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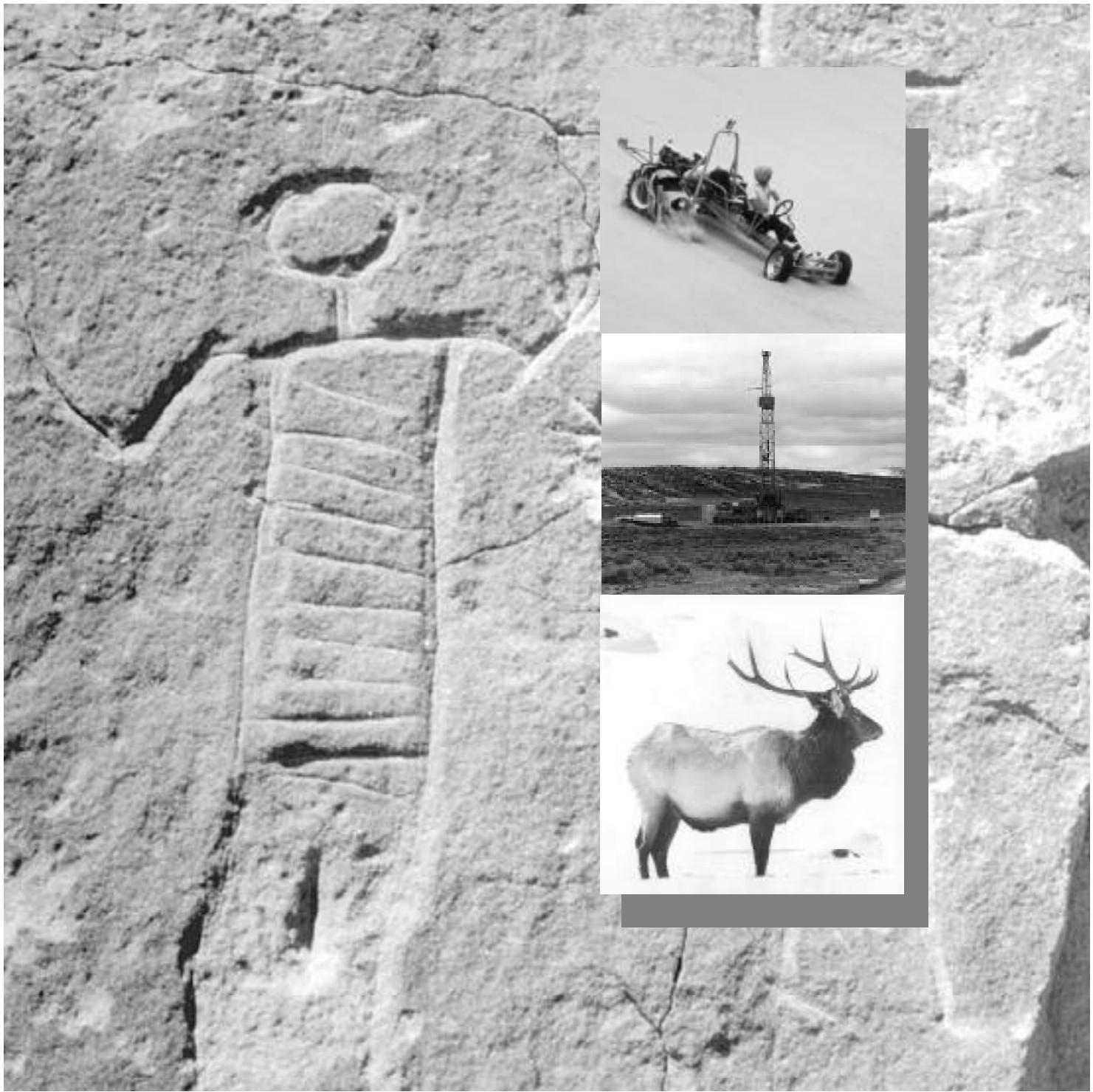
Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office

Rock Springs Field Office

June 2000

DRAFT

Environmental Impact Statement for the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan



MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Wyoming State Office
P.O. Box 1828
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003-1828

In Reply Refer To:

1610 (930)
Jack Morrow Hills CAP

JUN 09 2006

Dear Reader:

Attached for your review and comment is the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan (JMHCAP). The alternative management plans described in this document have been designed to resolve land management issues that were identified in the early stages of the activity planning process. The analyses of the environmental consequences of implementing the alternatives are also included in the document.

Two public open houses to discuss the draft EIS will be held in July, in Lander (Best Western Inn) on July 18, and in Rock Springs (BLM Office) on July 20. A public field tour will be conducted on July 21 starting at the Rock Springs BLM Office. Open houses will run from 4-8 p.m. and include a short presentation each day. A public hearing will be held at 7:00 p.m. on August 23, at the Western Wyoming Community College, Room 1302. The purpose of this hearing will be to give the public the opportunity to verbalize their comments on the draft EIS.

