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Green River Resource Area

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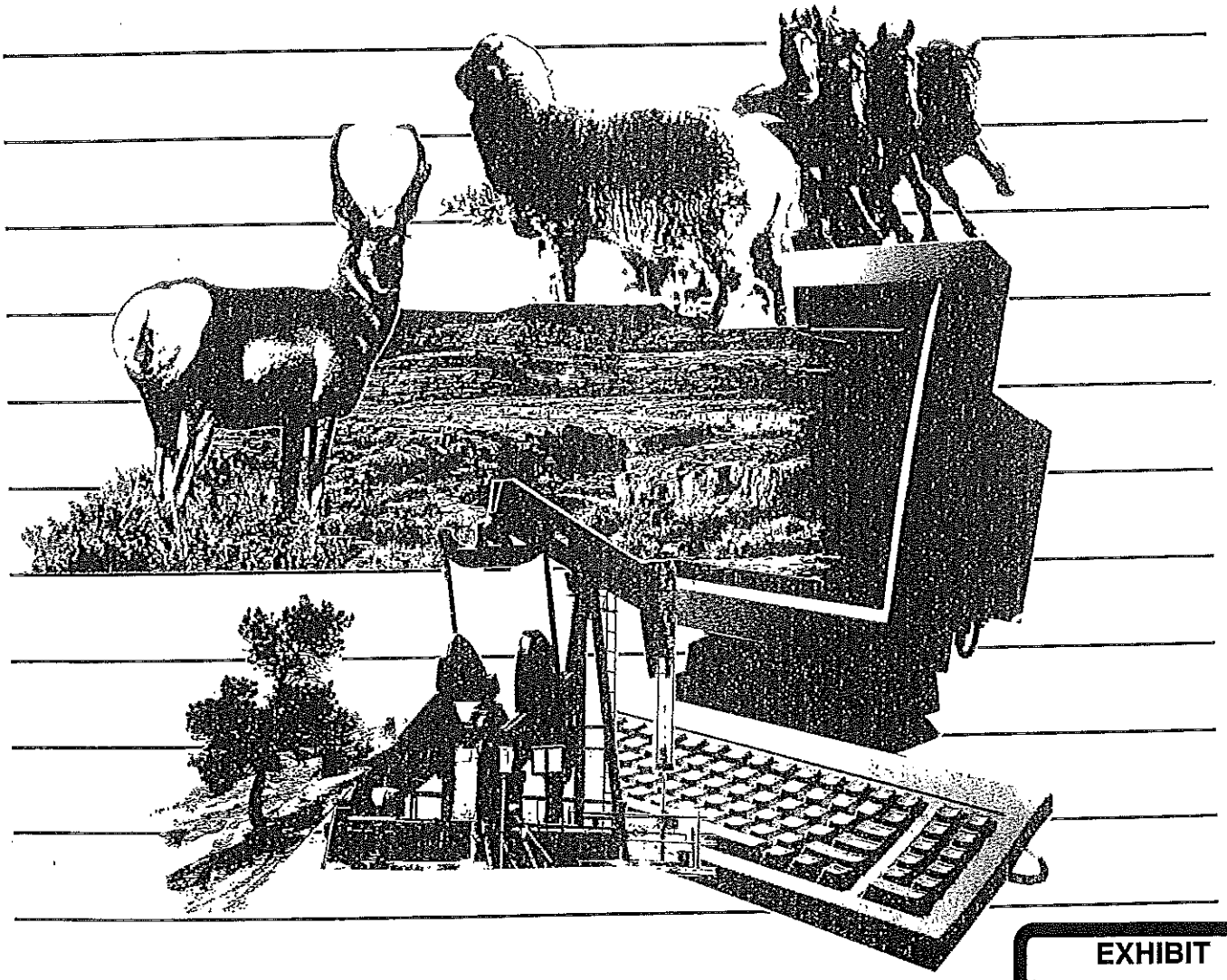
Green River Resource Area Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement Volume 1 of 2



EXHIBIT

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CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

ALTERNATIVE FORMULATION

Chapter 2 has been revised to include modifications and changes as a result of public comment, cumulative analysis, and new information. As a result, the Proposed Plan has been modified slightly from the preferred alternative in the DEIS. The Proposed Plan is presented in its entirety. The other alternatives are presented in Table 2-1 for the sake of brevity. Although the proposed plan is presented first, it is actually the last alternative developed in the planning process.

The BLM's proposed plan would generally place greater emphasis on protection of the natural environment compared to Alternatives A and B. It would also make more areas available for a variety of uses than Alternatives A, B, or C and would prescribe fewer restrictions on land use compared to Alternative C. The proposed plan was developed to balance production or commodity uses with protection of the environment.

An analysis of effects associated with each alternative is required by BLM planning regulations and the NEPA-based Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. Comparison of the differences among the alternatives is also required. Based upon this comparative analysis, BLM managers are able to choose a proposed plan. The proposed plan is composed of portions of the other alternatives and incorporation of public comments.

ALTERNATIVES AND MANAGEMENT OPTIONS CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

The following alternatives and management options were considered as possible methods of resolving the planning issues and answering the planning questions, but were eliminated from detailed study because they were unreasonable or not practical due to technical, legal, or policy factors.

Elimination of Livestock Grazing

The elimination of livestock grazing from all public lands in the planning area was considered as a possible method of resolving some of the planning issues related to vegetative resources. However, the interdisciplinary team and managers determined that the "no grazing" alternative should be eliminated from detailed study for the following reasons.

Resource conditions on the BLM-administered public lands in the planning area, including range vegetation, watershed, and wildlife habitat, are generally satisfactory (as measured by BLM monitoring and professional observation). Therefore, it is not necessary to prohibit livestock grazing throughout the planning area. However, reduction or elimination of livestock grazing may be necessary in specific situations where livestock grazing would significantly conflict with other management objectives. Most determinations would be made during activity planning and would be based on several factors including monitoring studies.

Public comments received during the scoping process and during preparation of the draft RMP EIS indicated a general acceptance of livestock grazing on the public lands, provided such grazing is properly managed.

Because of the fragmented landownership pattern, especially in the checkerboard portion of the planning area, either exchanges to "block up" public lands would be required or extensive fencing would be needed to exclude livestock from public lands. It is doubtful that enough exchanges with private landowners could be accomplished to sufficiently "block up" public lands, and the amount of fencing needed to exclude livestock would be disruptive to wildlife movement and restrict public access. Also, a checkerboard pattern of fencing on every other square mile of land would be totally impractical.

Elimination of Timber Harvesting

Possible elimination of all timber harvesting on public lands in the planning area was considered. However, the 7,900 acres of BLM-administered forest lands in the planning area that are capable of sustaining forest production need to be managed to maintain a healthy, vigorous forest ecosystem. This requires systematic cutting (or harvesting or burning) of the timber over time to control disease and to provide vegetative diversity. Further, there is sufficient local demand for forest products to warrant continued forest harvest. Finally, not harvesting forest products (or managing the forest lands) would not be consistent with the BLM multiple use management policy.

Elimination of Mineral Leasing (Except Coal)

Closing the planning area to mineral leasing was considered to resolve conflicts with other resource uses. According to previous experience and activity expected in the future, oil and gas and trona would be the leasable minerals resources affected. This proposal was eliminated from further analysis because it would be contrary to BLM policy, that, except for congressional withdrawals, public lands shall remain open and available for mineral exploration unless doing otherwise is clearly in the national interest (May 24, 1987). In addition, this would be directly contrary to the BLM multiple use management mandate in FLPMA.

Elimination of leasing of oil and gas resources was considered in the Big Sandy/Salt Wells Oil and Gas Environmental Assessment (EA) (USDI 1981a). At that time, the proposal was determined to be unacceptable. A review of the proposal, during consideration of possible management options and alternatives for this RMP EIS, revealed that to eliminate leasing of federal oil and gas resources in the planning area continues to be unacceptable and to eliminate leasing of the other federal minerals in the area is also unacceptable.

Resource management of the planning area should respond to the need for oil and gas resources. However, not leasing portions of the planning area, in response to other identified resource needs, is addressed in the alternatives analyzed in detail.

Public comments received during issue identification and the development of planning criteria indicated general acceptance of mineral leasing and development, provided it is properly managed. It was further pointed out that, in most cases, leasable mineral exploration and development could take place in a manner that would avoid unacceptable adverse impacts to the other resources in the planning area.

In addition, nearly the entire planning area is covered by federal mineral leases and portions of the area are developed. This situation would continue for the entire time this plan is in effect. Eliminating federal mineral leasing in the planning area would not help resolve resource conflicts over the short term or the long term. Resource conflicts tend to be located in specific areas, not planning area wide, and closing the entire area would not be considered reasonable.

Surface Disturbance On or Around Special Status Plant Species

An alternative that would have allowed surface disturbing activities on or around special status plant species was considered but dropped from detailed analysis. Avoidance of impacts to known or potential special status plant species and their habitats is the only alternative that would prevent direct, significant impacts such as a loss of plants, habitat, and genetic variability essential to the future of the species. The BLM's Special Status Plant Species policy is aimed at preventing a decline in special status plant species which would motivate listing as Threatened or Endangered. Direct loss of these species from BLM authorized actions would thus place the BLM in non-compliance with its own regulations.

A Special Status Plant Species policy has been drafted to provide maximum protection for future special status plant species and to provide minerals and other activities with fair and reasonable notification of the work they would be responsible for prior to buying a lease or permit from the BLM.

Maximum, Unconstrained Alternatives

Alternatives and general management options that proposed maximum development, production, or protection of one resource at the expense of other resources were not analyzed in detail. The purpose of the approved RMP is to provide multiple use management direction for the planning area. Generally, promoting a single land and resource use by eliminating all others does not meet the objectives of the BLM's multiple use management mandate and responsibilities. However, the alternatives analyzed in detail do include various considerations for eliminating or maximizing individual resource values or uses in specific areas where conflicts exist.

Restrictions Less Stringent Than No Surface Occupancy (NSO)

One alternative which was considered and eliminated from detailed analysis was not mentioned in the Draft EIS. It relates to the level of restrictions necessary to protect resource values.

The intent of the planning process is to provide guidance for managing all resources within a level of use and restrictions that is appropriate for multiple use purposes. The objective is to minimize the use of overly restrictive limitations on resource uses. To help achieve this objective, mitigation measures less stringent than NSO for resource protection were considered for those areas recommended for NSO but were not presented in detail in the Draft EIS. This evaluation was conducted during the analysis of the Management Situation.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN DETAIL

Introduction/Overview

The descriptions of the four alternatives addressed in this RMP EIS are summarized in Table 2-1. The management actions that would occur in the planning area under each alternative are described by resource or resource program component. Following these descriptions for the general planning area, this same format is then used to describe the management actions for each proposed special management area in each alternative.

The comparisons of the expected environmental consequences of the alternatives are summarized in Table 2-2.

PROPOSED PLAN

The proposed plan provides the guidance which emphasizes neither resource utilization nor resource protection. The objectives described in this alternative would be used to make resource tradeoffs which could favor resource utilization, resource protection, or a compromise between them.

Air Quality Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of air quality would be to maintain and where possible enhance present air quality levels; to protect public health and safety and sensitive natural resources; and within the scope of BLM's authority, minimize emissions which may add to acid rain, cause violations of air quality standards, or reduce visibility.

Management Actions: Special requirements (e.g., use authorization stipulations, mitigation measures, conditions of approval, etc.) to alleviate air quality impacts would be included on a case-by-case basis in use authorizations (including mineral leases). Examples of such requirements would include: limiting emissions, spacing of source densities, requiring the collection of meteorological and/or air quality data, covering conveyors at mine sites (to lower dust emissions), and placing restrictions on flaring of natural gas (to reduce sulfur emissions). See Appendix 5-1 for specific guidance for applying air quality protection measures.

BLM would continue to participate with other agencies in the collection of air quality data and air quality pollution analysis (Appendix 5-1). The BLM would 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 airshed of the Bridger Wilderness. Collected air quality data would be used to determine actual or potential impacts from air pollutant emissions and to provide information on proposed emission sources.

Plant facilities would be authorized where they would minimize air quality impacts over the planning area, particularly the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area; or cause heavy fog conditions that would be hazardous to public health, such as black icing of major highways, or such as extreme and continual fog that could inhibit transportation or recreation activities (see Sodium EA).

Cooperation to develop and apply visibility standards and guidelines would be encouraged. BLM would cooperate with Wyoming DEQ on review of air quality regulations which could impact BLM-managed activities.

Surface disturbing activities would be managed to prevent violation of air quality regulations (see the Wyoming AQ Regulations, Fugitive Dust Suppression Appendix in the Draft EIS). Construction and surface disturbing activities would be designed with dust control measures to reduce particulate matter and visibility impacts. Coordination with local and state agencies to control dust on unimproved dirt roads would occur where necessary.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to air quality management activities.

Cultural, Natural History, and Paleontological Resource Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of the cultural and paleontological resources would be to: (1) expand the opportunities for scientific study, and educational and interpretive uses of cultural and paleontological resources; (2) protect and preserve important cultural and paleontological resources or their historic record for future generations; and (3) resolve conflicts between cultural/paleontological resources and other resource uses. Of particular concern would be significant sites of historic or prehistoric human habitation, sites demonstrating unique ethnic affiliation, places having traditional cultural or religious significance to Native Americans, and vertebrate fossil localities.

Management Actions: Sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and NRHP eligible sites would be managed for their local, regional, and national significance, under the guidelines of the National Historic Preservation Act (especially sections 106 and 110) (Appendix 6-1) and the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) (Appendix 6-2). These sites would be managed to ensure against adverse effects through proper mitigation if disturbance or destruction is not avoidable. Sites that are not eligible for the NRHP would be managed on a case-by-case basis according to their values.

An appropriate level of analysis of all BLM undertakings would be conducted to determine National Register of Historic Places eligibility and potential effects to those historic properties within the area of potential effect in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (Appendix 6-1).

Significant paleontological resources would be managed for their scientific and educational values and in accordance with 43 CFR 3600, 3622, and 8365.

Incidences of potential violation of the Archeological Resources Protection Act would be investigated.

Historic Trails

Congressionally Designated Historic Trails and Associated Historic Sites

Management of the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express National Historic Trails would provide for cooperation with the National Park Service in implementation of the Comprehensive Historic Trails Management Plan for the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails. The area within ¼ mile or the visual horizon (whichever is less) of any contributing trail segment (125 miles, 39,500 acres) would be an avoidance area for surface disturbing activities (Map 5); developments such as roads, pipelines, and powerlines would be allowed to cross trails in areas where previous disturbance has occurred and the trail segment has lost the characteristics that contribute to its National Register significance.

Off-road vehicles, such as those used for geophysical exploration, or large heavy vehicles such as buses used in recreational tours, or similar activities, could cross and drive down the trails, provided a site specific analysis determines that no adverse effects would occur. Geophysical activities such as shotholes, blasting, and vibroseis locations could be allowed, generally, provided they are at least 300 feet from the trail, do not occur directly on the trail, and a site specific analysis determines that visual intrusions and adverse effects would not occur. No blading would be allowed on any historic trail unless necessary to protect life or property. Historic trails would not be available for use as industrial access roads (e.g., oil and gas drilling access roads, or as haul roads for heavy truck traffic).

The Parting-of-the-Ways historical site would be protected by closing it to exploration and development of locatable and salable minerals. A 40-acre withdrawal would be maintained. The site would be managed under the prescriptions for management in the Comprehensive Historic Trails Management Plan.

The integrity of the Dry Sandy Swales (1 mile, 20 acres) would be protected. The site would be closed to surface disturbing activities that could adversely affect it (see Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management discussions). The ¼ mile area either side of the Dry Sandy Swales would be managed pursuant to the Comprehensive Historic Trails Management Plan.

Other Historic Trails And Historic Sites

Management of historic roads and trails that are eligible for the NRHP but are not Congressionally designated such as the Overland Trail, the Cherokee Trail, and the Point of Rocks to South Pass Road would generally be the same as for designated trails including a ¼ mile protective corridor (about 77 miles, 25,410 acres). These trails would be recommended for listing to the National Register of Historic Places.

LaClede Stage Station and Dug Springs Stage Station (20 acres) on the Overland Trail would be protected and would be closed to surface disturbing activities that could adversely affect the sites (e.g., activities associated with mineral exploration and development; construction of roads, pipelines, powerlines; mineral material sales; etc.) (see Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management discussions). These sites would be closed to exploration and development of locatable minerals, and withdrawals would be pursued. Cultural resource management plans would be written for these sites, and interpretive and visitor management efforts would be allowed as necessary.

The Dry Sandy Stage Station and Fort LaClede would be considered for acquisition under a willing seller/willing buyer situation to enhance BLM management of important historic resources. The BLM would not use powers of condemnation to acquire these parcels.

Various Expansion Era (i.e., 1870-1940) roads would be managed according to their historical context. Expansion Era roads are those routes developed after establishment of the Transcontinental Railroad in Wyoming in 1869. Management actions would include development of activity plans with the objective of preserving significant NRHP contributing segments (estimated at about 10 miles of each of the 15 roads, about 150 miles) in their natural condition. Activity plans would include NRHP nomination of those Expansion Era trails that qualify. Management prescriptions similar to those in the Comprehensive Historic Trails Management Plan would be applied, although the ¼ mile protective corridor might not always be applied.

The Big Sandy Station, Big Timber Station, Freighter Springs Station, Camp Carmichael, Lander's Camp, and the site of the

Simpsons' Gulch wagon train burning would be managed for the preservation of cultural and historical values. Site specific resource management actions would be developed in cultural resource management plans for these sites.

Rock Art Sites

Rock art sites would be managed to protect their cultural and historical values. Interpretive signing, fencing, barriers, and other activities designed to manage visitor use at five well-known rock art sites (Cedar Canyon, LaBarge Bluffs, Sugarloaf, Tolar, and White Mountain) would be allowed as part of cultural resource management planning.

These five areas would be closed to surface disturbing activities that could adversely affect rock art resources (e.g., activities associated with mineral exploration and development; construction of roads, pipelines, powerlines, etc.) (see the discussion in Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management for this alternative). The sites would be closed to the location of mining claims (withdrawals would be pursued as necessary), the existing Sugarloaf and White Mountain withdrawals would be retained, (see the Lands and Realty Management section); to mineral material sales for sand, gravel, or other types of construction or building materials; and to the use of explosives and blasting. These areas would also be limited to designated roads and trails for off-road vehicles including vehicles used for geophysical exploration activities (see the discussion on Off-Road Vehicle Management for this alternative), and to the use of fire retardant chemicals containing dyes.

Surface disturbing activities would be analyzed for the effects to the actual area seen from the rock art site for a distance of ½ mile surrounding the sites (vista, 1,600 acres). Most surface disturbing activities visible within this vista, for the five rock art sites, would not be allowed. Some activities within ½ mile of the rock art, but not visible from the rock art panels would be allowed. Other kinds of activities, such as audible disturbances would not be allowed if they adversely affected the sacred Native American religious values at the rock art sites. Site specific activity or implementation plans would be prepared for these sites.

All other rock art sites would be managed on a case-by-case basis according to resource values.

Site specific and time specific use limitations to accommodate traditional Native American religious practices at rock art sites or other cultural resources could be implemented by the Area Manager.

Other Sites

The Tri-Territory Marker (10 acres) would be protected by closing it to surface disturbing activities that could adversely affect it (e.g., activities associated with mineral exploration and development; construction of roads, pipelines, powerlines, etc.) (see Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management discussions); to exploration and development of locatable minerals; and a withdrawal would be pursued. A cultural resource management plan would be prepared for the site if necessary. The site would be open for consideration of activities such as fencing, interpretive signs, or barriers to ensure protection to the area.

Archeological resources in developing areas such as the Little Colorado Desert, Greater Nitchie Gulch, and Wamsutter Arch concentrated oil and gas areas (that may be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D) would be managed by synthesizing existing data with the objective of facilitating surface disturbing activities without sacrificing significant archeological values. A programmatic memorandum of agreement would be negotiated with the SHPO and ACHP to achieve this objective. Historic resources that could be eligible under NRHP criterion other than "D", (36 CFR 60 and Appendix 6-1) would not be managed according to this prescription.

