

KEMMERER FIELD OFFICE

The Record of Decision for the Kemmerer Resource Management Plan, signed on April 29, 1986, is a comprehensive plan for managing the Kemmerer field office (BLM 1986). The Kemmerer FO occupies approximately 1.63 million acres in southwestern Wyoming. The FO occurs in Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Uinta Counties, and includes some lands in Idaho and Utah. These lands outside of Wyoming are managed for range resources only under the Kemmerer RMP.

The approved Kemmerer RMP represents a selection of management actions that will resolve the planning issues and provide multiple use management of the public lands and resources that will best meet present and future needs. As previously mentioned in this document, the Wyoming approved stipulations will be used, as appropriate, to condition development activities in all programs where surface disturbing activities take place and where the objectives of the RMP include the protection of important resource values. Restrictions specifically set forth in resource management plans are complementary to those included in the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines and BLM Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management and are not all-inclusive.

The objectives of the RMP are to provide a degree of protection to certain resources rather than to restrict other activities. Four areas of no surface occupancy have been designated within the FO. These restricted areas include: bald eagle communal winter roosting sites (Woodruff Narrows, Morgan Canyon, and Rock Creek), the Bridger Antelope Trap, sensitive plant locations, and lands within a ¼ mile radius of perennial streams in the Raymond Mountain ACEC.

Environmental Baseline

One wolf pack extends onto the Kemmerer FO from the Pinedale FO. The 2003 mapping effort indicates a coverage of 487 acres on BLM land (**Map 7**). In addition, lone wolves and small groups of wolves have been observed around Cokeville and as far south as Kemmerer (Jimenez 2004).