We invite you to comment on the alternatives presented and on the adequacy of the impact analyses. A 90-day comment period will begin with the date the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes the filing of this draft EIS in the Federal Register. Please send your written comments to Renée Dana, Team Leader, 280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901. Comments may also be made via the Internet. Such comments, however, must contain your complete name and address and phone number. This information is being requested in the event we need clarification of messages that are not legible or we have questions about your comments. Incomplete comments or comments from unidentified sources will not be accepted as part of the official comment record. Send Internet comments to: rock_springs_wymail@blm.gov, putting "Jack Morrow" in the subject line.

Comments, including the names and street addresses of respondents, will be made available for review by the public at the address listed above during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and will be published as part of the final EIS. However, individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and/or street address, and private phone number

from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals representing or who are officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Comments on the alternatives and on the adequacy of the impact analyses will be fully considered and evaluated in development of the proposed CAP and final EIS. Through your participation in this effort, we can move forward together toward a common goal of improved public land management in the Jack Morrow Hills area.

Please retain this copy of the draft EIS for future reference as the final EIS may be published in abbreviated format. A copy of this draft EIS has been sent to affected Federal, State, and local Government agencies and to those persons who indicated they wished to receive a copy of the draft EIS. Copies of the draft EIS are available for public inspection at the following BLM locations:

Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Road
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009

Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

Bureau of Land Management
Lander Field Office
1335 Main Street
Lander, Wyoming 82520

Sincerely,



Alan R. Pierson
State Director

DRAFT

Environmental Impact Statement

for the

Jack Morrow Hills

Coordinated Activity Plan

for

Public Lands Administered

by the

Bureau of Land Management

Rock Springs Field Office

Rock Springs, Wyoming

Prepared by

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office

June 2000



*Alan R. Pierson
State Director, Wyoming*

6-9-00

Date

DRAFT
Environmental Impact Statement for the
Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan
Rock Springs, Wyoming

Lead Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Type of Action: Administrative

Jurisdiction: Portions of Sweetwater, Fremont, and Sublette Counties

Abstract: This draft environmental impact statement (EIS) addresses alternative coordinated activity plans for the JMHCAP area. When completed, the JMHCAP will provide more specific management direction to prevent or address conflicts among potential development of energy resources, recreational activities and facilities, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and provide more specific management direction for other land and resource uses in the planning area, including livestock grazing, important wildlife habitat, and other important resources. The planning area comprises about 574,800 acres of federal land and federal mineral estate in the Jack Morrow Hills area in southwestern Wyoming. This Draft EIS contains four alternative coordinated activity plans that provide management direction for the protection of certain resources (e.g., desert elk and other big game habitat, unique sand dune-mountain shrub habitat, unstabilized and stabilized sand dunes, cultural sites) and allow leasing and development of energy resources, recreational activities, grazing practices, and other activities at varying levels.

When the JMHCAP planning effort is completed, it will provide an integrated multiple use activity plan for a balanced level of resource uses and provide protection for sensitive and important resource values on the BLM-administered public lands in the area. The fluid minerals leasing decisions and locatable mineral decisions for the JMH area, that were deferred in the Green River RMP, will be determined in the JMHCAP which will result in amending the Green River RMP. Other management prescriptions resulting from this planning effort include some refinement of designations of roads for use, grazing practices, recreational activities and facilities, identification of right-of-way windows and concentration areas, and prescriptions for managing wildlife habitat.

Four alternatives that address the issues in the JMHCAP planning area have been considered. They are continuation of present management (no action alternative) and three other alternatives that provide a variety of management choices ranging from restricting management actions or development, to actively mitigating the effects of resource management actions or development. The Preferred Alternative is a combination of the No Action Alternative and Alternatives A and B. The four alternatives presented in Chapter 2 of the draft EIS focus on allocating public lands and resources among the uses and prescribing general management actions that would be taken. The various impacts that would be expected from implementing each of the alternatives are documented in Chapter 4.

When the JMHCAP is completed, it will provide a comprehensive framework for managing the BLM-administered public lands and resources and allocating their uses in the planning area. Further information regarding this draft EIS can be obtained from the address below. Comments will be accepted for 90 days following the date that the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of filing of this draft EIS in the *Federal Register*. Comments should be sent to the following address:

Renée Dana, Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901
(307) 352-0256

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This draft environmental impact statement (EIS) and coordinated activity plan (CAP) will provide more specific management direction to address potential conflicts among potential development of energy resources, recreational activities and facilities, and land uses in the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan planning area. The planning area includes approximately 574,800 acres of public land surface and federal mineral estate administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) through its Rock Springs Field Office in Rock Springs, Wyoming. The JMHCAP planning area encompasses the Steamboat Mountain, Greater Sand Dunes, White Mountain Petroglyphs, and Oregon Buttes Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); a portion of the South Pass Historic Landscape ACEC; the Oregon Buttes, Honeycomb Buttes, Greater Sand Dunes, Buffalo Hump, Whitehorse Creek, South Pinnacles, and Alkali Draw Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs); and three special recreation management areas—Greater Sand Dunes, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and the Oregon/Mormon Pioneer/Pony Express/California National Historic Trails. Parts of Fremont, Sweetwater, and Sublette counties in southwest Wyoming are within the planning area.