Surface disturbing activities in playa lake areas (Blue Forest, 24,640 acres; Blue Point, 3,200 acres; and Adobe Town Rim, 1,280 acres) would be managed by developing programmatic memoranda of agreement for data recovery with the SHPO and ACHP. Each playa would be managed as an NRHP eligible historic district.

The Pine Springs ACEC (90 acres) would be protected and would be closed to surface disturbing activities that could adversely affect the archeological site (e.g., activities associated with mineral exploration and development; construction of roads, pipelines, powerlines; mineral material sales; etc.) (see Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management discussions). The site would be closed to exploration and development of locatable minerals. The 90-acre withdrawal would be retained. Cultural resource management plans would be written for the site, and interpretive and visitor management efforts would be allowed as necessary (see also Pine Springs Expansion ACEC).

The Eden-Farson, Finley, Krmpotich, and Morgan archaeological sites and similar sites identified in the future would be managed to protect their important scientific values. These sites would be managed according to Sections 106 and 110 of the NHPA and their locations would be kept confidential pursuant to NHPA regulations. No public interpretive efforts would be initiated at these sites. Periodic law enforcement patrol and other efforts would be instituted to ensure that the ARPA is enforced and that these sites are protected.

All known human burial sites would be protected regardless of their ethnic affiliation. Management of Native American burial sites would take into account recommendations from appropriate tribes. Data recovery would not be the preferred method for mitigation of adverse effects to any burial location.

Known burial areas would be closed to surface disturbing activities that could adversely affect them (e.g., activities associated with mineral exploration and development; construction of roads, pipelines, powerlines; locatable mineral exploration and development; etc.) (see Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management discussions).

The prehistoric quarry site would be protected by closing it to mineral location and pursuing a withdrawal. The site would be closed to surface disturbing activities that could adversely affect it (e.g., activities associated with mineral exploration and development; construction of roads, pipelines, powerlines; mineral material sales; etc.) (see Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management discussions).

North and South Table Mountains (the Bozovich Site complex) would be managed to preserve cultural values within standard Section 106 and 110 NHPA compliance. The area would be closed to surface disturbing activities that could adversely affect the cultural sites (e.g., activities associated with mineral exploration and development; construction of roads, pipelines, powerlines; etc.) (see Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management discussions), but would be open for consideration of activities such as fencing, interpretive signs, or barriers to ensure protection to the area. Appropriate scientific study of sites in this area would be a priority within the resource area cultural program.

Other Cultural and Paleontological Management Actions

Consultation with appropriate Native American tribes concerning areas of concern to them for traditional cultural and religious

purposes would occur in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and BLM Manual 8160-1 Handbook. Native American consultation would occur within the context of specific development proposals, but would also be an ongoing process between BLM and affected Indian tribes and traditional cultural leaders.

Interpretive materials which describe the cultural resources of the area, their significance, and the bureau's responsibility toward these resources would be prepared. Historical aspects of all BLM programs would be interpreted as appropriate for public appreciation.

Exchanges for acquisition and cooperative agreements would be pursued to enhance management of cultural resources.

Collecting of vertebrate fossils may be allowed with written authorization which may be issued only to an academic, scientific, governmental, or other qualified institution or individual. Collection of common invertebrate fossils and petrified wood for hobby purposes may be allowed on public lands and is regulated under 43 CFR 3600, 3622, and 8365.

A site protection plan would be written and implemented for the Farson Fossil Fish Beds.

Surface disturbing activities that affect known vertebrate fossil localities would be considered in site specific analyses and potential adverse effects would be mitigated. At the Area Manager's discretion, mitigating measures may be required for surface disturbing activities occurring in areas having a reasonable chance for the occurrence of scientifically significant fossils. Mitigation measures may include surface inventory, construction monitoring, excavation/salvage, or other measures considered to be reasonable and appropriate by the Area Manager. Operators would be required to report any paleontological resources discovered during the course of operations.

The Steamboat Mountain and Boars Tusk-Killpecker Sand Dunes areas would be managed to protect the unique geological and ecological features and to provide for public interpretation of these features. The road around Boars Tusk would be closed.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to cultural, natural history, and paleontological management activities. See also Special Management Areas (South Pass Historic Landscape, Pine Springs Expansion, Crookston Ranch (within the Greater Sand Dunes ACEC); White Mountain Petroglyphs ACEC, and Cedar Canyon ACEC).

Fire Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for fire management would be to use prescribed fire as a management tool to help meet multiple use resource management goals and to provide cost effective protection from wildfire to life, property, and resource values.

Management Actions: Wildfire suppression or control actions would emphasize fire containment or confinement. Immediate control actions would be used only in cases of arson, direct threat to public safety, or a strong potential to threaten structural property.

Suppression actions would be based on achieving the most efficient control and allowing historical acres burned to increase on confinement and containment actions.

Activity plans would be developed for designated fire management areas defining specific parameters for all fire occurrence (Figure 2).

Prescribed burning would be conducted so that ambient air quality standards would not be violated.

Heavy equipment or actions that would cause surface disturbance would be used only after a site specific analysis has been performed and approved.

Priority areas for wildfire suppression would be identified in the area fire management activity plans.

A site specific analysis would be prepared for sensitive areas such as special status plant species, cultural sites, historic trails, and ACECs to determine the type of fire suppression activity that would be acceptable. Activities that cause surface disturbance would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Use of chemical fire suppression agents would be prohibited in rock art sites. Generally, use of chemical fire suppression agents would be prohibited in special management areas, unless or until an escaped fire situation analysis is completed or activity plans for the special management areas identifies chemical suppression agents as allowable use.

Wildfires occurring in forested areas would be suppressed as determined by resource values threatened on a case-by-case basis.

Wildfires occurring in or threatening a developed or active timber sale would receive priority control suppression action. Non-commercial stands may be included in prescribed fire activities. Standard management practices such as pile and broadcast burning would be permitted in all forested areas.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to fire resource management activities.

Forests and Woodlands Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of forests and woodlands would be: 1) to provide for healthy forest resources and to meet primarily the objective of improved watershed, soils, recreation use, and wildlife habitat; and 2) to provide production of forest products in accordance with resource goals and objectives.

To improve forest resource values and other values (watershed, soils, wildlife habitat, and recreation); to maintain and enhance biological diversity; and to provide long-range view of desired plant community concepts at the landscape level; to identify old growth areas; and to provide appropriate management. (Long-term stand structure development would be an integral part of all forest management.)

Noncommercial forest lands (woodlands) would be managed to optimize cover and enhance habitat for wildlife, protect soil and watershed values, and complement recreation uses.

Management Actions: The planning area has been broken into 4 timber compartments for timber management: Wind River Front, Pine Mountain, Little Mountain, and Hickey Mountain-Table Mountain (Map 6). Hickey Mountain-Table Mountain would be managed under the woodland prescriptions described in this alternative. The Wind River Front would be a restricted forest management area where forest resources would be managed for commercial forest values, to improve the health, vigor, and diversity of forest stands, and still give full consideration to other resource values such as watershed, wildlife, minerals, recreation, and scenic values. Pine and Little Mountain areas would be managed to enhance other resources, and activities would be designed to benefit other resource uses. Harvest levels from all areas combined (about 7,900 acres) could average 500,000 board feet annually (Table 2-3). Priority harvest would be given to mature, decadent, and diseased trees.

Where possible, timber compartments (commercial and woodland forest lands) would be managed to meet the local demand for minor forest products (e.g., fuelwood, posts and poles, wildlings, and Christmas trees).

The major consideration in the harvesting program for the Wind River Front would be to improve the condition of the forest stand with emphasis meeting wildlife habitat needs. The major consideration in harvesting in other areas would be to provide the stability and habitat for watershed and wildlife needs. Soil, watershed, and wildlife cover would be important considerations. Stand conditions and management considerations would dictate harvest methods and size and shape of units.

Clearcutting would not be allowed within 100 feet of drainages or standing waters. Other logging activity, such as thinning or cable logging could occur within this 100 feet of this zone as long as it is determined that other resource values would not be adversely affected.

Cutting methods would include clearcutting, individual tree marking, shelter wood, thinning, and group selection. Clearcut units would not exceed 25 acres in size unless a site specific analysis indicates RMP resource objectives would be met with a larger cut. All clearcuts would consider other resource values such as escape cover for wildlife. Clearcut unit size and shape would be designed to maximize natural regeneration and edge effect for wildlife.

Approximately 1,436 acres of commercial timber within big game winter ranges would be closed to logging activity from November 15 to April 30. If the logging unit would be within the 2,662 acres of commercial conifer in big game parturition habitats, the area would be closed to timber harvest activities from May 1 through June 30. From February 1 to July 31, there would be no logging activity on 22 acres within sage grouse nesting sites and raptor nests (see Minerals Management). Exceptions may be approved if conditions described in Appendix 7-1 apply.

A 500-foot buffer from live water, floodplains, and/or riparian/wetland areas would be applied to surface disturbing activities (e.g., roads), unless impacts to soils, watershed, water quality, and fisheries can be mitigated. No surface disturbance would be allowed within 100 feet of the edge of the inner gorge of intermittent and large ephemeral drainages, without an approved plan to mitigate impacts to water quality. Linear crossings would be considered on a case-by-case basis (see Watershed section).

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

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

Stand replacement of harvested areas or areas denuded by natural causes would be revegetated with tree seedlings within prescribed time periods of 5 to 15 years (fully stocked).

Commercial conifer stands would be managed under the guidelines for suppression of wildfires. Aspen and juniper stands would be available for prescribed fire activities to enhance watershed and wildlife values.

Habitat fragmentation would be prevented if it is determined to have a negative ecological affect. Special management areas (old growth, scientific research areas) would be identified and appropriate management incorporated into activity plans. Long-term stand structure development would be an integral part of all forest management.

Woodland forests consist of juniper, aspen, and limber pine (127,977 acres).

Woodland forest would be managed using silvicultural practices that promote stand viability. Treatments could include thinning, harvesting, chaining, and burning. The vegetative material resulting from these treatments would normally be sold as public demand sales.

Woodland forest acreage would be maintained and no treatment would be implemented that converts the areas to another vegetation type. Old aspen stands may be replaced by stands of sprouting aspen by various treatment (e.g., burning, etc.), or old decadent trees may be left standing or downed to provide cover or other habitat for wildlife (e.g., Animal Inn). Silvicultural treatments in mature timber stands would be designed to improve wildlife habitat and watershed condition, i.e., create small openings to provide forage for wildlife and accumulate snow drifts to increase moisture. Tree seedlings would be re-established within these openings. Cottonwood trees would not be available for any harvesting. Firewood cutting for camping purposes would be limited to designated areas.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to forest resource management activities.

Hazardous Materials and Other Hazards

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of hazardous materials and waste would be to: 1) protect public and environmental health and safety on BLM-administered public lands, 2) comply with applicable federal and state laws, 3) prevent waste contamination due to any BLM-authorized actions, 4) minimize federal exposure to the liabilities associated with waste management on public lands, and 5) integrate hazardous materials and waste management policies and controls into all BLM programs.

Management Actions: For BLM-authorized activities that involve hazardous materials or their use, precautionary measures would be used to guard against releases or spills into the environment. If safety hazards are identified as a result of hazardous waste spills on BLM-administered public lands, the BLM would provide appropriate warnings.

Sale or transfer of public lands on which storage or disposal of hazardous substances has been known to occur would require public notification of the type and quantity of these substances.

BLM-administered public land sites contaminated with hazardous wastes would be reported, secured, and cleaned up according to applicable federal and state regulations and contingency plans. Parties responsible for contamination would be liable for cleanup and resource damage costs, as prescribed in federal and state regulations.

Certain wastes generated by the oil and gas industry are exempt from regulation as hazardous wastes. These exemptions are too complex in detail to be listed here but are on file in BLM offices. Pits containing produced water or drilling fluids at well sites or other locations would be tested for TCLP constituents if nonexempt, hazardous wastes are indicated. Costs for testing and proper disposal would be borne by the operator if analysis confirms the presence of a nonexempt waste.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to hazardous materials management activities.

Lands and Realty Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for the management of the land and realty program would be to manage the public lands to support the goals and objectives of other resource programs, to respond to public demand for land use authorizations, and to acquire administrative and public access where necessary.

Management Actions: The lands and realty management actions are divided into five groups.

Land Ownership Adjustment

Public lands would be retained in federal ownership with the exception of those lands, which have future potential for disposal. Lands currently identified for disposal are described in Appendix 8-1 (24,528 acres) (see Map 7). All disposals must conform to the criteria listed in Appendix 8-2. The disposal of these lands and any lands identified in the future must allow for the acquisition of important resource lands or meet other important public objectives such as community expansion and economic development. Public lands may have further potential for disposal because they are isolated and would be difficult to manage. The preferred method of disposal would be by land exchanges. Other lands would be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis.

Lands would be provided for solid waste disposal to government entities through sale or exchange. Government entities would be encouraged to purchase unused portions of sanitary landfills currently authorized under Recreation and Public Purposes leases. The BLM would aid in finding suitable landfill sites on public land for purchase or exchange (see the Hazardous Materials Management section). Any site found to contain hazardous waste would be closed and monitored in accordance with appropriate Wyoming DEQ guidelines.

Sweetwater County School District No. 1 would be given the opportunity to acquire Lots 3,4,5, Section 28, T. 19 N., R. 105 W. (124 acres) for school purposes prior to any other type of disposal.

Appendix 8-3 describes proposed acquisitions (about 28,000 acres) that could be made by purchase/exchange or through cooperative agreement to support resource needs. State lands have been identified for acquisition through exchange to protect resource values (Appendix 8-3). Lands would include private/State lands along upper stream reaches of the Big Sandy River; State inholdings in WSAs; other lands with important resource values. Consideration would be given for exchanges for state lands in special management areas such as ACECs. In those instances where a purchase or exchange would not be feasible, attempts would be made to enter into cooperative agreements to protect cultural/historical sites; threatened and endangered species habitat; and riparian habitat.

Unauthorized uses within the planning area would be resolved. If circumstances warrant the issuance of a permit, lease, or right-of-way authorizing the use could occur as a means of resolving trespass. Disposal of the parcel through sale or exchange may be considered to resolve long-standing trespasses.

Utility/Transportation Systems

Public lands would be made available throughout the planning area for rights-of-way, permits, and leases. The planning area, with the exception of defined exclusion and avoidance areas, would be open to the consideration of granting of rights-of-way (reference ACEC and other special management area alternatives (Table 2-4). Right-of-way corridors would not be designated due to the predominate checkerboard private land pattern in the planning unit.

Rights-of-way and avoidance areas are described in Table 2-4 and shown on Map 8 and Map 9. An avoidance area for major utility lines would be located along I-80 between Point of Rocks and Green River. Due to topography, congestion in the concentration area, and surface mining, this area would be restricted to local distribution service lines. All other utilities would be located, if possible, in the northern or southern east-west windows.

Areas designated as utility windows, rights-of-way concentration areas, and existing communication sites would be preferred locations for future grants (Map 10).

Windows ½ mile in width have been identified for the placement of utilities. The northern east-west window would be for underground facilities only, and the southern east-west windows would be for both above and below ground facilities. A ½ mile wide north-south window on the west side of Flaming Gorge, a window south along Highway 430, and a north-south window along the east side of Flaming Gorge have been identified for above and below ground utilities.

The ROD and *Federal Register* notice for the RMP would meet the criteria for public notification for linear or site rights-of-way within floodplains as required by BLM Manual 7221, except for those associated with perennial streams. The BLM would solicit public comment on site facilities or major linear rights-of-way along perennial streams unless another agency (federal, state, or local) already had solicited such comments.

The Aspen Mountain Communications Site Plan would govern development of sites at this location. Sites at other locations would be approved on a case-by-case basis. Sharing of sites would be advocated, where possible.

Withdrawals/Classifications

Withdrawals and classifications would be processed to afford protection to important resource values (Table 2-5). Withdrawals which no longer serve the purpose for which they were established would be revoked (Map 11 and Map 12). Prior to revocation, withdrawn lands would be reviewed to determine if any other resource values require withdrawal protection (Table 2-6).

The Multiple Use Management Classification as it affects public lands in the planning area (200 acres) would be revoked.

An additional 63 acres inundated by water under Flaming Gorge Reservoir would be withdrawn for the Bureau of Reclamation.

Public Water Reserves would be terminated where no longer needed, and acquired where the need exists (21,368 acres canceled and 9,386 acquired acres) (Map 12).

Desert Land Entries

If an applicant can provide evidence of a water right and provide an acceptable conservation plan which protects the soil resource and prevents salinity, the application for either a desert land entry or for an agricultural lease would be considered on its merits. Otherwise, all public lands in the planning area would be considered unsuitable for and closed to agricultural use under Desert Land Entry (DLE) and agricultural leases would be managed to reduce the salinity and sedimentation of the Green River Basin. Desert Land Entries and agricultural leases must meet the criteria outlined in Appendix 8-2).

Access

Access to public lands would be provided throughout the planning area. Access would be closed, or restricted, where necessary, in specific areas, to protect public health and safety, and to protect significant resource values in accordance with ORV proposed designations (see ORV Management discussion). Easements would be acquired to provide access to public lands for recreational, wildlife, range, cultural/historical, mineral, ACEC, special management area, and other resource needs (about 300 acres) (Table 2-7 and Map 13).

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to lands and realty management activities.

Livestock Grazing Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for livestock grazing management would be: 1) to improve forage production and ecological conditions for the benefit of livestock use, wildlife habitat, watershed, and riparian areas; 2) to maintain, improve, or restore riparian habitat to enhance forage conditions, wildlife habitat, and stream quality; and 3) to achieve proper functioning condition or better on 75 percent of riparian areas. This would be the first priority for vegetation management.

Management Actions: Authorized grazing use would not exceed the recognized permitted active AUMs (318,647 AUMs). Public lands would be made available for livestock grazing while considering the needs of other resources.

The present kind and season of use would continue to be licensed. Permitting for livestock grazing would continue until monitoring, negotiation, or a change in resource conditions indicate that a modification is needed. Monitoring would be continued or initiated following adjustments in grazing use to assure that grazing and other management objectives are being met. Livestock grazing would be managed on 31 I category allotments, 18 M category, and 29 C category Allotments (Appendix 9-1), and one allotment would not be categorized.

Interdisciplinary monitoring studies would be conducted at a level sufficient to detect changes in grazing use, trend, and range conditions and to determine if vegetation objectives would be met for all affected uses (livestock grazing, wild horses, wildlife, etc.).

Livestock grazing would not be authorized in the Palmer Draw area (970 acres) and special management exclosures. AUMs currently authorized in these areas would be suspended. All developed and some semi-developed recreation areas would be closed to livestock grazing and would be fenced to reduce conflicts between uses.

Authorized grazing preference may be reduced in areas with excessive soil erosion and poor range condition, if allotment evaluation warrants such a change or to provide forage for wildlife, wild horse, and recreational use.

Management would be implemented in "I" category allotments to maintain or improve wild horse, wildlife, watershed, vegetation, and soils values. Management in "M" category allotments would be directed toward maintenance of these values.

New AMPs would be written and implemented for some I category allotments, and existing AMPs for I category allotments would be modified as needed. All new and existing AMPs would incorporate desired plant community objectives and riparian objectives where such resources exist. Grazing systems would be designed to maintain or improve plant diversity and would be implemented on all I category allotments. Existing AMPs for M category allotments would not be modified unless monitoring and evaluation indicate a change in management is needed or riparian objectives are necessary. Riparian objectives would also be developed for C category allotments where riparian values exist.

Management actions identified in the Rangeland Program Summary Update (1990) would continue to be implemented.

Site specific analyses would be conducted where necessary to alleviate conflicts between wildlife use, livestock grazing, and development activities. Such a site specific plan, that considers wildlife needs, would be developed for the Pine Canyon, Long Canyon, Cedar Canyon, and Table Mountain area to alleviate conflicts between oil and gas production and exploration, wildlife needs, and livestock grazing.

Cooperative allotment management plans prepared in coordination with other agencies, such as the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service, would be consistent with this land use plan.