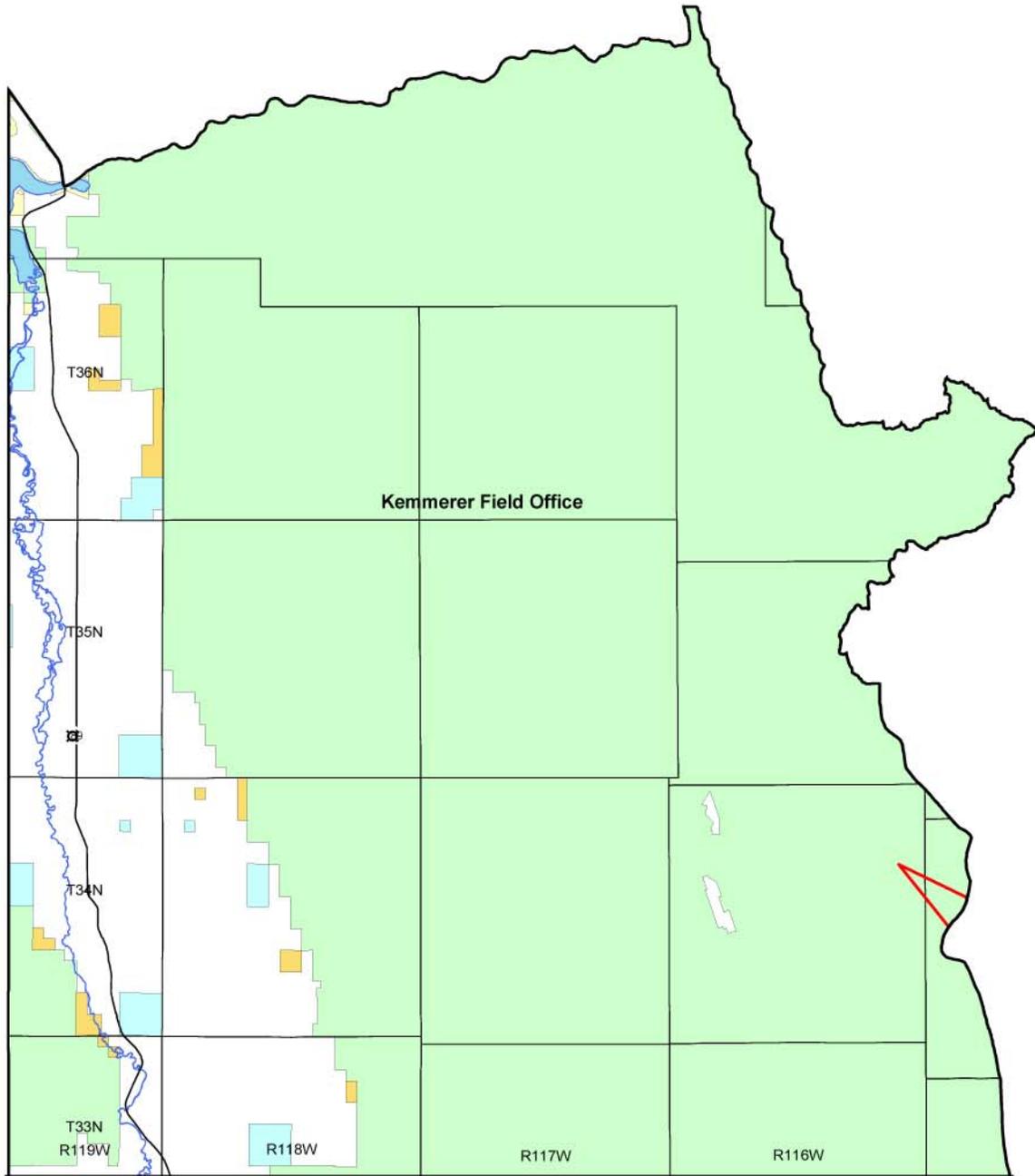
Existing Conservation Measures

The following section presents measures included in the Kemmerer RMP that may directly or indirectly minimize impacts to the wolf.

(a) “Four areas of “no surface occupancy” have been designated. They are: bald eagle winter roosts (Woodruff Narrows and Morgan Canyon), the Bridger Antelope Trap, sensitive plant locations, and within a ¼ mile radius of perennial streams in the Raymond Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern” (BLM 1986, p. 5).

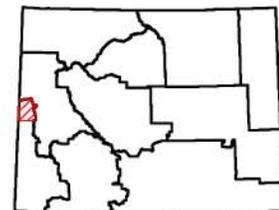
(b) “No activity or surface disturbance will be allowed for up to a ¾ mile radius from active raptor nest sites from February 1 through July 31 (except that bald eagle and peregrine falcon restrictions extend from February 1 through August 15). A nest site will be considered active if it has been used within the past three years. Actual distances and dates will vary based on topography, species, season of use, and other pertinent factors” (BLM 1986, p. 9, 29).

Map 7. Kemmerer Field Office Wolf Pack Polygons in 2003 (adapted from USFWS et al. 2004, Figure 3).



Map 7

-  Wolf Pack Distribution in 2003
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Forest Service
-  Private
-  State



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management for the use of the data for purposes not intended by the Bureau of Land Management.

Analysis of Proposed Management Actions and Effects

The Kemmerer RMP (BLM 1986) includes descriptions of each management prescription applied within the FO. These activities are summarized in the Introduction, above. The Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing and Disruptive Activities will be applied to all surface disturbing or disruptive activities.

Air Quality Management

Management Actions

No specific requirements or guidelines that are applicable to wolf mitigation are included for this resource in the RMP.

Effects Analysis

Actions related to air quality management will not result in negative impacts to wolves. Implementation of these management actions will likely result in maintaining or improving environmental conditions throughout the FO, which may have secondary benefits to wolves and their prey.

Determination

Implementation of air quality management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986), are **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Geology and Minerals Management

Management Actions

Geophysical, oil and gas, and mineral (for example; coal, sodium, oil shale, phosphate, and locatable and salable minerals) exploration will occur throughout the Kemmerer FO. More recently, wind farms are being erected, especially on ridgetops. Measures that are specific to wildlife and habitat resources are included in the management of geology and mineral resources. To protect riparian areas, no surface disturbance will be allowed within 500 feet of perennial streams or live water.