When completed, the Jack Morrow Hills CAP will provide a framework for managing the BLM-administered public lands and resources and allocating some of these uses in the planning area. Specifically, this CAP is focused on resolving three resource management issues: Minerals Resource Management and Related Rights-of-Way; Resource Uses Affecting Vegetation, Soils, Air, and Watershed Values; and Recreation, and Cultural Resources Management.

The CAP will make land and resource management decisions for fluid mineral leasing and some for mineral location in the core area and related affected areas. These decisions were not ripe for determining in the Green River RMP prepared in 1997, and were deferred to the JMHCAP. Thus, this effort will make the Green River RMP fluid minerals leasing decisions (and modify some existing decisions) and mineral location decisions for the CAP planning area and determine the appropriate levels and timing of leasing and development of energy resources, while sustaining the other important land and resource uses in the area. These deferred Green River RMP decisions will result in amending the Green River RMP. Other management prescriptions resulting from this planning effort include some refinement of designations of roads for use, grazing practices, recreational activities and facilities, identification of right-of-way windows and concentration areas, and prescriptions for managing wildlife habitat.

ALTERNATIVES

Four alternatives are analyzed in detail and documented in this document. All the alternatives are multiple-use oriented. Each alternative provides for resource production and environmental protection. The management prescriptions of the four alternatives are described in Chapter 2 and summarized and compared in Table 2-1, Summary Comparison of Alternatives (found at the end of Chapter 2).

The No Action Alternative would continue current management practices on the basis of the existing land use plan (the GRRMP). In this alternative, no additional lands would be leased for fluid minerals in what is known as the “core” area, about 80,410 acres encompassing the Steamboat Mountain ACEC, portions of the Greater Sand Dunes ACEC, and overlapping crucial big game habitats surrounding and adjacent to the Greater Sand Dunes and Steamboat Mountain ACECs.

Alternative A generally would reduce the level of land use restrictions and provide for more intensive management of mineral resources, recreation, and livestock grazing than either the No Action Alternative or Alternative B. Fluid mineral leasing would be allowed in the core area.

Alternative B would address resource management conflicts by increasing the level of restrictions on land uses and by providing for more intensive management of noncommodity resources than under the No Action Alternative or Alternative A. Fluid mineral leasing would not be allowed in the core area or in important migratory elk habitat.

The BLM’s Preferred Alternative generally would place greater emphasis on protection of the natural environment than the No Action Alternative or Alternative A and would prescribe fewer restrictions on land use than Alternative B. The management actions in the Preferred Alternative were drawn from the No Action Alternative and Alternatives A and B, but the Preferred Alternative also contains management actions that are not included in any of the other alternatives. Compared to the other alternatives, this alternative provides for staged oil and gas leasing and related development. Portions of the planning area would be available for leasing consideration, with appropriate mitigation, upon completion of the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan. Before other areas would be leased for oil and gas development, they would be withheld from leasing consideration until it could be ensured that adequate big game habitat would remain available for use.

The environmental consequences that could result from the management prescriptions of the four alternatives are described in Chapter 4 and summarized and compared in Table 4-1, Summary Comparison of Impacts (found at the end of Chapter 4).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
AMP	Allotment management plan
APD	Application for permit to drill (an oil or gas well)
AUM	Animal unit month
BBLs	Barrels (a measure of the quantity of condensate)
BCF	Billion cubic feet (a measure of quantity of natural gas)
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CAP	Coordinated Activity Plan
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DPC	Desired Plant Community
EIS	Environmental impact statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
FR	Federal Register
GRRMP	Green River Resource Management Plan
IBLA	Interior Board of Land Appeals
JMH	Jack Morrow Hills
JMHCAP	Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NSO	No surface occupancy (a stipulation on an oil and gas lease)
ORV	Off-road vehicle
PFC	Proper functioning condition (of riparian/wetland areas)
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purposes Act
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976
RMIS	Recreation Management Information System
RMP	Resource Management Plan
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right of way
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDI	United States Department of the Interior
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VRM	Visual resource management
WGFD	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
WSA	Wilderness study area
WYDOT	Wyoming Department of Transportation

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PLANNING EFFORT

INTRODUCTION

This draft environmental impact statement (EIS) evaluates alternatives for the management of public lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Jack Morrow Hills planning area. Based on concerns raised by the public and BLM personnel during preparation of the Green River Resource Management Plan (GRRMP), the Rock Springs Field Office initiated preparation of the Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan (JMHCAP). This activity plan will provide more specific management direction to prevent or address conflicts among potential development of energy resources, recreational activities and facilities and more specific management direction for other land and resource uses in the planning area, including livestock grazing, important wildlife habitat, and other important resources. This plan will provide management direction for the protection of certain resources (e.g., desert elk and other big game habitat, unique sand dune-mountain shrub habitat, unstabilized-stabilized sand dunes) and allow leasing and development of energy resources, recreational activities, grazing practices, and other activities at appropriate levels. The planning area encompasses the Steamboat Mountain, Greater Sand Dunes, White Mountain Petroglyphs, and Oregon Buttes Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); a portion of the South Pass Historic Landscape ACEC; the Oregon Buttes, Honeycomb Buttes, Greater Sand Dunes, Buffalo Hump, Whitehorse Creek, South Pinnacles, and Alkali Draw Wilderness Study Areas (WSA); and three special recreation management areas: Greater Sand Dunes, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and the Oregon/Mormon Pioneer/Pony Express/California National Historic Trails.

