



PRELIMINARY DRAFT ALTERNATIVES LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

Common to all Land and Water Resources

No Action Alternative

- Desired Plant Community objectives would be established.
- Watersheds would be assessed and those with more sensitive conditions would have increased monitoring and mitigation.
- Vegetation treatments would be designed on a case-by-case basis to protect water quality, dissipate erosion, and comply with requirements for special status plants. Prescribed burns with resting periods (two full growing seasons after treatment) would be the preferred method.
- Fences on public lands would be removed, modified, or reconstructed where documented wildlife conflicts occur. Herding control of livestock would be encouraged as an alternative to fencing.

Alternative 1

- Desired Plant Community objectives would emphasize commodity uses.
- Vegetation treatments would be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Fencing would be used to facilitate livestock management.

Alternative 2

- Desired plant community objectives would emphasize wildlife habitat, watershed, and biodiversity values.
- Watersheds would be assessed and those with more sensitive conditions would have increased monitoring and mitigation.
- Vegetation treatments would be limited to noxious weed control. No prescribed burns.
- Fencing would be used to limit wild horses to the Great Divide Basin Herd Management Area.

Alternative 3

- Desired Plant Community objectives would emphasize wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, watershed, and biodiversity values.
- Watersheds would be assessed and those with more sensitive conditions would have increased monitoring and mitigation.
- Vegetation treatments would be designed on a case-by-case basis, with a one year prior to and two year after treatment resting periods.
- Fencing would be used to protect or enhance wildlife habitat and forage production.

Fire Management

No Action Alternative

- Prescribed burns would be restricted in areas with fossil fuel outcrops and areas would be rested two full growing seasons after treatment.
- Full fire suppression would be applied in basin big sagebrush/lemon scurfpea vegetation associations.

Alternative 1

- Prescribed burns and associated stipulations would be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Full fire suppression would be applied in basin big sagebrush/lemon scurfpea vegetation associations.

Alternative 2

- Prescribed burns would be prohibited within the planning area.
- Limited fire suppression would be applied in basin big sagebrush/lemon scurfpea vegetation associations.

Alternative 3

- Prescribed burns would be restricted in areas with fossil fuel outcrops and treatment areas would be rested one full year prior to treatment, unless vegetation cover prior to burning is adequate, and rested two full years after treatment.
- Full fire suppression would be applied in basin big sagebrush/lemon scurfpea vegetation associations.

Watershed Quality

BLM would cooperate with federal, state, and local government agencies on applicable water quality plans. Wetland and floodplains would be managed in accordance with Executive Orders 11988 and 11990. Fluid mineral wells would be constructed in accordance with BLM regulations for resource protection (43 CFR 3162.5).

No Action Alternative

- The area within 500 feet of 100-year floodplains and highly erodible soils would be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities.
- New permanent facilities would be excluded from 100-year floodplains.
- Projects to improve the ecological integrity of the dunal ponds would be considered.
- Riparian exclosures would be used to enhance wildlife habitat; existing exclosures would be maintained.

Alternative 1

- The area within 500 feet of 100-year floodplains and highly erodible soils would be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities, unless mitigation measures would adequately prevent erosion and runoff.
- New permanent facilities would be excluded from 100-year floodplains.

- Riparian exclosures would be used to benefit commodity uses; existing exclosures could be removed.

Alternative 2

- The area within 1,500 feet of 100-year floodplains would be an avoidance area for surface disturbing activities.
- New permanent facilities would be excluded from 100-year floodplains and areas containing highly erodible soils.
- Specific actions would be implemented to protect the ecological integrity of the dunal ponds and other ecologically important ephemeral wetlands not covered under Executive Orders 11988 and 11990.
- Riparian exclosures would be considered only if they benefit preservation of sensitive resources.

Alternative 3

- The area within 1,000 feet of 100-year floodplains and highly erodible soils would be avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities.
- New permanent facilities would be considered in the 100-year floodplain that enhance the protection and management of the floodplains and riparian areas, and comply with Executive Order 11988.
- Specific actions would be implemented to protect the ecological integrity of the dunal ponds and other ecologically important ephemeral wetlands not covered under Executive Orders 11988 and 11990.
- Riparian exclosures would be used to enhance wildlife habitat; existing exclosures would be maintained.

Wild Horses

A site-specific activity plan for the Divide Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area would be developed and implemented to ensure adequate forage is available to support the appropriate management level (AML) of 415-600 horses. A selective gathering plan would be developed and implemented to remove excess horses from inside and outside the herd management area.

No Action Alternative and Alternative 1

- The Divide Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area and appropriate management level (AML) of 415-600 horses would remain unchanged.
- Water developments would be provided as needed to improve herd distribution and manage forage utilization.

Alternative 2

- The boundaries of the Divide Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area would be modified to exclude it from the JMH planning area; the AML would remain unchanged at 415-600 horses.
- No water developments for wild horse management would be constructed.

Alternative 3

- The Divide Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area would be expanded to include the entire JMHS planning area; the AML would remain unchanged at 415-600 horses.
- Water developments for wild horse management within sensitive wildlife habitats would be considered only where habitat and resource conditions would be improved or maintained.

Livestock Grazing

The Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (S&Gs) would apply to all livestock grazing activities. Appropriate actions (as determined by an interdisciplinary team) would be implemented to ensure all allotments meet the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands. Forage utilization levels would be in accordance with individual allotment management plans.