The current authorized active livestock use and existing forage reservations for wildlife and wild horses would be maintained. Existing rangeland monitoring would continue and additional rangeland monitoring would be initiated to determine any need for forage allocation adjustment.

Unallotted forage on public land (15,100 acres) scattered throughout the planning area would be allocated on a case-by-case basis to livestock grazing, wildlife, wild horses, and for watershed resources. The number of AUMs to be allocated would be determined after the lands have been evaluated. Forage increases would be evaluated in a site specific analysis and considered for allocation on a case-by-case basis.

Salt blocks for livestock would not be placed within 500 feet of live water, wetlands, or riparian areas unless analysis shows that watershed, riparian, and wildlife objectives could be met. Salt blocks would not be placed on areas inhabited by special status plant species or other sensitive areas.

New range improvements would be implemented in "I" and "M" category allotments (Map C). Maintenance of new and existing range improvements would be required in accordance with the BLM Rangeland Improvement Policy. Range improvements would be directed at resolving or reducing resource concerns, improvement of wetland/riparian areas, and overall improvement of vegetation/ground cover (see Vegetation section).

Water sources would be developed in crucial wildlife winter ranges only when consistent with wildlife habitat needs. Such sources would be designed to benefit livestock and wildlife. Alternative water supplies or facilities for livestock may be provided to relieve livestock grazing pressure along stream bottoms and improve livestock distribution.

Construction of fences would be considered to meet management objectives. Fence construction in big game use areas and known migration routes would require site specific analysis. Introduction of herder control would be encouraged as an alternative to fencing. All constructed fences would follow construction standards and design (BLM Manual 1740) and would be located and designed to not impede wild horse movement. Fences on public lands would be removed, modified, or reconstructed if documented wildlife or wild horse conflicts occur.

Combining and splitting allotments would be considered when such action would help meet RMP objectives for example. The Henrys Fork allotment would be split into 3 allotments and managed by the guidelines of revised AMPs. The Cottonwood Creek and

Antelope Wash allotments would be consolidated into one two-pasture allotment and managed by the guidelines of a new AMP.

Requests for conversions of livestock kind and changes in authorized season of use would be considered on a case-by-case basis with an environmental analysis. Such changes would be consistent with wildlife, wild horse, watershed, and riparian objectives. Special status plant species and vegetation objectives would be considered before allowing livestock conversions, and all conversions would be consistent with available forage.

Noxious weed infestations would be controlled through livestock management or by environmentally acceptable mechanical, chemical, or biological means in cooperation with County weed and pest districts (Appendix 9-2).

Stock driveway withdrawals numbers 4, 21, and 23 would be revoked.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to livestock grazing management activities.

Minerals Management

Management Objective: The objective for management of the minerals program would be to maintain or enhance opportunities for mineral exploration and development, while protecting other resource values. Appendix 5-1 explains environmental analysis and mitigation for oil and gas development and other surface disturbing activities.

Leasable Minerals

Public lands within the checkerboard are open to mineral development with appropriate mitigation measures to promote mineral resource recovery.

Nondiscretionary closures to leasing (that this plan does not address) include incorporated cities and towns and wilderness study areas (see Map 14 and Chapter 3).

Fluids

Management Objective: The objective for management of oil and gas resources would be to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas, while protecting other values.

Management Actions: Lands not specifically closed would remain open for oil and gas leasing consideration. Table 2-8 lists lands in the planning area with oil and gas lease restrictions necessary to protect other resource values. Discretionary no leasing areas would include certain parts of the Red Creek ACEC, and portions of the Wind River Front.

The remainder of the planning area would be open to consideration for oil and gas leasing with restrictions that would apply to certain areas. Table 2-8 provides information on which restrictions apply to particular areas and resources. This table provides the guidelines for all surface disturbing activities, not just those related to oil and gas.

Where maximum protection of resources is necessary, a No Surface Occupancy requirement would be established. Areas identified as needing this level of protection are included on Table 2-8 and Map 15. Additional areas may be identified through site specific activity planning. Any modifications to this requirement would require further public input.

Timing limitations (seasonal restrictions) would be applied when activities occur during crucial periods or would adversely affect crucial or sensitive resources. Such resources include, but are not limited to, soils during wet and muddy periods, crucial wildlife ranges, and raptor nesting areas (Table 2-9). Exception to seasonal restrictions may be granted provided the criteria in Appendix 7-1.

Where controlled use or restrictions on specific activities are needed but would not necessarily exclude activities, controlled surface use or surface disturbance restrictions would be designed to protect those resources. These restrictions would be placed on areas where resources could be avoided or mitigated (Table 2-8).

Development actions would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis where necessary to meet RMP objectives, provide for resource protection, and provide for logical development. Limitations on the amount, sequence, timing, or level of development may occur. This may result in transportation planning and in a limitation in the number of roads and pads, or some areas may not be developed until other areas have been restored to previous uses (Appendix 5-2).

Map 14, Map 15, Map 16, Map 17, Map 18, and Map 19 show those portions of the planning area where no leasing would be applied and areas where occupancy and activities would be limited.

Prior to leasing areas surrounding local communities or identified occupied dwellings, consultation with local communities and the counties would occur. Direction to protect public health and safety would be provided. Unleased areas may be offered for lease with a NSO stipulation or, if the interior areas are too large, may not be leased. These NSO areas may only be accessed through directional drilling. The NSO stipulation would be used to facilitate drainage, under the assumption that industry is the best judge of whether technology would enable them to access the oil and gas resources under the terms of the lease. Leases may also be issued with other appropriate mitigation necessary to protect public health and safety and allow for urban expansion.

Leasing with an NSO stipulation could become necessary for several reasons. First, the area is characterized by occupied dwellings and the potential for additional urban expansion; second, the area is surrounded by the scenic steep slopes of White Mountain, Wilkins Peak, and other similar topographic features. Any disturbance in the expanding urban areas or on the steep slopes, can affect the potential for expansion, public health and safety, watershed values, and the scenic resources. Likelihood of success in producing gas varies from low to high, which means that some development would be likely to occur and production facilities would be necessary and year-round access could be required. Any requests for relief from these guidelines would require a plan amendment. The plan amendment would generally be initiated in conjunction with an environmental analysis on the action being considered.

The areas closed to oil and gas leasing would remain closed to leasing of oil and gas unless drainage results in a loss of Federal minerals through production on enclosed private or State lands. At that time, the no lease prescription and other alternatives would be re-evaluated.

Geothermal

Management Objective: Although no geothermal resources are known within the planning area, the resource management objective would be to maintain opportunities for geothermal exploration and development.

Management Actions: Geothermal resources are available for leasing in areas that are open to oil and gas leasing. Areas closed to oil and gas leasing are also closed to geothermal leasing.

Exploration and development of geothermal resources are subject to application of restrictions on surface-disturbing activities and other restrictions in the same manner as they are applied to oil and gas exploration and development activities.

Solid Leasables (Coal)

The Federal coal management options for the Proposed Plan were derived through comparing the coal screening process applications and the impact analyses of the No Action Alternative and Alternatives B and C. Since evaluation of the alternatives and selection of the Preferred Option (Alternative), the Beans Springs Preference Right Lease Applications have been relinquished; thus impacts as projected to other resources in the Beans Spring area would be significantly reduced. Other coal development projections have been set back or put on hold and these would also reduce or lessen impacts to the other resources throughout the active coal mining areas. Our projections, however, are valid as an analysis of the level of activity that would provide the best mix and balance with the other land and resource uses in the planning area. Although current coal activity is in a downward trend, this trend could, and most likely will reverse over the time frames analyzed in the plan. Because of this we have not changed our projected mining activity scenarios.

The effect of the coal screening process on development of the Proposed Plan was that coal areas determined to be unsuitable or unacceptable for further leasing consideration in the analysis for Alternatives B and C were dropped from further consideration and were not carried forward into the Proposed Plan. See Appendix 3-2 for a complete explanation of how the coal screening process was conducted and how the coal screening results were applied for each alternative in this RMP EIS.

Management Objective: The objective for management of the federal coal resources in the planning area would be to provide for both short and long-range development of federal coal, in an orderly and timely manner, consistent with the policies of the federal coal management program, environmental integrity, national energy needs, and related demands.

Management Actions: With appropriate limitations and mitigation requirements for the protection of other resource values, all BLM-administered public lands and Federal coal lands in the Green River planning area, except for those identified in Table 2-10, would be open to coal resource inventory and exploration to help identify coal resources and their development potential.

About 422,000 acres of federal coal lands within the Coal Occurrence and Development Potential area (see Map 3) would be open to further consideration for coal leasing and development (i.e., new competitive leasing, emergency leasing, lease modifications, and exchange proposals, under the Federal Coal Management Program) with appropriate and necessary conditions and requirements for protection of other land and resource values and uses (Table 2-11).

These 422,000 acres would be subject to continued field investigations, studies and evaluations to determine if certain methods of coal mining can occur without having a significant long-term impact on wildlife, cultural, and watershed resources, in general, and on threatened and endangered plant and animal species and their essential habitats. Such investigations, studies and evaluations may be conducted on an as-needed or case-by-case basis in reviewing individual coal leasing or development proposals (e.g., mine plans) or, if opportunities or needs arise, area-wide studies may be conducted. These studies would include keeping resource base data current (e.g., where existing raptor nests become abandoned or where new raptor nests become established), analysis of effects to wildlife and threatened and endangered species habitats and populations, and the cumulative effects of mining operations and other activities in the area. Consultation with other agencies (e.g., USFWS, WGFD, etc.), special interest groups, and with industry would occur as needed or required.

The North Fork Vermillion Creek drainage and the City of Rock Springs Expansion Area would be closed to further consideration for Federal coal leasing and development (see Appendix 3-2).

Big game crucial winter ranges and birthing areas would be open to further consideration for federal coal leasing and development with a provision for maintaining a balance between coal leasing and development, and adequate crucial winter range and birthing area habitats to prevent significant adverse impacts to important big game species. This would be accomplished through controlled timing and sequencing of Federal coal leasing and development in these areas. For example: Satisfactory abandonment and adequate reclamation of mined lands in big game crucial winter ranges and birthing areas would be required before additional Federal coal leasing and development would be initiated in the same crucial winter ranges and birthing areas.

The greater Cooper Ridge and Elk Butte areas (about 25,368 acres) would be open to further consideration for Federal coal leasing and development, pending further study. This study is for the purpose of defining the extent of any deer and antelope crucial winter range in the area, and for determining if certain methods of coal mining can occur in the area without having a significant long-term impact on the deer and antelope herds.

For the protection of important petroglyph sites, other important cultural resource values, and important geologic and ecologic features, about 13,340 acres of Federal coal lands would be open to further consideration for leasing and development for subsurface mining methods only (refer to the Natural Corrals, Cedar Canyon, Greater Sand Dunes, and Steamboat Mountain portions of the Special Management Area section for more details). Any Federal coal leasing and development on these lands would include a no surface occupancy requirement for any related ancillary facilities. These same lands would be closed to surface mining methods and any related surface disturbing activities.

In general, cultural sites on Federal coal lands would be managed as avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities. As avoidance areas, cultural sites would be open to consideration for coal leasing and development. Surface disturbing activities associated with such actions as surface coal mining methods, exploration drilling, construction and location of ancillary facilities, roads and other types of rights-of-way, etc., would be avoided in these areas, if possible. In cases where it is not possible to avoid these areas, intensive mitigation of the surface disturbing activities (primarily excavation and other data recovery measures) would be emphasized. If necessary, appropriate buffer zones would be established to protect sites that are listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP. Data recovery measures would be implemented in the context of an NRHP district, if appropriate, to maximize efficiency of data recovery efforts.

Grouse nesting areas (sage or sharptail grouse) would be open to consideration for Federal coal leasing. Exploration activities and ancillary facilities would be allowed with the following requirement:

> If an occupied grouse nest that would be adversely affected by coal mining and related surface disturbing activities is identified, surface uses and activities would be delayed in the area of influence for the nest until nesting is completed.

Active grouse leks (sage and sharptail grouse) and the area within a ¼ mile radius of active leks would be managed as avoidance areas

for surface disturbing activities and would be open to consideration for Federal coal leasing and development with the following requirements:

> Surface disturbing activities associated with such actions as surface coal mining methods, exploration drilling, construction of roads and other types of rights-of-way, etc., would be avoided in these areas, if possible. In cases where it is not possible to avoid these areas, intensive mitigation of the surface disturbing activities would be emphasized.
>
> Permanent and high profile structures, such as buildings, overhead powerlines, other types of ancillary facilities, etc., would be prohibited in these areas.
>
> During the grouse mating season, surface uses and activities would be prohibited between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m., within a ½ mile radius of active leks (i.e., those leks occupied by mating birds).

Wetland and riparian areas on Federal coal lands (about 2,000 acres) would be managed as avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities and would be open to consideration for coal leasing and development with the following requirements:

> Surface disturbing activities associated with such actions as surface coal mining methods, exploration drilling, construction of ancillary facilities, roads and other types of rights-of-way, etc., would be avoided in these areas, if possible. In cases where it is not possible to avoid these areas, intensive mitigation of the surface disturbing activities would be emphasized.

Areas of BLM-Administered Public Land Surface Overlying State-Owned Coal. About 28,000 acres of BLM-administered public land surface overlying state-owned coal would be open to further consideration for coal development with appropriate and necessary conditions and requirements for protection of the public land surface and surface resource values and uses, including big game crucial winter range, grouse leks, cultural values, geologic features, rights-of-way, and City of Rock Springs expansion area.

About 25,000 acres would be subject to continued field investigations, studies, and evaluations to determine if certain methods of coal mining can occur without having a significant long-term impact on wildlife, in general, and on threatened and endangered plant and animal species and their essential habitats. Such investigations, studies and evaluations may be conducted on an as-needed or case-by-case basis in reviewing individual coal leasing and development proposals by the state or, if opportunities or needs arise, area-wide studies may be conducted. These studies would include keeping resource base data current (e.g., where existing raptor nests become abandoned or where new raptor nests become established), analysis of effects to wildlife and threatened and endangered species habitats and populations, and the cumulative effects of mining operations and other activities in the area. Consultation with other agencies (e.g., USFWS, WGFD, etc.), special interest groups, and with industry would occur as needed or required.

About 3,000 of these acres would be closed for surface mining activities to protect cultural and geologic values. These would be no surface occupancy and very limited surface occupancy areas.

Preference Right (Coal) Lease Applications (PRLAs). The Beans Spring coal PRLA has been canceled. Processing of competitive lease applications in the Beans Spring area would be considered, with special attention given to those sensitive value areas identified through the coal screening process. These lands would thus be managed the same as the Federal coal lands immediately surrounding them.

Solid Leasables (Sodium/Trona)

Management Objective: The objective for management of the federal sodium (trona) resource would be to provide for both short- and long-range development of federal sodium (trona) in an orderly and timely manner.

Management Actions: The known sodium leasing area (Map 3) would remain open to exploration and consideration for leasing and development, but would be closed to prospecting permits. The remainder of the planning area would be open to sodium prospecting except for areas closed to mineral leasing, surface mining, or mechanical prospecting type activities (areas closed to drilling, off-road vehicle use, and explosive charges) (Table 2-10). Leasing would be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to the resource management prescriptions applied to oil and gas and coal, and the management direction applied in this plan.

Other Leasables

Management Objective: The objective for management of other leasables is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development.

Management Actions: Leasing would be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to appropriate mitigation.

Mineral Materials

Management Objective: The objective for management of salable minerals would be to provide mineral materials in convenient locations for users while protecting other resources.

Management Actions: Sale areas and community pits would be established in conformance with other resource objectives. Adequate mine and reclamation plans for both new and existing use areas would be developed. Requests from users for mineral material disposals would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Sales and free use of mineral materials from established sites would be allowed. Proposed sales from new use areas would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Localized common use areas would provide for sales of moss rock and sand. No topsoil sale areas would be established.

Table 2-12 shows the areas that would be closed to mineral material sales.

Locatable Minerals

Management Objective: The objective for management of locatable minerals would be to provide opportunities to explore, locate, and develop mining claims while protecting other resource values.

Management Actions: With the exception of lands withdrawn from mineral location, the planning area would be open to mineral exploration, location, and development. The existing mineral classification withdrawals (phosphate, coal, oil shale) would be revoked (Table 2-6). Table 2-5 lists proposed withdrawals.

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. In designated ACECs, WSAs, potential additions to the Wild and Scenic River System, and areas closed to ORVs, a plan of operations would be required for any surface disturbance activities, regardless of acreage involved.

Geophysical

Management Objectives: The objective for management of geophysical activity would be to provide opportunity for exploration of mineral resources and collection of geophysical data, while protecting other resource values.

Management Actions: Most of the planning area would be open for consideration of geophysical activities. Table 2-13 shows areas that would be closed to the use of geophysical vehicles and explosive charges to protect sensitive resources.

Geophysical activities would follow the guidelines of ORV management prescriptions (see Off-Road Vehicle Management). However, geophysical exploration has been and would continue to be routinely granted site specific authorization for off-road vehicle use subject to appropriate limitations to protect various resources identified during analysis. Geophysical Notices of Intent would continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and all authorizations would be issued with appropriate analysis and mitigation requirements (see Appendix 5-1).

Geophysical activities would be limited within ¼ mile or visual horizon of historic trails (whichever is closer) to protect trail integrity. Generally, shotholes and vibroseis activity would be restricted or disallowed within 300 feet of historic and recreational trails based on a site specific analysis.

Geophysical travel through developed and semi-developed recreation sites would be restricted to existing roads and trails.

Geophysical exploration on the potential wild sections of the Sweetwater River under Wild and Scenic River consideration would be limited to foot access and placement of surface cables. No off-road vehicles would be allowed. Surface charges may be allowed if a site specific analysis determines no adverse impacts would occur to river values.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to minerals management activities.

Off-Road Vehicle Management

Management Objective: The objectives for off-road vehicle (ORV) management would be to provide opportunities for off-road vehicle use in conformance with other resource objectives.

Management Actions: Off-road vehicle use would be managed according to the ORV designations (Table 2-14 and Map 20). Areas for ORV rallies, cross-country races, and outings would be provided on a permit basis. Approximately 170,000 acres would be closed to off-road vehicle use to protect naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Off-road vehicles in areas designated as "limited" for off-road vehicles must stay on designated or existing roads and trails unless allowed as an exception by the authorized officer. This limitation applies to all activities.

Travel in wildlife crucial habitats (strutting grounds, spawning beds, big game ranges, calving/fawning periods, etc.) (Table 2-14) would be restricted seasonally as necessary (about 1,500,000 acres).

Travel would be restricted to certain designated roads in sensitive watersheds and on cultural sites.

Generally, over-the-snow vehicle use would be subject to the prescriptions described in Table 2-14 unless a site specific analysis determines otherwise.

An ORV implementation plan would be prepared to replace the two existing ORV plans and would reflect the ORV designations made in this plan. Except for areas that would be closed to off-road vehicle travel, some types of motor vehicle use may be allowed by the authorized officer provided resource damage did not occur.

ORV management prescriptions would apply to the use of vehicles for geophysical and other operations (see Geophysical).

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to off-road vehicle management activities.

Recreation Resource Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for recreation management would be to ensure the continued availability of outdoor recreational opportunities sought by the qpublic in accordance with the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Map 21), while protecting other resources. Other objectives would be to meet legal requirements for the health and safety of visitors and to mitigate conflicts between recreation and other types of resource uses.

Management Actions: Most public lands in the planning area would be open and available for consideration to all individual, commercial, and competitive outdoor recreation uses. Existing developed sites would be managed for public health and safety. Undeveloped areas would be managed to give first consideration to air quality, cultural resources, watershed, wildlife values, and public health and safety.

A 14-day camping limit on all public lands would be maintained. Camping would be limited to 14 days within a 28-day consecutive period. After the 14th day of occupation, campers must move outside a 5-mile radius of the previous location. Camping would not be allowed on posted waters or within 200 feet of springs, seeps, and ponds to protect water quality and wildlife and livestock watering areas. Camping in other riparian areas would be allowed, within 200 feet from water. Areas would be closed if resource damage occurs.

Special recreation permits would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Necessary mitigation would be required for special recreation permits, commercial recreation uses, and major competitive recreation events to provide resource protection and public safety.

