

APPENDIX F

Landownership Adjustment Strategy
of
Casper District
Bureau of Land Management

Proposed By: Land Exchange Team, Casper District 3/13/96

Approved By: /s/ Donald Hinrichsen 3/13/96
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INTRODUCTION

The Casper District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) made up of three resource areas: Buffalo, Newcastle and Platte River has the responsibility for management of some 2.9 million acres of public lands (federal surface and federal minerals), and approximately 8.5 million acres of federal minerals referred to as split-estate (private surface and federal minerals). Focusing primarily on the 2.9 million acres of public lands within this district, many are isolated, unaccessible, and scattered parcels that are intermingled with private, State and other federal lands managed by other agencies.

PURPOSE OF THE LAND ADJUSTMENT STRATEGY

The purpose of this land adjustment strategy is to provide general guidance to the land adjustment program for Casper District in order to accomplish plan objective of the resource areas. The strategy will be useful in guiding land exchange negotiations as well as other land adjustment actions with landowners and discussing the overall program with the public.

The strategy provides general direction for federal land adjustments and may be modified or amended as new information and/or opportunities become evident. The strategy does not make hard and fast decisions on land adjustment; it provides concepts. Specific land adjustment proposals will be analyzed using the NEPA process including public participation. Decisions to implement a specific proposal will be based on the specific NEPA analysis and finding that the proposal is in the public interest and consistent with the BLM plans, and applicable laws and regulations.

Goals

The overall goals of the Casper District BLM are:

- 1) to develop a landownership pattern that will provide better access, better management and protection to the public lands,
- 2) to identify and pursue appropriate disposal actions of public land to private individuals and/or for management by other federal or State agencies to help solve problems related to intermixed landownership patterns.
- 3) to implement and accomplish landownership adjustment in a timely, cost effective manner while continuing to streamline processes.

Objectives

These objectives will tier to resource area management plans (emphasis on land adjustment using exchanges including assembled land exchanges):

- 1) provide or improve public access and recreation use and opportunities by consolidating landownership pattern and acquiring easement through land adjustment.

- 2) reduce conflicting land management objectives of private landowners and BLM.
- 3) improve resource management of BLM public lands and other federal lands to meet planning direction and allow implementation of an ecosystem management approach.
- 4) acquire lands within critical wildlife and/or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), and riparian areas according to planning direction.
- 5) Improve cost affective management practices and cost efficiency of management objectives by reducing the administrative costs.

JUSTIFICATION FOR A LAND ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

The intermingled landownership pattern of this district makes it especially difficult for both the BLM and the private landowners to achieve their often different management objectives. The BLM has multiple objectives endorsed by planning objectives while the private landowners primarily have revenue production objectives. The intermingled ownerships where BLM public lands are scattered, unmanageable and inaccessible leads to conflicts in meeting these different objectives and inhibits management effectiveness and efficiency for both the BLM and the private landowners. In striving to meet its planning objectives, Casper District will plan and use landownership adjustment to consolidated public lands into more manageable and accessible units to further benefit the public and to more effectively initiate and continue sound ecosystem management practices. The intent of landownership adjustment is not to increase the federal land estate, but to consolidate parcels into more efficient and manageable patterns.

The predominant issues and majority of comments from past and current scoping meetings and interviews for resource area planning documents were ones of access to and recreation potential on public lands. Another area of high interest in these meetings and through direct inquiries over the past several years from both adjoining landowners and the general public was the desire to acquire many of these isolated federal (public land) parcels. Also, with the onset of range reform and the uncertainty of grazing lease fees, landowners surrounding isolated, scattered parcels of public lands within their ranch units have voiced their growing sincere interest in purchasing these lands. These scattered, isolated public lands are both expensive and impossible to manage, and more efficiency would be gained while better serving the public by disposing of these parcels. For the Casper District, in order to initiate practices and make sound decisions base on effects to ecosystem units the land pattern must be adjusted. Currently, identified within this district, there are over 300,000 acres of scattered, isolated parcels of land identified within planning documents as available for possible disposal. The majority of the adjoining landowners, the grazing lessees, and the general public have expressed interest in purchasing these parcels. In exchange for many of these disposal parcels, lands or easements could be acquired through avenues such as "assembled land exchanges" defined simply as a type of exchange where several different federal and/or private parcels are combined together and exchanged in one or more transactions over time. The expense of conducting the exchange can be distributed among several different participants and a higher dollar value can be utilized to exchange for lands or public

interest therein that BLM has identified for high priority acquisition accordance with land use plans.

LAND ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

The land adjustment program will make full use of all land adjustment tools as appropriate. These include land for land exchanges, land for other interests such as minerals, land or interest therein for easements (access, conservation), land sales, purchases, transfers and donations. Any of these tools could be used individually or in combinations to meet the land adjustment objectives. It is anticipated and emphasized that land exchanges will provide the greatest opportunity to improve the landownership pattern. No exchange may be completed without a determination that the public interest will be well served according to 43 CFR 2200.06 (b).