Effects Analysis

Construction of roads and pads, and increased vehicle traffic associated with mineral and geology exploration, development, and operation may lead to increases in vehicle collisions with wolves and increased intrusion by humans. Association with humans leads to higher wolf mortality due to easier access for illegal trapping, snaring, and shooting. Wolves avoid areas with high road densities. A road density threshold of 0.45 km/km² best classified pack and nonpack areas in one study (Mladenoff et al. 1995, 1999).

Determination

Implementation of minerals management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986), is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Soils Management

Management Actions

The protection of trees, shrubs, and ground cover from damage during construction will be required. Backfill will be required to be replaced in a similar sequence and density to preconstruction conditions. The restoration of normal surface drainage will be required. Any mulch used will be free of mold, fungi, or noxious weed seeds. The grantee or lessee will be responsible for the control of all noxious weed infestations on surface disturbances.

Recognized roads will be used when the alignment is acceptable for the proposed use. Generally, roads will be required to follow natural contours; be constructed in accordance with acceptable standards; and be reclaimed to BLM standards. On newly constructed roads and permanent roads, the placement of topsoil, seeding and stabilization will be required on all cut and fill slopes. No unnecessary side-casting of material on steep slopes will be allowed. Reclamation of abandoned roads will include requirements for reshaping, recontouring, resurfacing with topsoil, installation of water bars, and drill seeding on the contour. Stripped vegetation will be spread over the disturbance for nutrient recycling, where practical.

On well pads and facility locations, special attention will be given to parts of the surface use plant covering reclamation. This plan will include objectives for successful reclamation covering; soil stabilization, plant community composition, and desired vegetation density and diversity. The development of facilities on slopes between 25 and 40 percent will be restricted unless soil erosion controls can be ensured and adequate revegetation is expected. No surface occupancy will be allowed on slopes greater than 40 percent. Abandoned sites must be satisfactorily rehabilitated by the lessee.

Existing road locations will be used where possible to minimize surface disturbances. Where possible, clearing of pipeline and communication line rights of way will be accomplished with the least degree of disturbance to topsoil. Where topsoil removal is necessary, it will be stockpiled and respread over the disturbance after construction and backfilling are completed. Vegetation removed from the right of way will also be required to be respread to provide protection, nutrient recycling, and a natural seed source.

No specific requirements or guidelines that are applicable to wolf mitigation are included for this resource in the RMP.

Effects Analysis

Management of soil resources is not expected to detrimentally impact wolves, their den sites, or their prey. Implementation of soil resource management actions may maintain or improve the condition of some habitats and therefore may result in beneficial effects to elk and other big game and wolves.

Determination

Implementation of soil resource management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986), is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of wolves.

Water Management

Management Actions

No specific requirements or guidelines that are applicable to wolf mitigation are included for this resource

in the RMP.

Effects Analysis

Actions associated with watershed management will not negatively impact wolves or their prey. Management actions are likely to improve riparian vegetation and habitat which will benefit elk and other big game.

Determination

Implementation of watershed management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP, are **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Livestock Management and Rangeland Program Summary

Management Actions

All noxious weed control will adhere to measures allowed in the Record of Decision for the Rock Springs District Noxious Weed Control EA or applicable updated guidance. Cooperation with county weed and pest control programs will continue.

Adequate stock trails will be designated and maintained to support the livestock management program. Approximately 6,160 acres of public land designated as administrative stock trails will be retained.

Predator control will continue in accordance with the Rock Springs District Animal Damage Control Plan. No herds of wild and free-roaming horses will be maintained in the Kemmerer FO.

Forage will be produced for livestock grazing and, at the same time, other resource values will be protected or enhanced. The overall objective will be to improve range condition on "I" allotments and to maintain range condition on other allotments. A long-term increase of 31,901 AUMs, for a total of up to 193,901 AUMs could be realized through management actions. Any realized forage increases will be distributed among various resource uses to achieve overall management objectives.