Suitable wild horse herd viewing area(s) would be developed to enhance public viewing of horses. Short-term intrusions (within ½ mile) and actions that would blend with the landscape or would benefit the intent of the wild horse herd viewing area would be considered in these areas. The viewing area and ½ mile surrounding area would be closed to intrusions and surface disturbing activities (e.g. structures, mineral activities, powerlines, roads, etc.) that could interfere with opportunities to view horses.

Oregon Buttes, Honeycomb Buttes, Steamboat Mountain, Leucite Hills, Red Creek, Pine Mountain, Little Mountain, and Cedar Canyon areas would be managed to assure their continuing value for recreational opportunities (Map 22). Recreation area management plans would be prepared for these areas if necessary.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail, the Green River, and Wind River Front (about 265,188 acres and 24 miles of trails) would be managed as special recreation management areas to focus management on areas with high recreation values or areas where there are conflicts between recreation and other uses. The existing special recreation management areas (Killpecker Sand Dunes and Oregon and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails) would be retained (Map 23). The existing management plan for the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer

Trails would be implemented. Management plans for the Green River, Wind River Front, the Sand Dunes, and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and Snowmobile Trail would be developed. The remainder of the planning area would be managed as an extensive recreation management area.

Recreation project plans and an interpretive prospectus would be developed for the 14-Mile recreation site, Sweetwater Campgrounds, Boars Tusk, Leucite Hills, and the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail. No development activities, such as those associated with mineral development, pipelines, powerlines, or well pads, would be allowed on the 14-Mile recreation area. The public water reserve and the recreational withdrawal which closes the area to mineral location and disposal would be retained. The 14-Mile recreation site would be open to activities such as recreation site facilities.

The integrity of the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail would be maintained to allow for continued snowmachine use, by limiting surface-disturbing activities, structures, or facilities that would block or hinder trail use on or within ¼ mile of the trail (2,330 acres). The only exceptions would be facilities that support the visitors use and experience along the trail or to protect the health and safety of the user. The existing trail system would be expanded by adding loop trails.

Mountain bike trail opportunities would be explored. Partnerships with local citizens and Chambers of Commerce, Forest Service, and the State of Wyoming would be pursued. Specific areas would include the Little Mountain-Firehole Canyon-Flaming Gorge area and the Wyoming Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail. Trails would be signed, and brochures would be developed. Other trails would be developed on a case-by-case basis. An implementation plan would consider mountain bike and other mechanized vehicle needs.

The Green River, Sweetwater River, Big Sandy River, and Bitter Creek between the towns of Rock Springs and Green River would be managed for recreation values, and recreation area management plans would be developed, where necessary. The establishment of a "greenbelt" along the Green River from Fontenelle Dam to Flaming Gorge Reservoir (approximately 3,200 acres) would be supported.

About 1.5 miles of the Big Sandy River adjacent to the Bridger-Teton Forest boundary would be managed to retain pristine values. Actions would not be allowed that would alter these river values.

Travel routes that meet the criteria for backcountry byways would be designated. Five backcountry byways (Map 22) have been identified and would include consideration for mountain bike use. They are Tri-Territory Loop, the Lander Road, Red Desert, Fort LaClede Loop, and the Firehole-Little Mountain Loop. Brochures and interpretive signs would be prepared to inform users. Additional backcountry byways would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Cutting of trees and firewood for camping purposes would be limited to designated areas.

Recreation site development projects and access would be managed to maintain or improve wetland habitat conditions along intensively used streams and reservoirs.

Consideration for permanent recreation site facilities in existing use areas would be made provided proper mitigation and exceptions to Executive Order 11988 apply. The area within 500 feet of riparian areas and floodplains would be avoidance areas for new recreation site facilities. Exceptions may be considered following a site specific analysis. Impacts to riparian areas and water quality would not occur. Stream water at undeveloped recreation sites would be monitored. If the water is not potable, signs would be posted.

Vegetation buffer strips would be maintained between developed recreational facilities and surface water.

The natural values of Boars Tusk, Pilot Butte, and Emmons Cone would be protected from surface disturbance and the integrity of the geologic features would be maintained. No surface occupancy would be allowed on Boars Tusk, Pilot Butte, and Emmons Cone, unless activity would enhance management of these features (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4). Interpretive facilities would be allowed.

Surface disturbing activities, such as those associated with mineral development, roads, pipelines, powerlines, etc., on recreation sites would not be allowed within ¼ mile of sites unless activities were determined to be compatible with recreation objectives for the area. Generally such activities would be designed to avoid these areas. An approved plan would be required prior to the site disturbance.

Posting information and directional signs would be necessary in some areas. This alternative establishes various types of resource designations, and sign posting would be provided to promote visitor use of the various areas consistent with management objectives.

A withdrawal from the public land laws, including the mining laws, would be pursued for the Sweetwater Campgrounds.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to recreation resource management activities.

Wind River Front Special Recreation Management Area (261,080 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of the Wind River Front Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) would be (1) to provide protection and enhancement of the recreation opportunities, activities, and setting of the area, maintain the high visual values of the area, and to protect air quality in the adjacent Class I airshed; (2) to maintain or enhance biological diversity; (3) to prevent fragmentation of grasslands, shrublands, streams, wetlands, and forest habitats; and (4) to continue to maintain crucial big game habitats and migration corridors so that Wyoming Game and Fish Department population objectives can be met.

Management Actions: The boundary that would be considered the Wind River Front Special Recreation Management Area would be public lands north of Township 27, public lands east of Highway 191, public lands northwest of Highway 28, and public lands south of the Bridger-Teton and Shoshone National Forests.

To facilitate management, the area would be divided into two units, with the boundary following the Continental Divide and with the eastern portion including the Prospect Mountains.

Eastern Portion

This area (approximately 88,510 acres) would be managed to provide protection to the Class I airshed in the Bridger Wilderness, for scenic, watershed, and wildlife values, recreation use, riparian, and vegetation resources.

Major facilities (including linear facilities) would be excluded from the eastern part of the Wind River Front. Small feeder lines could be allowed if analysis indicates that the objectives of the area could be met.

This portion of the SRMA would be closed to mineral leasing. Surface disturbing activities would have to conform to area objectives.

Off-road vehicle (ORV) use would be limited to designated roads and trails, except for about 500 acres associated with the *Arabis pusilla* proposed ACEC, which would remain closed to ORV use.

The 9.7-mile proposed Wild and Scenic Sweetwater River would be managed under interim management guidelines so as to not impair the suitability of the river from inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River Preservation System. More detailed information on the management of the proposed Wild and Scenic River can be found in the Wild and Scenic River section. The suitable segments of the river would be withdrawn from the public land laws, including the mining laws.

The Sweetwater Bridge and Guard Station Campgrounds would be upgraded to provide for public health and safety, reduce natural resource degradation, and to meet Bureau accessibility standards. The campgrounds would be withdrawn from the public land laws, including the mining laws. Additional withdrawals would be pursued to meet area objectives, if necessary.

The integrity of the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and the South Pass Cross Country Ski Trail would be maintained by limiting (and in some cases precluding) surface-disturbing activities or facilities on or within ¼ mile of the trails. The only exceptions would be the establishment of facilities to provide services to the users of the trails and to provide for public health and safety.

All activities would conform with the requirements of the Class II visual resource management classification and all management actions would be designed and located to blend into the natural landscape and not be visually apparent to the casual viewer. A transportation plan would be done prior to developments. Long linear facilities would avoid the area.

About 1.5 miles of the Big Sandy River, from the Bridger-Teton National Forest boundary to the boundary of State land, would have a no surface occupancy restriction applied to surface disturbing activities within 1 mile (½ mile of either bank) of the river.

Western Portion

This area (approximately 172,630 acres) would be managed for dispersed recreation uses such as camping, hunting, and fishing, with full consideration given to wildlife, cultural, vegetation, watershed values, and mineral development activity.

This portion of the SRMA would be open to mineral leasing. Daily off-road vehicle use and access may not be feasible for this entire area. Access, particularly proposed roads, may be limited and a road density analysis may be required. To prevent conflicts with recreation users, alternative access may be needed.

Surface disturbing activities would be limited through controlled surface use requirements or closing areas where maximum resource protection is necessary.

Facility placement would be designed for minimum surface disturbance unless a site specific analysis determines that additional activity can occur and SRMA objectives can be met. An exception would be if the operator and surface management agency/individual could arrive at an acceptable mitigation plan for anticipated impacts. Options in the mitigation plans would include consideration of development in one portion of the area coupled with no development in remaining areas. Other considerations would be to place multiple facilities in a specific area (e.g., multiple wells and production facilities on one pad) and require remote control operations (such as remote well head and production facility control) to limit trips into locations.

All activities would conform with the requirements of the Class IV visual resource management classification and all management actions would be designed and located to repeat the basic elements (form, line, color, and texture) inherent in the characteristic landscape. New roads would be designed so they conform with the landform and do not create the "tunnel effect". Off-road vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails.

Transportation planning would be done prior to development. Linear facilities need to conform with the transportation plan and follow existing routes and previously disturbed areas.

No surface occupancy for surface disturbing activities would be allowed on 1 mile of the Dry Sandy Swales.

Special Status Species Management

Special Status species are those which are proposed for listing, officially listed (threatened and endangered), or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the Secretary of the Interior under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act; those listed or proposed for listing by a state in a category implying potential endangerment or extinction; and those designated by each State Director as sensitive.

Candidate, Sensitive, and Threatened and Endangered Plant Species Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of special status plant species would be to 1) maintain or enhance essential and important habitat and prevent destruction or loss of the plant species communities and important habitat; 2) provide opportunities for enhancing or expanding the habitat; and 3) prevent the need for listing these species as threatened or endangered.

Management Actions: Any management actions on potential habitat of special status plant species communities on federal land or non-federal surface with federal minerals would require searches for the plant species prior to project or activity implementation. New special status plant populations would be closed to activities that could adversely affect these species and their habitat. Closed or restricted activities would include limiting off-road vehicle travel to designated roads and trails and limiting fire suppression to use of existing roads and trails.

Locations of special status plant species and essential and/or important habitats would be determined. Known locations of special status plant species communities (see Map 24) would be protected and closed to: 1) surface disturbing activities or any disruptive activity that could adversely affect the plants or their habitat (see the discussion in Lands and Realty Management and Minerals Management for this alternative); 2) the location of new mining claims (withdrawal from mineral location would be pursued); 3) mineral material sales; 4) all off-road vehicles including those used for geophysical exploration activities, surveying, etc.; and 5) the use of explosives and blasting.

Locations of special status plant species would be open to consideration for mineral leasing (see Table 2-8).

A site specific analysis would be prepared for fire activities around special status plant species sites. All fire suppression activities would be limited to existing roads and trails on essential and important special status species habitat.

Activities such as fencing, interpretive signs, or barriers to ensure protection to the special status plant species would be considered for both existing populations and potential habitat.

BLM would attempt to acquire approximately 1,920 acres of additional *Descurania torulosa* habitat on Pine Butte.

The management actions for these species apply only to BLM-administered public lands. Emphasizing management of these species on public lands and preventing these species from being listed as threatened or endangered would benefit all parties within the Green River Resource Area. When species are listed as threatened and endangered, by law they become more universally protected on most lands and avoiding listing would be of mutual benefit to all parties.

As new information about vegetation types and communities is acquired, additional special status plant species may be identified. Should new special status plant species be identified, they would be managed under the same prescriptions as stated above.

Management prescriptions for threatened and endangered species and proposed threatened and endangered species would be managed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Known locations of special status species would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if they meet the relevance and importance criteria to be considered for ACEC designation. If appropriate, such locations would be proposed for ACEC designation and the Green River RMP would be amended, as necessary. See the section on Special Designation Management Areas for those areas of known special status plant species locations that are proposed for ACEC designation.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to special status plant species management activities.

Vegetation Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of vegetation would be to maintain or enhance vegetation community health, composition, and diversity in order to meet watershed, wild horse, and wildlife resource management objectives and provide for plant diversity (desired plant communities) to meet livestock management, watershed, wild horse, and wildlife objectives.

Management Actions: Riparian habitat would be maintained, improved, or restored to enhance forage conditions, provide wildlife habitat, and improve stream quality. Where possible, additional riparian area acreage would be acquired to enhance livestock and riparian area management (see Appendix 8-3).

The minimum goal for riparian area management would be to achieve a proper functioning condition. This would be considered the highest priority for vegetation management. Desired plant communities must meet criteria for proper functioning condition. Guidelines for utilization described in Appendix 9-2 have been established to aid in achieving this goal.

Desired plant community objectives would be established for the planning area if possible when ecological site inventory data becomes available. All activity plans would incorporate desired plant community objectives.

Prescribed fire would generally be the preferred method of vegetation manipulation to convert stands of brush to grasslands and to promote regeneration of aspen stands and/or shrub species. Low intensity burns during periods of high soil moisture would be the preferred methods/times in mountain shrub communities (Appendix 9-2).

Approximately 26,700 acres of vegetative removal would be designed to increase livestock forage, while the remaining 41,000 acres would primarily be designed to improve wildlife habitat. Treatment methods would include mechanical, biological, chemical, and prescribed fire. Prescribed burns may be conducted in crucial big game winter ranges if habitat values would improve for these species. Prescribed fire would be the preferred method of vegetation manipulation, and spring burns would be preferred to regenerate shrubs. Chemical treatment would be used only where national guidelines can be exercised to prevent unwanted destruction of desirable fauna or flora and to prevent transportation of these chemicals to other areas by water or air movement (Appendix 9-2).

Prescribed burns generally would be conducted in areas having greater than 35 percent sagebrush composition, 20 percent desirable grass composition, and greater than 10 inches of precipitation. Other vegetation manipulation methods would be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on objectives and cost benefits. All treated areas would be rested for 2 growing seasons from livestock grazing. Burn areas would be fenced from livestock if necessary. Prescribed fire would be restricted in areas with surface coal.

Vegetation manipulation projects would be conducted to reach multiple use objectives and would involve site specific environmental analysis and coordination. Funds for vegetation manipulation in I category allotments would be provided by the BLM, other state or federal agencies, and private sources.

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

All vegetation treatments would be designed on a case-by-case basis and would be irregular in shape for edge effect, cover, and visual esthetics.

Vegetation treatments would be designed to be compatible with special status plant species, i.e., spraying, burning, mechanical disturbances, etc. would not be allowed to adversely affect populations.

Vegetation treatment units would be designed to protect water quality and dissipate erosion. This generally means accomplishing vegetation treatments in a mosaic pattern and leaving sufficient untreated vegetation to buffer riparian areas and intermittent and ephemeral drainages from erosion. Specific treatment designs for erosion control would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to vegetation management activities.

Proper Functioning Condition Guidelines

Riparian habitat in proper functioning condition is the minimum acceptable status or level within the Green River Resource Area. Under this resource management plan, 75 percent of the riparian areas within the area would, within 10 years, have management plans in place that would allow riparian areas to achieve proper functioning condition. The BLM definition of proper functioning condition is found in the Glossary. To achieve this condition, riparian areas would benefit with the implementation of allowable use levels based on a riparian area's classification (i.e., Proper Functioning Condition, Functioning At Risk, Non-Functioning, and Unknown At Present). The Green River Resource Area would use the BLM Technical Reports (TR 1737-9 and TR 1737-11) on Proper Functioning Condition to guide the effort in classifying or rating all lotic and lentic riparian areas in the area based on condition. From this information, use levels would be established on key riparian species to improve riparian plant communities at a rate sufficient to achieve

proper functioning condition. See Appendix 9-2 for more information.

The utilization guidelines would aid in accomplishing hydrologic, vegetative, and deposition factors that are required to meet proper functioning condition.

Utilization standards may change from the guidelines as site specific data are analyzed on season of use, class of livestock, and functional condition. Upper limits could rise if certain conditions, such as season of use, are limited on a riparian area. As an example, a specific riparian area is grazed only in early spring and no livestock grazing is allowed after this period. If this condition could be met, and the higher utilization of key riparian species is not detrimental to the functioning condition, then this standard could be established for a site specific area.

The next step beyond Proper Functioning Condition of riparian areas is the establishment of desired plant communities. Desired plant community objectives would be developed on riparian areas by several different methods, including Ecological Site Inventory, comparison areas (comparison areas would have similar soils, aspect, vegetation, and precipitation), and estimating the structural component that can be achieved in the short term. Desired plant community goals can have short- and long-term goals. Desired plant community goals take into consideration all uses of the riparian area which can include livestock, wildlife, recreation, fisheries, flood control, etc.

While the desired plant community establishes goals for the riparian area or upland plant community, the Desired Future Condition establishes goals for entire watersheds (or larger blocks of land) involving all activities and resources. Achieving Proper Functioning Condition and Desired Plant Community are integral steps in the process of establishing and achieving the Desired Future Condition of an area.

Visual Resource Management

Management Objective: The objective for management of visual resources would be to maintain or improve scenic values, visual quality, and to establish priorities for managing the visual resources in conjunction with other resource values.

Management Actions: Visual resource classes would be retained or modified to enhance other resource objectives such as cultural, recreation, wild horse viewing, and special management areas. The visual resource management classifications would become as shown on Table 2-15 and Map 25.

Projects would be designed to meet the objectives of the established visual classifications and appropriate mitigation applied. Facilities including existing or new wells and facilities, linear rights-of-way, etc., would be screened, painted, or designed to blend with the surrounding landscape.

Management actions on the lands classified as Class II visual resource management lands would be designed to blend into the natural landscape and retain the existing character of the landscape (Appendix 9-2).

Management actions on the lands classified as Class III visual resource management lands would be designed to partially retain the existing character of the landscape.

Management actions on the lands classified as Class IV visual resource management lands could result in a major modification to the existing character of the landscape.

All surface disturbing actions, regardless of the visual resource management class, would be mitigated to reduce visual impacts. This would be achieved by designing and locating the disturbances in a manner that most closely meets the minimum degree of contrast acceptable for the visual resource management class.

Management actions in rehabilitation areas would be designed to reclaim and improve visual resource values to achieve a higher classification (Classes III and IV) (see Map 25 and Table 2-15).

The scenic values along Highway 28 within Fremont County (12.5 miles) would be protected. All proposed lands actions and other activities within view of the highway would be evaluated for impacts and mitigated to protect the scenic value of this historical area; and Class II visual values, where designated, would be retained.

Major highways would be managed under their current visual classifications except for the area along Interstate 80 between Green River and Rock Springs which would be managed consistent with Class III visual resource management classifications (Map 25 and Table 2-15).

Suitable wild horse herd viewing area(s) would be developed to enhance public viewing of horses. Short-term intrusions and actions that would blend with the landscape or would benefit the intent of the wild horse viewing area would be considered. The viewing area would be closed to surface disturbing activities that would interfere or preclude viewing of the horses (such as those associated with mineral development, roads, pipelines, powerlines, structures, etc.) on or within a ½ mile radius of any wild horse viewing area (500 acres) (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4).

All activities that could be viewed from the Fontenelle Reservoir would be designed to be subordinate to the landscape.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to visual resource management activities.

Watershed/Soils Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for watershed/soils management would be to stabilize and conserve soils, to increase vegetative production, to maintain or improve surface and groundwater quality, and to protect, maintain, or improve wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas.

Management Actions: Land uses and surface disturbing activities would be designed to reduce channel erosion, specifically bank erosion, and channel incision that would result in unacceptable losses of riparian habitat, and accelerate surface erosion. Damaged wetland and riparian areas would be restored (Map 26).

Sediment, phosphate, and salinity load would be reduced in the planning area, where possible. Measures listed in Appendix 5-1 would be applied. Guidelines described in the Wyoming Water Quality Rules and Regulations would also be applied (Wyoming 1989).

Channel stability would be improved and maintained, and damaged wetland areas would be restored. Where exclosures are used, exclosures would be designed to allow ample water for livestock and allow minimum impediments to big game migration.

Those areas where the soils are highly erodible or difficult to reclaim would receive increased attention, and would be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities, where possible. Activities could be allowed if a site specific analysis determines that no adverse impacts would occur to water quality, and soil degradation would not occur. An erosion control plan (such as an ERRP, Appendix 5-3 would be prepared as part of the site specific analysis process (Map D). Rehabilitation plans would be developed and implemented on newly disturbed areas and for existing disturbed sites as needed.