The JMHCAP planning effort is an integrated activity planning effort to specify a balanced level of resource use and protection for BLM-administered public lands in the area. The land use planning decisions for leasing fluid minerals in the planning area were not ready for inclusion in the Green River RMP. Thus, these decisions were deferred for determination in the course of developing the JMHCAP. Some Green River RMP decisions for mineral location in the area were also deferred to the CAP. Thus, the primary objective of this effort is to make the Green River RMP fluid minerals leasing decisions and mineral location decisions for the planning area and to determine the appropriate levels and timing of leasing and development of energy resources, while sustaining the other important land and resource uses in the area. These deferred Green River RMP decisions will result in amending the Green River RMP. Other management prescriptions resulting from this planning effort include some refinement of designations of roads for use, grazing practices, recreational activities and facilities, identification of rights-of-way windows and concentration areas, and prescriptions for managing wildlife habitat.

The process for the development, approval, maintenance, and amendment or revision of RMPs was initiated under the authority of Section 202(f) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and section 202(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The process is guided by BLM planning regulations in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 1600 (43 CFR 1600) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations in 40 CFR 1500.

The first tier of the three-tiered BLM planning process consists of (1) compiling and reviewing the current laws, regulations, policies, Executive Orders and directives pertaining to the planning area; and (2) development of any needed State Director's guidance, specific to the planning effort and the planning area.

Development of the RMP represents the second of the three-tiered BLM planning process, the land use planning tier. As such, the approved RMP prescribes the general future resource and land use management for the BLM administered public lands in the planning area. It is this process of planning for the management of the public land and resources, and allocating their uses, that guides activity planning and daily operations.

Activity planning, the third tier of the BLM planning process, incorporates the resource and land use decisions of the RMP into the specific management guidance for administering the public lands in the planning area. During activity planning, the management prescriptions in the RMP are applied (1) to specific geographic areas in developing and implementing site-specific activity plans (e.g., allotment management plans, habitat management plans, interdisciplinary or coordinated activity plans); (2) in issuing various land and resource use authorizations; (3) in identifying specific mitigation needs; and (4) in developing and implementing other similar plans and actions. The JMHCAP effort involves making decisions at both the RMP and activity planning tiers of the planning process.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE JACK MORROW HILLS CAP

The Green River RMP deferred certain fluid mineral leasing decisions and some locatable mineral decisions until a coordinated activity plan could be completed for the Jack Morrow Hills area. As stated in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Green River RMP:

“The fluid mineral leasing decisions and some locatable mineral decisions are deferred in a “core” area, involving the eastern portion of the Greater Sand Dunes ACEC (not includ-

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ing any parts of the Buffalo Hump or Sand Dunes Wilderness Study Areas - WSAs - because WSAs are closed to mineral leasing by Congressional mandate), the entire Steamboat Mountain ACEC, and the area of overlapping crucial big game habitats surrounding and adjacent to the Greater Sand Dunes and Steamboat Mountain ACECs. Approximately 80,000 acres are involved with this "core" area (Map 1). Because more site specific and detailed information is needed to make the fluid mineral and locatable mineral decisions for the core area, these decisions will be deferred in this core area until a coordinated activity plan (CAP) covering the area is completed."

The JMHCAP will provide a comprehensive and environmentally adequate framework to consider allowing some fluid mineral and locatable mineral activities while providing for other resource and land uses in the planning area.

This EIS documents the consideration and analyses of the consequences of current and alternative management of land and resource uses in the planning area. The EIS also provides the basis for developing an activity plan that resolves the resource and land use issues identified in the preparation of the Green River RMP and in subsequent scoping efforts for the JMHCAP, and provides direction for site-specific actions to support the implementation of RMP management prescriptions. Thus, the approved JMHCAP will amend the Green River RMP in some areas, and establish implementation actions in others.

The objective of this activity planning effort will be to determine the appropriate level and methods of all the combined land and resource uses possible that are mutually compatible and that provide for the important resource concerns in the area, such as sustainability of crucial big game habitat, air and water quality, scenic quality, vegetative cover and soil stability, recreational activities, livestock grazing and range improvement activities, mineral development and other important resource concerns. The CAP will provide more specific management direction for the planning area to prevent or address potential conflicts among or resulting from these uses.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The general planning area for the JMHCAP includes the BLM-administered lands located north and east of Rock Springs, Wyoming, and which includes portions of Sweetwater, Sublette, and Fremont counties in southwestern Wyoming (Map 1).