Vegetation manipulation projects will be proposed on up to 82,610 acres. Vegetation manipulation will be designed to minimize adverse impacts to wildlife habitat and to improve it, whenever possible. WGFD will be consulted in advance on all vegetation manipulation projects.

Approximately 4,500 acres of unallotted public lands that support approximately 646 AUMs could be made available for grazing. However, some of these lands may be disposed of through the Lands program.

No conversion of sheep to cattle will be allowed in allotments with riparian problems without a plan to address riparian issues. Management actions and range improvements proposed would have to be in place before a conversion is authorized.

Riparian areas will be addressed on all "I" category allotments during the development of monitoring or allotment management plans. This objective will be established on allotments as riparian problems are identified and priorities for implementation are adjusted.

Effects Analysis

Domestic livestock grazing in riparian areas alters the structure and composition of aspen and riparian shrubs that also are used by moose and elk. Cattle grazing in broad floodplains and high-elevation meadows can compete with elk and other big game.

Determination

Implementation of livestock grazing management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986), is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management

Management Actions

Management actions will be directed toward maintaining or improving riparian habitat condition by minimizing impacts: from surface disturbing activities in or near the riparian zone through the use of avoidance; by crossing on temporary or permanent bridges or culverts; and through the reclamation to promote native riparian vegetation.

Water for antelope, sage grouse, and livestock will be provided in the Opal and Chrisum bench areas. Big game winter range will be improved using mechanical treatment, burning, or other vegetation manipulation methods. Seasonal closures for motorized vehicles may be used to protect big game winter range, as has been the case for the past three years from January 1 to April 30.

Management actions in riparian areas and wetlands will include measures to preserve, protect, and if necessary, restore natural functions. The objectives will be to minimize the degradation of stream banks and the loss of riparian habitat. Riparian areas in the Thomas Fork drainage will be managed to re-establish riparian/willow vegetation. Wetland areas will be improved for waterfowl production and sage grouse brood rearing. Stream improvement practices to improve riparian and wetlands areas for fisheries habitat will be implemented.

No activities that would jeopardize the continued existence of threatened and endangered species will be allowed in habitat for those species. WGFD and USFWS will be contacted prior to implementing projects that may affect habitat for threatened and endangered species. If a “may affect” situation is identified, a biological assessment will be prepared and formal consultation with USFWS will be initiated.

The objectives of the proposed Kemmerer Riparian HMP will be to complete an inventory of potential fisheries habitat, and to prioritize and implement restoration efforts. Its main goals will be to improve bank stability and riparian vegetation, to reduce sedimentation, and to increase fisheries habitat.

Inventories to locate important wildlife habitat will be conducted as funds are available. Inventories will be conducted to provide baseline data for a proposed management action, such as an HMP, or to provide information in response to other program activities. Important wildlife habitat will be monitored to determine seasonal habitat use and to identify areas in need of habitat improvement.

Effects Analysis

The implementation of management actions associated with wildlife habitat management will likely have positive effects by maintaining or improving existing habitat conditions for elk and other big game.

Determination

Implementation of wildlife habitat management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986), is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Recreation Management

Management Actions

Recreation area management plans (RAMPs) will be developed for prime areas of recreation potential. These include the Raymond Mountain Area, Pine Creek, Dempsey Ridge, Commissary Ridge, Upper Hams Fork, and Upper Smith's Fork areas.

Visual resources will continue to be evaluated as part of activity and project planning. Visual resource management (VRM) classes will be updated as situations change so that appropriate baseline information is included in project level planning. Large, long-term facilities will be required to be colored to blend with the natural environment when this is not in conflict with safety or with the purpose for which the facility has been designed.

For Off-Road Vehicle use, most of the Kemmerer FO (98 %) will be designated "limited" to existing roads and trails except for necessary tasks. The entire Kemmerer FO will be open to snowmobile use, with the exception of big game winter ranges.