No Action Alternative

- BLM staff would work with livestock operators to determine the most appropriate methods for achieving the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands.
- Livestock water developments and range improvements would be considered to maintain or improve resource conditions and/or enhance livestock distribution.
- Salt or mineral supplements would be prohibited within 500 feet of riparian habitat.

Alternative 1

- Reductions of permitted animal unit months (AUMs) would not be implemented unless it is the only appropriate action for meeting the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands.
- Livestock water developments and range improvements would be considered in order to enhance livestock production.
- Salt or mineral supplements would be prohibited within 250 feet of riparian habitat.

Alternative 2

- Reductions of permitted AUMS and modified turnout dates would be the primary methods for meeting the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands.
- Livestock water developments and range improvements within sensitive wildlife habitats would be considered only where wildlife habitat and resource conditions would be improved.
- Salt or mineral supplements would be prohibited within 1/2 mile of riparian habitat, areas inhabited by special status plant species, or other sensitive areas.

Alternative 3

- BLM staff would work with livestock operators to determine the most appropriate methods for achieving the Wyoming Standards for Healthy Rangelands.
- Livestock water developments and range improvements within sensitive wildlife habitats would be considered only if wildlife habitat and resource conditions would be maintained or improved.
- Salt or mineral supplements would be prohibited within 1/4 mile of riparian habitat, areas inhabited by special status plant species, or other sensitive areas.

Vegetation Management

Potential habitat for listed, proposed, or candidate threatened and endangered plant species would be surveyed prior to any surface disturbance or water withdrawals. The introduction of invasive species would be prevented and monitored, and populations would be controlled in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner.

No Action Alternative

- Locations of federally listed, proposed or candidate species and Wyoming BLM sensitive plant species would be protected and closed to surface disturbing and disruptive activities. Mineral leasing could be considered under no surface occupancy requirements.
- Locations of federally listed, proposed or candidate species and Wyoming BLM sensitive species would be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine if they meet criteria for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Alternative 1

- Locations of federally listed, proposed or candidate species would be avoided or closed from surface disturbing activities dependent upon consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Locations of Wyoming BLM sensitive plant species would be avoided from surface disturbing activities.

Alternatives 2 and 3

- Locations of federally listed, proposed or candidate species and Wyoming BLM sensitive plant species would be protected and closed to surface disturbing and disruptive activities. Mineral leasing could be considered under no surface occupancy requirements.
- Locations of federally listed, proposed or candidate species and Wyoming BLM sensitive species that meet criteria for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern would be so designated.

Wildlife Management

No Action Alternative

- High value wildlife habitats would be maintained or improved by reducing habitat loss or alteration and by applying appropriate distance and seasonal restrictions and rehabilitation standards to all appropriate activities. These habitats include crucial winter habitat, birthing/nesting areas, sensitive fisheries, and federally listed species habitat. Exceptions could be granted on a case-by-case basis with appropriate mitigation as determined by BLM in coordination with commodity users.
- BLM would continue to coordinate with APHIS – Wildlife Services (WS) and review their annual management plan for animal damage control activities on public lands.

Alternative 1

- High value wildlife habitats would be maintained, only as required by applicable laws and regulations, by reducing habitat loss or alteration and by applying minimum distance and seasonal restrictions and rehabilitation standards to all appropriate activities. These habitats include crucial winter habitat, birthing/nesting areas, sensitive fisheries, and

federally listed species habitat. Pro-active conservation measures would be taken on a case-by-case basis consistent with the Wyoming BLM Sensitive Species Policy, existing memorandums of understanding between BLM and other federal agencies, and other guidance. Exceptions could be granted on a case-by-case basis with appropriate mitigation as determined by BLM in coordination with commodity users.

- BLM would continue to coordinate with APHIS – Wildlife Services (WS) and review their annual management plan for animal damage control activities on public lands.

Alternative 2

- High value wildlife habitats would be maintained or improved by reducing habitat loss or alteration, by closing certain areas to surface disturbing activities, and by applying maximum distance and seasonal restrictions and rehabilitation standards to all appropriate activities. These habitats include crucial winter habitat, birthing/nesting areas, sensitive fisheries, and federally listed species habitat. In addition, indicators developed in an interdisciplinary monitoring plan would be used for determining effects of development and associated actions on habitat and uses by native wildlife. Considerations would be given to occurrences such as weather, drought, hunting, introduction of non-native/exotic species, and recreation disturbance.
- Allow non-lethal animal damage control for livestock protection and lethal animal damage control only if it benefits native wildlife.

Alternative 3

- High value wildlife habitats would be maintained or improved by reducing habitat loss or alteration and by applying appropriate distance and seasonal restrictions and rehabilitation standards to all appropriate activities. These habitats include crucial winter habitat, birthing/nesting areas, sensitive fisheries, and federally listed species habitat. In addition, indicators developed in an interdisciplinary monitoring plan would be used for determining effects of development and associated actions on habitat and uses by native wildlife. Considerations would be given to occurrences such as weather, drought, hunting, introduction of non-native/exotic species, and recreation disturbance.
- Emphasize non-lethal animal damage control, but allow lethal methods for animal damage control for both livestock and native wildlife.