The area to be addressed and analyzed for the CAP includes about 622,000 acres surrounding and including the core area. This represents the cumulative impact analysis area for the activity plan because the lands outside the "core" area could be affected by the management of the core area and vice versa.

As provided by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the BLM has the responsibility to plan for and manage the "public lands." As defined by the Act, the "public lands" are those Federally owned lands, and any interest in

lands (e.g., Federally owned mineral estate), that are administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Within the planning area, there are varied and intermingled land surface ownerships and overlapping mineral ownerships. Therefore, the administrative jurisdictions for land use planning and for managing the land surface and minerals are also varied, intermingled, and overlapping.

Because of this situation, the completed JMHCAP will not include planning and management decisions for lands or minerals that are privately owned or owned by the State of Wyoming or local governments. Providing direction for the surface or minerals management of these lands is not within BLM's jurisdiction. In addition, RMP decisions will not be made for those federally owned minerals within the planning area, that underlay federally owned land surface administered by other federal agencies. Table 1-1 describes land and mineral ownership and interrelated administrative jurisdictions in the planning area (Map 2 and Map 3).

PLANNING ISSUES AND PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning Issues Identified

Planning issues are determined from demands, concerns, conflicts, or problems regarding the use or management of the public lands and resources. These are usually expressed in terms of the affects that some land and resource uses have on other land and resource uses or resource values. The following planning issues have been identified through public scoping and information gathered in analyzing the existing management situation in the planning area. They are based on the input of BLM personnel, the public, and interagency consultation.

Issue 1: Minerals Resource Management and Rights-of-Way

Special attention is needed to address mineral development (i.e., oil/gas, coalbed methane, coal, diamonds, and gold) and related transportation network conflicts with other land and resource uses and values. Principal considerations include disruptive activities and human presence in elk, deer, and fisheries habitat, big game (i.e., moose, elk, deer, antelope) crucial habitat (crucial winter range and birthing areas), and other important wildlife species habitats (e.g., sage grouse, plovers, raptors); on recreation values, forage uses, air quality, sensitive vegetation types, and sensitive watersheds. Areas where surface-disturbing activities (e.g., mineral exploration and development activities, right-of-way construction activities, etc.) are suitable, not suitable, or should be restricted, need to be identified.

Issue 2: Resource Uses Affecting Vegetation, Soils, Air, and Watershed Values

There are conflicting demands for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of the vegetation resources in the resource area. The basic problem is providing for resource

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values and nonconsumptive uses while allowing for consumptive uses. Resource values include maintenance of general vegetative cover; watershed protection; maintenance and enhancement of riparian areas; soil stabilization; maintenance and enhancement of wildlife habitat (particularly big game crucial winter range and habitat for candidate or threatened and endangered wildlife and vegetative species); and air quality protection. Consumptive uses include livestock grazing; off-road vehicle use; and vegetation removal by mineral development, rights-of-way construction, and other surface disturbing activities.

Issue 3: Recreation and Cultural Resource Management

There are certain resources and areas that need protection while others need to be considered for more public and recreational uses. Off-road vehicle (ORV) use can conflict with other land and resource uses and can cause damage to resources, including wildlife and watershed values and other recreation values. Principal considerations include providing for suitable and sufficient recreation uses and facilities (both dispersed and commercial), particularly in the ORV open area, visual resource management direction, road designations (transportation planning), and management of cultural and historical resources (of particular concern is the need for protection of Native American respected places). Providing for visitor health and safety in areas with mineral development (i.e., ORV recreation area and oil/gas development) is also a concern.

Some issues that directly or indirectly apply to the planning area were addressed in the Green River RMP planning effort. These same issues will not be addressed in the EIS for the CAP.

Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are the conditions and guidelines or parameters for conducting the planning effort, for preparing the JMHCAP EIS and for developing the approved CAP. The planning criteria serve the following purposes:

1. To ensure that the planning effort is focused on the issues, follows and incorporates legal requirements, addresses management of all public land resources and land uses in the planning area, and that plan preparation is accomplished efficiently;
2. To identify the scope and parameters of the planning effort for the decision maker, the interdisciplinary planning team, and the public; and
3. To inform the public of what should and should not be expected from the completed JMHCAP. This includes identification of any planning issues that are not ready for decision-making and that will be addressed only through subsequent activity or implementation planning efforts or in approving public land and resource use authorizations (e.g., livestock grazing allotment management plans, wildlife habitat management plans, other coordinated activity planning, watershed management plans, processing appli-

cations for permits for mineral exploration, rights-of-way, etc.).

Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by laws and regulations; guidance provided by the BLM Wyoming State Director; the results of consultation and coordination with the public and with other agencies, governmental entities, and Indian Tribes; analysis of information pertinent to the planning area; public input; and professional judgment. The general planning criteria described in Appendix 1 have been developed to help focus the preparation of planning and management alternatives and the analysis of their impacts, and to guide selection of the preferred alternative for the RMP EIS. Additional planning criteria may be identified as the planning process proceeds.

