an inventory of all public
34 lands and their resources and other values, which includes wilderness characteristics. The BLM is
35 required to maintain and update its inventory of wilderness resources on public lands on a regular basis.
36 BLM Manuals 6310 and 6320 issued on March 15, 2012, clarify that the requirements of Section 201 of
37 FLPMA remain in effect. The manuals identify specific circumstances where the BLM will update or
38 initiate a wilderness characteristics inventory. BLM Manual 6320 indicates that the BLM will analyze the
39 effects of plan alternatives on lands with wilderness characteristics.

40 The primary function of an inventory is to determine the presence or absence of wilderness
41 characteristics. The inventory for wilderness characteristics is based on criteria defined in Section 2(c) of
42 the Wilderness Act and incorporated in Section 603 of the FLPMA for sufficient size, naturalness,
43 outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and supplemental
44 values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values).
45 The BLM inventoried Lands with Wilderness Characteristics for the entire RFO in 2012. A total of
46 90 units were surveyed and are detailed in **Table 3-4** below and illustrated in **Figure 3-8**. These areas
47 have not undergone a planning review to date to determine whether management is warranted. While

- 1 consideration of management alternatives for lands with wilderness characteristics is outside the scope
- 2 of this issue-targeted plan amendment, areas are evaluated to determine whether proposed
- 3 management would negate the eligibility of the whole inventoried area for consideration in a future
- 4 planning effort for wilderness character protection.

Table 3-4 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

LWC Area #	Unit Size (acres)	Sufficient Size? Yes/No	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive and Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No	Meets LWC Criteria? Yes/No
WY-030-411 Area C	10,572	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WY-030-411 Area D	7,534	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WY-030-411 Area E	13,490	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WY-030-15N93W12-2012	6,299	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N80W3-2012	5,024	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
WY-030-28N79W8-2012	6,318	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-24N94W28-2012	20,834	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-15N92W16-2012	5,717	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N88W28-2012	5,225	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N88W29-2012	9,623	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-24N97W12-2012	9,105	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N86W36-2012	7,737	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-24N93W33-2012	7,369	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N77W2-2012	11,147	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N80W19-2012	15,380	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-12N93W5-2012	17,039	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-15N94W27-2012	5,257	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N96W33-2012	28,521	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N96W15-2012	6,896	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N85W7-2012	9,707	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N83W14-2012	6,856	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Table 3-4 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

LWC Area #	Unit Size (acres)	Sufficient Size? Yes/No	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive and Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No	Meets LWC Criteria? Yes/No
WY-030-24N94W18-2012	23,303	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N95W19-2012	15,186	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N94W21-2012	6,828	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N86W19-2012	6,489	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-13N93W4-2012	6,123	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-13N93W4-2012	19,306	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-13N92W7-2012	9,265	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N89W24-2012	5,264	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WY-030-27N82W20-2012	16,903	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-13N95W33-2012	11,873	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-14N94W22-2012	28,269	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-24N96W19-2012	11,319	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N76W17-2012	5,054	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-23N96W22-2012	5,835	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N85W35-2012	9,423	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-412-S Area C	12,725	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
WY-030-412-S Area D	49,827	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
WY-030-412-S Area E	21,024	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
WY-030-26N87W19-2012	9,189	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-24N95W20-2012	59,231	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N94W25-2012	13,047	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Table 3-4 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

LWC Area #	Unit Size (acres)	Sufficient Size? Yes/No	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive and Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No	Meets LWC Criteria? Yes/No
WY-030-24N97W34-2012	9,477	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N82W13-2012	5,031	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N79W31-2012	6,859	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N76W28-2012	5,295	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-16N93W28-2012	7,588	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N79W12-2012	5,771	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N88W3-2012	9,265	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WYD03-14N98W-2011	10,071	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WY-030-15N93W27-2012	14,106	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N78W28-2012	9,891	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N82W7-2012	5,290	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N76W35-2012	5,723	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N84W3-2012	11,381	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
WY-030-27N87W6-2012	7,435	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N88W19-2012	6,570	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-28N86W18-2012	38,818	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-13N92W27-2012	25,401	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-12N95W22-2012	18,364	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N96W33-2012	15,947	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-15N91W29-2012	10,418	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-13N95W24-2012	6,106	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