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

Casper District 2.9 million acres of public lands and interest therein
8.5 million acres of federal mineral estate.

For exchanges in order to minimize negative local impacts such as loss of Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), preference should be first given to acquiring lands in counties where these public lands are to be disposed of. If private lands cannot be acquired in the affected counties then preference should be to acquire lands or interests therein for counties within the affected resource area, followed by preference for counties within the Casper District, and finally, preference within the State of Wyoming. The public interest determination and scope of affect as well as the feasibility of the exchange will dictate the applicability of the above preferences, however, they should, at least, be considered in the process.

LAND ADJUSTMENT EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following acquisition and disposal evaluation and ranking criteria were approved by the Casper District Corporate Board (CB) on October 11, 1995. They were developed by an interdisciplinary team referred to as the Casper District Land Exchange Team (LET) comprised of members from the resource areas and the district. The criteria were derived from laws, regulations, policy, program/resource management experience, planning decisions and presented in draft to all district personnel for review and comment.

These criteria are to be used to evaluate, rank and prioritize land exchange proposals districtwide. This criteria will be used by the LET to evaluate all exchange proposals within the district and present their recommendations to the CB. The CB will make the decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal.

**Acquisition Criteria
for Casper District**

Given: Acquisition of land has to have and/or provide public access that can be managed effectively and cost efficiently according to BLM goals and initiatives. Can this given be met? **(Yes or No)** (If **yes** continue completing ranking criteria)

Explain: (i.e., non-controlled access, restricted or cooperative)

| Ranking Criteria (points awarded) | <u>Points</u> |
|---|----------------------|
| 1) Public values. | |
| a) Recreation | |
| 1) Hunting | |
| a)Big Game | _____ |
| 1)Multiple species (15 points) | |
| or | |
| 2)Single species (10 points) | |
| b)Small Game | _____ |
| 1)Multiple species (15 points) | |
| or | |
| 2)Single species (10 points) | |
| 2) Fishing (15 points) | _____ |
| 3) ORV Use (If meets planning or public demand objectives) | |
| a) Present (5 points) | _____ |
| b) Potential (5 points) | _____ |
| 4) Scenic (0-15 points in increments of 5 points) *(Based on visual resource management ratings) | _____ |
| 5) Other Recreation Value(s) (5 points each) (Specify) _____ | _____ |

b) Resource(s) Management

* If the resource value is present, would the value(s) acquired or consolidated be/add to the cost efficiency

and manageability of them by BLM/federal agency by completing the land adjustment.

- 1) Improves Cost and management efficiency in:
- 1) Cultural Resources (5 points) _____
 - 2) Forestry Resources (5 points) _____
 - 3) Valuable Historic Resources (5 points) _____
 - 4) Minerals Resources (5 points) _____
*Indicate which minerals affected:
 - a) Oil and Gas leases _____
 - b) Coal leases _____
 - c) Locatables _____
 - d) Salables _____
 - 5) Paleontological Resources (5 points) _____
 - 6) Range Resources (5 points) _____
 - 8) Watershed(5 or 10 points) _____
(wetlands/riparian)
 - 7) Wildlife Resources (habitat) (5 points) _____
 - 8) T & E species (5 points) _____
 - 9) Other(name)_____ (5 points) _____

- c) Unique Opportunities (5-50 points in increments of 5) _____
Explanation: _____

Note: Unique opportunities may also be qualified by factors that aid in the economics of the opportunities, i. e. Proponent shares a percentage of the expenses on the evaluation of the public land. Such expenses as the costs of cultural inventory, T&E, appraisal, etc.

- 2) Provide access to blocks of consolidated federal Land or State(?)lands. _____
5 points for 1-640 acres
10 points for 640-2000 acres
15 points for 2,000-5,000 acres
20 points for 5,000-10,000 acres
30 points for 10,000 + acres

Total Points: _____

- a) Acres in consolidated blocks that access effects: _____ acres.

Further Explanation of topics:

**Criteria for Disposal of Public Lands
Casper District**

Given: Public interest will be well served.

Any one or more of the following criteria may be used to justify the disposal of public land:

*** There will be no acre restriction on disposal.**

- ___ public land because of its location and other characteristics, is difficult and uneconomical to manage.
- ___ public land is not suitable for management by another federal department or agency.
- ___ public land acquired for a specific purpose is no longer required for that or any other federal purpose.
- ___ disposal of public land would serve important public purposes
- ___ public land is more suitable for residential, commercial, agriculture or industrial development in non-federal ownership
- ___ create ownership patterns that allow for local community development that cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land and which outweigh other public objectives and values.
- ___ consistent with the mission of BLM and land use plans