Planning criteria, specific to the JMHCAP planning area, will focus on the potential environmental consequences of reasonably foreseeable development and other land use activities in the planning area, such as staking mining claims and mineral exploration and development, construction of rights-of-way, recreation uses and livestock grazing. Other criteria, in relation to reasonably foreseeable development, include vehicular use and transportation, construction of range and watershed improvement projects, and recreation site developments.

Criteria for Hydrocarbon Leasing and Development

As an aid in developing alternatives for the EIS, special criteria were developed relative to the leasing and development of carbon-based minerals (oil, gas, coal, and coalbed methane). By inference from available geologic information, reports of past production, and information from the minerals industry, parts of the planning area were determined to have a high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas, and to have high and moderate potential for the occurrence of coal and related coalbed methane.

This information, along with analysis of past mineral leasing and development activity and production, was utilized to project Reasonably Foreseeable Development scenarios for carbon-based minerals. These scenarios are used as assumptions to aid in analysis of impacts.

Because they are so broad, these resource occurrence and development potential classifications, projected for planning purposes, are not appropriate for or intended to predict details of future activity or the exact locations of new discoveries.

Criteria for Locatable Minerals

Areas of potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals such as gold, bentonite, and uranium were derived during the Green River RMP planning process, to facilitate analysis of the effects that the variety of other land and resource uses and management actions would have on locatable minerals development and vice versa.

Areas identified as having potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals, include areas with current or past mining activity, areas where mining claims are located, areas where

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mineral occurrence has been proven from some type of activity (such as stratigraphic test holes), and areas where geologic conditions appear favorable for the occurrence of locatable minerals. The areas of potential were refined for the JMHCAP planning area. They are based on a representative analysis by inference and do not imply that there may or may not be undiscovered locatable minerals of economic value in the planning area.

Criteria for Use of Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines

The activity planning process will identify mitigation or protective requirements based on the use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines for Surface Disturbing and Disruptive Activities (Appendix 2). Mitigation or protective measures would be applied as conditions of land and resource use:

- (a) to minimize soil movement;
- (b) to minimize disturbance of vegetation in sensitive areas such as riparian areas;
- (c) to protect important cultural and paleontological resources, recreational values, wildlife and habitat resources and threatened or endangered plant and animal species); and
- (d) to protect visual quality.

Criteria for Healthy Rangelands

The activity planning process will include the application of measures to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health. These would be based on using the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands and the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines. Appropriate management prescriptions and protection measures would be applied. The fundamentals are:

- (1) watersheds are functioning properly;
- (2) water, nutrients, and energy are cycling properly;
- (3) water quality meets State standards; and
- (4) habitat for viable, diverse, native plants and animals, and for special status species is protected.

Criteria for Livestock Grazing Management

The activity planning process will include the application of measures to meet the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. Appropriate management prescriptions and protection measures would be applied. However, such prescriptions may not be allotment specific. Site specific measures would be applied on an allotment basis after a site specific standards and guidelines review, and in developing allotment management plans.

Criteria for the Coal Screening/Planning Process

The coal screening/planning process for management of the federal coal resources in the planning area was conducted

in the Green River RMP planning process. Application of the Coal Unsuitability Criteria (43 CFR 3461) is documented in Appendix 3-2 of the Green River RMP. The coal screening/planning process will not be revisited in the JMHCAP planning effort. However, potential coalbed methane development in the area will be considered.

Criteria for Wilderness Study Areas

Management of Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) will not be addressed in the JMHCAP. Management of WSAs within the planning area is addressed in the Green River Resource Management Plan (Appendix 3) (August 1997). Within the planning area, approximately 117,060 acres of BLM-administered public land in WSAs which are pending Congressional decision (see Map 4). When Congress makes decisions regarding the WSAs in the planning area, they will be incorporated into the Green River RMP and JMHCAP. Until Congress acts, these WSAs will be managed under the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (USDI 1995). No other potential wilderness areas in the planning area have been identified for wilderness review.

Should Congress designate any of the WSAs (partially or wholly) as wilderness, the management of the designated areas will be in conformance with the Wilderness Act of 1964 and as described in the above-mentioned Green River RMP and/or in the designation legislation. Wilderness activity plans will be prepared for any wilderness areas designated by Congress.

Should Congress not designate part or all of any of the WSAs as wilderness, the nondesignated areas will lose their identity as WSAs and will be managed along with the adjoining land area as prescribed in the approved Green River RMP and JMHCAP.

It must be understood that this CAP will not address management prescriptions specifically for the WSAs. If WSAs are included in an area with management prescriptions that are more stringent than wilderness management prescriptions, the WSA would be managed under those more stringent prescriptions. Where this occurs, it is to be understood that the more stringent management prescriptions would apply, whether or not the areas involved were designated as wilderness.

Criteria for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

The relevance and importance criteria for ACEC designation, found in BLM Manual 1613, were applied and documented in the Green River RMP EIS. These criteria, their application and resulting determinations made in the RMP regarding the designation or nondesignation of ACECs, will not be revisited in developing the JMHCAP. However, if new areas are identified that meet the ACEC relevance and importance criteria, this information will be included in the EIS for the JMHCAP.