BLM would participate with federal and local government agencies and the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum to develop and implement salinity control plans. Activity plans which include measures to reduce salinity would be completed and implemented. Additionally, activity plans would also be designed with measures to reduce phosphate loading to Fontenelle and Flaming Gorge Reservoirs. BLM would participate with federal and local government agencies to develop and implement phosphate reduction plans in tributaries to Fontenelle Reservoir and Flaming Gorge Reservoir.

Practices would be implemented to reduce sediment loading and protect water quality. These practices would include ensuring construction of stream crossings during normal stream flows, not during high or peak flows when additional sediment from construction could be swept into the stream; and ensuring water discharges meet appropriate standards (Appendix 5-1).

Site specific management plans (to reduce erosion and sediment yield, promote ground cover, enhance water quality) would be prepared for areas where needed, including Cedar Mountain and Sage Creek/Currant Creek. The Red Creek watershed plan would continue to be implemented.

Existing HMPs would be updated to include watershed management directives.

Sediment reduction and water quality improvement objectives would be incorporated into activity plans and especially into AMPs that would be developed for Upper Bitter Creek, Four J Basin, Vermillion Creek, and Upper Salt Wells watersheds.

Wetlands and floodplains within the planning area would be managed in accordance with Executive Orders 11988 and 11990. The 100-year floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas would be closed to any new permanent facilities (e.g., storage tanks, structure pits, etc.) but linear crossings would be considered on a case-by-case basis (Table 2-8).

Surface disturbing activities (e.g., mineral activities, pipelines, powerlines, roads, recreation sites, etc.) that could adversely affect water quality, and wetland and riparian habitat would avoid the area within 500 feet of or on 100-year floodplains, wetlands, or perennial streams and within 100 feet of the edge of the inner gorge of intermittent and large ephemeral drainages. Activities could be allowed if a site specific analysis determines that no adverse impacts would occur to floodplains, wetlands, perennial streams, or water quality and a plan to mitigate impacts to water quality was approved. Linear crossings would be considered on a case-by-case basis (Map 27 and Table 2-8).

Practices would be implemented to protect groundwater and prevent soil contamination. Such practices could include lining of reserve, production, and other types of pits and would include alternate locations for plants, mill sites, ponds, and sewage lagoons where soils are highly permeable (Appendix 5-1). Determinations would be made on a case-by-case basis.

Aquifer recharge areas would be managed to protect groundwater quality and to ensure continued ability for recharging aquifers. Protection would be provided by limiting road density and surface occupancy to maintain a healthy recharge area. Vegetative cover and geologic soil condition that are conducive to groundwater recharge would be maintained. Activities within the Superior recharge area would be designed and allowed only if groundwater quality would be protected.

BLM would cooperate with the State of Wyoming on the Wyoming State 208 plan, and coordinate the development of water quality plans consistent with BLM programs and RMP recommendations.

An area-wide water quality monitoring program to determine sources and causes of water pollution would continue.

Legal protection of those water uses, both consumptive and nonconsumptive (including instream uses), that are necessary for the accomplishment of Bureau programs would be obtained, so that the beneficial uses may be continued or made possible in the future.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to watershed or soils management activities.

Wild Horse Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of wild horses would be to protect, maintain, and control viable, healthy herds of wild horses while retaining their free-roaming nature; to provide adequate habitat for free-roaming wild horses through management consistent with environmental protection; and to provide opportunity for the public to view wild horses.

Management Actions: Horses would be managed within five Wild Horse Herd Management Areas (Map 28). An appropriate management level of 1,105 to 1,600 would be maintained (Table 2-16). An appropriate management level (AML) of 69 to 100 horses in the Little Colorado Desert would be established (see Table 2-16). The new herd area would encompass about 619,541 acres of BLM-administered public lands and encompass the allotments identified in Table 2-17. The specific boundary and specific management prescriptions for this area would be identified in an activity plan.

Management plans for 5 wild horse herd management areas in the planning area would be implemented. The existing wild horse management plans would be updated to conform with management plan objectives for vegetation management. A monitoring program would be developed to provide information to support wild horse management decisions.

Specific habitat objectives for herd management areas would be developed. Consideration would be given to desired plant communities, wildlife, watershed, livestock, and other resource needs. The feasibility of water development on the checkerboard land portion of the herd area to better distribute wild horses would be determined. Water developments would be proposed in the Rock Springs Allotment primarily to enhance management of wild horses (see the Proposed Allotment Projects appendix in the Draft EIS). Water developments on crucial winter ranges would be allowed if they conform with wildlife objectives and do not result in adverse impacts to the crucial winter range.

Management would ensure that adequate forage (about 17,400 AUMs) would be provided to support appropriate management levels in the herd units and that herds maintain appropriate age, sex, and color ratios.

Selective gathering programs would be implemented in each of the wild horse herd management areas. Fertility control would be initiated only if necessary. These actions would aid in stabilizing populations, managing for conditions and special characteristics, and supply an adoptable population (young horses). Gathering cycles would vary depending upon plan objectives, resource conditions, and needs. See Table 2-18 for estimated populations based on a 3-year gathering cycle. Excess horses would be removed from inside and outside wild horse herd management areas, and gathering plans would be prepared.

Fencing would be restricted to those situations where it would enhance multiple-use values. All new fences would be constructed in such a manner as to minimize restriction of wild horse movement.

Opportunity for public education and enjoyment of wild horse herds by placing interpretive signs, providing interpretive sites, and access to the herd areas would be provided. Signs providing information on wild horses would be placed in strategic locations such as the rest area east of Rock Springs along Interstate 80, on the Bar X Road at the junction with I-80, and at the entrance to the Oregon Buttes and Continental Peak areas on Wyoming Highway 28.

Other resource uses would be maintained and protected consistent with those resource objectives while maintaining viable, healthy herds and appropriate management levels. Wild horse herd management areas would be managed in a natural, healthy state and for an ecological balance among wild horses and land and resource uses.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to wild horse management activities.

Wilderness Resource Management

Management Objective: The objective for management of the wilderness resource would be to retain the wilderness quality and manage the areas in accordance with the "Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review," until Congress acts on designation.

Management Actions: Wilderness management plans would be prepared for those WSAs designated by Congress as wilderness. Wilderness Study Areas (223,000 acres) would remain closed to mineral leasing (subject to valid existing rights).

New discretionary uses within or adjacent to WSAs could be reviewed to ensure they do not create conflicts with management and preservation of wilderness values.

Wildlife Management

Management Objectives: The objectives for management of all wildlife and fish habitat would be to maintain, improve, or enhance the biological diversity of all plant and wildlife species while ensuring healthy ecosystems; and to restore disturbed or altered habitat with the objective to attain desired native plant communities, while providing for wildlife needs and soil stability.

The objectives for management of wetlands/riparian areas would be to 1) achieve a healthy and productive condition for long-term benefits and values in concert with range, watershed, and wildlife needs and 2) enhance or maintain riparian habitats by managing for deep-rooted native herbaceous or woody vegetation.

The objective for threatened, endangered, special status, and sensitive plant and animal species would be to provide, maintain, or improve habitat through vegetative manipulation, mitigation measures, or other management actions including habitat acquisition and easements.

Management Actions: To the extent possible, suitable wildlife habitat and forage would be provided to support the Wyoming Game and Fish Department 1989 Strategic Plan objectives. Changes within Wyoming Game and Fish Department planning objective levels would be considered based on habitat capability and availability. This would be based on site specific analysis.

BLM would cooperate with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) in preparation of studies for the introduction and reintroduction of native and non-native wildlife and fish species, within the planning area.

High value wildlife habitats would be maintained or improved through restrictive habitat alteration, appropriate distance and seasonal restrictions, and rehabilitation standards. These habitats include crucial winter habitat, parturition areas, sensitive fisheries habitat, etc.

Big game crucial winter ranges and parturition areas would be protected to ensure their continued useability by limiting activities during seasons of use and the amount of habitat disturbed. See Glossary for surface disturbance factor for wildlife and surface disturbance activity.

Aboveground facilities (power lines, storage tanks, fences, etc.) would not be allowed on or within a ¼ mile radius of active sage grouse strutting grounds. Linear disturbances such as low-traffic roads, pipelines, seismic activity, etc., could be granted exceptions. Activities would avoid the area within ¼ mile radius of active strutting grounds from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. daily from February 1 through May 15. Seasonal restrictions (Table 2-9) would be applied through July 31 within an additional 1.75-mile radius (447,170 acres) from leks to protect sage grouse nesting habitat. Exceptions to seasonal restrictions may be granted provided the criteria in Appendix 7-1 can be met.

Active or historic raptor nesting sites would be protected and managed for continued nesting activities (Table 2-8). Nesting raptors would be protected by restricting activities within ½ to 1-mile radius of active or historic raptor nesting sites (depending upon the species) (361,330 acres) (Table 2-9).

Raptor nest surveys would be conducted within a 1-mile radius or linear distance of proposed surface uses or activities if such activities are proposed to be conducted between February 1 and July 31.

No surface occupancy or project component would be allowed within an appropriate distance of active raptor nests. (An active raptor nest is defined as a nest that has been occupied within the past 3 years.) The buffer distance may vary depending upon the species involved, natural topographic barriers, and line-of-sight distances.

All surface disturbing activity (e.g., range improvements, recreation sites, road, pipeline, well pad construction; drilling, completion, workover operations; etc.) would be seasonally restricted from February 1 through July 31 within a ½-mile radius or linear distance of all active raptor nests, except ferruginous hawk nests for which the seasonal buffer would be 1 mile. The seasonal buffer distance and exclusion dates applicable may vary depending upon such factors as the activity status of the nest, species involved, natural topographic barriers, and line-of-sight distance(s) (see Appendix 7-1).

Fences that are documented to be a problem to big game migration would be modified to meet BLM fence standards.

The cooperative management agreement with the WGFD for annual monitoring, maintenance, and the development of additional waters would continue as needed. Livestock water developments would be modified where possible or protected to enhance wildlife habitat and to maintain or enhance water quality.

Livestock and wild horse water developments on crucial winter ranges would be allowed if they conform with wildlife objectives and do not result in adverse impacts to the crucial range.

Needed special management and riparian management exclosures would be developed and/or maintained, and existing exclosure plans would be implemented for enhancement of wildlife habitat. Exclosures would be closed to livestock grazing use and no AUMs in these areas would be available to livestock.

Aquatic, wetland, and riparian habitat would not be suitable for disposal unless opportunities exist for land exchange for lands of

equal or better value. BLM would consider acquiring additional lands along perennial waters and wetlands. Water rights for BLM water developments would be pursued as appropriate.

Management toward proper functioning condition or better of 75 percent of riparian areas would be implemented. Executive Order 11990 for the protection of wetlands would apply.

Seasonal restrictions for surface disturbing activities to protect game fish and special status fish populations during spawning would be applied as necessary.

Animal damage control would be allowed on public lands in accordance with the Predatory Animal Damage Control Decision Record (March 1994). The plan is effective from the date approved through April 1999. Adjustments or refinements in approved activities would be considered and authorized as long as they are within the scope, intent, and objective of the Environmental Assessment and the Decision Record.

BLM would annually evaluate the APHIS animal damage control plan including the need for animal damage control, human safety, safety of domestic animals and non-offending animals, areas where animal damage control would be restricted, and analysis of environmental consequences of animal damage control.

Habitat improvement plans would be developed, particularly for highly developed areas to mitigate wildlife habitat losses. Plans could include habitat expansion efforts, T&E species reintroduction, and population goals and objectives. Such actions as preparing transportation plans and reclaiming roads, seeding, and vegetation enhancement (vegetation treatments, fencing), water developments, and reclamation actions to reduce the amount of existing disturbance, would be considered. Areas identified for consideration of such plans would be Little Colorado Desert, including the Fontenelle II and Blue Forest units, Nitchie Gulch, Wamsutter Arch, Patrick Draw, and Cedar Canyon areas.

See other resource management prescriptions in this document for other restrictions that may apply to wildlife management activities.

Special Designation Management Areas Introduction

The relevance and importance criteria applied to the areas considered for ACEC designation are summarized in Appendix 1-3. A more detailed discussion of the resource values in these areas can be found in Chapter 3, Affected Environment. The management objectives and management actions identified below apply only to BLM-administered public lands and federal minerals. Private and state lands and minerals, and other federal lands administered by other federal agencies are not covered by these actions. Actions on non-BLM-administered lands are determined by the owners/administrators of those lands. Access to private and state lands, where surrounded by BLM-administered lands, would be provided following appropriate analysis.

For additional information, refer to Map A and Table 2-19.

Any proposed ACEC designations identified apply only to BLM-administered public land surface.

Cedar Canyon ACEC (2,550 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objective: The management objective for the BLM-administered public lands in the Cedar Canyon ACEC would be to provide protection and enhancement of relevant and important cultural values, scenic values, and wildlife habitat in the area.

Management Actions: The BLM-administered public lands in the ACEC would be open to consideration for mineral leasing with restrictions to protect cultural and wildlife values, particularly raptors and raptor habitat, big game winter range, and watershed values (Table 2-9, Table 2-8, and Table 2-4).

Vegetation would be managed to provide habitat for wildlife. Habitat for raptors would be maintained or enhanced. Cliffs, tree hollows, and pinnacles would be managed to provide nesting habitat. The ACEC would be closed to wood cutting and the removal of other vegetative product materials.

Site specific analyses would be conducted to alleviate conflicts between wildlife use, livestock grazing, and development activities. Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the watershed, water quality, fisheries, recreation, and riparian management objectives. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Highly erodible soils throughout the ACEC would be managed to maintain or reduce erosion levels and to improve vegetative ground cover. Guidelines necessary to protect these areas would be developed. Surface disturbing activities may require approval of engineering design plans. Where necessary, identified roads would be upgraded, maintained, and properly surfaced in accordance with BLM standards.

Opportunities for the various dispersed recreational activities (e.g., camping, picnicking) that occur in the area would be made available. This may include maintaining, preserving, or enhancing existing opportunities and developing new opportunities to provide for an optimum visitor experience. Facilities and projects would be signed to interpret and provide information about sites in the area and directions for travel through the ACEC.

Off-road vehicle travel in the ACEC (including over-the-snow vehicles) would be limited to designated roads and trails. All off-road vehicle travel in the area would be restricted during the winter and spring to protect wildlife during high stress periods of severely cold temperatures, heavy snow cover and short food supply.

BLM would attempt to acquire needed access to this ACEC. Signing and closing of all nonessential roads and trails would be accomplished along with providing legal and physical access.

The ACEC would be managed consistent with the Class III and Class IV visual resource management classifications to protect, maintain, and enhance the visual resource values. All future facilities would be designed to blend with the landscape, including painting where necessary, and disturbed areas would be revegetated to keep visual resource impacts to a minimum.

A reclamation plan for disturbed areas would be prepared to restore lost habitat. Reclamation of some areas may be required prior to disturbing additional areas.

Existing wildlife waters would be maintained and additional wildlife waters would be developed.

Proposed surface disturbing activities on BLM-administered public lands, within ½ mile from a large rock art site (360 acres) would be analyzed for the visual effects to the actual area that can be seen from the rock art site within the ½ mile area surrounding the site (vista). Most surface disturbing activities visible within this vista would not be allowed. Some disturbance activities, such as interpretive facilities, within ½ mile of a rock art site would be allowed, if they do not affect the rock art site. Other kinds of activities, such as

audible disturbances, would not be allowed if they would adversely affect the sacred Native American religious values at a rock art site.

The vista area would also be closed to: 1) the location of mining claims and entry under the land laws (withdrawal from land entry and mineral location would be pursued); 2) mineral material sales; 3) the use of explosives and blasting, and vibroseis operations; and 5) the use of fire retardant chemicals containing dyes. Off-road vehicles (including over-the-snow vehicles) would be limited to designated roads and trails.

About 2,190 acres more than ½ mile from the rock art (i.e., outside of the 360 acres of vista area) would also be an avoidance area, open to other surface disturbing activities, with constraints to protect wildlife, cultural, and scenic resource values if the area could not be avoided and if disturbed areas could be reclaimed to blend with the landscape. New rights-of-way would be required to follow existing roads and rights-of-way in the ACEC wherever feasible (Table 2-4). Limited surface facilities for other surface disturbing activities could be considered if they meet the management requirements for the ACEC.

In summary, the 2,190 acres outside the 360-acre vista area would be open to: 1) the location of mining claims; 2) mineral material sales; and 3) seismograph activity including the use of explosives and blasting, provided the wildlife, cultural, and scenic values could be protected.

Coal leasing in the ACEC would be considered for subsurface mining methods only. Leasing for surface coal mining methods in the area would be prohibited. Any activities or ancillary facilities related to either surface or subsurface mining would not be allowed on or within a full ½ mile radius of rock art sites (about 500 acres).

About 2,050 acres more than ½ mile from the rock art site (i.e., outside of the 500 acres within the ½ mile radius area), would also be open to consideration for federal coal leasing for subsurface mining methods only. Seasonal uses and types or placement of surface facilities, activities, etc., related to subsurface mining in this area would be allowed on a very limited basis. This area includes about 643 acres of Federal Surface State Coal lands that would be affected.

The BLM-administered public lands in the Cedar Canyon area continue to meet the relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the criteria specific to this area, and Chapter 3. Therefore, the ACEC designation for the BLM-administered public lands in the area would be retained.

Greater Red Creek Proposed ACEC (131,890 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

The Greater Red Creek area includes the BLM-administered public lands in the Currant Creek and Sage Creek watersheds (including their tributaries), and the original, existing Red Creek ACEC.

Management Objectives: The management objectives for the area would be to: 1) improve watershed condition and enhance watershed values, including, but not limited to, improving channel stability, vegetation diversity and abundance, and water quality; 2) improve riparian areas that are at less than Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) to PFC as a minimum; 3) repair, improve, or maintain Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat in Red, Currant, Trout, and Sage Creeks and their tributaries; 4) provide opportunities for dispersed recreation uses in the area that are consistent with the primary watershed, riparian, and fisheries management objectives; 5) to allow the recreation user the opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment, to have moderate challenge, and to use outdoor skills; 6) maintain important wildlife habitat; 7) preserve scenic resources; and 8) reduce the amount of sediment being delivered to the Green River through Red Creek by reducing accelerated sheet, rill, gully, and channel erosion.

Actions that Apply to the Entire Area

Management Actions: All resource and land uses in the area would be managed in support of watershed stability and Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat management objectives. Various dispersed recreation uses would be allowed. Management would be provided to maintain or improve important wildlife habitat.

The Greater Red Creek area would, in general, be managed as an avoidance area for rights-of-way and surface and surface disturbing activities (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4). Exceptions in some specific areas are described in the individual watershed sections.

Any actions to be conducted in the proposed ACEC would be considered and analyzed on a case-by-case basis. Controls may be placed on the amount, sequence, timing, or level of activity or development that may occur to assure that the actions would be consistent with or help to meet the management objectives for the area. This may result in such things as limiting the number of roads and other construction, or other surface disturbing activities or development in some areas until other areas have been reclaimed and restored to other (original) uses (Appendix 5-2).

Most of the area would be open to mineral leasing and related exploration and development activities with appropriate mitigation requirements applied to protect the other important resource values.

The area would be open to consideration for such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, construction and placement of transportation barriers, sediment or erosion control, and fish habitat structures to meet resource management objectives.

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the watershed, water quality, fisheries, recreation, and riparian management objectives. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Any activity that would preclude the achievement of proper functioning condition of uplands and riparian areas and achievement of other management objectives would not be allowed.

Forested areas would be managed primarily toward meeting the watershed, riparian, fisheries, and recreation objectives for the area. Timber harvest levels and logging practices would be designed to help meet those objectives.

Although big game habitat should improve through the proposed management of the area, any increase in vegetative production would be reserved for watershed stabilization and improvement purposes.