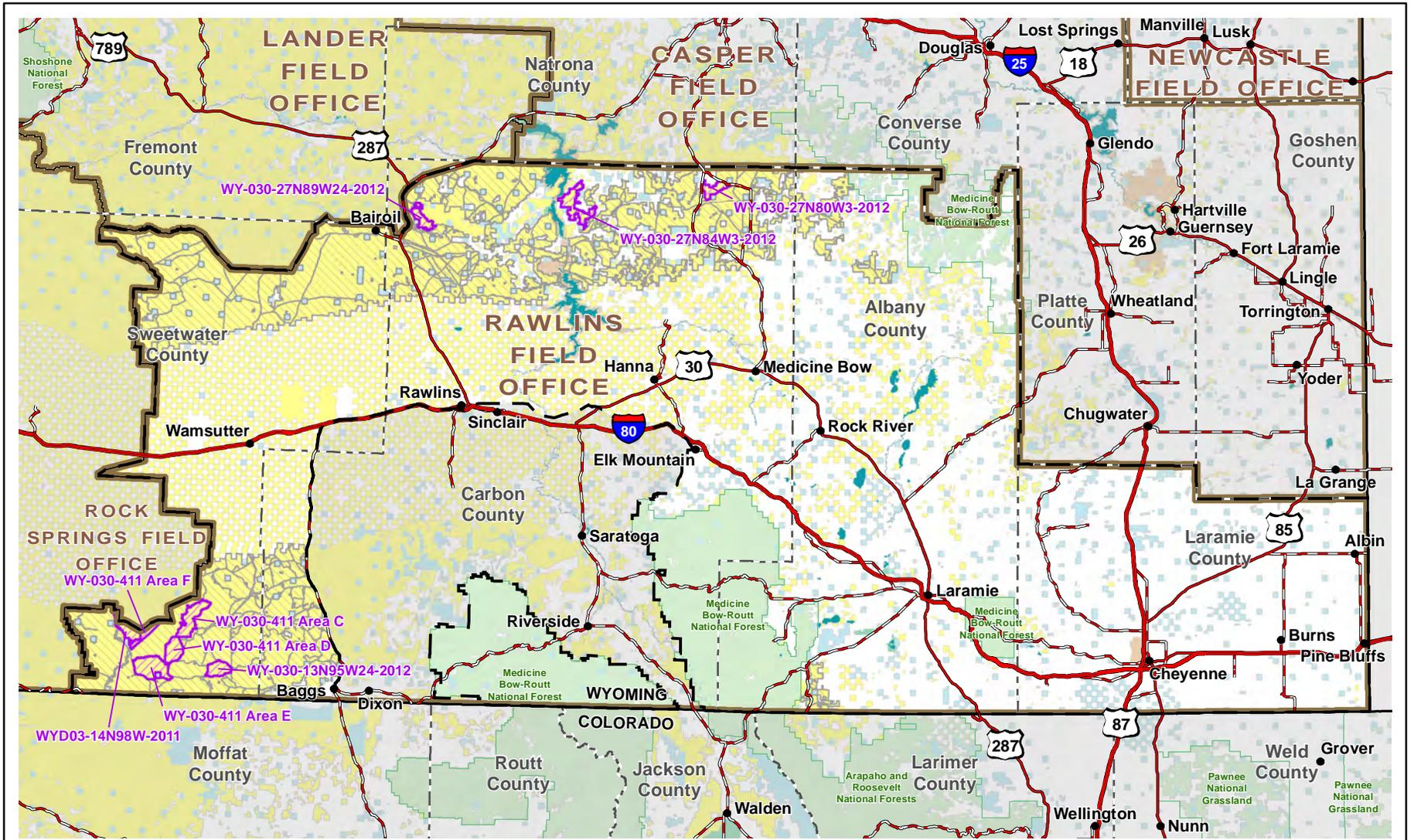
Table 3-4 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

LWC Area #	Unit Size (acres)	Sufficient Size? Yes/No	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive and Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No	Meets LWC Criteria? Yes/No
WY-030-27N87W3-2012	7,027	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N79W10-2012	10,625	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N87W5-2012	5,526	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N84W20-2012	11,916	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N89W34-2012	6,002	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N79W32-2012	14,014	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N80W13-2012	15,181	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N81W22-2012	17,244	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N82W23-2012	5,301	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-24N91W18-2012	22,252	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N86W6-2012	6,218	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N86W22-2012	11,081	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-25N90W8-2012	113,684	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-24N93W25-2012	7,087	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N91W12-2012	20,217	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N91W12-2012	38,397	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-03014N92W25-2012	7,527	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-27N79W13-2012	5,018	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N89W11-2012	5,658	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-15N91W29-2012	32,143	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-24N93W31-2012	14,394	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Table 3-4 Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Inventory

LWC Area #	Unit Size (acres)	Sufficient Size? Yes/No	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive and Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No	Meets LWC Criteria? Yes/No
WY-030-12N95W24-2012	7,750	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-14N96W36-2012	11,841	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-15N94W12-2012	16,918	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-15N94W6-2012	12,933	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-26N83W19-2012	6,304	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
WY-030-16N94W28-2012	6,455	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Source: BLM 2012c.



Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interstate Highway U.S. Highway State Highway BLM Field Office Boundary Planning Area Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Other Lands Evaluated for Wilderness Characteristics | <p>Land Owner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureau of Land Management National Park Service US Fish and Wildlife Service US Forest Service Other Federal Private State |
|---|--|

**Rawlins Field Office
RMP-A/EA**

**Figure 3-8
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics
in the Planning Area**