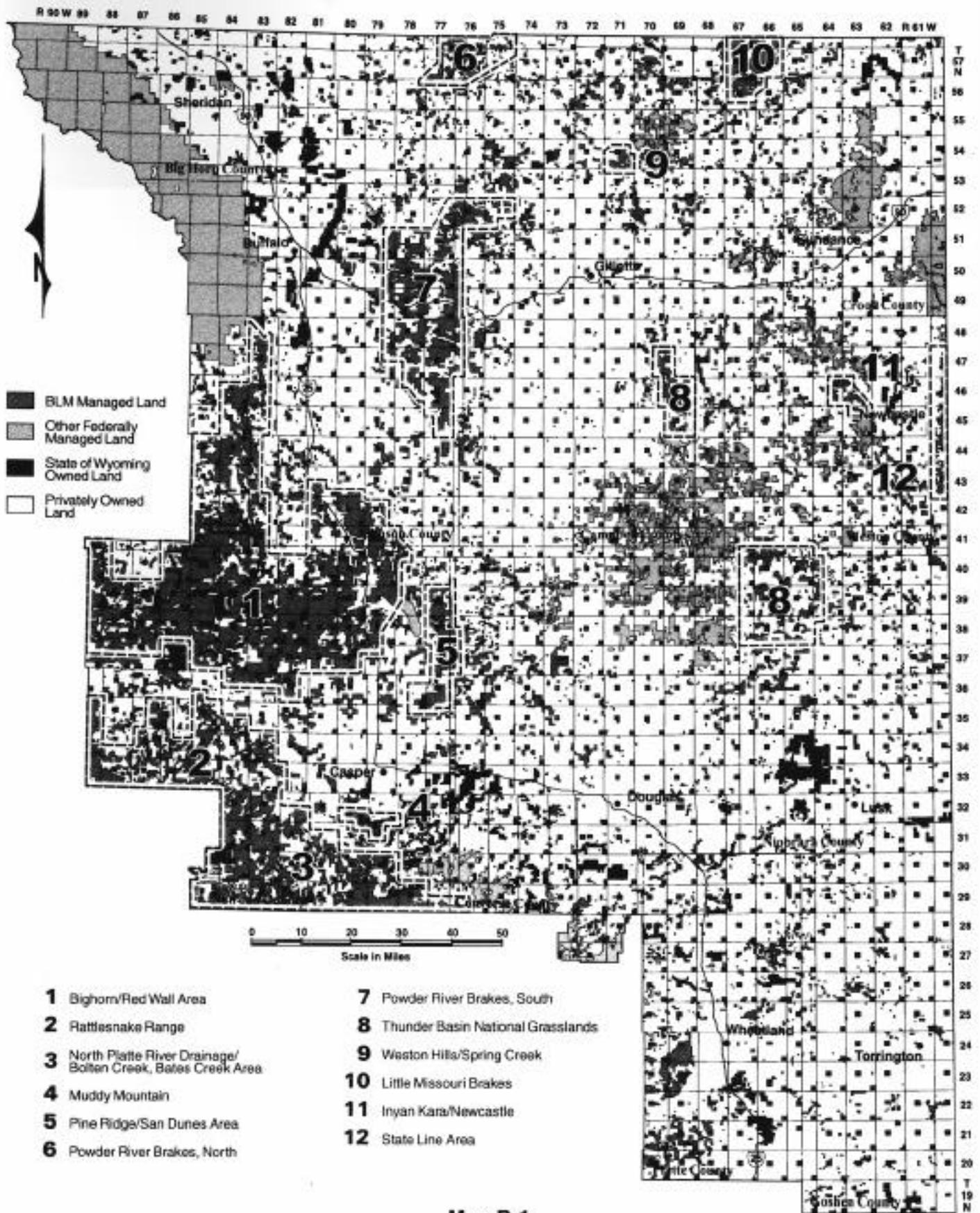
**** Dispose of entire grazing allotment/lease (yes or no)**

Acres in grazing allotment/lease: _____

CASPER DISTRICT LANDOWNERSHIP MAP NARRATIVE

The following areas identified on the Casper District land status map for building or consolidating within for future landownership patterns were developed by the LET (land exchange team) in conformance with current planning documents and Record of Decisions. They were reviewed, but should continued to be fine tuned as appropriate by districtwide resource specialists using their general and specific knowledge of the district land pattern and uses. These areas mostly are defined by larger blocks of federal ownership with private surface inholdings. Also noted were areas identified by the public as lacking necessary access to these larger blocks of public lands. It should be understood that the intent is to build and consolidate within these areas, however this does not completely negate trading out of these areas depending on the merits of the individual proposal. The remaining parcels not identified within these areas are mostly scattered an/or difficult to manage public land parcels that do not offer

much public benefit and may be more beneficial in private ownership or administered by either local, county, State or other federal agencies. However, each exchange no matter where it is located in this Casper District landownership map will be evaluated on its own merit and the public interest determination will be a major determination factor as to whether to pursue it or not.



Map B-1
Lands Adjustment Strategy—Potential Acquisition Areas-BLM