No specific requirements or guidelines that are applicable to wolf mitigation are included for this resource in the RMP.

Effects Analysis

Recreational areas are ones that humans frequent. In YNP, there has been some concern because people have fed wolves on several occasions, which could lead to a wolf bite and the subsequent necessity to eliminate the animal. However, this has occurred only occasionally, and in an area of high wolf concentration (Halfpenny 2004). Recreation areas that occur in good elk and other big game habitat may be used as access points for illegal trapping, shooting, and/or snaring of wolves. These areas also may be used for wolf viewing, which would not likely have effects of wolves and could deter illegal activities harmful to wolves.

Determination

Implementation of recreation resource management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986), is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Land Management

Management Actions

Authorizations in the Lands Program will be conditioned to avoid undue adverse impacts to other important resource values and sensitive areas. No specific requirements or guidelines applicable to wolf mitigation are included for this resource in the RMP.

Effects Analysis

Management of existing access and acquisition of new access to lands administered by BLM will not alter wolf behavior. Improved or new access to lands under new administration may result in positive effects to wolf habitats by securing these lands and managing them under BLM provisions.

Lands not under BLM jurisdiction that are suitable or occupied wolf habitats may be targeted for acquisition and subsequent management by BLM. Such acquisitions would provide benefits to wolves that may not be afforded under non-federal ownership.

Corridors are designated and managed to accommodate power lines, communication towers, pipelines, and roads. Roads can be a source of increased human activity, which can be a source of illegal snares, trapping, and shooting of wolves, and in mortality to resulting from collisions. The degree of these impacts is correlated with traffic volume and speed, and road width.

Determination

Implementation of land resource management actions, as provided in the Kemmerer RMP (1986) is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Forestry Management

Management Actions

Forest management practices will be directed to prevent insect or disease infestations. Clearcuts will generally be limited to no more than 25 acres in size. Exceptions on this acreage limitation may be made (e.g., for insect or disease infestations). Clearcuts will be laid out considering stand characteristics, topography, and other resource values.

Areas of new seedling establishment will be inventoried at specified intervals; areas not meeting stocking standards will be reforested using native species. Silvicultural treatments will be identified for specific areas to improve the stands. Treatment may include burning, chaining, cutting, or shearing. Rehabilitation surveys will be conducted on old logging and fire areas to determine if regeneration is sufficient to ensure proper stocking of a new timber stand. The effects of grazing will also be assessed and remedial action (e.g., fencing) may be taken to protect reproduction. The objective is to achieve a fully stocked stand within 15 years. When, prior to 15 years, it is apparent that natural regeneration will not result in a fully stocked stand and if funding is available, the area will be planted. Natural regeneration of a fully established stand normally takes from 5 to 9 years.

Road development will be kept to a minimum. Road locations and specifications will be selected to meet transportation needs, safety requirements, and consideration of other resource values. Timber harvest and associated activities will be planned in a sequence that will be least disruptive to wildlife. An engineering analysis will be required where road grades exceed 10 percent. Roads will be routed away from areas that are likely to slump or slide. Cross drain culverts, water bars, or ditches will be installed, as needed to prevent erosion or washing away of the road. Temporary roads will normally be rehabilitated and closed after logging.

No specific requirements or guidelines that are applicable to wolf mitigation are included for this resource in the RMP.

Effects Analysis

Forestland management actions occur in coniferous habitats, which are the same areas used by wolves and elk. However, especially in winter, elk and other big game and wolves tend to concentrate in lower elevation areas (Callaghan 2002). Timber management creates a patchwork pattern of forest stands. These openings enhance grass, forb, and shrub growth favored by elk and other big game, and thus timber management would favor wolves overall. There could be an impact to wolves if specific management actions occur at or near a den or rendezvous site, causing the wolves to abandon that site. Wolves suffer as a consequence of proximity to humans (from illegal snaring, poisoning, and shooting, among others) and new roads created for timber management can bring more people into a pack's territory.