Habitat for special status species habitat would be monitored and site specific activity plans would be developed to address habitat repair, maintenance, and enhancement needs. Re-introduction of Colorado River cutthroat trout and other native species would be considered if consistent with watershed and riparian objectives, in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Travel and transportation of firefighting equipment would be limited to designated roads and trails. Use of heavy equipment would be prohibited in areas closed to surface disturbing activities. Fire management, suppression needs, and prescribed burning in timber stands would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure timber stands are maintained in healthy condition and the "snowfence effect" is preserved. Fire management in other areas would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure that area objectives would be met.

Aquifer recharge zones in the area would be managed to protect groundwater quality. Protection includes limiting road density, surface disturbing activities, and surface occupancy in identified recharge zones, in order to maintain them in a healthy and functioning condition (Map 26).

Vegetation treatments would be designed to help meet and be consistent with all management objectives for the area. Treatments in the inner gorge of intermittent and ephemeral drainages would be designed to leave mosaic patterns of treated and untreated areas of vegetation.

Herbicide loading sites would be located at least 500 feet from surface water or riparian areas (whichever is greater). Herbicide treatment of noxious weeds on BLM-administered public lands would first require a site specific analysis to help determine whether or not such action would be authorized.

Recreation development would be kept to a minimum. On-site controls and facilities would be provided for the protection of resource values and the safety of the users only. Camping would be allowed within 200 feet of surface water if damage to watershed, water quality, and wildlife values can be avoided. Otherwise, camping would be restricted or prohibited within this zone.

Off-road vehicle travel within the area on BLM-administered public lands would be limited to designated roads and trails. A transportation plan would be developed for the area. Some existing roads and trails in the area may be closed and reclaimed as a result of transportation planning. Transportation planning would include consideration of proper road location, construction, reconstruction, design, and reclamation. New road construction would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for conformance with area and transportation plan objectives. In some cases, consideration of a "no net gain in roads" factor may be an effective way to help meet objectives in the area.

Actions Unique to the Sage Creek Watershed

Management Actions: About 9,600 acres of federal coal in the Sage Creek watershed would be acceptable for further consideration for development by surface and subsurface coal mining methods, with certain stipulations. Coal leases and development in the area would include a requirement for plans of development, mining plans, etc., to include adequate mitigation measures to assure protection of the fisheries and watershed values, prior to allowing any mining activity. The watershed would be managed consistent with the Class III visual resource management classification.

Actions Unique to the Currant Creek Watershed

Management Actions: All BLM-administered public lands within this watershed would be closed to: 1) surface disturbing activities (see Glossary and Table 2-8); 2) mineral material sales; and 3) mineral location. A withdrawal from mineral location would be pursued (about 23,740 acres). This area is also an exclusion area for rights-of-way (Table 2-4). Exceptions to these requirements are as follows:

> A north-south right-of-way window, parallel to the east side of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area would be established at County Road 4-33 or to the west of this road.
>
> Aboveground power lines that span the drainage (from rim to rim) could be considered east of this county road if environmental analysis demonstrates that scenic, watershed, and fisheries objectives could be met.

The rim areas within the Currant Creek watershed (tops of the watershed ridges) with slopes of less than 25 percent could be considered for surface disturbing activities if environmental analysis demonstrates that watershed, fisheries, wildlife, and scenic objectives could be met. Within the Currant Creek watershed, slopes greater than 25 percent and areas in or within 500 feet of riparian areas and floodplains would remain closed to surface disturbance unless the action is designed specifically for the enhancement of watershed values and Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat.

The BLM-administered public lands in the watershed would be closed to coal and sodium exploration, prospecting, leasing, and development activities (Table 2-10).

BLM would pursue possibilities of land exchanges to acquire lands along Currant Creek and Trout Creek to improve management opportunities for Colorado River cutthroat trout and its habitat (Appendix 8-3).

The area would be managed consistent with the Class II visual resource management classification.

Fire suppression activities in this watershed would be limited to containment at ridgetops.

Actions Unique to the Red Creek Watershed

Management Actions: The BLM-administered public lands within this watershed (55,880) would be closed to: 1) surface disturbing activities (see Glossary); 2) mineral leasing (Table 2-8); 3) mineral material sales; and 4) mineral location. A withdrawal from mineral location would be pursued for the area. The existing pipeline right-of-way concentration area would be an avoidance area for any additional rights-of-way. However, that part of the right-of-way concentration area, from the escarpment south to Richards Gap, would be closed to any new rights-of-way development for at least a 10-year period to allow soils to stabilize from previous disturbance. At the end of the 10-year period, new rights-of-way in the area could be reconsidered if satisfactory stabilization has occurred (Table 2-4). The remainder of the BLM-administered public lands that lie east of the right-of-way concentration area would also be managed as an exclusion area for rights-of-way.

A right-of-way grant has been issued to Questar Pipeline Company to build the Mainline 58 pipeline across public lands through the Red Creek escarpment. Future rights-of-way across public lands through this area (for linear utilities, transmission lines, communication sites, roads and highways, etc.), that would adversely affect the stabilization of the watershed would be prohibited. Should the Mainline 58 Pipeline not be built, the area would be considered closed and any subsequent right-of-way proposal, to either replace or substitute for the Mainline 58 Pipeline, or any similar future proposed action across public lands in the area, would be prohibited. The area would remain closed to any new right-of-way development for at least a 10-year period to allow for watershed stabilization.

The area would be managed consistent with the Class II visual resource management classification.

The Red Creek watershed would be managed to minimize accelerated erosion and increased sedimentation into the Green River/ Colorado River system. Maintenance activities, such as road maintenance, could be accomplished to meet area objectives and provide needed improved access. Borrow material for this purpose could be obtained provided no any access would be built to obtain the material and provided disturbance does not cause additional erosion or watershed degradation. The borrow area would also be satisfactorily reclaimed. Large commercial sources of material would not be considered an acceptable use in the area.

A portion of the Red Creek ACEC overlaps the Red Creek Wilderness Study Area (about 8,020 acres). Wilderness manage-

ment recommendations and alternatives for this area are addressed in the Rock Springs District Final Wilderness EIS. As mentioned earlier in this document, because the proposed management in this overlap area is more stringent than either the interim wilderness management policy or management for designated wilderness areas, it is being addressed here.

The 8,020 acres of the area that overlap the Red Creek WSA would be closed to off-road vehicle travel, including over-the-snow vehicles, in order to maintain natural conditions, outstanding opportunity for solitude, or a primitive or unconfined type of recreation in the area. Mechanized vehicle use would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

This 8,020-acre portion would also be closed to oil and gas leasing, mineral location (withdrawal would be pursued), and geophysical activities (Table 2-14 and Table 2-13).

The BLM-administered public lands in the Greater Red Creek area, including the Currant Creek and Sage Creek watersheds and the original Red Creek ACEC, meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the area. Therefore, the 131,890 acres of BLM-administered public lands in the Greater Red Creek area would be designated the Greater Red Creek ACEC.

Greater Sand Dunes ACEC (38,650 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objectives: The management objectives of the BLM-administered public lands in the Greater Sand Dunes ACEC would be to preserve and protect the integrity of the unique values in the area for future public use and enjoyment. These values include the unusual geological features associated with the sand dunes and the Boars Tusk, and the biological interrelationships supported by the dunes, especially the Steamboat desert elk herd, mule deer herd, other dependent plants and animals, and a variety of recreation uses.

General Area

Management Actions: The BLM-administered public lands in the ACEC would be managed consistent with the Class II visual resource management classification. The visual impacts of existing or future facilities (e.g., producing wells) or other visual intrusions in the area would be evaluated and mitigated to the extent reasonable.

The BLM-administered public lands in the Greater Sand Dunes area and those within 1 mile or the visual horizon of the area would be avoidance areas for new rights-of-way (approximately 70,850 acres).

Any surface disturbing activities within the Wasatch and Green River Formations would require paleontological clearance. Activities that would be incompatible with recreation sites would be managed to avoid recreation sites. The BLM-administered public lands in the area would be closed to mineral material sales.

Livestock grazing would continue in the ACEC. Maintenance and use of existing rangeland improvements on the BLM-administered public lands would be allowed. Proposed rangeland improvements must be part of an allotment management plan, and be consistent with the management objectives for the area. Environmental analyses of such improvements would be conducted to consider the effects on the resource values of the area of rangeland improvement construction and maintenance activities, and the type of equipment used for these activities. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Materials used for new improvements must be compatible with the natural character of the area to reduce intrusive visual effects on the natural environment.

Wild horse use in the area would be consistent with the Divide Basin Wild Horse Management Plan and the management objectives for the area. No wild horse traps would be constructed within the area.

To support and improve the diversity of wildlife species within the area, habitat on the BLM-administered public lands would be protected, maintained, or enhanced. Crucial elk winter range in the area would be maintained as an essential component of the Steamboat Mountain-Sands elk habitat.

Projects to improve the interdunal ponds for bird, amphibian, and mammal habitat would be developed on the BLM-administered public lands following a site-specific analysis.

Interpretive materials and educational programs would be developed to describe wildlife and cultural values in the area.

Native vegetation would be maintained and protected on the BLM-administered public lands to allow natural plant succession to continue. Revegetation of disturbed areas with big sagebrush and other adaptable shrubs would be required to maintain and/or improve big game habitat.

A diversity of non-motorized recreation uses, including hiking, bird-watching, photography, sightseeing, and hunting, would be encouraged. Appropriate recreation facilities would be developed and maintained on BLM-administered public lands to provide for a diversity of motorized and non-motorized recreation uses. Two roads that pass through or adjacent to the area would be designated as part of the Tri-Territory backcountry byway (see Map 22). Camping would be restricted to the BLM 14-day limit, and subject to "Pack In-Pack Out" requirements for trash, etc. (see Recreation Resource Management for this alternative).

Additional or Different Items Specific to the Western Portion

The western portion of the Greater Sand Dunes area is bounded on the east by the Sand Dunes WSA boundary and on the west by the existing Greater Sand Dunes ACEC boundary.

Management of the portion of the Greater Sand Dunes area that overlaps the Buffalo Hump and Sand Dunes WSAs (25,250 acres in the western portion of the Sand Dunes area) is directed by the "Interim Management Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review." As mentioned earlier in this document, because proposed management in this overlap area is more stringent than either the interim management policy or wilderness policy for designated wilderness areas, it is being addressed here. Wilderness management recommendations and alternatives for this area are addressed in the Rock Springs District Final Wilderness EIS.

The portion of the area that overlaps the WSAs would be closed to off-road vehicles, including over-the-snow vehicles, and some mechanized vehicles to maintain the unique naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities.

This overlap portion would also be closed to oil and gas leasing, mineral location, and geophysical activities. The oil shale withdrawal would remain in effect until a comprehensive study was completed for the area and, if necessary, lands could be identified to be withdrawn for protection of their resource values (Table 2-5).

The approximate 4,360 acres of Federal coal lands in the area would be closed to further consideration for coal leasing.

BLM would pursue land exchanges to improve the manageability of the area (1,920 acres).

Additional or Different Items Specific to the Eastern Portion

The eastern portion of the area is bounded on the west by the Sand Dunes WSA and on the east by the existing ACEC boundary.

The issuance of Federal minerals leases on BLM-administered public lands in the eastern portion of the Sand Dunes area (about 16,390 acres) would be contingent upon completing a comprehensive and detailed, site specific activity or implementation plan encompassing the combined Steamboat Mountain and Greater Sand Dunes areas. This detailed implementation plan would identify areas of feasible access, allowable road densities, and how much and what type of development would be acceptable in the area (e.g., field unitization may be a requirement for oil and gas development activities in the area). Activities in the area would be required to conform with visual resource management classifications and prescriptions. Geophysical activities, including off-road vehicle travel, would be allowed provided resource damage would be minimized and the activities would conform with ORV designations and transportation plans for the area. Drilling of additional oil and gas wells or production from temporarily shut-in wells could be allowed upon completion of the activity or implementation plan.

The relatively pristine portion of the eastern area that has no developments (approximately 8,800 acres), including the base of Steamboat Rim, would be managed to protect big game habitat, vegetation communities, and visual and recreation resources.

Road construction and new access may not be feasible for much of the entire eastern portion. To prevent conflicts with big game, recreation users, and other resource and land use activities, alternative access methods may be needed (use of existing or designated roads or pads, seasonal travel requirements or restrictions, use of helicopters, etc).

Activities would not be permitted to disrupt access to or use of developed and semi-developed recreation sites.

Approximately 9,840 acres of Federal coal lands in the area would be closed to coal leasing and development by surface mining methods and related surface facilities and activities. This area would be open to coal leasing for subsurface mining methods with placement of surface facilities extremely limited.

Surface disturbing activities, geophysical activities, and oil and gas exploration and development activity would be restricted on crucial big game winter ranges and big game birthing areas. Exceptions to this requirement may be approved for activities such as oil and gas development, rights-of-way, construction, and range improvement development, if conditions described in Appendix 7-1 apply. Once an operation starts (such as oil and gas drilling/completion), it would be allowed to be completed into or through the winter. Decision points for shutdown due to unacceptable winter conditions would occur between such things as pad construction and drilling startup, and between drilling/completion and production facility installation.

Surface water, soils, and shallow aquifers would be protected from contamination by practices such as closed drilling systems or installation of pit liners. Pit liners would be removed prior to reserve pit reclamation. Dune ponds would not be used as water sources for development activities.

New linear facilities such as pipelines and powerlines in the existing area of development would be laid on the surface, or buried adjacent to access roads or within existing concentration areas containing such lines. New pipelines in the stabilized dune areas would be installed as surface lines to avoid unnecessary disturbance of vegetation. Powerlines could be buried. Existing surface gas pipelines would be monitored by the operators to identify potential hazards to ORV users. Identified hazards would be marked to improve visibility. A recreation user map would be developed in cooperation with oil and gas operators to show the location of aboveground facilities (e.g., pipelines, well production facilities, snow fences, etc.).

Any proposed activity or use that would involve surface disturbance (see Glossary) would be required to have appropriate engineering design, geotechnical analysis, mitigation planning, etc.

Abandoned pipelines and other unnecessary facilities (e.g., snow fence), etc., in unstabilized dune areas would be removed.

About 10,500 acres would continue to be designated open for off-road vehicle travel on the active sand dunes. Off-road vehicle travel on about 5,810 acres of stabilized dune areas would be limited to existing roads and trails.

Crookston Ranch and Boars Tusk

The Crookston Ranch site would be managed to preserve its historic features and for the interpretation of ranching history in the area. About 500 acres of BLM-administered public lands surrounding the site would be managed to preserve the setting of the historic ranch.

The Boars Tusk would be managed to preserve its value as a geologic feature.

The Crookston Ranch (40 acres) and the Boars Tusk (90 acres) areas would be closed to: 1) surface disturbing activities (see Glossary) (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4); 2) mineral material sales; and 3) use of explosives and blasting. Additionally, the area within a ½ mile radius of the Boars Tusk would be closed to blasting and explosive charges (about 500 acres).

The Crookston Ranch and Boars Tusk areas would be open for consideration of activities such as fencing, interpretive signs, or transportation barriers to ensure protection of the sites. Facilities would be prohibited from being developed on site. Either a protective right-of-way or withdrawal would be pursued to accomplish this.

Off-road vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails in these two areas. The road around the Boars Tusk would be closed.

Fires in the Crookston Ranch area would be immediately suppressed if there is any potential of the structures being burned.

The Boars Tusk and about 1,400 acres of BLM-administered public lands in the surrounding area would be managed to retain natural and geologic values. The area would be closed to any surface mining activity such as coal mining and any related surface facilities. The Crookston Ranch and surrounding 500-acre area would be closed to surface mining activities such as coal mining, and to the placement of related surface facilities.

The BLM-administered public lands in the Greater Sand Dunes area (38,650 acres) continue to meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3 for a description of the values in this area. Therefore, the ACEC designation for the BLM-administered public lands in the area would be retained.

Natural Corrals ACEC (1,276 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objective: The management objective for BLM-administered public lands in the Natural Corrals area would be to protect and enhance the cultural, historical, recreation, and geological values in the area.

Management Actions: The entire area would be open to consideration for oil and gas leasing with a No Surface Occupancy stipulation.

Any surface disturbing activities (see Glossary) that could adversely affect the relevant and important resources in the area would be prohibited (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4). The area would be closed to surface coal mining activity and related facilities and to mineral material sales.

The existing withdrawal, closing 357 acres of BLM-administered public lands and federal minerals in the area to mineral location (Table 2-5), would be retained. The public water reserve withdrawal in section 12 would be revoked, since the land it is on is now privately owned. A filing for a BLM water right would be pursued if necessary.

The area would be open to consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, or construction of transportation barriers or barriers to other types of uses, to meet resource management objectives. Management activities would be designed to increase public awareness of the significance of the area.

Cultural resource values on BLM-administered public lands in the area would be protected by using stabilizing in place archeological components and by limiting surface disturbing uses and activities that would adversely affect the cultural resources. The components may be excavated to recover archeological information if stabilization is not effective. Crucial big game winter range seasonal restrictions and raptor nesting restrictions would be applied to activities that would be disruptive and excessively stressful to big game animals and raptors during these critical periods (Table 2-9).

The area would be managed consistent with the Class III and IV visual resource management classification.

The existing road/trail from the spring located in the SE¼NW¼, NE¼SW¼ of Section 18 and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) site would remain closed to off-road vehicle use. The 20-acre NRHP would also be closed to off-road vehicle use for geophysical activities and by over-the-snow vehicles. This site would also be closed to the use of explosives and to blasting. The remainder of the area would be open to over-the-snow vehicles and all other off-road vehicle travel would be limited to designated roads and trails.

Prescribed management actions for livestock grazing would include continuous monitoring, establishing objectives for livestock use in riparian areas, and encouraging cooperative management. Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

The wild horse herd use would continue and monitoring would occur to ensure resources would be protected. No wild horse traps would be constructed in the area.

In conformance with the management objectives, the opportunities in the area for various recreational activities such as camping, picnicking, winter sports, and hunting, would be developed, maintained, preserved, or enhanced to provide for an optimum and satisfying visitor experience. A "Pack In-Pack Out" policy and a 14-day stay limit would apply for camping. Camping around the spring (within 200 feet) would be prohibited.

The BLM-administered public lands in the Natural Corrals Area (1,276 acres) continue to meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3 for a description of resource values in the area. Therefore, the ACEC designation for the 1,276 acres of BLM-administered public lands in the area would be retained.

Oregon Buttes ACEC (3,450 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objectives: The management objectives for the Oregon Buttes area would be to protect and enhance the scenic integrity as a historic landmark and to protect the significant wildlife values that are found in the area.

Management Actions: The ACEC is within the boundaries of three WSAs. Wilderness management, recommendations, and alternatives for this area are addressed in the Rock Springs District Final Wilderness EIS. The wilderness study area acreage would not be identified for specific management unless the management is more stringent than either the Interim Management Policy or wilderness management.

The ACEC would be closed to surface disturbing activities (see Glossary) that could adversely affect the resource values in the area (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4); to mineral material sales for sand, gravel, or other types of construction or building materials; and to off-road vehicle travel, including those utilized for seismograph operations.

The ACEC would be open to consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, or construction of barriers to ensure protection to the area. Seasonal restrictions for raptors and big game parturition areas would apply (Table 2-9).

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

The Oregon Buttes area would be managed consistent with the Class II visual resource management classification. Management actions would be designed to blend into the natural landscape and retain the existing character of the landscape.

The BLM-administered public lands in the Oregon Buttes area continue to meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the resource values in the ACEC. Therefore, the ACEC designation for 3,450 acres of BLM-administered public lands in the area would be retained.

Pine Springs ACEC (90 acres of BLM-administered public lands) and Proposed Expansion Area (5,940 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objective: The management objective for the Pine Springs area would be to enhance and protect cultural, historic, and prehistoric resource values.

Management Actions: Approximately 5,200 acres of the Pine Springs proposed expansion area overlap the Devils Playground/Twin Buttes WSA which is managed under the "Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review." Recommendations and alternatives for this area are addressed in the Rock Springs District Final Wilderness EIS. Because the proposed management in this overlap area is more stringent than either the interim management policy or management for designated wilderness area, it is addressed here.