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Criteria for Wild Horses

The Green River RMP EIS considered appropriate management levels for wild horses. These will not be revisited in developing the JMHCAP.

Criteria for Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Green River RMP EIS identified BLM-administered public lands along waterways that meet the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act suitability factors to be given further consideration for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Wild and scenic river reviews will not be revisited in developing the JMHCAP.

Criteria for Livestock Grazing

The Green River RMP EIS addressed and provided for livestock grazing management. As a result, the JMHCAP will consider some level of grazing use in all alternatives and a no grazing alternative will not be revisited in developing the JMHCAP. A no grazing alternative will be addressed on individual grazing allotments in the course of future processing of grazing permits.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DOCUMENTATION

This EIS is intended to be a concise public document that analyzes the probable and known environmental impacts from several alternatives for development and use of public lands and resources upon components of the human and natural environment. The goal of this EIS is to produce better decisions using three themes developed in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations: 1) early and continuous communication with the public; 2) early consideration of significant environmental consequences; and 3) consideration of all reasonable alternatives. Development of alternatives included preparation of the alternatives, affected environment, and environmental consequences.

No Action Alternative

The interdisciplinary planning team began the environmental analysis for the JMHCAP by preparing a comprehensive description of the existing management situation for the planning area. This description represents the "No Action Alternative" for the environmental analysis. This alternative describes levels of activities existing and anticipated to occur under existing management direction in the planning area. This direction includes no leasing or activity in the core area, and no withdrawals in addition to those already identified in the Green River RMP. Management objective and action decisions in the Green River RMP that affect the JMHCAP planning area are contained in Appendix 3.

Other Alternatives Including the Preferred Alternative

Development of other alternatives for this section of the environmental impact analysis were based upon public scoping and analysis of the No Action Alternative. An adequate range of alternatives has been developed for comparative analysis.

Affected Environment

This section of the EIS describes those land and resource uses and resource values in the planning area that would be affected by each of the alternatives.

Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives

The interdisciplinary planning team conducted an environmental impact analysis of the effects of each alternative. Based upon these analyses, the Preferred Alternative was developed and was also analyzed.

SCOPING, CONSULTATION, AND COORDINATION

CEQ regulations require that agencies responsible for preparing an EIS use an early scoping process to identify significant issues. The principal goals of scoping are to allow public participation and to identify issues, concerns, and potential impacts that require detailed analysis in the EIS. The scoping process was the primary mechanism used by BLM to identify public interests and concerns about activities in the planning area.

BLM has actively and directly solicited public involvement by circulating information through public mailings, public announcements, notices in local newspapers, and conducting open houses and field tours. The public has been provided ample opportunity to submit comments and recommendations by mail, over the telephone or fax, e-mail, or in person. The BLM did not only accumulate significant public comment, the agency considered and responded to the concerns expressed. A chronology of the public scoping process is provided in Table 1-2.

Initial notification of the intent to prepare the JMHCAP occurred in the Green River RMP final EIS (1996). This information was again provided with the publication of the Record of Decision and Approved Green River RMP (USDI 1997). On January 22, 1998, the BLM mailed a scoping statement to the media, governmental agencies, environmental organizations, industry representatives, individuals, land-owners, and grazing permittees. The scoping statement explained the general nature of the JMHCAP planning effort and requested initial comments concerning the level of analysis,

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resource information, and concerns. A notice of intent to conduct public scoping and prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register on February 5, 1998. The scoping period ended March 20, 1998; however, comments received after this date were still considered.

Meetings were held with the public on February 10, February 19, and March 19, 1998 to provide information about the CAP planning effort and to solicit public input. Two field tours were also held and two additional open houses were held on September 14, and October 27, 1998 (see Table 1-2).

Consultation with Native Americans, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, American Indian Religious

Freedom Act, and Executive Order 13007, occurred throughout the planning process. Specific consultation with tribes guaranteed their participation, in conformance with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." See Chapters 3 and 5 for further discussion of Environmental Justice, federal trust responsibility, and consultation coordination.

All comments received were incorporated into the analysis of issues found in this EIS . Over 190 comment letters were received during the scoping process and are available for inspection in the Rock Springs Field Office.

