RAWLINS FIELD OFFICE

The Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan for the Rawlins FO was signed in November 1990 (BLM 1990b). The Rawlins FO occupies portions of four counties including Laramie, Albany, Carbon, and Sweetwater in south central Wyoming. Approximately 12.5 million acres are within the administrative boundary of the Rawlins FO. The Great Divide RMP provides the management direction for approximately 5 million acres, 4 million acres of BLM public surface lands and an additional 1 million acres of federal mineral estate. The remaining 7.5 million acres are administered by other agencies, primarily the U.S. Forest Service, private owners, or the State of Wyoming. The Great Divide RMP does not address these acres because the plans proposed by the Forest Service and other agencies provide the basis for the BLM's administration of subsurface resources.

Environmental Baseline

There are no LAUs or lynx habitat on BLM land in this FO. All the LAUs in the Rawlins FO occur on the Medicine-Bow National Forest in the Medicine Bow and Sierra Madre mountain ranges. This resulted from a mapping effort coordinated between the Medicine Bow National Forest and BLM, during which it was determined that the Forest Service LAUs could not reasonably be extended onto BLM land due to lack of suitable habitat. The forest stands on BLM land are comprised mostly of lodgepole and ponderosa pine and juniper, not the forest types suitable to lynx and snowshoe hares. As no lynx habitat or LAUs occur within the Rawlins FO, no further analysis will be conducted on the effects of past and ongoing human activities (including Federal, State, tribal, local and private) that may influence lynx and their habitats. .

The Rawlins FO does, however, have non-delineated potential travel linkage and movement corridors that may be of value to lynx. These include: 1) a number of riparian corridors coming out of the Sierra Madre range; 2) the low-elevation, sparsely forested lodgepole and ponderosa pine and juniper stands between the Medicine Bow and Sierra Madre ranges may be useful for movement between the two mountain ranges; and 3) a potential corridor along the Shirley, Seminoe and Ferris mountains, which (along with the Green and Crooks mountains) form a linkage between the Medicine Bow Range and the Wind River Range. An action plan delineating these three linkage corridors and determining any management restrictions needs to be developed to further the conservation of the lynx.

There are 9 records from the WYNDD in the FO, one of which is on BLM land (**Table 2** and **Appendix A**) (WYNDD 2003). As a consequence of the lynx reintroduction efforts in Colorado, collared lynx have been documented at some point in time in Natrona, Converse, Carbon, and Albany counties (Shenk 20003. As of March 2004, there were 4 collared lynx from Colorado in the Medicine Bow NF (Defenders of Wildlife electronic newsletter). This is the first year that the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) has documented collared lynx in Wyoming in the winter months. Previously, the movements up to Wyoming had all occurred during the summer exploratory movements that have been observed in a number of the Colorado animals and reported for naturally occurring lynx as well (Squires and Laurion 2000). CDOW made visual observations on these lynx in Wyoming during 2003 and they were in good habitat and appeared to be healthy (Shenk 2003). In June 2004, 1 den with 3 kittens was located in southern Wyoming on the Medicine Bow NF. Unfortunately, the female was found dead of an unknown cause, buried in a pine squirrel midden, in July 2004 and the kittens are assumed dead (http://wildlife.state.co.us/species_cons/lynx/).