The area would be closed to surface disturbing activities (see Glossary) that could adversely affect it (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4); to

mineral location and an additional withdrawal of about 2,000 acres pursued (Table 2-5); to mineral material sales for sand, gravel, or other types of construction or building materials; and to off-road vehicle and some mechanized vehicle travel, with the exception of 730 acres. The remainder of the area (about 730 acres) and the existing road through the Pine Springs area would be limited to existing roads and trails (Table 2-14).

The existing Pine Springs site (90 acres) would be closed to all geophysical operations and to the use of explosives and blasting.

The area would be open to consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, or construction of barriers to ensure protection to the area; to maintenance of the existing spring development; and to additional spring developments if the action would not impact cultural values.

The entire area would be managed consistent with the Class III visual resource management classification, and management actions on the BLM-administered public lands classified as Class III visual resource management lands would be designed to partially retain the existing character of the landscape.

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

BLM-administered public lands in the Pine Springs area and the surrounding expansion area meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the resource values in the area. Therefore, 6,030 acres of BLM-administered public lands in the Pine Springs area would be designated an ACEC.

South Pass Historic Landscape Proposed ACEC (53,780 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objective: The management objective for the area would be to protect the visual and historical integrity of the historic trails and surrounding viewscape.

Management Actions: The South Pass Historic Landscape would encompass the viewshed along the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express trails and the Lander Cutoff (about 16.42 miles of trail with a 6-mile wide corridor along the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, and California trails, and a 2-mile wide corridor along the Lander Cutoff) (Map 29).

The landscape would be open to consideration of mineral leasing and mineral material sales, provided the visual and cultural concerns could be mitigated. Most of the area would also be open to exploration and development of locatable minerals. A plan of operations would be required to address measures to mitigate affects to the viewshed before any mining claim activity would be allowed. A withdrawal of about 5,260 acres would be pursued, if necessary.

A right-of-way grant has been authorized, but not yet issued, for the Altamont Pipeline Company to build a pipeline across public lands through the South Pass Historic Landscape Area. Should this grant be issued, it would be a one-time right-of-way authorization through the South Pass Historic Landscape Area. Future rights-of-way across public lands through this area (for linear utilities, transmission lines, communication sites, roads and highways, etc.), that would adversely affect the values of the historic landscape would be prohibited. In addition, should the Altamont Pipeline not be built, the South Pass Historic Landscape Area would be considered closed and any subsequent right-of-way proposal, to either replace or substitute for the Altamont Pipeline, or any similar future proposed action across public lands in the area, would be prohibited (Map 29).

About 33,700 acres surrounding the trails and visible from the trails would be closed to surface disturbing activities (see Glossary) that could adversely affect the viewshed (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4). This would be an exclusion area for all rights-of-way. Off-road vehicle travel would be limited to designated roads and trails.

About 20,080 acres that are shielded by topography and not visible from the trail would be open to development activities if they would be subordinate to the existing landform and not visible from the historic trail, and provided that environmental analysis indicates that the visual integrity of the area can be maintained. Rights-of-way would be managed to avoid this area, and this area would not be considered as a preferred route for linear facilities. Small feeder lines could be allowed if analysis indicates that the visual integrity of the area would not be compromised. Rights-of-way along existing roads in the area could also be allowed if they did not compromise the visual integrity of the area. The prescriptions for the management of historic trails would also apply to this area. Off-road vehicle travel would be limited to existing roads and trails.

All activities for the entire area would be managed consistent with the Class II visual resource management classification and all management actions would be designed and located to blend into the natural landscape and to not be visually apparent to the casual viewer. The scenic values of the Highway 28 visual corridor (3 linear miles) would be protected.

Generally, vibroseis activity would not occur within 300 feet of the historic trails. Shothole activity would not be allowed along the trails. Other geophysical operations would be allowed within the historic trails corridors (16.42 miles) if site specific analysis determines that no effects adverse to the visual and historical integrity of the trails would occur.

The entire area would be open for consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, or construction of barriers to ensure protection of the landscape.

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Wild horse management in the area would be consistent with the Divide Basin Wild Horse Management Plan and the management objectives for the area. No wild horse traps would be constructed within the area visible from the trails.

Site specific activity planning would consider nomination of South Pass to the National Register of Historic Places as an historic landscape.

The BLM-administered public lands in the South Pass Historic Landscape area were found to meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the resource values in the area. The area would be designated an ACEC.

Special Status (Candidate) Plant Species Proposed ACEC (900 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objective: The management objective for special status (candidate) plant species would be to prevent destruction or

loss of special status (candidate) plant communities and their important habitat, and to provide opportunities for enhancing or expanding their habitat and to provide them sufficient protection to prevent their listing as threatened and endangered species.

Management Actions: The BLM-administered public land areas occupied by four special status (candidate) plant species would be included in the proposed ACEC designation (about 900 acres of BLM-administered public lands). Additional acres of public land may be added, if more of these special status (candidate) plant species or crucial habitat areas are found on BLM-administered public lands. Management and protection to actual plant locations would be provided for *Arabis pusilla*, *Astragalus proimanthus*, *Descurainia torulosa*, and *Thelesperma pubescens* (Map A).

Locations of these special status (candidate) plant species and essential and/or important habitats would be identified. The ACEC (about 900 acres of BLM-administered public lands) (see Map 24) would be protected and closed to: 1) direct surface disturbing activities (see Glossary) or any disrupting activities (e.g., off-site dust, air pollutants, etc.) that could adversely affect the special status plant species and their habitat (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4); 2) the location of new mining claims (withdrawal from mineral location would be pursued); 3) surface occupancy for surface disturbing activities (such as leasable mineral exploration and development activities or for construction or long-term placement of facilities or structures); 4) mineral material sales; and 5) the use of explosives and blasting.

Known locations of special status (candidate) plant species communities would be closed to off-road vehicle travel. The remainder of the ACEC would be limited to designated roads and trails.

While ensuring the maximum protection to the plant species, mineral lease parcels would be designed prior to lease issuance, with the intent of providing access to mineral resources, where possible.

Searches would be conducted to identify any additional areas where special status (candidate) plant species are located. Habitat needs would be determined and management prescriptions would be specified. The window for inventory would be mainly from May through August. As new populations are identified, site boundaries and any ACEC designation on BLM-administered public lands would be expanded to cover any new or expanded sites. Should a plant species be removed from the special status (candidate) plant species list, the portion of any ACEC designation attributed to that plant species would be discontinued. The ACEC acreage could, thus, increase or decrease, depending upon the results of the searches or if a plant species should be de-listed. Nonessential habitat to support these plants would not be included in an ACEC designation.

Searches would be required on potential habitat areas prior to implementing surface disturbing activities or projects. If a plant were not found in a potential habitat area, surface occupancy and activities would be allowed with proper guidelines and mitigation for the habitat. If plants were found, the site and its associated habitat area would be avoided and surface occupancy would be prohibited.

Special status (candidate) plant species population areas would be closed to any surface disturbing fire suppression activities unless necessary for species survival. The use of fire suppression ground vehicles would be consistent with ORV designations in these areas. The type of suppression activity, if any, would be determined through site specific analysis.

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Wild horse management in the area would be consistent with wild horse herd management plans and management objectives for this area. No wild horse traps would be constructed within this area.

BLM would attempt to acquire approximately 1,900 acres on Pine Butte to enhance management for the mountain tansymustard (*Descurainia torulosa*).

Activities such as fencing, interpretive signs, or barriers for the purpose of ensuring protection of the plant species would be considered for both existing and potential habitat areas.

The locations of these four special status (candidate) plant species on BLM-administered public lands were found to meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3. Therefore, these sites would be designated an ACEC.

Steamboat Mountain Proposed ACEC (43,270 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objectives: The management objectives for this area would be 1) to enhance and maintain the water quality, vegetation, soil, and wildlife resources to ensure biological diversity and a healthy ecosystem; 2) to maintain the unique diverse habitats (big sagebrush, aspen, limber pine, and mountain shrub communities) in the Steamboat Mountain area, especially on stabilized sand dunes along Steamboat Rim, Indian Gap, and in the Johnson, Lafonte, and Box Canyon areas; and 3) to provide suitable habitat to maintain the continued existence of the Steamboat elk herd and other big game populations (Map A).

Management Actions: All activities would be designed to place priority on elk habitat considerations over conflicting land uses to ensure continued elk use of the area. Steamboat Rim and the base of the rim would be managed to protect big game habitat, vegetation communities, and visual and recreation resources. Since the area has a high development potential for oil and gas resources, some specific guidance for oil and gas development is provided here. Presently, leasing of unleased parcels and future parcels that may become available for lease would be contingent upon completing a comprehensive management plan encompassing the Steamboat Mountain and Greater Sand Dunes areas. The management plan would identify feasible access, allowable road densities, guidelines for development of other minerals, and how much and what type of development would be acceptable.

Unleased areas may be offered for lease with the NSO stipulation or, if the interior areas are too large, may not be leased. These NSO areas may only be accessed through directional drilling. The NSO stipulation would be used to facilitate drainage, under the assumption that industry is the best judge of whether technology would enable them to access the oil and gas resources under the terms of the lease.

Leasing with an NSO stipulation could become necessary for several reasons. First, the area is characterized by steep slopes with streams and riparian zones filling the valley bottoms. Any disturbance on the steep slopes or in the riparian zones threatens the habitat directly. Likelihood of success in producing gas is high which means production facilities would be necessary and year-round access could be required which appears to make seasonal wildlife stipulations inadequate mitigation and other mitigation is therefore necessary. Mitigation would apply to all surface disturbing activities, not just oil and gas activity.

Any requests for relief from these guidelines would require a plan amendment. The plan amendment would generally be initiated in conjunction with an environmental analysis on the action being considered.

Off-road vehicle use and access may not be feasible for much of the area. Access may be limited by low road densities, necessary to achieve area management objectives. To prevent conflicts with big game, recreation users, and other resources, alternative access methods may be needed (use of existing roads, pads, helicopters, etc).

Since some of the area is already leased for oil and gas, development would occur to some extent. All drilling applications would require a plan of development to ensure no undue degradation would occur to the elk herd or unique habitat areas. The plan would cover such things as transportation, pad density, and operations after well completion. Transportation plans would minimize fragmentation of habitats by limiting roads, access, and use. Remote control operations would also be required to accomplish this. Centralizing locations for condensate would also be required to limit trips into well locations, especially during parturition and crucial winter periods. To minimize effects to habitat, all associated linear facilities would be aboveground.

Although a protective withdrawal for locatable minerals would not be pursued at this time, should a withdrawal become necessary, it would be pursued accordingly. Any determination to close parts of the area to mineral location and pursue withdrawals would be deferred to completion of a comprehensive activity or implementation plan for the area. In the interim, those parts of the area not covered by existing withdrawals would remain open to mineral location and a plan of operations would be required for any locatable mineral activity. Any plan of operations submitted by a mining claimant must address the impacts of mining on the Steamboat elk and deer herds to ensure no unnecessary or undue degradation would occur. A site specific environmental analysis would be required on each action. The area would be closed to mineral material sales and to other surface disturbing activities if they do not conform with area objectives until the comprehensive activity or implementation plan is developed which would identify if and where these activities could occur within the area.

Approximately 9,810 acres of coal potential area occurs within the Steamboat Mountain area. Subsurface mining only for coal would be allowed with a plan of development ensuring adequate measures would be taken to protect and maintain the elk herd. Surface facilities relating to subsurface mining would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The area would be open to actions that would enhance management objectives including to consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, or construction of barriers.

Linear rights-of-way and geophysical activities would be allowed if impacts to the elk and the unique habitats could be mitigated (Table 2-4). Communication sites would not be allowed.

Off-road vehicle travel would be limited to designated roads and trails, and transportation planning would be completed. The May 10-July 1 seasonal closure for off-road vehicle travel would remain in effect.

All activities would be managed consistent with the Class II and Class III visual resource management classification and all management actions would be designed and located to blend into the natural landscape and to not be visually apparent to the casual viewer.

The unique geological and ecological features in the area would be protected by limiting or prohibiting intrusions and facilities, and by providing public interpretation of these features.

Vegetation management would be designed to maintain, preserve, or enhance biological diversity while providing big game forage and cover requirements. Fire activities would be designed to meet these objectives. Management of conifer communities would be limited to activities designed to control insects and disease. Dead standing trees would be managed under the "Animal Inn" program to help maintain biological diversity. Reseeding and reforestation within the area would be done with native species. Shrub species would be included in all seed mixes.

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Any additional forage that becomes available would be allocated for wildlife use to improve quality and quantity of forage.

An overlapping area of elk crucial wintering and parturition areas within the elk herd unit (27,000 acres) outside and adjacent to the Steamboat Mountain area (Map A) would be managed to allow for progressive development of one or two areas at a time. Satisfactory abandonment and reclamation of an area or field would be required prior to developing another area.

The BLM-administered public lands in the Steamboat Mountain area were found to meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the resource values found in the area. Therefore, the 43,270 acres of BLM-administered public lands in the Steamboat Mountain area would be designated an ACEC.

White Mountain Petroglyphs ACEC (20 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objective: The management objective of the White Mountain Petroglyphs ACEC would be to protect cultural resource values from degradation, and provide for wildlife and scenic values, and Native American concerns.

Management Actions: The ACEC would be open for consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, or construction or placement of barriers to ensure protection of the site. Public awareness and use of the area as an educational site would be encouraged.

The area would be closed to surface disturbing activities (see Glossary) that could adversely affect the resource values in the area (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4); to the location of mining claims (and the existing withdrawal would be retained) (Table 2-6); to mineral material sales for sand, gravel, or other types of construction or building materials; and to the use of explosives and blasting. The area would also be closed to off-road vehicle travel including vehicles used for geophysical exploration activities (Table 2-14) and to the use of fire retardant chemicals containing dyes.

The area would be managed consistent with the Class IV visual resource management classification. Management actions on the lands classified as Class IV lands would be designed to partially retain the existing character of the landscape.

Lands visible within ½ mile radius of the rock art site (vista) would be open for consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, or construction and placement of trail and off-road vehicle barriers to ensure protection to the sites. Most surface disturbing activities visible within the vista would not be allowed (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4). Some activities within ½ mile of the rock art but not visible from the panels would be allowed. Vibroseis activities would not be allowed within 300 feet of the rock art site. Other kinds of activities, such as audible disturbances would not be allowed if they adversely affected the sacred Native American religious values at the rock art sites.

Off-road vehicle travel, including vehicles used for geophysical exploration and fire suppression activities within the vista area, would be limited to designated roads and trails (Table 2-14).

Human activity, recreation use, etc., would be restricted from February 1 through July 31 to protect nesting raptors. Exception from this restriction may be approved if conditions described in Appendix 7-1) apply.

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

The BLM-administered public lands in the White Mountain Petroglyphs area meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria. See Appendix 1-3 for a summary of the applicable criteria and Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the resource values in the area. Therefore, the ACEC designation for the 20 acres of BLM-administered public lands in the White Mountain Petroglyphs area would be retained.

Other Management Areas

Monument Valley Management Area (69,940 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objective: The management objective for the Monument Valley area would be to provide protection of wildlife, geologic, cultural, watershed, scenic, and scientific values (paleontological and cultural).

Management Actions: A portion of the Monument Valley area overlaps parts of the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area. Wilderness management, recommendations, and alternatives for this area are addressed in the Final Adobe Town-Ferris Mountain Wilderness EIS.

The area would be open to: 1) consideration for mineral leasing, exploration, and development provided mitigation could be applied to retain the resource values (Table 2-9 and Table 2-8); 2) consideration for mineral material sales with the same constraints applied to all surface disturbing activities; and 3) development and public use with necessary consideration for wildlife, raptors, cultural, watershed, and scientific values.

The area would be a priority for future cultural and paleontological inventory. A paleontological survey would be required prior to surface disturbing activities. The standard Section 106 compliance process would apply for cultural resource management. The oil shale withdrawal would remain in effect until a comprehensive study was completed for the area and, if necessary, lands could be identified to be withdrawn for protection of their scientific or other resource values.

Surface disturbing activities (see Glossary) including rights-of-way would be managed to avoid slopes greater than 25 percent and highly erosive areas unless a plan can be developed to mitigate adverse affects to the resource values.

Off-road vehicle travel would be limited to designated roads and trails. A transportation/road plan would be prepared to manage public use of the area and to keep the miles of roads and trails to a minimum.

The entire area would be managed consistent with the Class II visual resource management classification and all management actions would be designed and located to blend into the natural landscape and to not be visually apparent to the casual viewer. No new recreation sites would be developed and limited interpretive signing would be accomplished (mostly for roads and access routes).

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives of this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Construction of wild horse traps and range improvements would be allowed provided the management objectives of the area could be met. Areas with highly erosive soils or slopes would not be suitable for wild horse traps and range improvements. Improvements would be considered with protection provided for slopes, raptors, cultural, scientific, scenic, and watershed resources.

Although the Monument Valley area has some of the most unique scenic features in the entire resource area, and has the apparent high potential for significant cultural and paleontological resources, there has been little systematic inventory of those values. This lack of information precludes identification of specific resources that meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria for designation of ACECs. Rather than considering ACEC designation at this time without a more complete appreciation of the values in the area and appropriate management prescriptions, the area would be targeted for additional cultural and paleontological inventory. If specific resources are identified that meet the relevance and importance criteria, the area would then be considered for designation as an ACEC. Further public input would be solicited at that time.

Pine Mountain Management Area (64,200 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objectives: The management objectives for the area would be to: 1) improve watershed condition and enhance watershed values; 2) improve riparian areas to proper functioning condition, as a minimum; 3) provide opportunities for dispersed recreation uses in the area consistent with the primary watershed, riparian, and wildlife objectives; 4) maintain and protect important wildlife habitat, especially raptor habitat; and 5) reduce erosion.

Management Actions: The Pine Mountain area would be managed as an avoidance area for rights-of-way and surface disturbing activities (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4).

The area would be open to mineral leasing and related exploration and development activities with appropriate mitigation requirements (controlled surface use) applied to protect all other resource values.

The area would be open to consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, transportation or other use barriers, and sediment or erosion control structures to meet resource management objectives.

Any actions to be conducted in Pine Mountain would be considered and analyzed on a case-by-case basis. Controls may be placed on the amount, sequence, timing, or level of activity or development that may occur to assure that the actions would be consistent with or help to meet the management objectives for the area. This may result in such things as limiting the number of roads and other construction or other surface-disturbing activities (such as well pads) or deferring activities or development in some areas until other areas have been reclaimed and restored to previous uses (Appendix 5-2).

Livestock grazing objectives would be re-evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the watershed, water quality, fisheries, recreation, and riparian management objectives. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Reintroduction of Colorado River cutthroat trout and other native species would be considered on a case-by-case basis, if consistent with watershed and riparian objectives.

Any activity that would preclude the achievement of proper functioning condition of uplands and riparian areas, and achievement of other management objectives would not be allowed.

Forested areas would be managed primarily toward meeting the watershed, riparian, wildlife, and recreation objectives for the area. Timber harvest levels and logging practices would be designed to help meet those objectives.

Although big game habitat should improve through the proposed management of the area, any increase in vegetative production would be reserved for watershed stabilization and improvement purposes.

Management of habitat for special status species, if identified, would be developed on a case-by-case basis.

Travel and transportation of firefighting equipment would be limited to designated roads and trails. Use of heavy equipment would be prohibited in areas closed to surface disturbing activities. Fire management, suppression needs, and prescribed burning in timber stands would be determined on a case-by-case basis to ensure timber stands are maintained in health condition and the "snowfence effect" is preserved. Fire management in other areas would be determined on a case-by-case basis to ensure that area objectives would be met.

Aquifer recharge zones in the area would be managed to protect groundwater quality. Protection includes limiting road density, surface disturbing activities, and surface occupancy in identified recharge zones in order to maintain them in a healthy and functioning condition.

Vegetation treatments would be designed to help meet and be consistent with all management objectives for the area. Treatments in the inner gorge of intermittent and ephemeral drainages would be designed to leave mosaic patterns of treated and untreated areas of vegetation.

Herbicide loading sites would be located at least 500 feet from surface water or riparian areas (whichever is greater). Herbicide treatment of noxious weeds on BLM-administered public lands would first require a site specific analysis to help determine whether or not such actions would be authorized.