TABLE 1-1
LAND AND MINERAL OWNERSHIPS AND ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTIONS
WITHIN THE JMHCAP PLANNING AREA

Areas the CAP Decisions WILL Cover:	Approximate Acres¹
A. Areas where the land surface and mineral estate are both Federally owned and are both administered by the BLM ²	567,080
B. Areas where the land surface is Federally owned and administered by the BLM and the mineral estate is owned and administered by the state of Wyoming ³	7,720
C. Areas where the land surface is owned and administered by private individuals and the total mineral estate is Federally owned and administered by the BLM ⁴	4,950
D. Areas where the land surface is owned and administered by private individuals and the coal is Federally owned and administered by the BLM ⁴	2,010
E. Areas where the land surface is owned and administered by private individuals and the oil and gas is Federally owned and administered by the BLM ⁴	30
F. Areas where the land surface is owned and administered by private individuals and the other federal minerals are Federally owned and administered by the BLM ⁴	40
G. Areas where the land surface is owned and administered by the State of Wyoming and the mineral estate is Federally owned and administered by the BLM ⁴	640
H. Areas where the land surface is owned and administered by the State of Wyoming and the coal is Federally owned and administered by the BLM ⁴	80
Total BLM administered federal land surface to be covered by CAP decisions (A + B)	574,800
Total BLM administered federal mineral estate to be covered by CAP decisions (A + C + D + E + F + G + H)	574,830
Areas the CAP Decisions Will NOT Cover:	
I. Areas where the Federal land surface is administered by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Federal mineral estate is administered by the BLM ⁵	1,980
Total BLM administered federal mineral estate that will <u>NOT</u> be covered by RMP decisions	1,980
J. Areas where the land surface and minerals are both owned by private individuals and the BLM has no administrative authority ⁶	8,800
K. Areas where the land surface and minerals are both owned by the State of Wyoming and the BLM has no administrative authority ⁶	29,000
Total Land Surface Acres in the JMHCAP Planning Area (All Ownerships)¹	622,330

¹ Because of land surface and mineral ownership overlaps and administrative responsibility overlaps, acreage figures are not additive.

² In areas where the Federal land surface and Federal mineral estate are both administered by the BLM, the CAP decisions will cover both the land surface and the mineral estate.

³ In areas where the Federal land surface is administered by the BLM, and the minerals are privately owned or owned by the State of Wyoming, the CAP decisions will cover only the BLM-administered Federal land surface. While these surface management decisions may have some affect on the ability to manage and develop the non-Federally owned minerals, the CAP decisions will not pertain to the non-Federal mineral estate. At the same time, surface and minerals management actions and development activities anticipated in these areas will be taken into account for purposes of cumulative impact analysis in the CAP.

⁴ In areas where the land surface is privately owned or owned by the State of Wyoming, and the minerals are Federally owned, the CAP decisions will cover only the BLM-administered Federal mineral estate. While the land and resource uses and values on the non-Federal surface will be taken into account and will affect development of the Federal mineral management decisions, these decisions will not pertain to the state and privately owned land surface. At the same time, surface and minerals management actions and development activities anticipated in these areas will be taken into account for purposes of cumulative impact analysis in the CAP.

⁵ In areas where the Federal land surface is administered by the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Federal mineral estate is administered by the BLM, the land surface planning and management decisions are the responsibility of the Bureau of Reclamation. Any BLM administrative responsibilities on these lands (for example, actions concerning the Federal mineral estate) are handled case by case and are guided by the other surface management agencies' policies, procedures, and plans. Thus, the CAP will not include management decisions for the Federal minerals on these lands. At the same time, surface and minerals management actions and development activities anticipated on these lands will be taken into account for purposes of cumulative impact analysis in the CAP.

It is also important to note that, while other BLM responsibilities include surface management of the lands withdrawn for purposes of the Bureau of Reclamation, they are carried out in accordance with an interagency agreement between the two agencies. Administrative jurisdiction (including land use planning) for these lands lies with the Bureau of Reclamation.

⁶ The CAP will not include any management decisions for areas where the land surface and minerals are both privately owned or owned by the State of Wyoming.

TABLE 1-2
PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS
FOR THE JACK MORROW HILLS COORDINATED ACTIVITY PLAN DRAFT EIS

Date	Scoping Purpose
January 22, 1998	Scoping Notice mailed to the public.
February 5, 1998	Notice of Intent to prepare the CAP published in the Federal Register with notice of open houses to be conducted.
February 10, 1998	Open House held in Rock Springs to receive input on issues and concerns. 46 people attended.
February 19, 1998	Open House held in Lander to receive input on issues and concerns. Over 70 people attended.
March 19, 1998	Open House held in Rock Springs to receive input on issues and concerns. 13 people attended.
March 20, 1998	Scoping period ended.
September 2, 1998	Newsletter sent to all parties on the mailing list. Internet web site established with newsletter information. The newsletter summarized the issues raised during scoping and provided notification of a field tour and open house to be conducted September 14, 1998.
September 14, 1998	Field tour of planning area to familiarize the public with the area and to receive input on issues and concerns. Over 50 people attended. An open house followed the field tour.
October 27, 1998	Field tour of planning area to familiarize the public with the area and to receive input on issues and concerns. Over 10 people attended.
February 18, 1999	Coordination meeting with State of Wyoming, EPA, and USFWS to discuss progress and receive input on development of alternatives.
February 24, 1999	Open house held in Lander to discuss progress on the CAP and to solicit comments on Alternative development. Over 23 people attended.
February 25, 1999	Open house held in Rock Springs to discuss progress on the CAP and to solicit comments on Alternative development. 10 people attended.
June 2000	CAP Draft EIS published and distributed to the public (60-day review). Federal Register notice of availability published.