Determination

Implementation of forest management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986), is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Cultural and Historic Management

Management Actions

All significant historical, archaeological, and cultural sites will be protected or mitigated. Erosion on Johnston Scout Rock will be stabilized. Title to Emigrant Springs (Slate Creek) will be sought. Interpretive signing will be developed. The trail register will be stabilized and preserved. A campground at Emigrant Springs (Dempsey) will be considered as a part of total development. Interpretive signs will be placed at the Alfred Corum gravesite and at nearby ruts of the Oregon Trail. Cultural resources management plans will be developed for significant sites. The need for such activity plans will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

No specific requirements or guidelines that are applicable to wolf mitigation are included for this resource in the RMP.

Effects Analysis

Actions associated with cultural resource management may detrimentally affect wolf behavior by causing wolves to avoid or abandon areas where management actions are implemented. Denning and rendezvous sites are the most sensitive habitat elements for wolves, as these are often used repeatedly over the years and are relatively limited across the landscape. Disturbance and destruction of denning habitats is possible, however, the likelihood is extremely low.

Determination

Implementation of cultural resource management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986), is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Fire Management

Management Actions

The Kemmerer FO is divided into nine fire management areas that share common management objectives, topographic boundaries, or land ownership patterns. Fire suppression efforts within these areas will be driven by property threatened or resource benefits derived. All new developments that could be

damaged by wildfire will be required to have a fuel break stipulation to prevent the spread of fire from adjacent vegetation to the development.

If, due to potential resource damage, a need for full suppression is clearly indicated (Option I), suppression procedures are initiated. Where there are limited benefits to be derived from fire (Option II), the costs of suppression versus expected benefits are analyzed. This may result in limited suppression efforts. When fire may result in important resource benefits (Option III), four primary parameters will be evaluated to determine if fire would result in potentially unacceptable impacts or in conditions that would make it difficult to control the fire. If at some point, one or more of the parameters becomes unfavorable, management of the fire would revert to Option I (full suppression). These parameters include: 1) threat to persons or property, 2) adverse weather conditions or forecast, and 3) resource impacts. These parameters will be monitored throughout the course of the burn.

No specific requirements or guidelines that are applicable to wolf mitigation are included for this resource in the RMP.

Effects Analysis

Fire management actions, particularly actions associated with wildfire suppression and prescribed fire, whether planned or unplanned, have the potential to occur in habitats occupied by wolves. Fire exclusion alters the natural mosaic of successional stages that promote open habitats and mixed shrublands favored by elk and other big game. This limits the function of fire in perpetuating vegetation conditions conducive to promoting elk and other big game forage.

Prescribed burns have typically been conducted to promote elk and other big game foraging areas by opening up forests and enhancing development of mixed shrubs. This would be beneficial to wolves by improving habitat for wolf prey. Prescribed fires in the vicinity of den sites could cause wolves to abandon the den site. This event is relatively unlikely.

Determination

Implementation of fire management actions, as presented in the Kemmerer RMP (1986) is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.

Summary of Determinations

The following is a summary of the effects determinations developed for each of the Kemmerer RMP management actions.

Resource	Determination
Air Quality	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Geology and Minerals	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Soils	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Water	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Livestock and Rangeland	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Fish and Wildlife	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Recreation	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Land	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Forestry	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Cultural and Historic	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species
Fire	Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species

Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects include future State, tribal, local, or private actions that are reasonably certain to occur in the Kemmerer FO. One example is the proposed logging of 160 acres on private land on Commissary Ridge. Potential effects that could affect wolves or their habitats in the Kemmerer FO include the following:

- Existing and proposed wind farms
- Hard rock mining (including coal, trona, and phosphates)
- Livestock grazing on private lands
- Non-federal oil and gas fields and related energy development
- Vehicle collisions

In addition to the cumulative impacts resulting from the BLM activities described previously, implementation of the Kemmerer RMP (1986), is **not likely to jeopardize the continued existence** of the wolf.