The entire area would be managed consistent with the Class III visual resource management classification.

Camping would be allowed within 200 feet of water if damage to watershed, water quality, and wildlife values can be avoided. Otherwise, camping would be located at further distances from water. Recreation developments would be kept to a minimum and designed primarily for the protection of resource values and the prevention of resource damage, and for public health and safety.

Off-road vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails, and transportation plans would be completed. Some existing roads and trails in the area may be closed and reclaimed as a result of transportation planning. Transportation planning would include consideration of proper road location, construction, reconstruction, design, and reclamation. New road construction would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for conformance with area and transportation plan objectives. In some cases, consideration of a "no net gain in roads" factor may be an effective way to help meet objectives in the area.

Management Actions Unique to the Four J Basin Portion

In order to meet management objectives, occupancy and surface disturbance on BLM-administered public lands would be severely limited or not allowed. No surface occupancy would be allowed on the escarpment or toe slopes. Due to the highly erosive nature of these soils, all surface disturbing activities should be designed for zero runoff into the established drainages. Mineral leasing would be allowed provided management objectives could be met and logical areas found for placement of access facilities. Livestock grazing would be managed to allow for optimum vegetation recovery and for uplands and riparian areas to reach proper functioning condition as a minimum. If necessary, forage would be reserved for watershed purposes. Full consideration would be given to wildlife habitat needs. Any determinations to close parts of the area to mineral location and pursue withdrawals would be deferred to completion of a comprehensive activity or implementation plan for the area. In the interim, those parts of the area not covered by existing withdrawals would remain open to mineral location.

Human activity, recreation use, etc. would be restricted from February 1 through July 31, where needed, to protect nesting raptors. Exception from this restriction may be approved if conditions described in Appendix 7-1 apply.

The Pine Mountain management area was not recommended as part of the proposed Greater Red Creek ACEC because although the watershed resources in this area are interconnected with that of Greater Red Creek, Pine Mountain does not contain the same sensitivity of resources found in Greater Red Creek. The area does not contain populations of the Colorado River cutthroat trout that the Greater Red Creek area has and thus would not need to receive the same management emphasis. However, the area would be maintained as a geographic unit.

Red Desert Watershed Management Area (341,060 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objective: The management objective for the Red Desert Watershed Area would be to provide large areas of unobstructed views for enjoyment of scenic qualities. This would be accomplished through facility design and placement and using topography to shield activities, using neutral colors so facilities blend with the landscape, identification of backcountry byways, and providing viewing points for the public (Map A).

Management Actions: The boundary that would be considered the Red Desert Watershed Area would include BLM-administered public lands north of the checkerboard boundary within the Great Divide Basin.

A portion of the Red Desert Watershed Area encompasses portions of six WSAs (Alkali Draw, Alkali Basin-East Sand Dunes, Honeycomb Buttes, Oregon Buttes, Red Lake, and South Pinnacles). Wilderness management recommendations and alternatives are addressed in the Rock Springs District Wilderness Final EIS. The Resource Management Plan would not address wilderness recommendations or management prescriptions for the WSAs. The wilderness study area acreage would not be identified for specific management unless the management is more stringent than either the interim management policy or wilderness management.

The Red Desert watershed area would be managed to ensure developments and activities conform with the concepts of open space. The area would be managed consistent with the Class II and Class III visual resource management classifications. Site specific visual resource reviews (inventories) would be conducted prior to allowing activities that may affect these values.

Surface disturbing activities, mineral exploration and development, and seismic activities would continue where acceptable subject to the management guidelines provided in the Minerals section.

Approximately 2,500 acres would be closed to surface disturbing activities to protect special status plant species and relevant and important resource values in ACECs (Table 2-8). Seasonal restrictions for protection of raptors, big game crucial winter range, and calving/fawning areas would be managed as shown in Table 2-9. The exception criteria described in Appendix 7-1 would apply.

Approximately 2,860 acres in the coal potential area could be developed for coal (see Coal Decisions). Most of the area would be open to consideration for salable minerals activities and mineral location. The existing coal and stock driveway withdrawals would be revoked.

About 5,260 acres would be closed to mineral location and salable mineral activity, to protect features in the South Pass Historic area (see the South Pass Historic Landscape Section).

The preferred route for rights-of-way would be the east-west window described in the Lands and Realty Management section. Other areas would be considered if in conformance with wildlife, watershed, cultural, and scenic resource objectives (see Table 2-4). Overhead powerlines would not be permitted.

Off-road vehicle travel would be managed to provide access opportunities in conformance with other resource objectives. Approximately 95,580 acres would be closed to ORV use, and the remainder of the area would be limited to designated roads and trails. Recreational activities, opportunities, and uses would be maintained. A Tri-Territory Loop and Red Desert backcountry byway would be established.

Livestock grazing objectives would be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Forage would continue to be provided for wild horses in the area. Wild horse management in the area would be consistent with the Divide Basin Wild Horse Management Plan and the management objectives for the area. Vegetation resources would be managed for continued livestock grazing and wildlife uses in accordance with the management objectives for those resource values.

Special status plant species, the relevant and important resource values in the Oregon Buttes ACEC, and cultural resource sites such as the South Pass Historic Landscape would be protected. Specific management prescriptions for those areas may be found in the particular special management area section of this document.

The Red Desert Watershed area was not found to contain values that met the relevance and importance criteria and therefore would not be recommended for ACEC designation.

Sugarloaf Basin Management Area (85,880 acres of BLM-administered public lands)

Management Objectives: The management objectives for the area would be to: 1) improve watershed condition and enhance watershed values; 2) improve riparian areas to proper functioning condition, as a minimum; 3) provide opportunities for dispersed recreation uses in the area consistent with the primary watershed, riparian, and wildlife objectives; and 4) maintain and protect important wildlife habitat.

Management Actions: The Sugarloaf Basin area would be managed as an avoidance area for rights-of-way and surface disturbing activities (Table 2-8 and Table 2-4). However, a north-south right-of-way window, parallel to the east side of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, would be established.

The area would be open to mineral leasing and related exploration and development activities with appropriate mitigation requirements applied to protect all other resource values.

The area would be open to consideration of such activities as fencing, interpretive signs, construction of placement of transportation barriers, and sediment or erosion control structures to meet resource management objectives.

Any proposed actions to be conducted in the Sugarloaf Basin area would be considered and analyzed on a case-by-case basis. Controls may be placed on the amount, sequence, timing, or level of activity or development that may occur to assure that the actions would be consistent with or help to meet the management objectives for the area. This may result in such things as limiting the number of roads and other construction or other surface-disturbing activities (such as well pads) or deferring activities or development in some areas until other areas have been reclaimed and restored to previous uses (Appendix 5-2).

Livestock grazing objectives would be re-evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the watershed, water quality, fisheries, recreation, and riparian management objectives. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and proper functioning condition of watersheds (upland and riparian).

Any activity that would preclude the achievement of proper functioning condition of uplands and riparian areas and achievement of other management objectives would not be allowed.

Forested areas would be managed primarily toward meeting the watershed, riparian, wildlife, and recreation objectives for the area. Timber harvest levels and logging practices would be designed to help meet those objectives.

Although big game habitat should improve through the proposed management of the area, any increase in vegetative production would be reserved for watershed stabilization and improvement purposes.

Management of habitat or special status species, if identified, would be developed on a case-by-case basis.

Travel and transportation of firefighting equipment would be limited to designated roads and trails. Fire management, suppression needs, and prescribed burning in timber stands would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure timber stands are maintained in healthy condition and the "snowfence effect" is preserved. Fire in other areas would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure that area objectives would be met.

Aquifer recharge zones in the area would be managed to protect groundwater quality. Protection includes limiting road density, surface disturbing activities, and surface occupancy in identified recharge zones in order to maintain them in a healthy and functioning condition.

Vegetation treatments would be designed to help meet and be consistent with all management objectives for the area. Treatments in the inner gorge of intermittent and ephemeral drainages would be designed to leave mosaic patterns of treated and untreated areas of vegetation.

Herbicide loading sites would be located at least 500 feet from surface water or riparian areas (whichever is greater). Herbicide treatment of noxious weeds on BLM-administered public lands would first require a site specific analysis to help determine whether or not such actions would be authorized.

The area would be managed consistent with the Class II and Class III visual resource management classifications.

Camping would be allowed within 200 feet of water if damage to watershed, water quality, and wildlife values can be avoided. Otherwise, camping would be located at further distances from surface water. Recreation developments would be kept to a minimum and designed primarily for the protection of resource values and the prevention of resource damage, and for public health and safety.

Off-road vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails, and a transportation plan would be completed. Some existing roads and trails in the area may be closed and reclaimed as a result of transportation planning. Transportation planning would include consideration of proper road location, construction, reconstruction, design, and reclamation. New road construction would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for conformance with area and transportation plan objectives. In some cases, consideration of a "no net gain in roads" factor may be an effective way to help meet objectives in the area.

The Sugarloaf Basin area was not recommended as part of the proposed Greater Red Creek ACEC because although the watershed resources in the are interconnected with that of Greater Red Creek, Sugarloaf Basin does not contain the same sensitivity of resources found in Greater Red Creek. The area does not contain populations of the Colorado River cutthroat trout that the Greater Red Creek area has and thus would not need to receive the same management emphasis. The watershed, scenic, and wildlife resources were determined not to be more than locally significant, nor fragile, sensitive, or rare when compared to those values found in Currant, Sage, and Red Creeks.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Management on BLM-Administered Public Lands

Management Objective: The management objective would be to manage BLM-administered public lands that meet the wild and scenic rivers suitability factors to maintain or enhance their outstandingly remarkable values and wild and scenic rivers classifications, until Congress considers them for possible designation.

Seven BLM-administered land parcels along the Sweetwater River (involving about 9.7 miles of the river) were found to meet the wild and scenic rivers suitability factors to be given further consideration for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System (Map 30). Of the 9.7 miles of river involved, the BLM lands along 5.8 miles are classified as wild, the BLM lands along 3.3 miles are classified as scenic, and the BLM lands along 0.6 miles are classified as recreational (Map 30) (see Appendix 4-3).

In conducting the wild and scenic rivers review process, application of the wild and scenic rivers eligibility criteria, determining the tentative wild and scenic rivers classifications, and the application of the wild and scenic rivers suitability factors, focused on the BLM-administered public lands (hereafter called BLM lands) within a ½ mile wide corridor along the review segment of the river (i.e., approximately ¼ mile wide along each bank of the river along the length of the review segment). The public lands within and adjacent to this corridor (identified on Map 30) would be considered in future site specific, activity or management implementation planning to fulfill the stated management objective.

Interim Management, on the BLM-Administered Public Land Parcels, Identified as Meeting the Wild Classification (involving 5.8 miles of the river) would focus on maintaining or enhancing the outstandingly remarkable historic, scenic, and recreational values and maintaining the relatively primitive, pristine, rugged, and unaltered character of the area. Any activities that would conflict with this objective and any physical or visual intrusions on the BLM lands involved would be prohibited.

Temporary cultural and paleontology activities (e.g., recordation, sampling, testing, stabilization, rehabilitation, and reconstruction) may be allowed on the BLM lands, if the outstandingly remarkable values are maintained and if no permanent adverse impacts would occur to either the BLM lands directly involved or any other lands within or adjacent to the corridor.

The BLM lands would be closed to mineral leasing and related exploration and development activities. Existing mineral leases on these lands would be allowed to expire.

The BLM lands would be closed to new mineral location actions (e.g., filing of mining claims and related exploration and development). A withdrawal from mineral location would be pursued. Valid existing rights (existing mining claims) would be recognized.

The BLM lands would be closed to recreational dredging for minerals, such as gold, and to mineral material sales.

Geophysical exploration would be limited to foot access and use of surface cables on the BLM lands (use of motorized or non-motorized vehicles would be prohibited). Surface charges may be allowed if site specific analyses determine no permanent adverse impacts would occur.

The BLM lands would be closed to land disposal actions. Exchanges of BLM lands "outside the corridor" could be considered for acquiring private or state lands within the corridor or between the BLM land parcels along the river; however, BLM lands within the corridor would not be exchanged.

The BLM lands would be closed to surface disturbing activities such as construction of recreational developments (e.g., new campgrounds, put-in or take-out areas, or other such facilities), wildlife habitat improvements, range improvements, rights-of-way, mineral development, etc. Hiking trails may be built, "by hand labor", if there would be a demand for them and they conform with the management objective for these lands.

The BLM lands would be an exclusion area for rights-of-way.

Water impoundments or diversions would be prohibited on the BLM lands.

The BLM lands would be closed to motorized and non-motorized vehicles. Hikers would be required to "pack it out"; there would be no garbage facilities. Campfires would be permitted in keeping with current fire management regulations.

Any Fire suppression activities on the BLM lands would use "light-on-the-land" techniques. No motorized or non-motorized vehicle ground equipment would be used to suppress fires. Helicopter bucket drops and the use of chainsaws may be allowed if no permanent impacts would occur.

The BLM lands would be closed to commercial timber sales and harvesting. Cutting of trees would only be allowed with written permission or in association with safety and environmental protection requirements (such as clearing trails, visitor safety, and fire control).

Increases in active grazing preference and construction of new range improvements on the BLM lands would be prohibited.

The BLM lands would be closed to vegetation treatment or manipulation , by other than hand or aerial seeding methods using species that will restore natural vegetation. Undesirable and exotic species could be removed by hand.

The BLM lands would be managed under a Class II VRM classification.

Interim Management, on BLM-Administered Public Land Parcels, Identified as Potentially Meeting the Scenic Classification

(involving 3.3 miles of river) would focus on maintaining or enhancing the outstandingly remarkable historic, scenic, and recreational values and the relatively unmodified character of the area in a near-natural setting. Any activities that would conflict with this objective would be prohibited. Some intrusions on the BLM lands involved may be allowed if they were not readily evident or that are short lived, and would not adversely affect maintaining the scenic classification.

Temporary cultural and paleontology activities (e.g., recordation, sampling, testing, stabilization, rehabilitation, and reconstruction) may be allowed on the BLM lands, if the outstandingly remarkable values are maintained and if no permanent adverse impacts would occur to either the BLM lands directly involved or any other lands within or adjacent to the corridor.

The BLM lands would be closed to mineral leasing and related exploration and development activities. Existing mineral leases on these lands would be allowed to expire.

The BLM lands would be closed to new mineral location actions (e.g., filing of mining claims and related exploration and development). A withdrawal from mineral location would be pursued. Valid existing rights (existing mining claims) would be recognized.

The BLM lands would be closed to recreational dredging for minerals such as gold and to mineral material sales.

Geophysical exploration would be allowed if a site specific analysis determines no adverse affects would occur. Vehicles would use designated roads and trails only. Foot access would be required off of existing roads. Surface charges may be allowed if site specific analyses determine no permanent adverse impacts would occur.

The BLM lands would be closed to land disposal actions. Exchanges of BLM lands "outside the corridor" could be considered for acquiring private or state lands within the corridor or between the BLM land parcels along the river; however, BLM lands within the corridor would not be exchanged.

The BLM lands would be closed to most surface disturbing activities such as construction of rights-of-way, mineral development, and most types of recreation site development, and wildlife habitat and range improvements. Some recreation (such as put in or take out areas), wildlife, and range improvement development may occur on the BLM lands so long as there is not a substantial adverse effect to the natural-like appearance of all the lands within the river corridor and their immediate environment.

Water impoundments or diversions would be prohibited on the BLM lands.

The BLM lands would be an exclusion area for rights-of-way.

Motorized and non-motorized vehicles would be restricted to using designated roads and trails. Hiking trails may be built if there would be a demand for them and they conform with the objective for the scenic classification. Mountain biking would be allowed to the extent that no adverse affects would occur. Hikers would be required to "pack it out"; there would be no garbage facilities. Campfires would be permitted in keeping with current fire management regulations.

Any Fire suppression activities on the BLM lands would use "light-on-the-land" techniques. No motorized or non-motorized vehicle ground equipment off of designated roads and trails would be used to suppress fires. Helicopter bucket drops and the use of chainsaws may be allowed if no permanent impacts would occur.

The BLM lands would be closed to commercial timber sales and harvesting. Cutting of trees would only be allowed with written permission or in association with safety and environmental protection requirements (such as clearing trails, visitor safety, and fir control).

Increases in active grazing preference on the BLM lands would be prohibited. Range improvements would only be allowed if they were compatible with objectives for the scenic river classification.

The BLM lands would be closed to vegetation treatment or manipulation , by other than hand or aerial seeding methods using species that will restore natural vegetation. Undesirable and exotic species could be removed by hand.

The BLM lands would be managed under a Class II VRM classification.

Interim Management, on BLM-Administered Public Land Parcels, Identified as Potentially Meeting the Recreational Classification (involving 0.6 miles of river) would focus on maintaining or enhancing the outstandingly remarkable historic, scenic, and recreational values in a modestly modified setting and retain the character of the area. Any activities that would conflict with this objective would be prohibited. Some intrusions may be allowed if they would not adversely affect the characteristics of the area and the maintenance of the recreational classification.

Temporary cultural and paleontology activities (e.g., recordation, sampling, testing, stabilization, rehabilitation, and reconstruction) may be allowed on the BLM lands, if the outstandingly remarkable values are maintained and if no permanent adverse impacts would occur to either the BLM lands directly involved or any other lands within or adjacent to the corridor.

The BLM lands would be closed to mineral leasing and related exploration and development activities. Existing mineral leases on these lands would be allowed to expire.

The BLM lands would be closed to new mineral location actions (e.g., filing of mining claims and related exploration and development). A withdrawal from mineral location would be pursued. Valid existing rights (existing mining claims) would be recognized.

The BLM lands would be closed to recreational dredging for minerals, such as gold, and to mineral material sales.

Geophysical exploration would be allowed if a site specific analysis determines no adverse affects would occur. Vehicles would use designated roads and trails only. Foot access would be required off of existing roads. Surface charges may be allowed if site specific analyses determine no permanent adverse impacts would occur.

The BLM lands would be closed to land disposal actions. Exchanges of BLM lands "outside the corridor" could be considered for acquiring private or state lands within the corridor or between the BLM land parcels along the river; however, BLM lands within the corridor would not be exchanged.

The BLM lands would be closed to most surface disturbing activities such as construction of rights-of-way and mineral development. Some surface disturbing activities such as recreational developments (development of, and improvement of existing campgrounds, put in or take out areas, etc.), range improvements, and wildlife improvements, provided such activity is done in a manner that minimizes surface disturbance, sedimentation, pollution, and visual impairment, and if a site specific analysis determines that no adverse affects would occur.

Water impoundments or diversions would be prohibited on the BLM lands.

The BLM lands would be an exclusion area for rights-of-way.

Motorized and non-motorized vehicles would be restricted to

using designated roads and trails. Hiking trails may be built if there would be a demand for them and they conform with the objective for the recreational classification. Mountain biking would be allowed to the extent that no adverse affects would occur. Campfires would be permitted in keeping with current fire management regulations. Public use and access may be regulated and distributed where necessary to protect and enhance outstandingly remarkable values.

Fires would be suppressed using appropriate techniques provided no permanent impacts would occur. Motorized and non-motorized vehicle ground equipment on designated roads and trails, the use of chainsaws, and helicopter bucket drops may be used to suppress fires.

The BLM lands would be closed to commercial timber sales and harvesting. Firewood collection for camp fires and some post and pole cutting would be allowed provided no substantial adverse effects would occur to the BLM lands.

Increases in active grazing preference would be prohibited. Range improvements would only be allowed if they would be compatible with the objective for recreational river classification.

The BLM lands would be closed to vegetation treatment or manipulation , by other than hand or aerial seeding methods using species that will restore natural vegetation. Undesirable and exotic species could be removed by hand.

The BLM lands would be managed under a Class II VRM classification.

The portion of the Green River administered by BLM did not meet the suitability criteria based upon the inability of the BLM to manage the area because of lack of jurisdiction. However, it would be recommended that a cooperative study between BLM, BOR, and USFWS be conducted to determine eligibility and suitability. BLM would cooperate on the formation and management of a greenbelt area.